

(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 to grow at 7.4% in 2017-18, says Asian Development Bank

As the note ban impact dissipates, India will grow at 7.4% in the current fiscal and 7.6% in 2018-19, cementing its position as the world's fastest-growing major economy, ahead of China, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) forecast on Thursday. In its Asian Development Outlook, ADB also said: "The impact of the demonetisation of high-value bank notes is dissipating as the replacement banknotes enter circulation. Stronger consumption and fiscal reforms are also expected to improve business confidence and investment prospects in the country." The country is expected to have clocked a growth rate of 7.1% in 2016-17, despite apprehensions that the note ban, announced in November last year, has dented consumption as well as investment. ADB's forecast India is better than that of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for 2017-18. In its forecast in January, the IMF said the Indian economy will grow 7.2% in 2017-18 and 7.7% in the next fiscal. In January, the World Bank also predicted India's growth to rebound to 7.6% in 2017-18 and 7.8% in 2018-19.

*The Financial Express - 07.04.2017*

<http://www.financialexpress.com/economy/india-to-grow-at-7-4-in-2017-18-says-asian-development-bank/618608/>

## Chinese economy likely to grow at 6.8 per cent in Q1, predicts Goldman Sachs

China's economy, which is reeling under continued slowdown, is likely to grow at 6.8 per cent in the first quarter this year, according to a Goldman Sachs forecast. The world's second largest economy slowed down to 6.9 per cent last year and the government has cut down the growth to 6.5 per cent this year. The bank said in a research report that purchasing managers' index (PMI) readings from both official and private surveys have implied firm activity growth overall. It expected China's GDP growth to reach 6.6 per cent for 2017. Goldman Sachs expected China's industrial production to rise 6.4 per cent in March, slightly higher than the 6.3 per cent growth for January and February. Fixed asset investment growth is likely to remain strong, expanding 8.9 per cent in the first three months of the year,

## Business confidence at all time high: CII report

India's business sentiment is bullish and expectations from the economy are at an all-time high, a business outlook survey carried out by the Confederation of Indian Industry has revealed. The CII Business Confidence Index (BCI) for the quarter to March has surged to a record high of 64.1 as against 56.5 recorded in the previous quarter. "The turnaround in business expectations gives credence to a growth narrative based on improved business sentiment and investor confidence," said Chandrajit Banerjee, director general, CII. The survey calculates BCI based on the responses from more than a 100 large, medium, small and micro firms across the country, on questions related to the performance of their firm, sector and the economy based on their perceptions about the previous and current quarter. Over 77% of respondents expressed optimism with regard to budget tax proposals and 52% expected the goods and services tax (GST) to have a positive impact on the economy after a year of its implementation.

*The Economic Times - 10.04.2017*

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/business-confidence-hits-record-high-with-companies-upbeat-on-economy-cii/articleshow/58091694.cms>

## Manufacturing grows fastest in 5 months

The manufacturing sector grew at its fastest pace in five months in March, marking the third month of expansion, on a strong surge in domestic and export orders, a monthly survey showed today. The survey also showed that the inflationary pressure eased in the sector as input prices rose at a slower pace and the corresponding easing of output prices helped boost demand. The Nikkei Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) — an indicator of manufacturing activity — increased to a five month high of 52.5 in March, from 50.7 in February. A reading above 50 indicates expansion, while any score below the mark means contraction. The factory output grew fast as order books expanded at the quickest pace since demonetisation, which

unchanged from that in the first two months, the Goldman Sachs forecast said. It expected weaker auto sales to continue weighing on the country's retail sales, which may increase 9.4 per cent in March, slowing from the 9.5 per cent growth registered in the first two months, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

*The Indian Express* - 09.04.2017

<http://indianexpress.com/article/business/economy/chinese-economy-likely-to-grow-at-6-8-per-cent-in-q1-predicts-goldman-sachs-4605975/>

## **Services growth gallops to 5-month high on new orders**

The services sector grew at its fastest pace in five months in March on surge in business orders and softer inflationary pressure, recovering for the second straight month from a demonetisation-triggered slump, a monthly survey showed on Thursday. The Nikkei India Services Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), which tracks services sector output on a monthly basis, rose from 50.3 in February to 51.5 in March. A reading of 50 separates growth from contraction and the index has reached its highest level since October. "India's private sector economy stayed on an upward trajectory during March, benefiting from an upswing in demand and output. The country's rapid recovery from the demonetisation-related downturn was accompanied by job creation and softer inflationary pressures," said Pollyanna De Lima, economist at IHS Markit and author of the report. After three months of demonetisation-driven contraction from November to January, services sector had returned to growth in February. The improvement in business conditions also promoted job creation, while confidence towards the year-ahead outlook for activity was at a four-month high during March

*Millennium Post* - 07.04.2017

<http://www.millenniumpost.in/business/services-growth-gallops-to-5-month-high-on-new-orders-235293>

## **Parl clears decks for GST rollout from July 1**

Parliament today cleared the decks for the rollout of the historic Goods and Services Tax (GST) from July 1 as it approved four supporting legislations to usher in the one-nation-one-tax regime. The Central GST Bill, 2017; The Integrated GST Bill, 2017; The GST (Compensation to States) Bill, 2017; and The Union Territory GST Bill, 2017 were returned by the Rajya Sabha by a voice vote as all parties were on board. A number of amendments moved by some opposition parties were negated

had hit the manufacturing as well as services sectors hard in a largely cash-dependent economy. This is the third consecutive month of expansion in the manufacturing sector after the demonetisation-induced contraction during November-December period.

*The Telegraph* - 04.04.2017

<https://epaper.telegraphindia.com/detail/250247-154522939.html>

## **Centre calls for gender-sensitive Swachh Bharat messaging**

Messages that promote Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pet project Swachh Bharat may soon become more gender sensitive as the government feels that currently most such promotions by states could be inadvertently perpetuating gender bias. Why should the messaging on Swachh Bharat involve a brother gifting a toilet to his sister, or a Sarpanch vowing not to sport a moustache unless his village turns open-defecation free, the Centre has asked in a set of guidelines on 'Gender issues in sanitation' sent to all states the guidelines sent to states on April 3. Currently the theme of most behaviour-change messaging from governments focus on shame, or dignity, of women while advocating against open defecation, it said. ET reviewed a copy of the guidelines. Such stories "may perpetuate gender-stereotyping and portray women as weak and passive compared to men", it said. "While these may be useful for entry-point messaging, they carry risks of lack of ownership by men and the reinforcing of gender stereotypes - like women should not step out of the house or men as the custodians of a women's dignity," it said.

*The Economic Times* - 07.04.2017

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/centre-calls-for-gender-sensitive-swachh-bharat-messaging/articleshow/58055958.cms>

## **Poser on multiple GST rates**

Parthasarathi Shome, chairman of Bangalore-based International Tax Research and Analysis Foundation and a former adviser to the Union finance ministry, has questioned the need for a multiple GST rate structure and the logic of keeping petroleum and electricity out of the purview of the indirect tax regime. The GST Council has arrived at specific tax rates of 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent, besides exempted goods. A cess is also proposed to be levied on luxury cars, aerated drinks, pan masala and

in the House where the ruling NDA is in a minority. Significantly, Congress member Jairam Ramesh did not press an amendment he had proposed, saying he had been advised by former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh against it for the sake of consensus. The Lok Sabha had passed these bills on March 29. State Assemblies will now have to pass the States GST Bill after which the new indirect tax regime can be rolled out from the targeted date of July 1. Replying to the 8-hour-long debate, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley also gave credit to the previous UPA government for the GST.

*India Today - 07.04.2017*

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/parl-clears-decks-for-gst-rollout-from-july-1/1/922452.html>

### **Roadmap on oil, gas PSU integration likely this fiscal**

The roadmap on consolidation of various Indian oil and gas public sector undertakings should become clear in the current financial year, according to Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan. "The government has given a roadmap. Companies are talking to each other. We expect roadmap on PSU oil and gas consolidation to be clear in FY18," Pradhan said at Network18's Global Natural Resources Conclave. The government is keen to create large integrated oil and gas companies in the country in order to have the wherewithal of taking very large projects both in India and abroad. The government has the model of oil and gas giants like Saudi Aramco and Russia's Rosneft to base its ambition on. Three months back, speculation was rife that the government planned to merge Oil and Natural Gas Corp and Hindustan Petroleum Corp to create an integrated oil and gas explorer and refiner. Pradhan said the government was not looking to create only one behemoth but rather have more than one integrated entity.

*Moneycontrol - 06.04.2017*

<http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/companies/roadmap-on-oil-gas-psu-integration-likely-this-fiscal-2253973.html>

### **You could soon be paying a different price every day for your petrol and diesel.**

Prices at petrol pumps may change every day, similar to what happens in many advanced markets, as state oil companies plan to review rates daily to align them with international prices, replacing the current practice of fortnightly revision. Indian Oil Corp, Bharat Petroleum and

tobacco products to compensate states for any loss in revenue. However, Shome feels that a multiple rate structure would only complicate GST. "GST should ideally have only one to two rates with no difference in the tax rates between goods and services. But now we know that there are multiple rates and cess to finance compensation of states. Can a big country like India afford such complications?" Shome said at a meeting organised by the Merchants Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The indirect tax will also keep petroleum and electricity, two key inputs for any industry, out of its purview.

*The Telegraph - 08.04.2017*

[https://www.telegraphindia.com/1170408/jsp/business/story\\_145208.jsp#.W0s8\\_tR97IU](https://www.telegraphindia.com/1170408/jsp/business/story_145208.jsp#.W0s8_tR97IU)

### **Creation of integrated energy major will not impact mega-refinery project: Pradhan**

The creation of 'integrated energy major' will not affect the proposed mega refinery project, which is a combined initiative of three public sector oil refining-cum-retailing companies. "There will no overlaps or conflicts. As and when work takes place on integrated energy major it will be a smooth transition of business," Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Petroleum & Natural Gas, told BusinessLine. Under active consideration is a proposal that public sector energy giant ONGC will take over one of the refiner-cum-retailers such as Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL). In all likelihood the government will adopt the holding company concept. The plan is to transfer the government's holding to ONGC, making the latter the holding company. The other oil companies — Oil India, in the upstream sector, and Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) in the downstream sector — will operate unchanged.

*The Hindu Business Line - 10.04.2017*

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/creation-of-integrated-energy-major-will-not-impact-megarefinery-project-pradhan/article9625581.ece>

### **To ensure all homes with LPG connections don't run short, Narendra Modi government takes next step**

To ensure that all the 73% of the households across the country having liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) connections are serviced and new consumers are added at a brisk pace, the central government has issued guidelines to district authorities to take a decision of either

Hindustan Petroleum, which control nearly 95% of the country's fuel retail market, are considering ways to roll out the plan to review petrol and diesel prices daily, top executives at state oil firms told ET. Executives of state oil firms met Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and the ministry officials on Wednesday to discuss the idea of daily fuel pricing. "The idea of daily fuel pricing has been there for some time. But now we have the technology to implement it. So we will do it," a top executive said, without giving a timeline for the launch. The automation at most filling stations, which allows companies to centrally change prices, as well as the availability of digital technologies and social networks have made it much easier for companies to convey price changes to their 53,000 filling station across the country.

*The Economic Times - 07.04.2017*

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/state-run-oil-companies-plan-to-review-fuel-rates-daily/articleshow/58056139.cms>

### **Price hitch for gas hunt**

The fifth downward revision in domestic natural gas price in two years to \$2.48 per million British thermal units (mBtu) could make exploration and production unviable, according to a study. The revised gas price for the first half of 2017-18 (April-September) is less than half of \$5.05 when the formula was first applied in November 2014. "The issue of such low prices for a sustained period making exploration and production unviable would have to be addressed on a priority basis to incentivise domestic production and balance the interest of upstream producers with consumers," said K. Ravichandran, senior vice-president and group head, corporate ratings, Icra. "Domestic price is now well below the average cost of production for many producers for a sustained period, leading to losses, which has forced the industry to seek a floor price," Icra said in a report. "The appreciation of the rupee against the dollar would have a further adverse impact on gas producers," Ravichandran said.

*The Telegraph - 04.04.2017*

[https://www.telegraphindia.com/1170404/jsp/business/story\\_144404.jsp#.WOC8YdR97IU](https://www.telegraphindia.com/1170404/jsp/business/story_144404.jsp#.WOC8YdR97IU)

### **Vigil on crude course**

India is keeping a close watch on global crude prices, which spiked to a one-month high of \$55 per barrel after the US air attack on Syrian government airbases. The volatility in oil prices is a major concern for the country as it imports 80 per cent of its crude requirement. "If the conflict escalates, it will have serious implications for

providing or rejecting no-objection certificates for prospective distributors within a month after receiving applications. The ministry of commerce and industry has, through a November, 2016 notification, made it mandatory for distributorship applicants to obtain NOCs for LPG godown site plans from a defined district authority or district magistrate prior to applying for construction of godown approval to the Petroleum and Safety Organisation (PESO) under the Gas Cylinder Rules, 2016. However, obtaining an NOC from the district authority has become a long-drawn process, as at least 11 line departments are being consulted before the issuance of an NOC. The decision to involve district authorities was taken as PESO does not have the wherewithal to verify land rights and public safety norms.

*The Financial Express - 06.04.2017*

<http://www.financialexpress.com/economy/god-news-to-ensure-all-homes-with-lpg-connections-dont-run-short-narendra-modi-government-takes-next-step/616895/>

### **Natural gas price far below average production cost: ICRA**

Natural gas prices in India are well below the average cost of production after rates were cut for the fifth time in two years, Icra said today. Following the implementation of modified gas pricing, the rate of domestic gas reduced to USD 2.48 per million British thermal unit for first half of 2017-18 (April-September), less than half of USD 5.05 when the formula was first applied in November 2014. "With the latest marginal fall from USD 2.50 per mmBtu for the second half of 2016-17, the domestic price is now well below the average cost of production for many producers for a sustained period, leading to losses, which has forced the industry to seek a floor price," Icra said in a report. K Ravichandran, Senior Vice-President and Group Head, Corporate Ratings, Icra, said gas producers will be hit as the business continues to be a loss-making venture for most fields.

*The Financial Express - 04.04.2017*

<http://www.financialexpress.com/economy/natural-gas-price-far-below-average-production-cost-icra/613171/>

### **India plans high speed diesel pipeline to Bangladesh**

India plans to build a pipeline to carry high-speed diesel (HSD) to Bangladesh, similar to a project it announced last week to supply fuel to Nepal. A formal proposal on the friendship project could be announced when Bangla Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina meets her Indian

crude prices as production and supply lines could be hit. But the chances of hostilities in Syria escalating beyond current levels are one in ten," energy analyst Narendra Taneja said. Although Syria is not an oil-producing nation and not part of Opec, the region involves other members of the oil cartel such as Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Russia and the US. The escalation of tension and greater involvement of these countries could spike rates. Oil prices had spiked to an all-time high of \$140 per barrel before the global economic crash in 2008 and had dipped to a low of around \$33 in February last year. A \$1-per-barrel increase in oil price will jack up the net import bill by \$0.27 billion and an increase in the exchange rate by Re 1 per dollar will inflate the import bill by \$0.22 billion.

*The Telegraph - 08.04.2017*

[https://www.telegraphindia.com/1170408/jsp/business/story\\_145205.jsp#.W0s4SNR97IU](https://www.telegraphindia.com/1170408/jsp/business/story_145205.jsp#.W0s4SNR97IU)

### **Iran said to cut benefits on crude oil sales to Indian state-run refiners**

Iran will cut some benefits to Indian state-run refiners on crude purchases after the South Asian country decided to reduce the amount of oil it buys from the Persian Gulf nation, people with knowledge of the matter said. National Iranian Oil Co. will cut the credit period on crude oil sales to 60 days from 90 days for refiners such as Mangalore Refinery & Petrochemicals Ltd. and Indian Oil Corp., the people said, asking not be identified as the matter isn't public yet. Iran will also reduce the discounts it offers on the shipping of crude to 60 percent from 80 percent, they added. The lower incentives will make Iranian purchases costlier and less competitive in a world awash with crude oil where rivals such as Saudi Arabia and Iraq are seeking to expand their market share. Iran's crude sales to India more than doubled in 2016 after the lifting of sanctions over its nuclear program. India is Iran's second biggest customer and the emerging centre of global oil demand.

*The Economic Times - 10.04.2017*

<http://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/iran-said-to-cut-benefits-on-crude-oil-sales-to-indian-state-run-refiners/58089343>

### **ONGC sees its gas output hitting 5-year high in 2017-18**

India's Oil and Natural Gas Corp. expects its natural gas production to reach a 5-year high in the current fiscal year following the start in coming

counterpart Narendra Modi here on April 8, people in the know said. The cross-border pipeline will run from Siliguri in West Bengal to Parbatipur in northern Bangladesh. Until the project is completed, HSD will be transported from Assam's Numaligarh Refinery to Bangladesh via rail and one such consignment will be flagged off by the two prime ministers. In fact, supplies to Bangladesh has already begun from Numaligarh Refinery. Recently, it dispatched the first consignment of HSD to Bangladesh - a railway rake containing 2,281 metric tonnes of the fuel chugged off from the refiner's marketing terminal at Siliguri to the Parbatipur depot of Bangladesh Petroleum Corp (BPC).

*The Economic Times - 06.04.2017*

[http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/india-plans-high-speed-diesel-pipeline-to-bangladesh/articleshow/58037897.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/india-plans-high-speed-diesel-pipeline-to-bangladesh/articleshow/58037897.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

### **Shell India to expand natural gas marketing business**

Royal Dutch Shell, is planning to expand its gas marketing business in India, said Shaleen Sharma, the company's head of upstream development in India. Sharma, who spoke on the side-lines of an energy conference in Mumbai, said the downstream segment is the most attractive one currently in the gas market and the company plans to supply natural gas directly to buyers including power plants, fertilizer and petrochemical units and city gas distributors. "Indian LNG market is in good shape. That is the future. There are some new initiatives going on to see how we can access new downstream markets," said Sharma, adding that Shell has set up a team in Singapore to boost the India gas market. Shell operates Hazira LNG Ltd, a five million tonnes per annum liquefied natural gas (LNG) import facility at Hazira, Gujarat. The company plans to double the capacity to 10 million tonnes a year, Reuters had reported on 31 March.

*Mint - 06.04.2017*

<http://www.livemint.com/Industry/q4I15yp8O8LxmBo5J2xRyM/Shell-India-to-expand-natural-gas-marketing-business.html>

### **Global Automotive Lubricants Market Expected to Reach \$89,585 Million by 2022-Allied Market Research**

According to a new report published by Allied Market Research, titled, "Automotive

weeks of a long-delayed project in the Arabian Sea, two senior company executives said. State-owned ONGC, which accounts for about two-thirds of India's total natural gas production, is likely to produce close to 25 billion cubic metres (bcm) of gas in fiscal 2018, the executives told Reuters. The forecast compares with 23.5 bcm in the fiscal year to end March 2017, one of the executives said, representing expected growth of about 6%. The two asked not to be named as the figures have not been released by the company. Higher output from India's top producer would help the country meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi's target of reducing hydrocarbon imports by 10% by 2022. India currently imports 70-75% of its energy needs. While gas makes up only 8% of the total energy consumed, almost 40% of it is imported.

*Mint - 10.04.2017*

<http://www.livemint.com/Industry/70buqt8SpzkuJEctv5hqfK/ONGC-sees-its-gas-output-hitting-5year-high-in-201718.html>

### **India's fuel product consumption declines 0.6% in March 2017**

India's fuel product consumption or sales declined 0.6% to 17.36 mt in March 2017 over March 2016. Fuel oil sales dipped 23.3% to 0.57 mt mainly contributing to the overall decline in fuel product sales, while kerosene sales also fell 26.8% to 0.41 mt and bitumen 12.2% to 0.69 mt. Consumption of lubes/greases dipped 16.3% to 0.34 mt, naphtha 1.8% to 1.15 mt, and light diesel oil (LDO) 29.8% to 0.03 mt. However, the consumption of petcoke moved up 6.4% to 2.09 mt, other products 20.1% to 0.63 mt and ATF 10.4% to 0.64 mt. Further, the consumption of petrol improved 2.9% to 2.11 mt, LPG 1.9% to 1.89 mt and diesel 0.3% to 6.81 mt in March 2017. Consumption or sales of fuel products increased 5.2% to 194.21 mt in April-March 2017, showing moderation in growth from 11.6% surge recorded in April-March FY2016. Sales of petcoke increased 22.2%, LPG 9.8%, petrol 8.8% and diesel 1.8%. Consumption of ATF also moved up 12.1%, fuel oil 8.4%, others 5.4% and LDO 10.1%. However, the consumption of kerosene declined 21.0%, lubes/greases 4.4%, bitumen 0.8% and naphtha 0.1% in April-March FY2017.

*Business Standard - 10.04.2017*

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-cm/india-s-fuel-product-consumption-declines-0-6-in-march-2017-117041000266\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-cm/india-s-fuel-product-consumption-declines-0-6-in-march-2017-117041000266_1.html)

Lubricants Market: Global Opportunity Analysis and Industry Forecast, 2014-2022," the global automotive lubricants market was valued at \$64,716 million in 2015, and is projected to reach \$89,585 million by 2022, growing at a CAGR of 4.8% from 2016 to 2022. The engine oil segment held nearly two-thirds share of the global market in 2015. Automotive lubricants enhance the overall durability and functioning of a vehicle, and safeguard it from wear & tear, friction, and high temperatures. Increase in preference of consumers towards high-quality synthetic automotive lubricants is a key factor that drives the market growth. Automotive lubricants exemplify the futuristic technologies capable of manufacturing durable surfaces, maximizing the overall efficiency.

*PR Newswire - 07.04.2017*

<http://www.prnewswire.co.in/news-releases/global-automotive-lubricants-market-expected-to-reach-89585-million-by-2022-allied-market-research-618649733.html>

### **Exports Help Steelmakers Fight Tepid Demand in Home Market**

India emerged as a net exporter of steel in the last financial year, helping local companies ride out tepid home demand and forge an enriched product basket that would underpin the industry's expansion into newer markets overseas. Leading manufacturers such as Tata Steel, Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL), and JSW Steel reported a three-fold rise in export volumes during the year ended March 31, 2017, utilizing capacities that may have remained idle if these manufacturers relied largely on domestic demand. "Indian steel exports are rebounding as steelmakers chase more attractive prices overseas, while largely fending off import competition in the minimum import price (MIP) regime," a Platts report recently said. While final data for the whole year April-March FY17 is still being compiled, the trend indicates a 77.6% jump in exports to 6.62 million tonnes, coinciding with a 38.5% drop in steel imports in AprFeb'17. "It coincided with a strong growth in steel exports by domestic mills, supported by an improvement in the pricing scenario in international markets," said Jayanta Roy, senior VP of Corporate Ratings at ICRA.

*The Economic Times - 04.04.2017*

<http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com/Article.aspx?eid=31817&articlexml=Exports-Help-Steelmakers-Fight-Tepid-Demand-in-Home-04042017019010>

## US, India think alike on steel

In a move akin to the Trump administration's policies on steel, India plans to make compulsory the use of local steel in government projects. The steel ministry has even circulated a draft cabinet note on this. "We want to promote and encourage the growth of domestic steel industry and so we will be seeking preference for India-made steel in government funded projects. We have initiated a draft cabinet note on this," steel minister Chaudhary Birendra Singh said here today at a conference of secondary steel users. Washington's proposal related to the use of American steel in pipelines. At a meeting with small business leaders earlier this year, President Donald Trump had made it clear that he wanted pipeline companies to purchase pipes fabricated in the United States, which in turn have to use American steel as raw material. Trump has since given an executive order that makes it mandatory for the US commerce department to "develop a plan under which all new pipelines, as well as retrofitted, repaired, or expanded pipelines" in the United States "use materials and equipment produced in the United States, to the maximum extent possible and to the extent permitted by law".

*The Telegraph - 06.04.2017*

[https://www.telegraphindia.com/1170406/jsp/business/story\\_144753.jsp#.W0dkEdR97IU](https://www.telegraphindia.com/1170406/jsp/business/story_144753.jsp#.W0dkEdR97IU)

## Govt eyes Aadhaar-based airport access for flyers

The government has asked IT major Wipro to develop a blueprint for Aadhaar-based biometric access to flyers at all airports across India. Wipro is expected to give the report by early May and then airports will begin the process of a passenger's thumb being all the identification she requires to fly, for domestic flights as international ones will need passports. The aviation ministry had been toying with the idea of linking Aadhaar numbers to air travel bookings and then enabling biometric access possible at airports. The push towards a concrete step in this direction came at a recent meeting of airport operators and airlines with aviation minister Jayant Sinha and aviation secretary R N Choubey. "It was felt a joint system be developed that can be replicated by all airports. Wipro has been asked to develop a concept note after consulting all stakeholders, including the JV airport operators. We are seeing what all airport processes can be made e-enabled," Airports Authority of India chief Guruprasad Mohapatra told TOI.

*The Times of India - 05.04.2017*

<http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com/Article.aspx?eid=31812&articlexml=Govt-eyes-Aadhaar-based-airport-access-for-flyers-05042017006064#>

## India likely to become second largest steel producer by Dec

India is set to pip Japan to become the world's second largest steel producer by December this year, an official of Indian Institute of Metals (IIM) said. "India is likely to leave Japan behind and become world's second largest steel producer by December 2016," IIM Delhi Chapter Chairman K L Mehrotra said in a statement. However, what needs to be deliberated is will it be the greenfield or brownfield projects that will help India achieve the ambitious 300 million tonnes target, added Malhotra, who has also served as chairman and managing director of state-run manganese miner MOIL. "Not to forget the steel for strategic sector -- defence production, including naval warships, frigates, nuclear reactors and ISROs space vehicles. India seems to be importing almost of all this special requirement as of now," he added. IIM is organising the 11th edition of Minerals, Metals, Metallurgy and Materials International Exhibition and Conference (MMMM 2016) in the national capital next week.

*India Today - 05.04.2017*

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/india-likely-to-become-second-largest-steel-producer-by-dec/1/733361.html>

## AirAsia India Seeks Fleet Exemption to Fly Abroad to Enhance Connectivity

The Malaysian owner of AirAsia India has urged New Delhi to allow the carrier to fly overseas, seeking exemption from the minimum fleet requirement of 20 aircraft to help enhance connectivity to Kuala Lumpur. "If the dispensation from 020 is granted, we can start international flights in three months depending on the other factors like slots. The Malaysian carriers have exhausted bilateral entitlements and cannot add any more flights to India. Indian carriers, however, do not at all fly to Malaysia. Exemption to Air Asia India would help increase connectivity between India and Malaysia," Datuk Kamaruddin Meranun, executive chairman AirAsia Berhad told reporters on Monday. The exemption request was made by Malaysian Business Council to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. According to the norms governing overseas flights, any Indian carrier needs to operate a fleet of 20 aircraft in the country to become eligible to fly abroad. The airline can fly international with the 21st aircraft.

*The Economic Times - 04.04.2017*

<http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com/Article.aspx?eid=31817&articlexml=AirAsia-India-Seeks-Fleet-Exemption-to-Fly-Abroad-04042017007014>

## **India logs world's highest air passenger growth for 23rd straight month**

India topped the global charts in domestic air passenger growth for the 23rd straight month in February, helped by strong demand and increased load factor, IATA said on Thursday. In February, the country's growth in revenue passenger kilometres (RPK) stood at 17 per cent. Globally, RPK - an indicator of passenger growth - declined to 4.8 per cent during the same period. Load factor refers to occupancy level in a flight. "India topped the domestic growth chart for the 23rd month in a row in February. Adjusting for the leap year effect, February was the 16th consecutive month in which the annual RPK growth rate exceeded 20 per cent," the global airlines' body said in a release. IATA noted that there is little sign that the surprise withdrawal of certain denomination bank notes in late 2016 has unduly affected air passenger demand. "Airlines are scheduling a 5 per cent increase in domestic routes in 2017, along with a similar-sized increase in average flight frequencies on each route." Both factors will translate into time savings for passengers and will have the same stimulatory impact on demand as a cut in fares," it said.

*Millennium Post - 07.04.2017*

<http://www.millenniumpost.in/business/india-logs-worlds-highest-air-passenger-growth-for-23rd-straight-month-235291>

## **Hyderabad emerging as top consumer logistics hub**

Hyderabad registered 12 per cent growth in logistics market in 2016 year-on-year and occupied 9 per cent of the total warehouse space in India. The north and south corridors of Hyderabad witnessed 7 per cent and 6 per cent growth in warehousing rentals year-on-year. Companies such as Amazon, Flipkart, Jubilant Foods, Asian Paints, Johnson & Johnson and Procter & Gamble have significantly invested in warehousing and similar investments by major e-commerce companies is expected in this market. Medchal is becoming a major hub of activity in the city. Typical warehouses in the city are close to 1,00,00 sq. ft. while the larger ones are in the range of 2,00,000-2,75,000 sq. ft. The city is a gateway for all activity in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. And is dominant in the consumer / electronics space.

*Telangana Today - 10.04.2017*

<https://telanganatoday.news/hyderabad-consumer-logistics-hub>

## **Major ports' cargo handling up 7%; petro products drive traffic**

Major ports, which are under the aegis of the Central government, have registered better growth in 2016-17, driven primarily by handling of petroleum products. The ports have registered a 6.79 per cent growth in 2016-17 in cargo volumes handled compared with the previous fiscal, by carrying over 647 million tonne of petroleum products, iron ore, and containers. "The growth rate this year is 6.79 per cent, while that in 2015-16 against 2014-15 was 4.32 per cent," Rajive Kumar, Secretary, Shipping Ministry, told BusinessLine. According to data sourced by BusinessLine, the growth was driven by petroleum products, which were up 8.16 per cent and iron ore pellets which saw a 163 per cent hike. However, there was a steep drop in handling of finished fertiliser (-17 per cent), raw fertiliser (-6.76 per cent) and coal. Containers have seen a higher growth in terms of number of boxes against weight. On a pan-India level, the average container being handled at ports has become lighter.

*The Hindu Business Line - 06.04.2017*

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/logistics/major-ports-cargo-handling-up-7-petro-products-drive-traffic/article9618108.ece>

## **Shri Gajendra Singh takes charge as Director (Marketing), GAIL**

Shri Gajendra Singh has taken charge as Director (Marketing) of GAIL (India) Limited today. He started his career in processing and interpreting of seismic data in upstream Industry, and possesses 32 years of illustrious career in hydrocarbon sector. Shri Singh has been involved in the execution of several prestigious projects of GAIL starting from the HVJ and has held various leadership and strategic positions. Some of these key roles where he has served as the Head of Department include General Manager (Gas Sourcing and Gas Marketing), Executive Director (Operations & Maintenance)

*Sarkaritel - 06.04.2017*

<http://www.sarkaritel.com/media-updates/06-Apr-2017>