

(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.)

Industry growth slows to 3.8%

Industrial production grew at a slower pace of 3.8 per cent in September, mainly because of a subdued performance by the manufacturing sector coupled with a contraction in the output of consumer durables. In the same month last year, factory output, measured in terms of the index of industrial production (IIP), rose 5 per cent while the growth was 4.5 per cent in August this year, data released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) showed on Friday. In September, growth in manufacturing, which accounts for 77.63 per cent of the index, dipped to 3.4 per cent from 5.8 per cent a year earlier. For the April- September period, manufacturing grew 1.9 per cent, down from 6.1 per cent in the year- ago period. Consumer durables output contracted 4.8 per cent in September against a growth of 10.3 per cent in the previous year. During the first half of this fiscal, the output of these goods declined 1.5 per cent against a growth of 6.9 per cent last year. Growth in electricity generation slipped to 3.4 per cent in September compared with 5.1 per cent a year before. However, mining recorded a growth of 7.9 per cent in the month under review against a contraction of 1.2 per cent a year ago.

The Telegraph - 11.11.2017

<https://epaper.telegraphindia.com/detail/290116-152514260.html>

ETF route to selloff

A new PSU exchange traded fund - is set to debut on Tuesday as the government scrambles to meet its selloff target with just four-and-a-half months left to the end of the fiscal. Officials said the government would offload part of its Rs 52,000-crore SUUTI stocks through the new exchange-traded fund. The government has been able to collect a little more than 40 per cent of its target of Rs 72,500 crore for the current financial year. The Bharat-22 ETF, which will have blue chips such as ONGC, SBI, IOC, Nalco, BPCL, NTPC and Bank of Baroda as well as SUUTI shares in entities such as ITC, Axis Bank and L&T, will start with an initial corpus of Rs 8,000 crore. Top officials said part of the huge corpus of stocks that the SUUTI has in a large number of blue chip companies, including Axis Bank, Reliance Industries, ITC & L&T, would be offloaded. The SUUTI was created in 2003 by

18 Cos Lined Up for Strategic Sale, Land to be Part of Deal

The government has lined up 18 companies for strategic sales and has asked their administrative ministries to identify land that can be bundled and put on the block to make the deal more attractive. The companies in which the government proposes to sell stake and hand over management control include Dredging Corporation of India, Central Electronics Ltd., Scooters India, Hindustan Prefab Ltd. and Pawan Hans Ltd. The government has set a record disinvestment target of Rs 72,500 crore in this financial year, of which Rs 15,000 crore is to come from strategic sales. Total disinvestment proceeds in the current financial year, as of November 1, were Rs 30,185.67 crore, according to the website of the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management. Scooters India, a manufacturer of three-wheelers, has over 150 acres of land in Lucknow. Hindustan Prefab, which builds civil engineering structures and supplies pre-fabricated components for the building industry and Indian Railways, occupies 28 acres of prime land in New Delhi.

The Economic Times - 11.11.2017

<http://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TheEconomicTimes/#>

Fuel tax cut drill in poll time

The government is considering another round of excise duty cuts on petrol and diesel to shield consumers from the surge in global crude prices to a two-year high. An excise duty cut or a greater absorption of the price rise by state-owned oil companies, or a combination of both, are among the options before the government, officials said. The spike in prices comes at a time Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state of Gujarat is going to the polls. Any substantial increase in petrol and diesel prices, a politically-sensitive commodity, could have an adverse effect on the outcome of the elections. In October, the government had cut the excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 2 per litre to ease the relentless rise in prices in the previous three months. However, prices have risen almost Rs 1.5 per litre in the last one month,

splitting the Unit Trust of India into two entities -- the Specified Undertaking of the Unit Trust of India (SUUTI) and UTI Mutual Fund.

The Telegraph - 13.11.2017

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/business/etf-route-to-selloff-185563>

As crude prices rise, govt may cut excise on petrol, diesel: Pradhan

With global crude oil prices breaching the \$60-a-barrel mark, the Centre on Thursday indicated it could examine the possibility of a further cut in excise duty on fuel. "Let us see," Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said when asked about the scope of a further cut in excise duty. On October 3, the Centre had lowered the excise duty on petrol and diesel by ₹2 a litre to cushion the impact of high prices on the common man. However, the cut was not easy for the Exchequer, which faces a revenue loss of ₹13,000 crore in the second half of the financial year. The Finance Ministry had taken \$60/barrel as the price point to work out the numbers in this year's Union Budget. Sources said any decision on a further cut in excise duty would be taken after discussions with the Finance Ministry. "We are monitoring the prices at present," said an official source.

The Hindu Business Line - 10.11.2017

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/policy/as-crude-prices-rise-govt-may-cut-excise-on-petrol-diesel-pradhan/article9951572.ece>

Oil surges to over two-year peak; Wall Street climbs to record highs

Oil prices surged to their highest since July 2015 on Monday as Saudi Arabia's crown prince cemented his power with a crackdown on corruption, while shares worldwide were little changed and key currencies stayed in tight ranges. U.S. crude CLc1 broke above \$56 a barrel for the first time in more than two years as Mohammed bin Salman's clampdown on graft led to arrests of royals, ministers and investors, including prominent billionaire investor Alwaleed bin Talal. Brent crude futures LCOc1 were trading about 3.5 percent higher at \$64.23 a barrel by 4:30 p.m. ET. Prince Mohammed's reforms include a plan to list parts of state-owned oil company Saudi Aramco next year, with higher oil prices seen as beneficial for the market capitalization of the future listed company. The crackdown spurred concerns of Middle Eastern money pulling out of global financial markets. A weekend call by China's

taking away the bulk of the gains from the cut in the excise duty on the two fuels. Oil prices touched a two-year high this week and have gone up about 14 per cent over the last one month.

The Telegraph - 13.11.2017

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/business/fuel-tax-cut-drill-in-poll-time-185562>

Government non-committal on cutting excise duty on petrol, diesel

Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan today remained non-committal on cutting excise duty on petrol and diesel to cushion the rise in retail fuel prices that followed the rally in international oil rates. Petrol and diesel prices have risen by almost Rs 1.5 per litre in the last one month, taking away bulk of gains that accrued from a one-off cut in excise duty cut on the two fuels. "Let us see," Pradhan told reporters when asked if the government would cut excise duty cut on the two fuels. "Let us see," Pradhan told reporters when asked if the government would cut excise duty on petrol and diesel in view of the rally in international oil rates. Brent futures this week touched USD 64.65 per barrel before retracting a bit. For much of this year, oil prices have been around USD 55 per barrel. The government had in October cut excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 2 per litre in a bid to moderate the relentless rise in fuel prices witnessed in the previous three months.

The Economic Times - 09.11.2017

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/government-non-committal-on-cutting-excise-duty-on-petrol-diesel/articleshow/61582895.cms>

India set to buy 49% in Russia oilfield by Feb

A consortium of Indian companies led by ONGC Videsh (OVL) is likely to acquire a 49 per cent stake in Russia's Vankor cluster oilfields owned by Rosneft by February 2018. While OVL, a fully-owned subsidiary of state-run Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, is expected to hold 26 per cent stake in the cluster, remaining players — Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Oil India (OIL), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL) and Bharat PetroResources (BPRL) — will also be partners in it. "Oil India is heading the talks for the consortium. We are expecting to seal the deal by February next year," said an official. The Vankor cluster includes three fields — Suzunskoye, Tagulskoye and Lodochnoye — in the north of the Krasnoyarsk territory in immediate neighbourhood of the Vankor field. "The size of the deal is likely to be close to \$1 billion. We are already in the advanced stage of

central bank governor for tougher financial regulation also hit global investor sentiment.

Reuters.com - 07.11.2017

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-global-markets/oil-surges-to-over-two-year-peak-wall-street-climbs-to-record-highs-idUSKBN1D602W>

Finished steel exports surge 45% in October; imports rise 11.5%

Export of total finished steel saw an annual jump of 45 per cent to 0.778 million tonnes during October 2017, according to official data. The overall exports of finished steel stood at 0.537 million tonnes in the same month last year, according to Joint Plant Committee's latest report. "Export of total finished steel was up by 57.7 per cent in April-October 2017 at 5.626 million tonnes over same period last year," the report said. However, on month-on-month basis, export in October 2017 (0.778 MT) was 30 per cent lower than 1.115 million tonnes in September this year, it said. On the other hand, the imports grew 11.5 per cent to 0.600 million tonnes in October this year from 0.538 million tonnes in the same month a year ago. "Import of total finished steel at 4.916 million tonnes in April-October 2017 was up by 18.9 per cent over same period of last year," the report said. However, on month-on-month basis, the overall import in October 2017 was down by 25.7 per cent over September 2017, it said, adding India remained net exporter of total finished steel last month and during April-October 2017.

The Economic Times - 12.11.2017

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/steel/finished-steel-exports-surge-45-in-october-imports-rise-11-5/articleshow/61615585.cms>

Leather Exports may Soon Lose Sheen

Reduction in duty drawback incentive and delay in the goods and services tax (GST) refund may take the sheen off Indian leather exports that have been witnessing a downward trend in the past few years. Exporters expect the shipments this fiscal to remain around \$5.6 billion, attained last year. The duty drawback rate which refunds the tax paid on imports for exports has been brought down by 7% to 2.6%, which may prompt exporters to raise the prices of products. "But we are not getting new orders as buyers are not willing to pay a higher price. We are sending consignments as per the

talks," he added. Another official privy to the deal said, "We are in the stage of technical due-diligence. Financial due-diligence is yet to happen. Hence, the value of the (Vankor cluster) deal cannot be specified now."

Business Standard - 09.11.2017

http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/india-set-to-buy-49-in-russia-oilfield-by-feb-117110900038_1.html

October crude steel output firms up by 5.5% to 8.65 mt

Domestic crude steel production rose by 5.5 per cent to 8.65 million tonnes (MT) in October 2017 compared to 8.19 MT in the same month last year, according to the official data. "During April-October 2017, crude steel production was 58.416 MT, a growth of 4.7 per cent over the same period of the last year," the Joint Plant Committee (JPC) under the Ministry of Steel said in a report. "SAIL, RINL, TSL, Essar, JSWL and JSPL together produced 33.515 MT," the report said, adding that the rest 24.901 MT came from other producers. The country had produced 55.805 MT crude steel during the first seven months of the preceding fiscal. In October, the overall production of total finished steel was at 9.354 MT, up by 6.9 per cent over October 2016. "Production of total finished steel for sale was at 61.375 MT during April-October 2017, a growth of 5.1 per cent over same period of last year," the report said. In April-October, hot metal output stood at 38.129 MT, registering a growth of 1.1 per cent over the same period last year, the JPC said in its report, adding, "Overall hot metal production in October 2017 (5.744 MT) was up by 3 per cent over September 2017 but was up by 2.3 per cent over October 2016."

Millennium Post - 08.11.2017

<http://www.millenniumpost.in/business/october-crude-steel-output-firms-up-by-55-to-865-mt-270055>

Cruise tourists could soon travel to India without passports via E-landing cards

In the wake of lingering 'security threat' across Indian ports, Ministry of Shipping and Ministry of Tourism are weighing various options, including launching its own E-landing card to beef up safety while simplifying the overall paper-work for cruise tourism. A high ranking official from the Shipping Ministry told Moneycontrol that the ministry has sent procedural recommendations to a task force to

orders taken in the previous months," said Mukhtarul Amin, chairman of Council for Leather Exports. The delay in refund of GST paid by some exporters for imports has also hampered the shipments as it has resulted in a shortage of working capital. India's loss has been the gain of Bangladesh, which enjoys zero duty advantage with Europe and Japan. "Bangladesh has emerged as a big competitor of India with duty advantage and cheap labour," Amin said. Leather exports for six months from April to September 2017-18 showed a marginal increase of 2.41% at \$3.01 billion from a year ago.

The Economic Times - 10.11.2017
<http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com/Article.aspx?eid=31817&articlexml=Leather-Exports-may-Soon-Lose-Sheen-10112017018007>

By 2019, India to be 3rd largest aviation market by departure

More than 150 million passengers are expected to take flights from Indian airports in the next financial year (2018-19), making the country the world's third largest aviation market for departures, says a report by global consultancy and research firm Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA). Overall, India is on its path to become the third largest aviation market—both departing and arriving passengers—after the US and China by 2025, according to global airlines' body International Air Transport Association (IATA). But CAPA estimates that India will get there by the end of 2022-23. Indian airports are estimated to serve over 460 million fliers that financial year, up from 265 million in 2017-18. But Indian airports are ill-prepared for the increase in passengers. This could mean passengers boarding from many airports could face long queues at check-in, security, immigration counters, longer flight delays and higher airfares. Indian airport system is expected to exceed its maximum structural capacity by FY 2022 and this level could be breached earlier if the new airport projects are delayed.

The Times of India - 12.11.2017
<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/by-19-india-to-be-3rd-largest-aviation-mkt-by-departure/articleshow/61611654.cms>

JNPT to invest ₹800 cr to develop 2 dry ports

Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) is likely to make ready the Jalna and Wardha dry ports over the next 18 months. The Jalna port will come up close to Aurangabad, with an annual capacity of 20,000 TEUs. Wardhwa will come up near Nagpur, with another 20,000 TEU annual capacity. Around

seek approval. "The ministry has submitted these procedures. The task force, however, is yet to consider it," he said. He said that if the procedure gets approval, India may soon have its own 'E-landing card' which would act as a substitute of passports for all passengers travelling via sea route. The card would contain all the details, possibly biometric data as well, of the passengers coming to India via cruise which would be given to them after they step in India.

Moneycontrol - 10.11.2017
<http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/trends/currency-affairs-trends/cruise-tourists-could-soon-travel-to-india-without-passports-via-e-landing-cards-2434229.html>

55 new airports needed by 2030 as traffic grows

Major airports such as Mumbai, Delhi and Chennai are at the highest risk of saturation with increase in number of fliers. Smaller airports like Agartala, Dehradun, Guwahati, Jaipur, Kozhikode, Lucknow, Pune, Srinagar and Trichy are already operating beyond their design capacity. The Indian airport system is expected to exceed its maximum structural capacity+ by FY 2022 and this level could be breached earlier if the new airport projects are delayed. Maximum structural capacity is the maximum passengers an airport can handle if all the possible infrastructure and operational improvements are carried out. Beyond this, the only option would be to go for a new airport at a different site. For airlines, the big challenge would be getting arrival/departure time slots and parking bays. Indian carriers are expected to induct close to 350-400 aircraft over the next five years. "These aircraft will also have to fly somewhere. As metro airports become saturated, airlines will have to deploy more capacity to Tier 2 cities over the next 3 years due to slot constraints," says the CAPA report.

The Times of India - 12.11.2017
<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/55-new-airports-needed-by-2030-as-traffic-grows/articleshow/61611781.cms>

Major ports witnessed 3.27% growth in FY2018

Major Indian ports put together witnessed growth of 3.27% during the first seven months of the ongoing fiscal. Commodity-wise, the highest increase in cargo was of Petroleum, Oil and Lubricants at 34.07%, followed by container cargo with 20.01%. According to the

₹400 crore will be spent on each of the two ports. According to C UnniKrishnan Nair, Chief Manager (Traffic), JNPT, work has begun on developing the two dry ports on a public-private partnership basis. "Development work on Jalna and Wardhwa has already begun and should be ready within 18 months," he told BusinessLine on the side-lines of a conference organised by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry. "Land has been obtained for both the projects." The Shipping Ministry has been trying to develop dry port infrastructure to improve the turnaround time of ships calling at major ports in the country. A dry port, Nair explained, will help logistics companies consolidate their operations and also complete export/import procedures at inland locations that are relatively closer to farms and factories. It provides customers better control over the cargo.

The Hindu Business Line - 13.11.2017

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/logistics/jnpt-to-invest-800-cr-to-develop-2-dry-ports/article9954831.ece>

data released by Ministry of Shipping, the overall traffic growth at major ports increased in single digit. Between April to September 2017, the dozen major ports of India together handled 383 Million Tonnes (MT) of cargo as against 371 MT handled during the corresponding period last year. Out of the dozen major ports, 8 major ports of Kolkata, Paradip, Chennai, Cochin, New Mangalore, Mumbai, Jawaharlal Nehru Port and Kandla registered positive growth in traffic between April to October. When it comes to cargo handled at these dozen Indian ports, the highest growth was witnessed at Cochin Port followed by Kolkata, New Mangalore and Paradip. Cochin Port registered growth of 17.66% in cargo handled, while Kolkata, New Mangalore and Paradip port's growth was around 12%. Double digit rise in Cochin Port's cargo is mainly due to Petroleum, Oil and Lubricants cargo handled that went up by 24.56% and containers handling by 11.12%.

DNA - 10.11.2017

<http://www.dnaindia.com/business/report-major-ports-witnessed-327-growth-in-fy2018-2559077>