

(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.)

## **PM Modi to discuss role of CPSEs with PSU chiefs for 'New India-2022'**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair a meeting of heads of top state-run enterprises next month to chalk out a strategy for the functioning and role of CPSEs to realise the vision of a 'new India', officials said. Officials in the Department of Public Enterprises said the prime minister will preside over the conclave to be held on April 9 on the theme of redefining the role and functioning of CPSEs' to realise the New India-Vision 2022. The PSU chiefs will make presentations before the prime minister on HR, innovation, finance, corporate governance, among others, and how these can be leveraged to improve the efficiency of state-owned enterprises to increase their contribution to nation building. The deliberations in the Conclave will lead to the formulation of an actionable roadmap to achieve the target of a New India 2022, a senior government official told PTI. Top officials from PSUs including NTPC, Indian Oil Corporation and GAIL (India) Limited will make thematic presentations, the official said.

*Business Standard - 26.03.2018*

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/pm-modi-to-discuss-role-of-cpses-with-psu-chiefs-for-new-india-2022-118032500115\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/pm-modi-to-discuss-role-of-cpses-with-psu-chiefs-for-new-india-2022-118032500115_1.html)

## **Govt to promote 12 service sectors to power up exports**

The government is working on a strategy to boost share of services, which will grow faster than merchandise exports raising the total exports from the country, said commerce and industry minister Suresh Prabhu. "In last few months, we are seeing exports registering growth. We are targeting to ensure that exports are not only traditional products, but new products are also added to the basket. We are focusing on services and have identified 12 services as 'Champion Services'," Prabhu said after inaugurating CapIndia event here. He said that the government has already approved a Rs 5,000 crore to promote 12 champion services sectors such as IT, tourism and hospitality. The decision, he said, will drive growth

## **Goldman Sachs downgrades India's FY19 growth forecast**

Investment bank Goldman Sachs downgraded its forecasts for Indian economy on Tuesday in the wake of a more than \$2 billion fraud at Punjab National Bank, warning it could spark tighter regulation of the banking sector that would constrain credit growth. In a note to clients, Goldman Sachs lowered its real gross domestic product (GDP) forecast for the year to March 2019 to 7.6% from 8% earlier. Last month's disclosure of the fraud by PNB, India's second largest state-run lender has sent bank shares tumbling. The case, along with a flurry of smaller loan frauds since reported by other banks, has sparked new concerns that credit growth is unlikely to pick up quickly in an economy where state-run lenders that account for two-thirds of banking assets are already saddled with a mountain of bad debt. The Goldman warning is a blow for the government, which had hoped that a \$32 billion, two-year, bank recapitalisation programme it unveiled last year would help Indian banks to begin to restart lending, spurring elusive job growth in the economy.

*The Economic Times - 21.03.2018*

<https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TheEconomicTimes/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=ETKM%2F2018%2F03%2F21&entity=Ar01608&sk=985C7AC5&mode=text>

## **India to seek easier export rules to China**

Amid rising trade tension globally, India and China will meet on Monday to look at ways to strengthen bilateral ties with New Delhi pitching for easier rules for its exports to bridge the massive trade deficit. Sources told TOI that authorities led by commerce and industry minister Suresh Prabhu will pitch for China to address several of the long pending grievances that include barriers to ship medicines and farm goods even as domestic IT firms haven't been able to enter the market across the border. At the same time, there are indications that the government is more open to treat China as a "market economy" for anti-dumping and other actions, an issue which has turned into a trade

of the services economy in India. We have prepared an action plan for each of these sectors to promote them domestically as well as globally, the minister said. Services sector will play a significant role in pushing the country's economic growth and the industry must focus on delivering services of global standards, he added.

*Millennium Post - 23.03.2018*

<http://www.millenniumpost.in/business/govt-to-promote-12-service-sectors-to-power-up-exports-290735>

### **Set aside divestment proceeds for sick PSUs revival: Parliamentary panel**

A parliamentary panel has recommended earmarking of a defined portion of proceeds from divestment of state-owned enterprises for funding revival, restructuring and modernisation proposals of sick PSUs that have the potential to turn around. "In this manner, the government can extend a hand-holding support to the select sick PSUs that have the potential to turn around and sustain themselves in future," the panel said in a report. The government has set a target of raising Rs 80,000 crore in 2018-19 by selling stake in state-owned firms, with strategic divestment of 24 CPSEs on the cards, and privatisation of Air India on track. Besides, NITI Aayog is preparing another list of sick PSUs that can be privatised, its CEO Amitabh Kant said last month. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) had asked the think-tank to look into the viability of sick state-run companies. The Aayog has already recommended strategic divestment of 40 sick public sector units. The committee observed that timely approval of revival/restructuring/modernisation plans of CPSEs, with accurate cost estimates, availability of funds with the Government and the timely disposal of such funds are crucial factors.

*The Economic Times - 26.03.2018*

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/set-aside-divestment-proceeds-for-sick-psus-revival-parliamentary-panel/articleshow/63450866.cms>

### **Govt may have to settle for lower dividend income from PSUs in FY19**

The Union government may have to settle for lower dividend income from public sector undertakings (PSUs) in the next fiscal year, as most large companies have already paid hefty interim dividends during the first 11 months of the current fiscal year. Moreover, some state-owned companies dipped into their cash reserves to make

dispute at the WTO — with Beijing dragging the US and the European Union to the global forum. India's trade deficit with China was estimated at over \$51 billion in 2016-17 as imports of close to \$62 billion entered the domestic market. In contrast, the country's exports were estimated at just over \$10 billion led by chemicals and ores.

*The Times of India - 26.03.2018*

<https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TimesOfIndia/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=TOIKM%2F2018%2F03%2F26&entity=Ar01515&sk=C9D68D93&mode=text>

### **FPIs give PSU offers a miss**

Foreign fund managers have given the recent initial public offers of government companies the cold shoulder. These investors did not place bids for a share in the IPOs of Bharat Dynamics, Hindustan Aeronautics and Midhani (Mishra Dhatu Nigam), final day subscription data of these issues on the BSE and NSE websites showed. They, however, participated in the share sales by private companies in recent weeks. Bankers said weak listings by public sector companies in the last couple years in the roaring bull market have made these investors sceptical about putting money in these IPOs. "Foreign investors prefer to invest in consumer, financial, B2C business and not in B2B businesses. Recent public sector issues such as GIC and New India Assurance have not made money for them so they are waiting to see performance of these stocks post listing," said an investment banker with a domestic brokerage which managed the recent issues. "The fact that all these PSUs hit the market in the same month also affected (FIIs') response for them," the banker added. GIC shares are down 23% from its IPO price of ₹912 per share while New India Assurance Company's shares are down 18% from the IPO price of ₹800 apiece.

*The Economic Times - 26.03.2018*

<https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TheEconomicTimes/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=ETKM%2F2018%2F03%2F26&entity=Ar00905&sk=9D1EA0BB&mode=text>

### **Loss-Making PSUs' divestment kicks off with Scooters India**

The government has kicked off the process of selling its entire stake in Scooters India, marking the beginning of strategic sale of loss-making and non-core public sector entities that also has Air India on the list. The Department of Heavy Industries has invited global expressions of interest (EoIs) for strategic divestment of

payments in 2017-18. Analysts said these two instances left little room for PSUs to step up dividend payment in the next fiscal year. "Indian Oil and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) have been very generous with their dividend payouts in the current fiscal year, in line with a sharp rise in their profitability due to lower crude oil prices. This upside may not be present next fiscal year as crude oil prices are rising and electoral compulsions may force oil PSUs to defer raising fuel prices," said Dhananjay Sinha, head of research, Emkay Global Financial Services. Oil and gas PSUs such as Indian Oil, ONGC, Bharat Petroleum, Hindustan Petroleum and GAIL (India) have paid Rs 328 billion as interim dividend during the first 11 months of 2017-18, 22 per cent higher than their full-year dividend in 2016-17.

*Business Standard - 20.03.2018*

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/centre-may-have-to-settle-for-lower-dividend-income-from-cpses-in-fy19-118031900948\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/centre-may-have-to-settle-for-lower-dividend-income-from-cpses-in-fy19-118031900948_1.html)

### **CSR spending of Indian companies rises by 14% in 2 fiscals: Survey**

Indian corporates have upped their corporate social responsibility (CSR) spending, which has seen a 14 per cent rise over the last two fiscals, despite a moderate growth in net profits, says a survey. The finds were based on an analysis of 1,186 eligible and listed companies by Crisil Foundation. "Over the past two fiscals, the amount spent on corporate social responsibility (CSR) has surged at a compound annual growth rate of 14 per cent, despite a lukewarm 5 per cent growth in net profit," the survey showed. It said more number of corporates are using non-government organisations (NGOs) as implementing agencies for CSR spending. "As many as 74 per cent of the eligible companies, including two-thirds of the small ones, used implementing agencies (NGOs) last fiscal when spending on CSR," it said. The survey, however, indicated that almost two-thirds of the respondents had less than five dedicated personnel for CSR activities, indicating companies have underinvested in building their own capacity to provide strong oversight.

*The Economic Times - 23.03.2018*

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/company/corporate-trends/csr-spending-of-indian-companies-rises-by-14-in-2-fiscals-survey/articleshow/63414631.cms>

entire 93.74% government stake in the company. The EoIs have to be submitted by May 7, 2018. Lucknow-based Scooters India (SIL), which manufactures three-wheelers under brand name Vikram, made a net loss of ₹10.3 crore in FY17 against a profit of ₹5.48 crore the year before. The company's share closed flat at ₹53 on Monday. The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management has appointed Resurgent India as the adviser to manage the transaction. Before the disinvestment, the company will hive off non-core land of 89.69 acres out of its total land bank of 147.499 acres. "The Government of India has 'in-principle' decided to disinvest 100% of its equity shareholding in SIL (which is equivalent to 93.74% of the total paid-up equity share capital of Scooters India) through strategic disinvestment with transfer of management control," the invite said.

*The Economic Times - 20.03.2018*

<https://auto.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/industry/loss-making-psus-divestment-kicks-off-with-scooters-india/63374792>

### **Fixed-Term employment extended to all sectors to boost ease of biz**

The government has extended the facility of hiring workers on fixed term employment to all sectors for improving the ease of doing business, meeting the announcement made in the budget. It has given in to one major demand of the unions that no permanent employee will be moved to fixed term. The facility for hiring fixed-term contract was initially available only for the apparel manufacturing sector as per the Industrial Establishment (Standing Order) 1946. As per this notification to amend the Order, words "fixed term employment in apparel manufacturing sector" will be replaced by "fixed term employment" meaning that facility would be available for all sectors. The fixed term employment was defined as a workman who is employed on a contract basis for a fixed period. Thus the services of workman will be automatically terminated as a result of non-renewal of the contract between the employer and the workman concerned. A separation of service of a workman as a result of non-renewal of the contract of employment between the employer and workman concerned shall not be construed as termination of employment.

*The Economic Times - 21.03.2018*

<https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TheEconomicTimes/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=ETKM%2F2018%2F03%2F21&entity=Ar01308&sk=A77367C7&mode=text>

## **Global oil demand in 2017 grew fastest in a decade: IEA**

Global oil demand rose by 1.5 million barrels a day in 2017, growing at 1.6 per cent, more than twice the average annual growth rate seen in a decade, International Energy Agency (IEA) said in its report. The Paris based agency said in its Global Energy and CO2 status report 2017 that more than 60 per cent of the growth in oil demand came from Asia, with China and India being the biggest demand centres. It added that one of the main drivers of growth was the transport sector and petrochemical sector. The report said that even though electric cars are making rapid inroads, particularly in China, which is leading in global sales of electric cars the strong growth in electric-car sales remains too small to make a dent in oil demand growth. IEA reiterated that a slowdown in oil demand growth may be likely in the coming years. However, it adds that there are no signs of a peak in demand anytime soon. "One of the main drivers of growth was the transport sector. Vehicle ownership levels increased in 2017, as did the share of Sport Utility Vehicles (SUVs) and other large vehicles.

*The Economic Times - 23.03.2018*

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/global-oil-demand-in-2017-grew-fastest-in-a-decade-iea/63433414>

## **Oil rises to March high on Middle East tensions, Venezuela concerns**

Oil rose on Tuesday to its highest level so far this month, lifted by tension in the Middle East and the possibility of further falls in Venezuelan output. Brent futures were up 98 cents at \$67.03 a barrel by 1212 GMT, around their highest level since late February. U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were up 87 cents at \$62.93 a barrel. "The move today is more to do with geopolitical tensions than underlying fundamentals, but I don't expect that to last," PVM Oil Associates strategist Tamas Varga said. Saudi Arabia called the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers a "flawed agreement" on Monday, on the eve of a meeting between the Saudi crown prince and U.S. President Donald Trump. Both are highly critical of Iran. Trump has threatened to withdraw the United States from the accord between Tehran and six world powers, raising the prospect of new sanctions that could hurt Iran's oil industry. "Tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran gave prices some support," Sukrit Vijayakar, director of energy consultancy Trifecta, said in a note.

*The Economic Times - 20.03.2018*

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/oil-rises-to-march-high-on->

## **Domestic gas price set to hit two-year high**

Consumers using natural gas to run their vehicles (CNG, or compressed natural gas) and cooking gas (PNG, or piped natural gas) look set to pay more from next month as the benchmark price for natural gas produced from domestic fields is expected to hit a two-year high during the six-monthly revision due on April 1. Government sources said the benchmark price is expected to go up to \$3.06 per unit (million British thermal unit, or mBtu) from \$2.89 at present. This will be the highest gas price since \$3.82 for the six months ended March 2016. The revision will raise the cost of manufacturing urea, which uses domestic gas as feedstock just like companies providing CNG and PNG services. But the impact on power tariffs will hardly be felt as less than 8% of total electricity comes from gas-fired plants. The price increase will, however, shore up the fortunes of producers such as Reliance Industries from the private sector as well as state-run ONGC and OIL at a time when they are altogether investing more than \$10 billion into new gas fields.

*The Times of India - 23.03.2018*

<https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TimesOfIndia/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=TOIKM%2F2018%2F03%2F23&entity=Ar01510&sk=36B48D4F&mode=text>

## **Oil rises as Saudi backs extending output cuts into 2019**

Crude prices rose on Friday, hitting their highest since late January after the Saudi energy minister said OPEC and allied producers would need to keep coordinating supply cuts into 2019, and as concerns grew over the future of Iranian crude exports. Brent crude futures LCOc1 jumped \$1.54, or 2.2 percent, to settle at \$70.45 a barrel. For the week, Brent was up about 6.4 percent, its strongest weekly rise since July. U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures also had their biggest weekly gain since July, at 5.5 percent. WTI CLc1 settled at \$65.88 a barrel, up \$1.58, or 2.5 percent. U.S. hedge funds and other money managers raised their bullish bets on WTI in the week to March 20 by 34,488 contracts to 488,438, the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) said. "There are a number of bullish things to hang the hat of the rally on this week; be it the inventory report ... or the tariff news, or the heightened tensions between Saudi and Iran," said Matt Smith, director of commodity research at Clipper Data in Louisville, Kentucky.

*Reuters - 24.03.2018*

[middle-east-tensions-venezuela-concerns/63383237](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/middle-east-tensions-venezuela-concerns/63383237)

## **Reliance, other private fuel retailers double petrol, diesel market share**

Private fuel retailers like Rosneft-owned Essar Oil and Reliance Industries have doubled their market share in last three years, capturing close to 7 per cent of petrol sales and over 8 per cent of diesel sales. Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, in a written reply to a question put to him in the Lok Sabha, said private companies were allowed to sell petrol and diesel in March 2002. From April 2002, fuel pricing was also deregulated. Consequently, Reliance, Essar and Shell set up petrol pumps to directly compete with public sector giants like Indian Oil Corp (IOC). In the initial years, private firms were aggressive in setting up of petrol pumps. However, they slowed down once government control over pricing came back in vogue in 2004-05, and they couldn't compete with subsidised fuel sold by PSUs. The government freed petrol price from its control in June 2010 and the same for diesel was done in October 2014, giving fillip to fuel retailing by private firms. Pradhan said private players had a market share of 3.5 per cent in petrol sales and 3.1 per cent in diesel in 2015-16.

*The Times of India - 20.03.2018*

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/reliance-other-private-fuel-retailers-double-petrol-diesel-market-share/articleshow/63365513.cms>

## **ONGC may buy out GAIL in OPaL**

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) may buy out gas utility GAIL India Ltd in its Dahej mega petrochemical project in Gujarat to take full control of the recently commissioned plant. GAIL had in 2008 picked up 19 per cent stake in ONGC Petro-additions Ltd (OPaL), which was then building the mega petrochemical complex at Dahej in Gujarat. But the project, which started in 2006, faced major cost and time overruns, which forced GAIL to restrict its equity contribution to the original Rs 996.28 crore. This investment in the expanded project cost meant that the gas utility's stake dropped first to 17 per cent, then to 15.5 per cent and now about 9 per cent, sources privy to the development said. "It doesn't make any business sense to hold such a small percentage stake and it is best that ONGC buys out GAIL in the project," they said. The 1.1 million tonnes plant, which at the time of conception was projected to cost Rs 12,440 crore, got completed only last year for about Rs 30,000 crore. After GAIL in 2008 agreed to pick up 19 per cent stake in OPaL, the

<https://in.reuters.com/article/us-global-oil/oil-rises-as-saudi-backs-extending-output-cuts-into-2019-idINKBN1GY03D>

## **IOC powers diesel home delivery with pilot project**

State-owned Indian Oil Corp (IOC) has launched home-delivery of diesel on a pilot basis in Pune and plans to expand doorstep delivery of the fuel to other parts of the country in near future, its Chairman Sanjiv Singh said on Wednesday. The country's biggest oil company has mounted a diesel dispenser, similar to the one seen at petrol pumps, on a mid-sized truck along with a storage tank for delivering the fuel at customers' doorsteps in Pune. "We are the first company to have started doorstep delivery after receiving clearance from the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO)," he said. The doorstep delivery has been launched on a pilot basis in Pune and it would be expanded to other cities based on the response it gets during the three-month trial period, he said, adding that the same on petrol too would be started soon. Initially, the company is targeting 'static customers' like shopping malls and commercial establishments that use diesel in gensets for producing electricity, and transport companies with large diesel consumption.

*Millennium Post - 22.03.2018*

<http://www.millenniumpost.in/business/ioc-powers-diesel-home-delivery-with-pilot-project-290593>

## **Steelmakers may raise prices even as demand improves**

Indian steel producers may look at increasing steel prices domestically even as demand shows signs of recovery and belated price hike of earlier contracts may take place with new contracts being signed in the new financial year. The hike will also be driven to absorb an increase in the prices of raw materials. Industry players also allayed fears that the imposition of a 25% import tariff by Donald Trump would dampen prices going forward as exporters to the country look for fresh markets to dump their steel. "We see a broad-based recovery taking place in key markets like the US, Europe, China and Japan that is leading to a growth in steel demand," Jayant Acharya, director of commercial and marketing told ET in an interview. "We're also seeing a similar possibility of capacity expansion investment similar to what existed in 2001 driven by recovery," Acharya said. In the domestic scenario, demand is being driven by

project cost was in 2010 was revised to Rs 19,535 crore.

*The Financial Express - 25.03.2018*

<http://www.financialexpress.com/industry/ongc-may-buy-out-gail-in-opal/1110398/>

## **US slaps anti-dumping duty on Indian, Chinese steel flanges**

The US has decided to slap anti-dumping duty on stainless steel flanges imported from India and China, after it found in a preliminary probe that both countries provide subsidies to exporters. US President Donald Trump had earlier this month imposed heavy tariffs on imported steel and aluminium which he said were necessary to boost the US industry suffering from "unfair" business practices, a move that has sparked fears of a global trade war. The US Department of Commerce has found that exporters from China and India have sold stainless steel flanges in the US at 257.11% and 18.10 to 145.25% less than fair value, respectively, according to an official statement issued on Tuesday. The department will instruct the US Customs and Border Protection to collect cash deposits from importers of the stainless steel flanges from China and India, based on these preliminary rates, it said. In 2016, imports of stainless steel flanges from China and India were valued at an estimated \$16.3 million and \$32.1million, respectively.

*The Economic Times - 22.03.2018*

<https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TheEconomicTimes/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=ETKM%2F2018%2F03%2F22&entity=Ar01908&sk=498ECE7D&mode=text>

## **Steel companies bankruptcy to help woo MNCs; help consolidation**

Bankruptcy proceedings against many large steel companies may lead to consolidation in the sector and the entry of global players in the alloy segment, says a report. "The domestic steel sector may see further consolidation in the wake of the many insolvency proceedings launched against stressed accounts. A few large players with strong financial positions and debt-raising abilities have an opportunity to increase their market shares by acquiring stressed capacities at attractive valuations," says an EY India report. Global majors may also use this opportunity to enter the domestic market given its long-term attractiveness, the report said. Bhushan Steel, Essar Steel Monnet Ispat & Energy, and Electrosteel Steels are among the 40 largest

automotive, construction and yellow goods production.

*The Economic Times - 21.03.2018*

<https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TheEconomicTimes/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=ETKM%2F2018%2F03%2F21&entity=Ar00622&sk=548C6D65&mode=text>

## **Bright prospects for steel exports**

India's steel exports are expected to remain strong, on the back of higher global prices, amid falling Chinese shipment as Beijing focuses on cutting around 30 million tonnes of excess annual capacity, to curb air pollution. Exports during the first 10 months of this financial year jumped 40.2 per cent from same period last year, while domestic consumption grew 5.4 per cent. Production in the period was about 88.6 million tonnes. "It is the increase in export which is helping domestic production go up. We expect the year (FY18) to end with production of more than 100 mt, mainly to cater to the export market," said an analyst with a local brokerage, on condition of anonymity. Currently, Indian prices are around \$650 a tonne; in the US, close to \$900 a tonne. Europe steel is about \$750 a tonne and so is South Korea and some other Asian countries, said industry officials. Industry officials think encouraging economic indicators in India could also push domestic demand. The country's industrial production growth in January was 7.5 per cent, from 7.1 per cent the previous month. Manufacturing, in general, grew 8.7 per cent. January was also the third successive month of more than seven percent industrial growth.

*IBEF - 22.03.2018*

<https://www.ibef.org/news/bright-prospects-for-steel-exports>

## **India to be 3rd largest tourism economy in 10 years: Report**

India is expected to establish itself as the third largest travel and tourism economy by 2028 in terms of direct and total GDP, a 2018 economic impact report by World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) has said. The report, released globally on Thursday, also said India would add nearly 10 million jobs in the tourism sector by 2028 and the total number of jobs dependent directly or indirectly on the travel and tourism industry would increase from 42.9 million in 2018 to 52.3 million in 2028. Calling India the seventh largest travel and tourism economy in the world, Gloria Guevara, president and chief executive of WTTC, said India should work on improving tourist infrastructure. In an exclusive email interview to TOI, she said: "The biggest

defaulters referred by RBI for resolution under the new bankruptcy law and contribute half of the steel sector's bad loans. EY points out that strong policy support in the form of the national steel policy, coal deregulation and focus on infrastructure development is expected to help the country to build a globally competitive metals and mining industry.

*The Economic Times - 26.03.2018*

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/steel/steel-companies-bankruptcy-to-help-woo-mnncs-help-consolidation/articleshow/63453011.cms>

## **Global tourism predicted to slow after best year ever**

The travel and tourism sector is set for a modest slowdown in 2018 as a result of higher oil prices and airfares, a year after it experienced its best year on record, according to a leading global industry body. In its annual Economic Impact Report, the World Travel and Tourism Council said today that the sector was responsible for the creation of 7 million new jobs worldwide in 2017, or one in five new jobs. That was due largely to the fact that the sector outperformed the global economy for the seventh year running, growing by 4.6 percent against 3 percent. The sector, according to the organization, outperformed all others. "2017 was the best year on record for the travel & tourism sector," said Gloria Guevara, president and CEO of the WTTC. "We have seen increased spending as a result of growing consumer confidence, both domestically and internationally, recovery in markets in North Africa and Europe previously impacted by terrorism and continued outbound growth from China and India."

*The Economic Times - 23.03.2018*

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/business/global-tourism-predicted-to-slow-after-best-year-ever/articleshow/63413866.cms>

## **Cox & Kings sells stake in arm to SSG Cap**

Cox & Kings, the holiday and education travel group, said it has sold a stake in a subsidiary that houses the Meininger hotel brand to SSG Capital Management, an existing investor, for Rs.450 crore to reduce debt. Prometheon Enterprises, a wholly-owned unit of Cox & Kings, sold an 11.58% stake in Prometheon Holdings (UK) to SSG Capital. In November 2017, SSG Capital, a Hong Kong-based asset management firm, bought Rohatyn Group's entire 34.42% stake in Prometheon

single area of improvement for travel and tourism in India is infrastructure. Tourism is a competitive business in a global context and India's near-neighbours to the east and west have built world-class tourism infrastructure in the form of airports, sea ports, high-speed rail and roads. WTTC has long welcomed the opportunity of the Regional Connectivity Scheme to open 350 unserved and underserved airports and airstrips."

*The Times of India - 23.03.2018*

<https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TimesOfIndia/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=TOIKM%2F2018%2F03%2F23&entity=Ar01115&sk=A054AAB8&mode=text>

## **UDAN set to connect 100 regional airports soon**

In a major push to the government's flagship regional connectivity scheme, Prime Minister Narendra Modi plans to almost double its reach by starting subsidised flights to 100 airports in the country. The Prime Minister's Office has asked the civil aviation ministry to examine adding 44 airports under the scheme called Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN). "The aviation ministry has to examine the possibility of adding another 44 airports under the scheme," said a senior government official who did not want to be identified. The government has announced flights connecting 56 airports and 31 helipads in the initial two phases. Under UDAN, air connectivity is provided to unserved and underserved airports at a subsidised fare of Rs 2,500 per hour. The subsidy is funded through a mix of a charge of Rs 5,000 per flight for all airlines operating on domestic trunk routes and through the Airports Authority of India's dividend payment. Airlines and helicopter operators that have bid for and won these routes are in the process of starting flights

*The Economic Times - 26.03.2018*

<https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TheEconomicTimes/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=ETKM%2F2018%2F03%2F26&entity=Ar01700&sk=D91D1599&mode=text>

## **Travel, tourism created 26 million jobs in 2017: FICCI-KPMG report**

KPMG and FICCI released a report titled 'Expedition 3.0: Travel and hospitality gone digital' which said the travel and tourism sector is generating 25.9 million jobs and GDP of Rs 141.1 billion. Mobile applications, big data, AI, VR and AR will shape the future of the travel industry. As per the report, India was projected to have accounted for 3.7 % of the global digital travel sales — making it the third-largest

Holdings. Following the transaction, Cox & Kings will hold 54% of Prometheus Holdings and SSG Capital will hold 46%. Prometheus Holdings is the holding company of Holidaybreak, which houses the brands PGL, NST, EST, Travel Works and Meininger. PGL and NST are in the experiential learning space in the UK and have taken the product to Australia, while Meininger operates in the hotel-hostel space in Europe.

*The Economic Times - 23.03.2018*

<https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TheEconomicTimes/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=ETKM%2F2018%2F03%2F23&entity=Ar00503&sk=B09F313A&mode=text>

## **Trade war cost count**

The escalation in the trade war between the US and China would result in a slump in global trade which could hit India's exports, said analysts. "The tariff wars come at a time the world economy is just about getting out of a slow growth phase. If global trade volume shrinks on account of this trade war, our exports are bound to be buffeted. The expected double-digit growth in exports in FY19 (2018- 19) might not happen," Care Ratings said. "Global growth can be affected as a trade war will mean higher prices and lower growth in these two main geographies. This will impact our exports," the report said. Global gross domestic product in 2016 was at \$ 75.3 trillion with the US and China contributing \$ 19.4 trillion and \$ 11.9 trillion, respectively. Currency volatility Experts said currency volatility was set to return, noting trade battles have historically affected currency markets. "Overall, the rupee is expected to strengthen and make outbound trade more expensive, adding to India's woes of uncompetitive exports. Apart from the rupee and the Chinese yuan, most other currencies of Asian competitor nations have depreciated and are expected to continue doing so," said Ajay Sahai, director general of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations.

*The Telegraph - 26.03.2018*

<https://epaper.telegraphindia.com/detail/177629-143550115.html>

market by value in the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region. Jaideep Ghosh, partner and head - transport, leisure and sports at KPMG in India, said: "Digital revolution in the travel space is on. Brands are embracing technology to transform themselves into experience platforms while automating operations. Corporate and consumer travel boundaries are already blurred. Incumbents are adapting swiftly to the emerging bouquet of travel start-ups. Creative digital business models will continue to reshape the future of travel."

*The Economic Times - 21.03.2018*

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/jobs/travel-tourism-created-25-9-million-jobs-in-india-in-2017-report/articleshow/63396830.cms>

## **Goa's Mormugao port might shut down if losses mount: Gadkari**

Union Shipping Minister Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday said that the continued losses at the Mormugao Port Trust (MPT) might result in its shutdown. The MPT, located in the state's Vasco town, is facing a crisis as handling of coal has stopped due to protests and the banning of iron ore extraction has affected ore cargo as well. "The port (Mormugao Port Trust) has run into losses this year. During the current financial year there is a loss of Rs 25 crore. Now you have to decide whether to run the port or not," Gadkari told a gathering in Vasco town. He was speaking at a ceremony to launch an inland ferry service between the port town and Old Goa near here in the state's North district. "If you keep on opposing everything, then how would we be able to support the port? If the port does not get any consignment, it will have to be closed. If there are losses, it is difficult to give payment without any work," Gadkari said in an indirect reference to the protests against the alleged pollution caused by the port's handling of coal.

*The India Express - 21.03.2018*

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/goas-mormugao-port-might-shut-down-if-losses-mount-gadkari-5104550/>