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CONSTRUCTION MIRROR

An outlook of the Construction & Infrastructure Industry

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- A BOON FOR BUILDERS- INDICATES GOVT.
- GOVT. TO THRUST ON ROAD & HIGHWAY
- PSUs TO GET COAL MINES
- HIKE IN CEMENT PRODUCTION IMMENIENT
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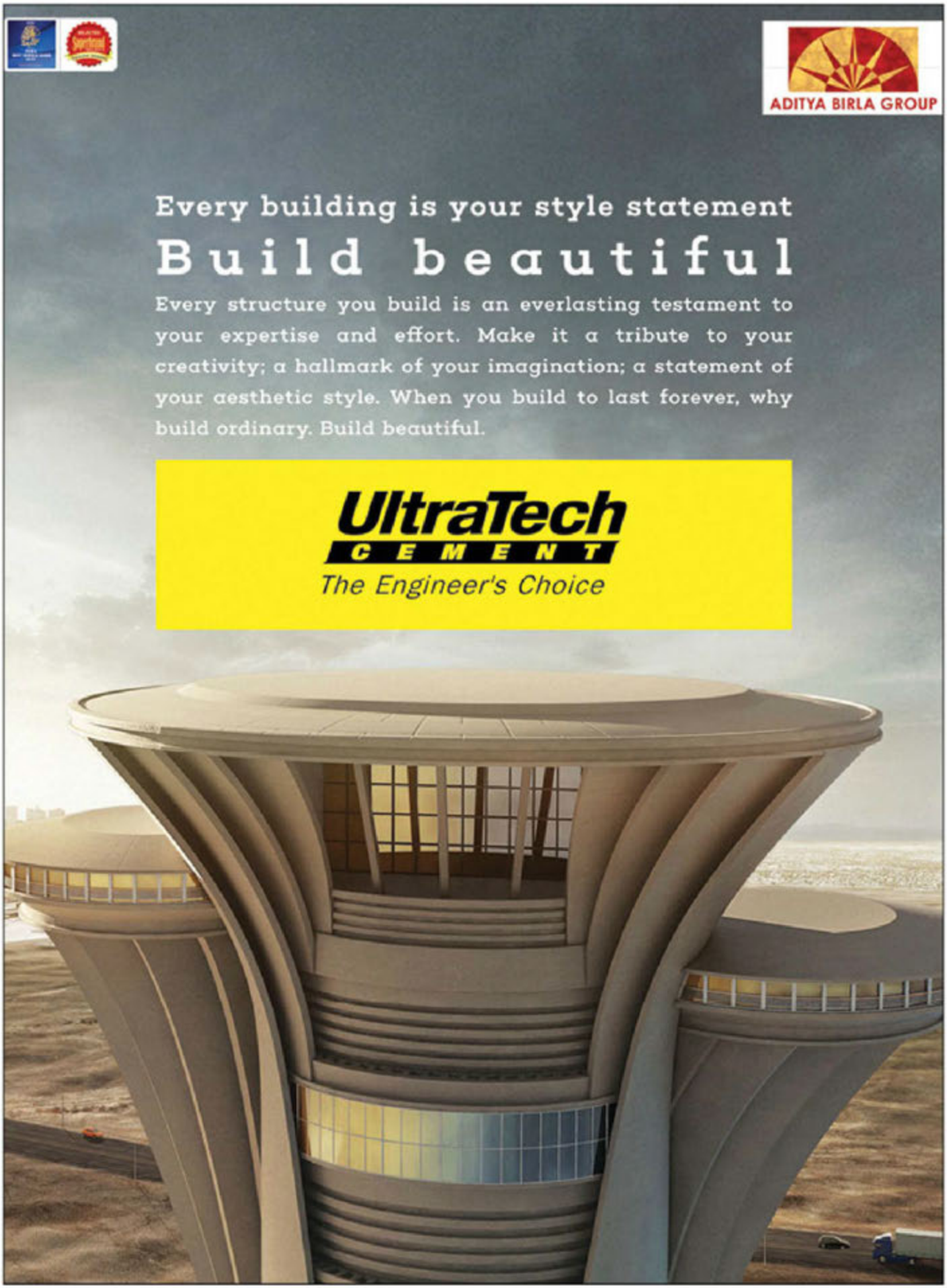
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Editor: Pratap Singh Syal

"High Rise Buildings: Gaining the Pace"

The urban population of India is growing with a rapid pace. The urban population of India makes it second ranked urban community in the world. With the continuous increase in the urban population the need for homes is increasing day by day and hence the vacant land areas are getting shorter. There is a huge need for planning for proper land use and zoning. In this situation the tall buildings or what we call them as the high rise building trend is getting popular.

Earlier only Mumbai had the enough number of high rise buildings but now the other states and metropolitan cities are also looking at high rise buildings as the solution of problem of shrinking empty lands. India is also the fastest growing real estate market in the world. The developers see such edifices as a good way to attract potential buyers - high-rise buildings are a good gambit to differentiate their offerings from the rest of the pack.

With experiencing an increasing trend of high rise buildings it is not wrong to say that in the near future we will also be counted in the category of countries having maximum number of high rise buildings in the world like USA, Japan, Dubai, Singapore etc.

In this issue of construction mirror we are covering our lead story on High Rise Buildings. We are bringing you more close to let you know the status of high rise buildings in the country. Hope you will enjoy reading our this issue on high rise buildings.

Please give us your feedback at editor@constructionmirror.com

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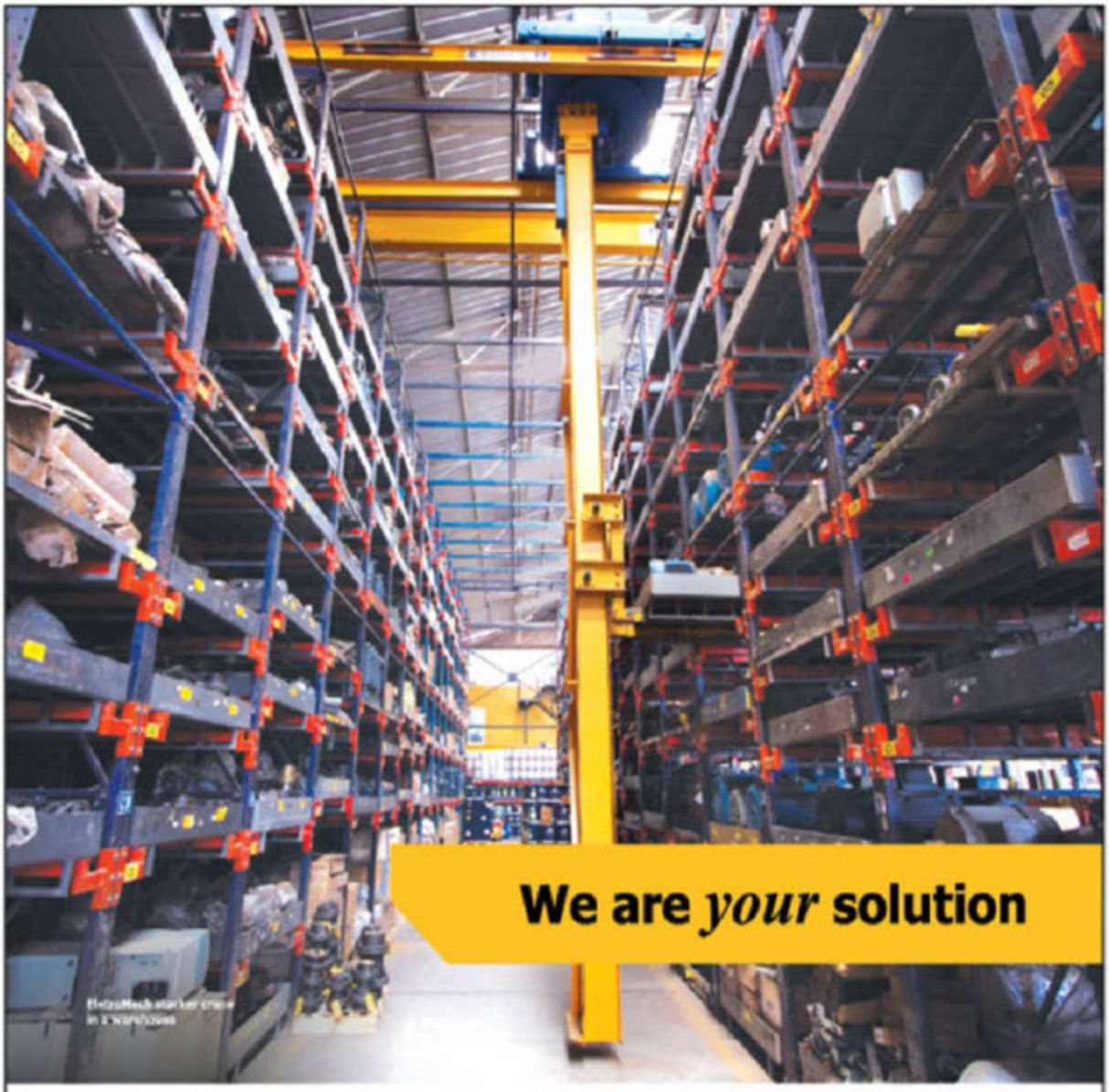
Editor



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CONSTRUCTION MIRROR

An Outlook of the Construction & Infrastructure Industry

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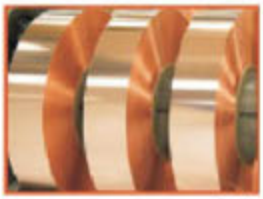
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KNR Constructions wins Rs 295-crore contract for flyovers

KNR Constructions Ltd has won a Rs 295.19-crore contract for building flyovers at Salem city in Tamil Nadu.

"KNR Constructions has an order worth Rs 295.19 crore towards construction of two-tier flyover at Five Road Junction including construction of flyover up to Ramakrishna road Junction and Four Road Junction in Salem city, Tamil Nadu," the company said in a regulatory filing.

The contract has to be completed within 39 months from the appointed date, it said.

Skipper secures Rs 500-crore orders

Skipper Ltd said it has bagged new orders worth Rs 500 crore in its engineering and infrastructure business segments.

Skipper Ltd, a power transmission & distribution and PVC pipes manufacturing player, also said that it has commenced trial production of its PVC plant in Sikandrabad.

"The new plant in Sikandarabad will have an installed capacity of manufacturing 6000 MTPA of plumbing and agri pipes. This takes the total capacity of Skipper's PVC business to 35,000 MTPA," it said in a statement.

The unit will cater to demand in the northern part of the country. In order to expand Skipper Ltd's manufacturing capacity in India, the plant is designed with state-of-the-art manufacturing technology and a tailor-made workshop layout for highly efficient production.

"In addition, in the T&D business, the company has also secured new orders worth approximately Rs 500 crore for domestic transmission tower supply and EPC line construction from Uttar Pradesh Power Transmission Corp Ltd, Teesta Valley Power Transmission Ltd (a PGCIL JV company), as well as the company's first export supply order from Egypt," it added.

Punj Lloyd bags Rs 2,070-crore pipeline orders in Oman

Punj Lloyd, the diversified engineering, procurement and construction conglomerate, today announced that it has bagged oil and gas EPC orders worth Rs 2,070 crore in Oman.

"Punj Lloyd... today announced winning oil and gas EPC orders worth Rs 2,070 crore from Oman Oil Refineries and Petroleum Industries Company (Orpic) and Oman Gas Company (OGC), which was owned by the government of the Sultanate of Oman, and Oman Oil Company SAOC," the company said in a filing to BSE.

The scope of work includes construction of natural gas liquid and gas pipeline and construction of block valve and pigging stations, the filing added.

"The pipeline, part of Orpic's USD 6.4 bn Liwa Plastic Industries Complex (LPIC), will travel from the New Fahud NGL plant to the steam cracker unit of Sohar in Oman," it said.

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Otis wins order to build escalators and customised elevators in India

Otis India is expanding its manufacturing in India to escalators and customised elevators, according a company spokesperson. The company already builds elevators in India in Bengaluru and has doubled its capacity in 2015 by spending Rs 100 crore in the expansion.

The new investment by Otis India comes at the same time other elevator majors have declared their intention to manufacture elevators in India. Schindler has commenced production at their factory in Maharashtra last year. Among others Mitsubishi and Thyssenkrupp have declared their intentions to invest in manufacturing in India.

"India is the second largest market for elevators in India, at 48000 installations every year. It is also slowly migrating

towards high-speed elevators," Sebi Joseph, President of Otis Elevator Company (India) Ltd, said

IRB Infra to sign concession agreement on Zozila Pass tunnel by March

IRB Infrastructure Developers said it expects to sign a concession agreement for the ambitious Rs 10,050-crore Zozila Pass tunnel in Jammu and Kashmir by March.

"We will be signing the concession agreement for the project by March and in the next six months, we hope to complete the financial closure," Chairman and Managing Director Virendra Mhaiskar told reporters on the sidelines of the Make in India Week.

The company had bagged the contract from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways for construction, operation and maintenance of the longest tunnel in South-East Asia, the Zozila Pass tunnel in Jammu and Kashmir.

The scope of the project includes constructing approaches on NH-1

IRB
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(Srinagar-Sonmarg-Gumri Road) on design, build, finance, operate and transfer (annuity) basis.

NUBERG LANDS Rs.1000-CR EPC CONTRACT

Noida -based global EPC company, Nuberg Engineering , recently announced that it had landed a Rs.1000-crore contract to set up a US$150- million chemical complex for UAE's leading industrial conglomerate, the Abu Dhabi based Al Ghaith Industries. This will be Nuberg's biggest contract till date in its 19- year History.

The complex will have 350 TPD Caustic Soda and 60 TPD Hydrogen Peroxide Plants and is set to come up at the Khalifa Industrial Zone (Kizad) in Abu Dhabi.

L&T CONSTRUCTION WINS Rs.1563-CR WORTH ORDER

The Power Transmission and Distribution Business of L&T Construction has won orders worth Rs.1,563-crores in both the International and domestic markets in July and August 2015.

As a strategic breakthrough in the ASEAN market, a key order has been received from Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) for the design, manufacture, supply, installation , testing and commissioning of a 500KV double circuit transmission line in Malaysia .

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Government Approves 18 National Highway Projects Worth Rs 17,000 Crore in a Day

Government approved 18 highway development works on Friday totalling about 1,000 km, which will involve around Rs 17,000 crore investment.

Earlier this week, the Public Private Project Appraisal Committee (PPPAC) had cleared three national highway projects with a cumulative length of about 300 km.

All these works will be awarded by March-end and in fact bids for most of these projects have been called by NHAI and road transport ministry.

Till January 31, little over 6,800 km had been awarded and ministry officials claimed that more than 1,300 km works approved this week will be rolled out by the end of this financial year.

Road transport and highways ministry to set up empowered committee to clear stalled road projects

The road transport and highways ministry has proposed setting up an empowered committee to clear stuck road projects worth Rs 30,000 crore while seeking a huge bump up in allocation in the upcoming budget.

The ministry will soon move a Cabinet note on the panel, a senior government official told. The proposal figured in road transport and highways minister Nitin Gadkari's pre-budget meeting with finance minister Arun Jaitley. Gadkari has sought Rs 85,000 crore as budgetary allocation for 2016-17, almost double of what it received in the current fiscal year. "The ministry expects that finance ministry will increase its budgetary allocation as the receipt from toll collection is also going to be high in the current year. Since, the private investment is still low, we need to push public spending," the official said.

Bengaluru-Mysuru highway to be six lane within two years

Encouraged by the backing it has received from Union Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, the state government plans to start work on six-laning of the Bengaluru-Mysuru highway (NH 275) in May this year.

"Mr Gadkari is supporting this project and wants us to start the work as early as April. But we want to start at least by May," Public Works Minister Dr HC Mahadevappa said.

The highway, according to the minister, is an important road connecting two major cities and very congested. "It witnesses traffic of about one lakh cars on weekends. A journey that should take two hours takes about four hours now," the minister said.

The proposed freeway will run for a length of 117 km between NICE entrance in Bengaluru and the ring road junction (near the Columbia Asia hospital) in Mysuru. The proposed road is expected to bring down the travel time to 90 minutes.

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Government to ask RBI to provide more funds for stuck road projects

The government is likely to ask the Reserve Bank to provide more funds for road projects that are facing cost overruns due to delays, a move aimed at reviving languishing projects worth over Rs 30,000 crore. Banks are currently allowed to fund cost overruns up to 10% of the original total project cost.

The issue was discussed by the road transport and highways ministry with the Department of Financial Services and bankers in a meeting last week that was also attended by road transport and highways minister Nitin Gadkari and finance Minister Arun Jaitley.

"Concessionaires weren't able to handle these projects stuck due to various reasons. Once operationalised, these projects will start generating toll income. So banks shouldn't have any reluctance in financing these projects," said a senior road ministry official, who was present at the meeting.

Last year, the cabinet had approved one-time fund infusion into languishing public-private partnership projects by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). But the infusion can only be done only in cases where 50% work on the project is completed.

In most of the 14 projects that are stuck now, the work completed is under 50%. Besides, NHAI claims that it will have the first charge on toll revenues, whereas the banks contesting this. "We had around 21 languishing projects. Last week, after our meeting with bankers and concessionaires, we were able to sort out seven projects. Terminating the remaining projects due to funds shortage is no solution. We are looking for more innovative ways to get them on track," road transport and highways minister Nitin Gadkari said.

Govt. to spend Rs 2 lakh crore on Maharashtra Road Projects: Gadkari

A total of Rs 2 lakh crore will be spent on expanding as well as building new roads in Maharashtra in next five years, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said.

"At present, Rs 20,000 crore are sanctioned for various road development projects in Konkan area of the state alone," the Transport Minister said.

Gadkari performed the ground-breaking ceremony for the four-laning of Kashedi-Parshuram Ghat section of the NH-66 near Hatkhamba junction.

"We not merely announce the road projects but also see to it that they get completed within stipulated period of time. We are going to complete all the road widening projects in next two years," he said.

The four-laning of the entire Mumbai-Goa highway would cost about Rs 3,570 crore.

Gadkari said that besides development of roads, water transport will be promoted in Konkan and Goa.

Road projects of 10,000 km to be awarded during this fiscal: FM Arun Jaitley

The government has managed to address the stress in the highways sector and road contracts are now attracting multiple bids, said Finance Minister Arun Jaitley. According to him, by the end of fiscal, the government would award 10,000 km of road projects. "The government has induced a lot of liquidity in the sector and the banks have started supporting the sector. A number of contractors has started repaying old debts. It's additionally contributing to our growth rates," Jaitley said, addressing a meeting of bankers and road developers, organised by road transport and highways ministry to sort out financing issues. In the current financial year, the government has already awarded 6,800 km of road contracts.

"With such large projects being awarded, I think it's a spiral effect on steel, cement, auto sector," finance minister said.

He said a year-and-a-half ago, roads were a paralysed sector, and all major contracts attracted multiple bidding.

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Hike in import duty to help steel companies to raise prices: Ratings agencies

Top ratings agencies believe the recent imposition of minimum import price on steel would help domestic steel companies raise prices by anywhere between $40-70 per tonne and improve margins, though profitability is likely to remain subdued due to weak domestic demand growth.

Fitch Ratings has said profitability for Indian steelmakers is unlikely to improve before 2017 due to soft domestic demand growth and prevailing overcapacity even as the government decision on imposing a minimum iimport price (MIP) on a wide range of steel products would provide protection from cheap imports, and give Indian producers some flexibility to raise prices by around $50-70 per tonne and improve margins.

Ratings agency, ICRA too has predicted domestic steel prices could increase by $40-50 per tonne following the MIP.

Consequently, Fitch said it expects the profitability of steel producers to remain weak compared to the level in fiscal ended March 2015 (FY15).

"We believe that further steel price increases and a significant improvement in steel producers' profitability will depend on a strong revival in domestic demand growth," the agency said.

PPMAI objects to protection to steel sector

Process Plant and Machinery Association of India (PPMAI), an apex body representing the country's process plant manufacturers, has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi objecting to "protection" being given to the steel sector. The move follows the government's decision to impose a minimum import price (MIP) on steel last week.

The body, which includes Larsen & Toubro, Godrej, Thermax, Praj Industries, Toyo Engineering, ThyssenKrupp Industrial Solutions (India) and others, has expressed concern at the move being made without consulting the capital goods sector.

"India is in the process of globalizing its manufacturing base through establishment of capital equipment and downstream industries in micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) to generate employment and boost **Make in India** vision through competitiveness of Indian products,"

said PPMAI secretary VP Ramachandran. "However, this goal will be endangered if our industrial and trade policies are based on narrow perspectives of protection for one industry."

Government decides to impose minimum import price on steel items to protect local market

The government has decided to impose a minimum import price (MIP) on steel products to protect primary producers in the domestic steel industry.

The move is the strongest possible measure to shield steelmakers from the onslaught of cheap imports that has severely affected the industry and comes after intense lobbying by the steel industry.

The Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) — an arm of the Union commerce ministry — notified a price of $445 to 500 per tonne across a range of hot rolled flat products of steel.

For semi-finished products like slabs, blooms, ingot and billets, the MIP will range from $341 to $362 per tonne.

The MIP on cold rolled products will be between $500 and $560 per tonne. The MIP on steel will be valid for six months.

The commerce ministry will review the decision thereafter.

Domestic HR coil prices have plunged since the 20% safeguard duty was imposed in September 2015 on steel imports last year.

European steel market crisis hits global operations of Indian firms like Tata Steel, Arcelor Mittal

The crisis in the European steel market seems to be taking a toll on the global ambitions of Indian producers.

Poor demand conditions coupled with rising imports of steel from China seem to have added to the woes of steelmakers in Europe and the US, including Indian-owned ones. Tata Steel has had to shut down or find buyers for some of its European plants that supply steel to the construction and railway sector. Essar Steel is reportedly looking for buyers for Algoma Steel in Canada.

The news of ArcelorMittal deciding to mothball one of its plants in Spain due to adverse market conditions adds to this growing list. Some, like Tata Steel in Canada, have also had to scale down mining plans.

"In Europe and US there is little growth in demand. Companies operating there are suffering badly and Indian-owned assets have also been impacted. Moreover, high labour costs make it less competitive. On top of it, cheaper steel imports from China have compounded the problem. The situation is complex and there seems to be no immediate respite," said Goutam Chakraborty, metals analyst at Emkay Global.

Government plans to allot 15 coal blocks to PSUs

Moving ahead with its decision to open up the coal sector for commercial mining, government has identified 15 blocks to be allotted to central and state PSUs for undertaking production and sale of the dry fuel.

With the allotment, the centre's monopoly over mining and sale of coal will come to an end.

"As many as fifteen blocks have been identified for allotment to state and central PSUs for commercial mining," a top official told.

Preliminary exploration in most of these blocks through initial drilling has been done, which is known as regional exploration, the official said.

In the initial stage of exploration, Geological Survey of India (GSI) undertakes regional exploration of large areas to find out the broad availability of coal seams, geological structure, resources etc, he said.

After successful e-auction of two limestone blocks by Jharkhand, other states, including Odisha and Rajasthan, are likely to put under the hammer about 40 mines containing minerals like iron ore by March-end.

Jharkhand on February 12 became the first state to auction two limestone blocks through an electronic platform after the passage of the MMDR Act by Parliament.

"States were keen to know about the auction process for blocks other than coal and lignite. Now that Jharkhand has successfully auctioned two limestone blocks, we expect states to auction about 40 mineral blocks containing iron ore, bauxite, limestone etc by March," a senior Mines Ministry official told.

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After Jharkhand, other states may auction 40 mines by March

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Adani Group gets support of Australia for Carmichael project Queensland state: Government

Australia to support Adani Group's $16.5 billion Carmichael coal mine and rail project in Queensland state that will provide power to 100 million Indians, Australia Resources and Energy Minister Josh Frydenberg said in a statement.

Frydenberg said that even the state government and the Federal Opposition are in support of the project, which is expected to attract billions of dollars in investment.

"All the commonwealth approvals have been granted. There are some state approvals have been granted. There are some state approvals, which are awaiting conclusion. The state government and the federal government as well as the federal opposition, all support the Carmichael project," he told reporters after a meeting with Power Minister Piyush Goyal.

The Carmichael coal, railway and port project includes building Australia's largest thermal coal mine in the north Galilee Basin approximately 160 km northwest of Clermont in Central Queensland, linked by a new 388 km standard gauge rail line to a new terminal at Abbot Point Port near Bowen.

KIOCL inks pact with Karnataka government; to invest Rs 2,000 crore

State-run iron ore pellets maker KIOCL has inked a pact with the Karnataka government to set up a beneficiation plant and a pelletisation unit in Bellary district in the state.

The iron ore beneficiation plant will have a capacity of four million tonnes per annum (MTPA) and the pelletisation unit will have a capacity of two MTPA, Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Ltd (KIOCL) said in a statement.

The schedule 'A' Mini Ratna company signed the MoU at the 'Invest Karnataka - 2016' summit in the state capital Bengaluru.

KIOCL Chairman-cum-Managing Director Malay Chatterjee said the company has internal strength for development of mines and setting up of plants and the proposed project will generate employment opportunity for locals.

KEPL TO SUPPLY PUMPS TO SEPCO

Pune-headquartered, Kirloskar Ebara Pumps Ltd (KEPL), a joint venture of global fluid management solutions provider Kirloskar Brothers Ltd. (KBL), will be supplying indigenously-developed API pumps to the Chinese EPC major, SEPCO Electric Power Construction Corporation, popularly known as SEPCO. KEPL pumps will be used in the Jazan Integrated Gas Combined Cycle Power Block project in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia's ARAMCO is working with SEPCO for this project for expanding the capacity of its main gas pipeline across Saudi Arabia.

CLAY CRAFT INSTALLS STATE'S FIRST ROOFTOP SOLAR POWER PLANT

One of the largest manufacturer and retailer of fine bone china and ceramic tableware, Clay Craft India, has roped in Su-Kam Power Systems to set Rajasthan's first 200KW rooftop grid tied solar photovoltaic power plant for captive consumption at company's manufacturing facility. With this, Clay Craft India has become the first company to use renewable energy in VKI, Jaipur. Inthe second phase withan installation of additional 100KW rooftop solar PV systems it will become Rajasthan's first manufacturing company using 200KW rooftop solar PV systems in total. Rajesh Agarwal, Director, Clay Craft India Pvt.Ltd. said, "Clay Craft is having India's largest automatic manufacturing plant of bone china and ceramic tableware in Rajasthan. Being the largest on production side,we need uninterrupted power supply to fulfil the committed domestic and export demand. Using renewable energy is industry's first initiative in the state. This step has made us completely independent for using us own power systems which will also save nearly Rs.24.48- lakhs of operational cost annually."

LIEBHERR TOWER CRANES ENJOYS SUCCESS IN INDIA

Day by day, high performance tower cranes from Liebherr are proofing their performance and dependability in major projects all over the world, including India. To cope with the growing market for tower cranes in India, Liebherr held open days this year in Pune, Kolkata and Ahmedabad. India is en route to becoming one of the largest markets for tower cranes in world. To satisfy this demand, Liebherr Tower Cranes opened a new plant for tower cranes in Pune in 2012. As a result of the positive response and the massive demand for the 85 EC-B 5i Flat-Top crane, the product range at the plant will continue to be expanded over the next few years.

REVOLUTIONISING BUILDING AUTOMATION SECTOR

Messung Group, the pioneers of automation industry in India, recently announced its partnership with Distech Controls, headquartered in Montreal, Canada. Messung Systems Pvt. Ltd. (Messung) has been appointed as Master Distributor, serving the Indian market. Through this partnership, Messung will offer Distech Control's complete range of products and solutions to this strong-growth market. Through this partnership, Messung will focus on offering innovative, greener and sustainable building automation solutions for the Indian market.

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Ashoka Pte acquires 1% stake worth Rs 17-crore in Heidelberg Cement

Ashoka Pte Ltd acquired 1 per cent stake in German-based Heidelberg-Cement Group's Indian arm for about Rs 17 crore through an open market transaction.

According to bulk deals data available with NSE, the Singapore-based firm acquired 23,29,252 shares, or 1.02 per cent stake in HeidelbergCement India Ltd for Rs 16.65 crore.

The shares were bought at an average price of Rs 71.5 per piece.

Meanwhile, Australia's First State Investment today offloaded 0.65 per cent stake in the cement manufacturing plant.

The firm's First State Indian Subcontinent Fund sold 14,86,240 shares in HeidelbergCement for Rs 10.62 crore.

Birla Corp aquires Reliance Infra's cement business

Birla Corporation said the acquisition of Reliance Infra's cement business in a Rs 4,800 crore deal will increase its total capacity to 15.5 million tonnes per annum from 10 MTPA at present.

Birla Corporation today announced an agreement with Reliance Infrastructure for acquisition of its entire cement business for a value of Rs 4,800 crore.

The company in a release said the two companies have agreed that Birla Corp shall acquire all the shares of Reliance Cement Company Pvt. Ltd. (Reliance Cement).

The acquisition, subject to approval of the Competition Commission of India, will be funded through existing cash reserves and incremental debt.

Cement companies struggle amid falling prices; Shree Cement, Ultratech balanced their growth

Only a select few large cement companies with pan-India presence and lighter balance sheets are expected to report growth in the next four quarters as their peers struggle amid slack demand, lower capacity utilisation, and falling cement prices. Companies including Ultratech Cement and Shree Cement are in a better position to glide past the tough operating scenario.

In the past two and a half years, all India average cement prices have fallen from Rs 310 per 50 kg bag to Rs 244.

Ultratech Cement and Shree Cement responded by reducing cost of operations by over 2% over the past year by operating their plants on multiple fuels. On the other hand, most large cement companies such as ACC, Ambuja Cements, and The Ramco Cements reported 3.5% increase in the production cost.

Cement demand to grow in FY17 by 4%-6%: Ind-Ra Cement demand to grow in FY17 by 4%-6%: Ind-Ra

Ratings agency India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) has maintained a stable outlook on the cement sector for 2016-17.

The agency expects cement demand to grow between 4%-6% in 2016-17 after increasing at 5.6% in 2014-15 and 2.1% during April-November 2015.

The expectation is on the back of a slightly better demand from the construction and infrastructure segments led by government spending.

The agency has however revised down its demand estimate for the full year FY16 to around 3% from 6.5%-8.0%.

The ratings agency expects cement producers to add additional 40 mtpa capacity over FY15-FY17 at a CAGR of 4.9%, lower than the CAGR of 5.8% during FY13-FY15 (additional 42mtpa).

However, the CAGR capacity addition during FY15-FY17 in east (12.2%), west (6.6%) and north (5.5%) may outpace the expected demand growth in the regions.

Nepal, India discuss co-operate in power sector

Senior officials from India and Nepal had a meeting to discuss cooperation in power sector including implementation of a bilateral power trade agreement signed in 2014.

They are expected to discuss matters relating to cross- border electricity transmission, grid connectivity and power trade between both the neighbouring country, officials said. The implementation of power trade agreement that the two countries signed in 2014 will mainly be discussed in the two- day meeting, they said.

Besides expediting works relating to construction of cross border transmission lines between Nepal and India, the meeting will discuss matters which include importing electricity from India to ease Nepal's current power shortage and to provide market access for Nepal's power producers in India for future export of surplus hydropower, Nepalese officials said.

Indian power sector at inflection point: World Economic Forum report

India's power sector is at an inflection point and most of its electricity demand in the next two decades will be met by burning fossil fuels despite huge investments in renewables, WEF said.

Calling for developing an integrated outlook for the country's energy sector, the World Economic Forum (WEF) report said tariffs and rates for fuel pricing, costs that are passed through to customers, and peak power policies and pricing should all be transparent and consistent across states.

India has set an ambitious plan to add 175 GW of renewable energy generation capacity by 2022.

The country aims to have 100 GW of solar power by 2022 alongside its 260 GW of thermal and nuclear generation, and 62 GW of hydro generation capacity.

"India's power sector is at an inflection point, given the government's conviction that electricity is a critical enabler for economic growth," the report said.

Renewable energy sector to get Rs 1 lakh-crore boost from state-run lenders

State-run lenders to Power Finance Corporation and Rural Electrification Corporation are set to provide a boost of over Rs 1 lakh crore to the renewable energy sector as the two companies are looking to offer cheaper finance to low-risk commissioned renewable energy firms to help them replace costlier loans.

The move is aimed at utilising the cash that the two financiers will receive in lieu of loans lent to state-run power distribution companies.

Shares of REC and PFC had taken a beating a day after the government announced the debt recast scheme Ujjawal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY) on November 5 for distribution companies as it is likely to hit the interest income of these companies.

At present, renewable energy projects constitute nearly 10 per cent of the loan portfolio of REC and PFC.

The lack of new conventional coal and gas projects by private companies has also prompted the two companies to shift focus to renewable sector.

Vizag port to run its operations on solar power from next month

Vizag port in Andhra Pradesh is set to run its entire operations on solar power from next month, its chairman M T Krishna Babu said.

Visakhapatnam Port Trust has already commissioned 2 MW solar capacity and will add another 8 MW by March 20, he said at a roadshow here ahead of Maritime India Summit 2016, to be held in Mumbai in April.

"We will be the first major port in the country to run entire port operations on solar energy," Krishna Babu said, adding VPT has spent Rs 60 crore to set up the plants.

Devendra K Rai, Director, Union Ministry of Shipping, said the target is to operationalise 135 MW of solar power projects by 2020 in eight major ports -- JNPT, Paradip, Kamarajar, Kandla, V O Chidambaranar, Visakhapatnam, Kolkata and New Mangalore.

Small cities, including Jaisalmer and Jodhpur, to be linked with air services: Govt

Small cities, including Jaisalmer and Jodhpur, will be linked with air services in the near future and the Centre is working on a policy to this effect, Union minister Mahesh Sharma has said.

In the first phase, operations will be started in Jaisalmer and Jodhpur airports in Rajasthan, the Union Minister of State for Tourism and Civil Aviation said here yesterday.

The new aviation policy to bring small cities on the aviation map will be announced soon, he said. The fare will not be very high and it can go up to Rs 2,500 and such a journey will take around one hour.

Noting that Jaisalmer has got a huge potential in tourism, art and culture, the minister said it would be developed as a tourism hub.

Jayalalithaa looking for PM Modi's intervention to expedite rail projects

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa said that 20 railway projects announced in successive budgets for the state were yet to take off for want of funds and urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention for expediting them.

She said that a draft MoU by Railways regarding forming a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for three projects did not adequately reflect certain concerns of her government.

In a letter to Modi, Jayalalithaa said she had proposed 10 railway projects to boost industrialisation as part of 'Vision Tamil Nadu 2023', with three of them being prioritised for implementation through SPV between state government and the Railways.

"Given the importance of these three projects, the Government of Tamil Nadu has already indicated that it would be willing in-principle to enter into a MoU with the Indian Railways," she said, adding, her government had indicated "some specific conditions.

Cochin Shipyard to build 4 catamarans for Andaman and Nicobar: Nitin Gadkari

All set to make its maiden foray into catamaran manufacturing, Cochin Shipyard will build four such popular vessels, used for cruising and other purposes, for Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said.

This follows the state-owned company's recent feat under which it will build cryogenic carriers that transport natural gas frozen in liquid form after a pact with GTT France, the world leader in design and technology provider of containment systems for transportation of LNG.

"Cochin Shipyard is building four catamarans for Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The vessels should be ready in about two to two-and-a-half years," Road Transport Highways and Shipping Minister Gadkari told

This is done under 'Make in India' drive and the vessels would be used for cruising and other purposes, Gadkari said.

The cost of the vessels, according to an official, is estimated at about Rs 1,400 crore.

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Accelerating Energy Efficiency in High Rise Buildings

Authored By: NPK Reddy

The Pursuit

The 828-metre Burj Khalifa, the World's tallest building alters the skyline of Dubai, other nations look on to join the race of tallest Skyscrapers or High-Rise Buildings (HRB's). Where does India stand in the race of modifying policies for developers and engineers to innovate and explore new designs? Do we have policies or guidelines that can make these skyscrapers a reality in India in the next ten years? The answers are still uncertain.

India's High-Rise Buildings (HRB's) or Skyscrapers (SCP's) are not symbolic of nation's economic development, rather if there exist good infrastructure facilities such as sanitation, water, roads, connectivity, etc. then that itself speaks volumes about the economic development of India. What we need today is integrated development. This is possible only through adequate planning, that helps to plan an area, which will be self-sufficient, energy efficient and therefore environment-friendly. There is a need for more service providers of eco-friendly construction materials to reduce costs.

From the environmental perspective, too, these buildings could be considered viable as densely populated spaces are less carbon intensive and usually better served by existing public transport and other infrastructure amenities.

The future of high rise green buildings or skyscrapers seems bright in India and they hold great potential. To match India's increasing demand for housing for its ever-rising population, it certainly sounds like the most viable solution. But few developers caution that as HRB's consume more energy and contribute a lot in warming of surroundings it leads to more climate changes. HRB's that fail to incorporate energy efficient solutions for lighting, space heating, ventilation and cooling also damage the environment.

HRB's, also referred to as "Multi Dwelling Unit" or "Vertical cities" have the potential to decongest the urban sprawl on the ground level, and increase the urban density, housing higher number of families in lesser space. They serve a handful of purposes viz., condominiums, hotels, offices, retail spaces, parking, or a mix of these functions. Most buildings use 10% to 30% more energy than necessary and have major opportunities to save. In addition, each functional type has several unique energy challenges. Energy savings of 30% are attainable with a comprehensive approach to operations, maintenance, repairs. Consider the effect on the bottom line of saving a third of a building's utility costs.

With height comes an energy intensive process such as air conditioning the core of the building year round, elevating, and pumping potable water up the building. Many typical energy cost saving upgrades for low-rise buildings can be used on high-rises.