
Merchandise imports in India registered a decline of 0.75% in January 2020 at US$ 41.14 billion against US$ 41.46 billion in January 2019. Trade deficit was marginally higher by 0.8% at US$ 15.17 billion in January 2020 against US$ 15.05 billion in January 2019. Cumulative trade deficit during April 2019-January 2020 narrowed down by 18.4% at US$ 133.27 billion in comparison to US$ 163.27 billion during April 2018-January 2019.
CMD of Hero MotoCorp to invest $1 million in Ola electric mobility

Chairman and Managing Director of Hero MotoCorp, Pawan Munjal, has recently invested nearly $1 million in Ola electric mobility through their family trust. The company would also spend Rs 10,000 crore for alternative mobility solutions. Ola electric mobility is running pilot projects in Gurugram, Bengaluru and Nagpur.

Uber was also recently planning to quadruple electric vehicles fleet in India.

Mobility start-ups like Bounce, Yulu and Vogo would also like to add more electric vehicles to their fleet.

India has been pushing for electric vehicles in order to reduce oil imports and also to curb pollution. Intent is to electrify all new vehicles by 2030. Automakers are to draw up plans for electrification.

JSW Steel to register 5% growth in crude steel production in Feb 2020

JSW Steel, the flagship company of $14 billion JSW Group, has produced 1.32
million tonnes of crude steel in February 2020 in comparison to 1.257 million tonnes in February 2019 indicating a growth rate of 3%.

Output of flat rolled products of the company grew by 7% to 0.982 million tonnes in Feb 2020 against 0.920 million tonnes in February 2019, whereas that of long products was flat at 0.308 million tonnes in February 2020. The company has leading presence in sectors like steel, energy, infrastructure, cement etc.

JSW Steel registered 2% decline in crude steel output at 1.41 million tonnes in January 2020 in comparison to 1.453 million tonnes in January 2019. There was 1.4% decline in output of flat rolled products at 1.025 million tonnes in January 2020 against 1.04 million tonnes in January 2019.

The company registered 0.5% decline in output of long steel products at 0.342 million tonnes in January 2020 compared to that in January 2019.

‘MSME Samadhaan’ portal to solve delayed payments

MSMEs face a challenge in receiving timely payments from their clients. In order to solve this problem, the Government has recently launched ‘MSME Samadhaan’ portal for lodging online complaint against delayed payments.

Although the Micro and Small Enterprise Facilitation Council (MSEFC) has made it mandatory for the buyers to pay outstanding amount with penal interest, to the concerned MSME till many buyers are getting defaulters of their obligatory dues.

‘Samadhaan portal’ has been interlinked with National e-Governance Services Ltd’s Information Utility in which MSME’s may name their defaulting buyers and file insolvency proceedings against him. Details are available from : www.nesl.co.in

Indian foundry industry expects to more than double its share in global trade

Indian foundry industry is looking at overseas markets in the wake of doubling its share in the global market in the next five years. It is also relying on railways and defence to make higher growth in volumes of trade. Total demand from railways is estimated to be 4.5-5 lakh tonnes per annum which might increase by 8-10%. Defence consumption would likely to be 1-1.2 lakh tonnes per annum, with a growth rate of 15-20%.

At present, although India is the second largest producer of castings in the world with production of 13.38 million tonnes per annum, its share in total global trade is only 2.4%. However, Indian exports are set to scale up to $4 billion (from the current $3.5 billion) in the next 5 years in order to achieve 6% share in the total global imports.

For achieving this, the industry should concentrate on competitiveness, value addition and tapping of markets other than US and Europe. Recently, foundry
industry is eyeing Bangladesh, Panama, Sri Lanka, Ghana, Cambodia etc which are growing at an average rate of more than 10% year-on-year basis.

**Goa to resume iron ore exports**

Supreme Court has recently allowed Goa to export iron ore stockpiles. Aiming at rescuing the mining companies on the verge of bankruptcy, the Government has amended the mining decree recently allowing them to export within next six months.

There are more than 9 million tonnes of iron ore stocks in Goa. Miners have paid for the mining leases. However, after resumption of exports, all relevant procedures must be guaranteed to be completed within six months.

**India – the largest importer of scrap in Asia in 2019**

India is the largest importer of scrap in Asia in 2019 with total import volume of nearly 7.05 million tonnes followed by South Korea (6.5 million tonnes), Vietnam (5.5 million tonnes) and Taiwan (3.5 million tonnes).

This is for the first time India has overtaken South Korea to become the largest importer of scrap in Asia in the recent decade.

**MSME scheme for technology upgradation in auto component sector**

The long standing recommendation of Automotive Component Manufacturers Association (ACMA) for creation of technology fund for the auto component sector was finally approved in the Union Budget 2020.

In the second budget the Government has announced Rs 1,000 crore scheme for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector including auto components in order to extend support – for technology upgradation, research and development (R&D), business strategy etc.

According to Automotive Component Manufacturers Association (ACMA), MSMEs constitute more than 85% of the auto component manufacturing space. In its pre-budget expectations, the industry body urged for creation of supporting R&D and indigenous technology development especially due to technological disruptions.

And across the seven seas

**VW to buy Navistar for $2.9 billion**

Volkswagen of Germany intends to buy the part of Navistar at an investment of $2.9 billion which does not already own by them as the company bought 16.8% stake in 2016 with an investment of $256 million.

Truck division Traton is eager to buy it. If the offer is accepted by Navistar, Traton would be the sole owner of Navistar.

Navistar would closely study the offer and at the same time VW would also launch a strategic technology and supply chain co-operation and a purchasing joint venture with the US firm.