

ONGC launches 'Cleanathon Himalaya'



ONGC inked a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with Indian Mountaineering Federation (IMF) at ONGC Urja Bhawan for cleaning the Himalayas as part of the Swachh Bharat Pakhwada. Apty titled 'Cleanathon Himalaya', this innovative CSR programme of ONGC aims to clean three source tributaries of river Ganga viz. Bhagirathi, Alaknanda and Pindari. The campaign was flagged off in the presence of DD Misra, Director (HR), ONGC. SSC Parthiban, ED- Chief CSR- ONGC, Col H S Chauhan, President IMF, Alka Mittal, GGM Head CSR ONGC and other senior officials from ONGC and IMF were present during the MoA signing ceremony.

ओएनजीसी ने तिरूमाला तिरूपति देवस्थानम को 6.78 करोड़ का चैक दिया

तिरूपति, (भाषा)। सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की ओएनजीसी ने स्वच्छ भारत मिशन के तहत तिरूमाला तिरूपति देवस्थानम को स्वच्छ तिरूमाला के लिये 6.78 करोड़ रुपये का चैक आज दिया। टीटीडी तिरूमाला भगवान वेंकटेश्वर के मंदिर का रखरखाव करता है। ओएनजीसी ने कंपनी सामाजिक जिम्मेदारी के तहत 13 करोड़ रुपये मंदिर को देने की पेशकश की है और पहली किस्त के रूप में 6.78 करोड़ रुपये का चैक दिया। तेल एवं प्राकृतिक गैस निगम (ओएनजीसी) के निदेशक (मानव संसाधन) डी डी मिश्र ने तिरूमाला तिरूपति देवस्थानम के कार्यकारी अधिकारी अनिल कुमार सिंघल को यहां 6,78,25,800 करोड़ रुपये का चैक सौंपा।

Core Sector Growth Slows in June, Up 0.4%

Our Bureau

New Delhi: India's infrastructure sector growth slowed to a 19-month low in June, strengthening the case for an interest rate cut to support the economy as inflation fell to record lows.

Reduced output of cement, electricity and coal slowed the pace of expansion of the country's eight infrastructure sectors in June to 0.4%, data released on Monday showed. The core sector had expanded 4.1% in May and 7% in June last year, indicating that high base of last year has also muted the growth.

The eight infrastructure sectors of coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilisers, steel, cement and electricity constitute 40.27% of the total industrial production. Muted core sector could further dent industrial growth that was placed at 1.7% in May. The statistics office will release industrial production numbers for June on August 11.

"Overall, the headline number is not showing any significant signs of improvement. Most indicators remain muted," said Upasna Bhardwaj, economist at Kotak Mahindra Bank.

Subdued performance of the core sector combined with retail inflation falling to an all-time low firmed up experts' expectations of a 25 basis points rate cut by the Monetary Policy Committee when it meets on August 1-2.

Consumer inflation fell to 1.54% in June, the lowest in the current index that started in 2012 and less than 2.18% in May. "Overall, the balance is tilted towards a 25 bps repo rate cut in the next bi-monthly meeting of the MPC. The decision is unlikely to be unanimous," said Aditi Nayar, principal economist at ICRA. "We expect monetary accommodation, a 25 basis points rate cut," Bhardwaj said.

CORE ISSUE

Subdued infra sector growth (%)

	JUN 16	MAY 17	JUN 17
Coal	12.1	-3.2	-6.7
Crude Oil	-4.3	0.7	0.6
Natural Gas	-4	4.5	6.4
POL	5.8	5.4	-0.2
Fertilizers	5.9	-6.5	-3.6
Steel	8.8	3.9	5.8
Cement	10.5	-0.4	-5.8
Electricity	9.8	8.6	0.7
Overall	7	4.1	0.4

• GST led de-stocking by some cos caused slow fertiliser growth

• Monsoon to further slow infra, mining activity



As per data released by commerce and industry ministry on Monday, cement production declined 5.8% in June from 0.4% fall in May. Coal output nosedived 6.7% from a 3.2% decline in May. Refinery production declined 0.2%. Crude oil output rose a meagre 0.6% in June and electricity production was up 0.7%. Only natural gas and steel showed a sharp rise in production in June at 6.4% and 5.8%, respectively.

"The considerable dip in core sector growth in June relative to the previous month was driven by an unfavourable base effect that contributed to the worsening contraction in output of coal and cement, and the sharp deterioration in the performance of electricity generation and refinery output," Nayar said.

An unfavourable base effect and inventory trimming prior to onset of GST may contribute to a contraction in industrial output in June 2017, in stark contrast to the 8.9% expansion in June 2016.

GAIL Under CCI Scanner for Breaching Competition Norms

Commission clubs this yr's cases with five from last yr

Sanjeev.Choudhary@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The Competition Commission is investigating at least seven cases of alleged abuse of dominance by GAIL in dealing with its customers, the outcome of which could potentially redraw the rules of the gas marketing business in India.

The Commission has clubbed for investigation two cases from this year and five from the previous year in which customers – Rathi Steel, Mohan Meakin, Rico Auto, Omax Autos and Rico Castings - have alleged GAIL abused its dominant position by incorporating unfair terms and condition in the Gas Sale Agreement (GSA) and imposing take-or-pay (ToP) liability. ToP requires customers to pay for 90% of the contracted volume even if it lifts less in a year although the unlifted amount can be taken later.

GAIL has denied allegations by customers. "GAIL reiterates that obligation of contract termination and other contractual terms under the GSA reflect the obligation entered into by GAIL under its upstream contracts. Therefore, it is not correct to allege that GAIL has imposed arbitrary/unfair terms & conditions and/or abused dominant position," GAIL said in an emailed response to ET.

The investigation would examine almost every aspect of GAIL's procurement, price determination, the way company imposed take-or-pay liability on all customers in 2015, and how it commits ToP liability to its upstream customers.

The complainants have alleged that many of the provisions related to the quality of gas or the purchase terms favour GAIL more than customers. The most important dispute is linked to the imposition of the take-or-pay liabilities on customers for the year 2015, when changes in the global market had made long-term gas more expensive than spot, encouraging more consumers to switch to spot where possible.

"The conduct of Opposite Party (GAIL) in implementing such Take or Pay liability from the year 2015 appears to be a modus to ensure de facto exclusivity of the contractual arrangement. This, besides prohibiting the buyers from shifting to alternatives or terminating the GSA in the event of closure of their business, also appears to create entry barriers for alternative suppliers to enter the market or build up a viable customer base," the Commission has said in its order in the case filed by Rathi Steel.

"While imposition of ToP liability as per contractual terms cannot per se be regarded as abuse of dominant posi-

ET VIEW

Reforms Need of the Hour

It would make sense to have norms to separate cross-country gas supply from distribution. We need to overhaul market design in natural gas. To have a system of competitive prices, we require gas hubs to better match demand with supply. And pending a more extensive pipeline network, what's required is forward-looking price regulation to incentivise supply in a scenario of huge, unmet gas demand. The downstream oil and gas regulator needs to be suitably empowered.

tion, the same being imposed in an exploitative manner without justification or to ensure de facto exclusivity thereby hurdling potential entries or expansion of competitors warrants investigation under the provisions of the Act prohibiting abuse of dominant position," the commission said.

Core sector growth dips to 0.4% in June

Slowest pace of growth since February; clamour for rate cut grows

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi, July 31

Ahead of the meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee on Tuesday, latest official data of core industries show a further slowdown in production that could also have an impact on factory output.

The index of eight core industries grew at its slowest pace since February at a meagre 0.4 per cent in June this year as against a robust 7 per cent expansion in June 2016. It grew by 4.1 per cent in May.

The data, released on Monday showed that the worst performers were coal mining and cement production that contracted by 6.7 per cent and 5.8 per cent respectively in the month. Fertiliser production also declined by 3.6 per cent in June.

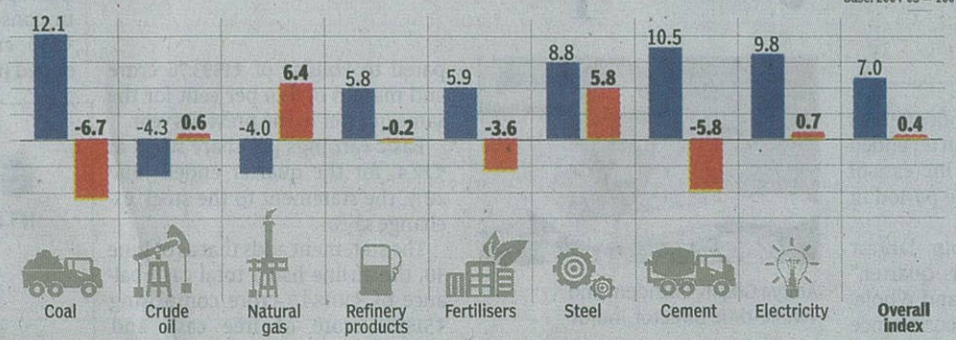
Production of natural gas registered a growth of 6.4 per cent in June as against a year ago, while steel production grew by 5.8 per cent.

Core worries

Sector-wise growth rate (%)

■ June 2016 ■ June 2017

(Weight in IIP: 37.90%)
Base: 2004-05 = 100



Sources: Ministry of Commerce & Industry

“The cumulative growth of the eight industries during April to June, 2017-18 was 2.4 per cent,” said an official release.

The Eight Core Industries comprise 40.27 per cent of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

Inflation at all-time low

With retail and wholesale inflation at an all time low in June, industry and the Finance Ministry is hoping for at least a 25 basis point reduction in the repo rate.

The MPC, led by the Reserve

The worst performers were coal mining and cement production that contracted by 6.7 per cent and 5.8 per cent respectively in the month. Fertiliser production also declined by 3.6 per cent in June.

Bank of India, will announce the decision on Wednesday.

In the second bi-monthly monetary policy review on June 6 and 7, the committee had left lending rates unchanged at 6.25 per cent while reducing the stat-

tory liquidity ratio by 0.5 per cent. Analysts attributed the low growth of core sector in June to a high base effect.

“It points to a subdued picture for industrial growth for June 2017, with the sequential decline in growth of non-oil exports, core sector output and automobile production.

“An unfavourable base effect and inventory trimming prior to the onset of the goods and services tax may contribute to a year-on-year contraction in industrial output in June 2017,” said Aditi Nayar, Principal Economist, ICRA.

US shale producers add to India's luck with oil

With shale oil production returning to growth this year, a major turnaround in oil prices is unlikely



KUNAL BOSE
Kolkata, 31 July

The National Democratic Alliance government came to power in May 2014 with big luck in oil. The stunning fall in oil prices, from a high of \$115 a barrel in the beginning of that year to under \$35 a barrel at the end of February 2016, relieved Finance Minister Arun Jaitley of two big worries: inflation and subsidies.

India, which is 82 per cent dependent on imports for oil, saw its petroleum import bill, including oil and petroleum products, rising 9 per cent to \$80.3 billion on the back of a 7 per cent increase in volume of imports and a 3 per cent in prices.

The latter happened because of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) and its allies, including Russia, making a production cut deal in December 2016 for the first time in 15 years. Eyebrows of Indian leaders started furrowing when benchmark Brent crude reached \$55.86 a barrel at the end of January, even while they went on reassuring the public that there was nothing to worry till oil had

breached \$60 a barrel.

US oil production returning to growth this year, helped by a smart recovery in the shale industry, has sustained a surplus situation, putting pressure on prices to the benefit of a major importing country like India. According to Baker Hughes, the world's largest oil field services company, the number of rigs drilling for oil in the US has more than doubled in the past year. Not only that, the surge in invento-

ry of drilled but uncompleted (DUC) wells in America's major shale basins, including Permian and Bakken, also exercises bear pressure on the market.

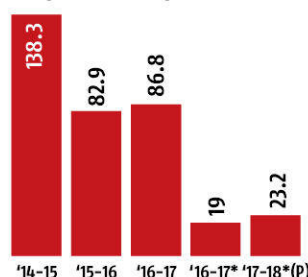
A DUC well is one where a hole is made into a shale rock but where fracking hasn't begun to get oil out. Once oil crosses a certain level and infrastructure, particularly pipeline for oil evacuation is in place, expect oil and gas to gush out from a large number of DUC wells.

Those expecting a major turnaround in oil fortunes will be making a mistake if they don't take into account what could happen with DUC wells maturing.

Didn't the pledge of Opec and non-OPEC countries to curb production late last year as a way to bolster teetering oil prices — from a high of over \$100 a barrel in early 2014 they were down to below \$30 a barrel in early 2016 — yield the desired price rises, and in the process encourage increased investment in the US oil industry? The International Energy Agency foresees a 53 per cent upswing in investment into US shale oil this year alone.

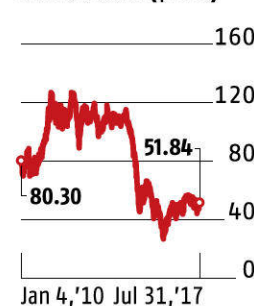
Referring to the US, several experts have said the results of investments in

SLIDING AWAY India's import of petroleum and petroleum products (\$bn)



*Apr-June; (P) Provisional
Data Source: DG CIS, Kolkata; compiled by BS Research Bureau

Brent crude (\$/bbl)



late 2016 and in the first quarter of this year are now seen as production rolls through. Thanks to a spurt in drilling in shale oil rich areas, the US oil production in 2018 would be a record above 10 million barrels a day. In the unlikely event of oil prices taking a major leap, next year's US production will be a lot more than is officially forecast.

It has been seen more than once that extraction of oil from rock formations by way of hydraulic fracturing using a mixture of water, chemicals and sand picks up when oil prices remain firm. The opposite happens when oil falls in a bear grip. While this remains the case, the sector has seen phenomenal technological advances in recent years, leading to massive drilling efficiency gains. The shale industry has achieved technology breakthroughs, allowing drilling of multiple wells from the same spot and horizontal wells.

Besides making shale oil production a viable proposition at sub \$45 a barrel, technological advances have ensured that fracking is no longer a dirty word. Earlier, fracking bore the stigma that it could be the cause of chemical contamination of water and tremors in surrounding areas of a drill. In fact, on the strength of the newly earned environment friendliness tag for fracking, a UK energy company is to bid for licences for exploration and extraction of oil and natural gas below Artesian Close Industrial Estate in London's Willesden. The company believes that hydraulic fracturing of the deposit could potentially meet 12 per cent of London's energy needs. But the litmus test for the company will be in getting the residents of the prime London location agree to fracking.

Much to the concern of Opec, particularly Saudi Arabia for which the principal source of revenue is oil and gas, shale operators have prepared themselves through efficiency and productivity improvements to operate in a \$40 a barrel price environment. This is good news for India. President Donald Trump's policy of energy dominance, which is to take the form of boosting oil and gas production for domestic use and exports, is not music to Opec ears.

Oil analysts are in consensus that the market has grown immune to stories of any supply side discipline or discipline breaches. Therefore, looking over to the demand side, the waning demand in China, the world's biggest crude importer, will likely keep oil prices low for long.

Amin Nasser, CEO of the world's largest energy company, Saudi Aramco, does not believe that shale oil development in the US and other countries will compensate for recession in investment in fossil fuel exploration, development of new large oilfields and related infrastructure. The oil industry claims that as much as \$1 trillion investment in oil and natural gas has been lost in the wake of global oil glut and low prices. Nasser goes on to remind that the "volume of conventional oil discovered around the world over the past four years has more than halved compared with the previous four."

Core sector growth falls to 0.4% in June

SUBHAYAN CHAKRABORTY
New Delhi, 31 July

Core sector output rose a paltry 0.4 per cent in June, as compared to the 4.1 per cent rise in May.









There was contraction or marginal growth in six of the eight segments, with only growth in natural gas and steel pulling up the index.

Data issued by the commerce and industry ministry on Monday showed the eight core segments — coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity — cumulatively grew 2.4 per cent in the first three months (April-June) of this financial year. This was less than half the 6.9 per cent growth in the corresponding period of 2016-17. April also saw lower growth of 2.8 per cent, after 5.2 per cent growth in March.

“The considerable dip in June 2017 from the previous month was driven by an unfavourable base effect that contributed to the worsening contraction in output of coal and cement, and sharp deterioration in the performance of electricity generation and refinery output,” said Aditi Nayar, vice-

SECTOR-WISE NUMBERS

Y-o-Y growth for October (%)

Natural gas	6.4	
Steel	5.8	
Electricity	0.7	
Crude oil	0.6	
Refinery products	-0.2	
Fertiliser	-3.6	
Cement	-5.8	
Coal	-6.7	

Source : Commerce and industry ministry

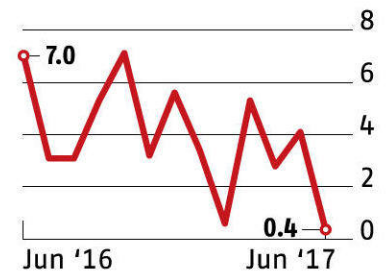
president at ratings agency ICRA.

Contributing 40 per cent to total industrial production, core sector output rose in May mainly due to a significant increase in the electricity segment, supported by refinery products and natural gas.

In June, however, the electricity sector managed to rise by only 0.7 per cent. Data indicates ther-

OVERALL GROWTH

Core sector's y-o-y growth in the past 1 year (%)



mal electricity generation fell two per cent, in sharp contrast to the year-on-year expansion of 6.8 per cent in May, ICRA said. In addition, the pace of growth of hydro electricity generation moderated for a second month, to 10.9 per cent in June from 15.8 per cent in May, partly reflecting an unfavourable base effect, it said.

Oil hits two-month high on tighter US market

HENNING GLOYSTEIN

Singapore, 31 July

Oil prices hit a two-month high on Monday, lifted by a tightening US crude market and the threat of sanctions against Venezuela, a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec).

US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) futures briefly jumped over \$50 per barrel on Monday and were at \$49.97 per barrel at 0654 GMT, still up 25 cents, or 0.5 per cent from their last close. That means that virtually the entire WTI curve has moved over \$50 per barrel.

Brent crude futures were at \$52.85 per barrel, up 33 cents or 0.6 per cent. Prices hit \$52.90 per barrel earlier in the day, their highest since May 25.

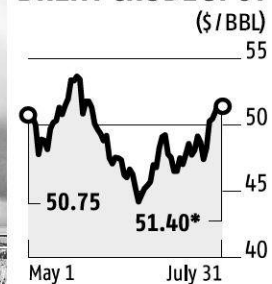
The price rises put both crude benchmarks on track for a sixth consecutive session of gains.

Prices have risen around 10 per cent since the last meeting of leading members by the Opec and other major producers, including Russia, when the group discussed potential measures to further tighten oil markets.

“US inventories are showing massive drawdowns, Saudi Arabia seems intent on playing its role as the world’s swing producer (and) impending sanctions on Venezuela



BRENT CRUDE SPOT



*As of IST 2130 hrs
Compiled by BS Research Bureau
Source: Bloomberg

by the US will almost certainly be oil price-supportive,” said Jeffrey Halley, analyst at futures brokerage OANDA.

The United States is considering imposing sanctions on Venezuela’s vital oil sector in response to Sunday’s election of a constitutional super-body that Washington has denounced as a “sham” vote.

But traders said the biggest price supporter was currently a tightening US oil market.

“Strong increases in the price of oil ... (were) fueled in large part by the substantial drawdowns in US inventories over the past several weeks,” said William O’Loughlin, analyst at Rivkin Securities.

US crude inventories have fallen

by 10 per cent from their March peaks to 483.4 million barrels.

In production, US output dipped by 0.2 per cent to 9.41 million barrels per day (bpd) in the week to July 21, after rising by more than 10 per cent since mid-2016.

Drilling for new US production is also slowing, with just 10 rigs added in July, the fewest since May 2016.

The tighter market was also visible in the price curve, which shows backwardation in the front end. Backwardation is a market condition in which prices for immediate delivery of a product are higher than those later on. Brent prices for delivery in September are currently around 35 cents above those for October.

REUTERS

बनेंगे पूर्वी, पश्चिमी व दक्षिणी पेट्रो रसायन क्लस्टर

गांधीनगर। विभिन्न औद्योगिक क्षेत्रों में पॉलिमर, प्लास्टिक और स्पेशलिटी केमिकल्स की बढ़ती मांग को पूरा करने तथा पेट्रो रसायन उद्योग के विकास को नई गति देने के लिए भारत सरकार ने पूर्वी, पश्चिमी और दक्षिणी भारत में पेट्रो रसायन क्लस्टर स्थापित करने की योजना बनाई है।

मनसुख एल मांडविया, रसायन एवं उर्वरक राज्य मंत्री, भारत सरकार और गुजरात के उपमुख्यमंत्री नितिन पटेल की उपस्थिति में पेट्रो रसायन सम्मेलन के छठे संस्करण का उद्घाटन करते हुए धर्मेन्द्र प्रधान, केंद्रीय पेट्रोलियम एवं प्राकृतिक गैस राज्य मंत्री (स्वतंत्र प्रभार) ने इस बात का खुलासा किया। प्रधान ने कहा कि पेट्रो रसायन क्षेत्र, भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था के कृषि, अवसंरचना, स्वास्थ्य देखभाल, वस्त्र, उपभोक्ता वस्तुओं एवं पैकेजिंग जैसे सभी प्रमुख क्षेत्रों में योगदान दे रहा है। इस मांग के परिणामस्वरूप इस उद्योग का भरपूर विकास हुआ है। खर्च करने की प्रवृत्ति में वृद्धि के साथ धातुओं के अलावा फाइबर और प्लास्टिक के बने उत्पादों का इस्तेमाल बढ़ रहा है। एजेंसी

कोर सेक्टर की ग्रोथ जून महीने में घटकर 0.4% हुई

[ईटी ब्यूरो | नई दिल्ली]

देश के इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर सेक्टर की ग्रोथ जून में 19 महीने में सबसे कम हो गई। इससे इकॉनॉमी को सपोर्ट देने के लिए ब्याज दरों में कटौती का आधार और मजबूत हुआ है क्योंकि महंगाई दर रिकॉर्ड लो लेवल पर है। सीमेंट, इलेक्ट्रिसिटी और कोयले के उत्पादन में कमी के चलते 8 इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर सेक्टर की ग्रोथ जून में घटकर 0.4 परसेंट रह गई। कोर सेक्टर की ग्रोथ मई में 4.1 परसेंट थी, जबकि पिछले साल जून में इसके उत्पादन में 7 परसेंट की बढ़ोतरी हुई थी। पिछले साल के ऊंचे बेस की वजह से भी इस साल जून में ग्रोथ कमजोर रही। इन 8 इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर सेक्टर्स में कोयला, क्रूड ऑयल, नेचुरल गैस, रिफाइनरी प्रॉडक्ट्स, फर्टिलाइजर, स्टील, सीमेंट और इलेक्ट्रिसिटी शामिल हैं। इनका औद्योगिक उत्पादन सूचकांक (आईआईपी) में भी 40.27 परसेंट का वेटेज है।

कोर सेक्टर की कमजोर ग्रोथ का औद्योगिक ग्रोथ पर बुरा असर पड़ेगा, जो मई में 1.7 परसेंट रही थी। स्टैटिस्टिक्स ऑफिस 11 अगस्त को जून के औद्योगिक उत्पादन के आंकड़े जारी करेगा। कोर सेक्टर के प्रदर्शन के बारे में कोटक महिंद्रा बैंक की अर्थशास्त्री उपासना भारद्वाज ने बताया, 'इकॉनॉमी की हालत अच्छी नहीं दिख रही है। ज्यादातर इंडिकेटर्स कमजोर दिख रहे हैं।' कोर सेक्टर के कमजोर प्रदर्शन और महंगाई दर के ऑल टाइम लो लेवल पर होने के चलते एक्सपर्ट्स 1-2 अगस्त को मॉनेटरी पॉलिसी कमेटी की मीटिंग में ब्याज दरों में 0.25 परसेंट कटौती की उम्मीद कर रहे हैं।

जून महीने में कंज्यूमर इन्फ्लेशन घटकर 1.54 परसेंट रह गई थी, जो 2012 में मौजूदा इंडेक्स शुरू होने के बाद का सबसे निचला स्तर है। मई में भी यह 2.18 परसेंट से कम थी।



इकरा की प्रिंसिपल इकॉनॉमिस्ट अदिति नायर ने बताया, 'ऐसा लग रहा है कि मॉनेटरी पॉलिसी कमेटी की अगली मीटिंग में रेपो रेट में 0.25 परसेंट की कटौती हो सकती है। हालांकि, एमपीसी का यह फैसला सर्वसम्मति से नहीं होगा।' वहीं, भारद्वाज ने बताया कि उन्हें भी ब्याज दर में 0.25 परसेंट कटौती की उम्मीद है।

कोर सेक्टर की ग्रोथ मई में 4.1 परसेंट थी, जबकि पिछले साल जून में इसके उत्पादन में 7 परसेंट की बढ़ोतरी हुई थी। पिछले साल के ऊंचे बेस की वजह से भी इस साल जून में ग्रोथ कमजोर रही

कॉमर्स मिनिस्ट्री ने सोमवार को जो डेटा जारी किए, उसके मुताबिक जून में सीमेंट प्रॉडक्शन में 5.8 परसेंट की गिरावट आई, जो मई में 0.4 परसेंट घटा था। कोयले का उत्पादन 6.7 परसेंट गिरा, जबकि मई में इसमें 3.32 परसेंट की गिरावट आई थी। वहीं, रिफाइनरी प्रॉडक्शन भी जून में 0.2 परसेंट कम रहा। कच्चे तेल का उत्पादन जून में 0.6 परसेंट बढ़ा, जबकि बिजली उत्पादन में 0.7 परसेंट की बढ़ोतरी हुई।

सिर्फ नेचुरल गैस और स्टील उत्पादन में अच्छी बढ़ोतरी हुई। जून में नेचुरल गैस का उत्पादन 6.4 परसेंट और स्टील का उत्पादन 5.8 परसेंट बढ़ा। अदिति नायर ने कहा, 'मई महीने की तुलना में जून में कोर सेक्टर सेक्टर ग्रोथ में कमजोरी की वजह हायर बेस इफेक्ट भी है।'