

Daily Economic News Summary: 19 April 2016

1. India surpasses solar energy target for 2015-16 than one and a half times

Source: **Economic Times** ([Link](#))

India has surpassed its solar energy target for 2015-16 more than one and a half times, commissioning 3018 MW during the year against the 2000 MW it had set itself. Latest figures shared by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy with ET show that Tamil Nadu added the most capacity in 2015-16 at 887.19 MW, followed by Andhra Pradesh (433.24 MW) and Telangana (351.56 MW). At the end of 2015-16, the country's cumulative solar capacity stands at 6753.38 MW, up from 3743.97 MW a year ago. Rajasthan, which has the best solar radiation among states, remains No. 1 in overall installed capacity at 1264.35 MW, while Gujarat, the earliest to start a solar programme, is in second place with 1105.15 MW. But Tamil Nadu, with its massive capacity addition this year, is rapidly catching up and is in third place with 1030.77 MW. Madhya Pradesh with 775.87 MW installed capacity and Andhra Pradesh with 571.09 MW are in fourth and fifth positions.

The cumulative target for at the end of 2016-17 is much stiffer at 17,000 MW which means over 10,000MW will have be added in 2016-17. However the MNRE appears well set to meet it. *"We are looking at tenders of around 20,900 MW,"* said Tarun Kapoor, Joint Secretary. *"Some of it has already been awarded and the rest will be done in the next few months."* The majority of projects completed during the year will be in the five southern states.

2. 3G, 4G network build up will give a strong business opportunity this year: Sandeep Girotra, Nokia India Head

Source: **Economic Times** ([Link](#))

The integration of Nokia and Alcatel Lucent will have "minimal" impact on the combined group's India operations, said its India head, Sandeep Girotra. In an interview with ET's Danish Khan, Girotra said the merged entity's focus on network build up for 4G and 3G technologies will give it a strong business opportunity this year.

Edited excerpts:

What will be the growth areas for Nokia this year?

Sandeep Girotra: *Government initiatives give us opportunity for our fiber optics portfolio, while spectrum auction will lead to 3G and 4G network build out. Further, networks have to be*

IP-fied, backbone has to be thicker, and we need to personalize data experience, so analytics and applications. In addition, we need to get fixed broadband into the places. Besides, enterprise business is coming in.

3. India to stop thermal coal imports; save Rs 40,000 crore

Source: **Economic Times** ([Link](#))

In view of rising production of the dry fuel, India plans to completely stop thermal coal imports in 2-3 years that would result in annual savings of Rs 40,000 crore, Union Minister Piyush Goyal today said. Coking coal, however, would need to be imported, the Coal and Power Minister said at the maiden Maritime India Summit here, adding that his Ministry was ready to tie up with Indian shipping companies for this purpose. Record coal production by the world's largest coal miner CIL, helped India reduce its import bill of the dry fuel by more than Rs 28,000 crore in the last fiscal. *"I have no hesitation in saying that Indian companies used to import a lot of thermal coal. We want to completely stop the import of thermal coal in the next two to three years. We have already reduced imports by Rs 28,000 crore. We will save Rs 40,000 crore,"* Goyal said. He said his Ministry was ready to enter into pacts with Indian shipping companies for import and transportation of coal.

4. ADB Loan to help Uttar Pradesh Boost Connectivity, Safety on District Roads

Source: **Business Standard** ([Link](#))

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a project loan of \$300 million to upgrade over 400 kilometers (km) of major district roads in Uttar Pradesh with improved maintenance, and to strengthen road safety on the major district roads forming part of the core road network in the state. The project supports the state government's core road network improvement master plan, under which the government plans to improve roads through a combination of state, private and multilateral resources. *"Major district roads provide key links between rural roads and state highways, and connect peri-urban and urban areas, so improving them is essential to give more communities better access to markets and basic social services,"* said Ravi Venkat Peri, Principal Transport Specialist in ADB's South Asia Department. *"Along with the physical upgrades and maintenance components, the project will conduct a road safety analysis of the district roads in the core road network, and implement remedial measures at identified trouble spots, to reduce the rate of accidents."*

Uttar Pradesh is India's most populous state and has the largest rural population, along with widely dispersed industrial centers, making its total road network of around 300,000 km crucial for its economy and development. However significant sections of the roads have

inadequate widths and poor surfacing, increasing economic costs and also making them vulnerable to bottlenecks and hazards. In addition, Uttar Pradesh has a challenging record on road safety for accidents and fatalities, which has promoted the Government of Uttar Pradesh to establish a new policy for road safety in 2014. The loan, which is ADB's first road sector assistance in Uttar Pradesh, will be used to improve around 430 km of major district roads, upgrading them to standard design widths, suitable for use in all weather and with safety features, including widened and strengthened culverts and bridges. A key element of the project is the inclusion of 5-year performance-based maintenance contracts to ensure ongoing high-standard upkeep of the roads.

5. ITC renews partnership with Starwood Hotels; signs up for three more hotels

Source: **Live Mint** ([Link](#))

ITC Ltd, a diversified business group with interests in consumer goods and hotels, and US-based Starwood Hotels and Resorts have renewed their partnership to operate 12 luxury hotels in India. The companies also signed for three more luxury hotels in Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Kolkata, taking the total number of tie-ups for hotels to 15. These three new properties are expected to open within the next four years. At present, the luxury hotels are run under two brands—The Luxury Collection (11 hotels) and Sheraton (one hotel). The three upcoming hotels will come under the The Luxury Collection brand.

The partnership between the two companies came into being in 1979 with the Sheraton brand. In 2007, Starwood Hotels entered into an exclusive partnership with ITC to introduce The Luxury Collection in India. *“The association with Starwood Hotels and Resorts for close to 4 decades bears testimony to this commitment and we are pleased to further strengthen our alliance with 3 upcoming ITC luxury hotels in Kolkata, Hyderabad and Ahmedabad, which will be an archetype of the culture and region they are located in,”* said Nakul Anand, executive director, ITC Ltd, in a statement on Thursday. Thomas Mangas, chief executive officer (CEO), Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide Inc., said India is one of the fastest growing markets and represents nearly 30% of its current operating footprint in the country.



By Harsha Hazarika