

Daily Economic News Summary: 20 February 2019

1. Saudi Arabia Asks India To Allow Foreign Ownership In Real Estate

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

Saudi Arabia wants India to open up its real estate sector to foreign ownership, which will lead to investments of hundreds of millions of dollars in residential and commercial properties, according to Kamil S Al-Munajjed, chairman of Saudi India Business Council. It also wants India to change laws to allow Saudis to own agricultural land to help enhance food security while reducing excessive dependence on oil, he said. Saudi and Indian businesses are also likely to significantly increase direct bilateral business, instead of routing it through the United Arab Emirates or Mauritius because of legacy investment and legal issues, Al-Munajjed told ET in an interview ahead of the visit of the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

2. 7 Islands In Andamans, Lakshadweep Identified For Seaplane Operations

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

Seven islands in the Andamans and Lakshadweep have been identified for seaplane operations while private sector participation has been invited for tourism-based projects in the two archipelagos, the Home Ministry said 19 February. The 5th meeting of the Island Development Agency (IDA), chaired by Home Minister Rajnath Singh, also reviewed the progress made towards the program "Holistic development of islands". Four islands (Swaraj Dweep, Shaheed Dweep, Hutbay and Long) in Andaman and Nicobar Islands and three islands (Kavaratti, Agatti and Minicoy) in Lakshadweep have been identified for seaplane operations, a statement issued by the home ministry after the hour-long meeting said.

3. Cabinet Clears Promulgating Fresh Ordinance For Companies Law Amendments

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

The Union Cabinet on 19 February approved promulgating an ordinance for companies law amendments to plug gaps in corporate governance and enforcement framework as well as improve the ease of doing business. A bill to replace the Companies (Amendment) Ordinance, 2018, that was promulgated in November could not be passed during the last session of the

current Parliament. Hence, the government has decided to promulgate the Companies (Second Amendment) Ordinance, 2019.

4. GST Council Meet Today: GoM Favours 3% Tax For Affordable Housing Category

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

A Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel which has favoured 3% tax on the affordable housing category, down from 8%, has submitted its report to the GST Council for taking it up and decide on it by 20 February. The Council, in its meeting on 20 February, might also consider reducing tax on cement from 28% to 18% to boost the realty sector. The proposed Goods and Services Tax (GST) cut in cement and the GoM report are on the agenda of the meeting, sources said, adding that the government is looking at the housing sector closely ahead of the coming Lok Sabha elections.

5. Sachin Bansal Invests Rs 650 Cr In Ola, Move To Give Ride-Hailing Firm More Ammo To Compete With Uber

Source: Firstpost ([Link](#))

Flipkart co-founder Sachin Bansal has invested about Rs 650 crore in Ola, giving the Indian ride-hailing company more ammunition to compete with rival Uber. The investment is in Sachin's personal capacity and is also the largest financing by an individual in Ola till date, Ola said in a statement. Ola is locked in a battle for market leadership with US-based rival Uber in India and other markets like Australia, New Zealand and the UK. The Indian company has been aggressively ramping up its rides business as well as hailing platform and food delivery operations (through Foodpanda).

6. Aero India 2019: Lethal Make In India BrahMos NG Integrated With Tejas! India Eyes Huge Defence Exports Market

Source: Financial Express ([Link](#))

At the Aero India 2019, BrahMos Aerospace plans to display a model of the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas with two next-generation BrahMos missiles under its wings! Sources told Financial Express Online that the new BrahMos NG (or the next-generation BrahMos) which is being developed by BrahMos Aerospace will have the same range as the original supersonic cruise missile, that is around 300 kilometres. The maximum speed of the BrahMos NG missile will be 3.5 mach. BrahMos NG is a lighter version of the world's fastest anti-ship cruise missile and according to BrahMos Aerospace can be used from various

platforms. The ‘Make in India’ BrahMos NG will add immense firepower to the ‘Make in India’ Tejas aircraft, making the duo a formidable combination for light combat warfare. Some of the big advantages of BrahMos NG on the Tejas will be; multi-target capability and wider scope of deployment.

7. Ease Of Doing Business: Nitin Gadkari To Inaugurate Upgraded Portal For Maritime Sector

Source: Financial Express ([Link](#))

The portal has played a vital role in enhancing 'Ease of Doing Business' in the maritime sector by facilitating a transparent and paperless system for electronic submission of trade document, resulting in faster turnaround time and dwell time. Gadkari inaugurated on 19 February an upgraded version of e-commerce portal Port Community System in Mumbai. The upgraded portal ‘PCS1x’ has been developed in record time by the Indian Ports Association, based on feedback from stakeholders using PCS. The minister would launch “PCS1x” at the Regional Maritime Safety Conference in Mumbai on 19 February, the Ministry of Shipping said in a release on Monday. According to the release, the portal has played a vital role in enhancing ‘Ease of Doing Business’ in the maritime sector by facilitating a transparent and paperless system for electronic submission of trade document, resulting in faster turnaround time and dwell time.

8. Indian Railways Leads World By Example! PM Modi Flags Off 1st Ever Diesel To Electric Conversion Locomotive

Source: Financial Express ([Link](#))

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s ambitious ‘Make in India’ initiative, Indian Railways has created history by converting a diesel locomotive into electric locomotive for the first time in the world. This all new converted energy-efficient electric locomotive has been flagged off by PM Narendra Modi in Varanasi on 19 February. In a first of its kind notable initiative, the diesel locomotive which has been converted to electric locomotive by the Diesel Locomotive Works (DLW) in Varanasi. The entire project is an Indian R&D innovation for the entire world, says Indian Railways. As India looks to reduce its carbon footprint, this ‘Make in India’ initiative by Indian Railways is a welcome step. According to the national transporter, the ‘Make in India’ project is a step towards saving traction energy cost. It is being said that with conversion of diesel locomotives into electric locomotives, the fuel bill of Indian Railways will reduce significantly.