

# Cement & steel firms hike prices as construction demand picks up

Some industry players, however, warn that price recovery is supply-led & not on demand

ISHITA AYAN DUTT & AVISHKEH RAKSHIT  
Kolkata, 11 November

Prices of steel and cement are showing early signs of recovery led by low inventory level at the user end and a pick-up in construction activity post-monsoon combined with festive buying.

Steel companies have increased prices of flat products in November by ₹500-750 a tonne and long steel up to ₹1,000 a tonne, after a gap of more than seven months.

Cement prices, too, moved up last month in all regions except South India, which witnessed a decline; in Central India, it stagnated. Prices in South India have remained muted since the monsoon and remained so even after the festive season.

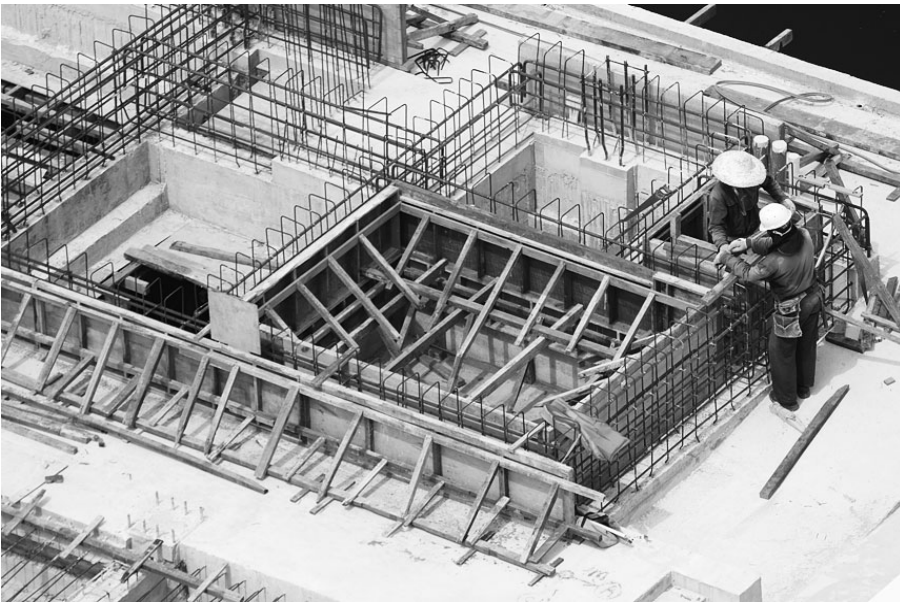
The price rise in other parts of the country, especially in Gujarat, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, East India and some pockets in the southern belt like Chennai, Bengaluru, Kochi and others, helped pull up the average prices by around four per cent post-monsoon.

Sales volume in North, East and West India is much higher than South India.

Recovery in steel prices is largely led by low stocks in the trade as well as higher international prices.

T V Narendran, chief executive officer and managing director, Tata Steel, said, profitability of the industry ensured there was not much room to drop the prices further.

"Scrap prices (ex-US) started moving up in early to mid-October, pushing up rebar and sponge prices. Also, stocks of steel are low in trade and consumer network as well as import volumes have dropped. There are some positive signs from pre-festive buying and



CEMENTING POSITION All figures in ₹ per bag

	AVERAGE PRICE RANGE		
	August	September	October
North	315-320	320-330	325-335
West	315-320	320-325	325-335
Central	330-335	325-330	325-330
East	300-310	310-320	315-325
South	370-380	350-355	325-335

Source: Sector analysts

**Cement prices had been flattish during the monsoon, with construction activities having stopped and government projects coming to a halt. A prolonged rainy season further worsened the demand situation**

rural markets," he said.

Jayant Acharya, director (commercial & marketing), JSW Steel, also said that prices had hit bottom. "International prices have moved up by \$25-\$30 a tonne. As a result, domestic prices are at a discount of 6-7 per cent to imports. Additionally, inventory in the domestic channel is much lower," he said.

At the retail end, there was some destocking in auto. "There is also resurfacing of funding in refinery and road projects," Acharya said.

Some industry sources, however, cautioned that the

price recovery was supply-led and not demand. But they are hoping that an increase of ₹750 a tonne may be possible in the next month.

Acharya said it is too early to say whether prices would be increased next month but expected the situation to be much better next quarter.

Narendran said India has been a price setter in the South East Asian market. Therefore, prices in the region have gone up.

Cement prices had been flattish during the monsoon with construction activities having stopped and govern-

ment projects coming to a halt. A prolonged rainy season further worsened the demand situation.

However, average prices have been moving up since August. In the northern region, prices increased marginally by ₹5 a bag since August which took the average to ₹325-335 although volume has declined by 5-7 per cent. While the demand is driven largely by the individual home buyers, an uptick was noticed after Diwali.

Industry officials are of the view that prices will not decrease any further. They are of the opinion that demand

from individual home buyers, backed by a higher disposable income as a result of good monsoon, has led to revival in demand. But government buying still remains muted.

"We believe that after a good harvest and investment returning to the housing, infrastructure sectors and with increased government spending in rural housing and roads, one will see a distinct pick up in the core sector," said Sandip Ghose, chief operating officer at MP Birla Cement.

H M Bangur, managing director at Shree Cement, as well as Ghose, are of the view that the price increase will continue on an uptrend in the near term.

"Overall, there has been around four per cent price increase on both year-on-year basis as well as on a sequential basis after the monsoon and the festive season. Prices are going to be sustained and there is no way prices will go down further on an average," Bangur said.

In the eastern part of the country, similar to the North, prices have been increasing since September to around ₹315-325 a bag while in the West, prices improved since the last month to go up between ₹325 and ₹335. In both these regions, dealers expect a further increase by ₹10-20 per bag this month.

"The price corrections are market-led and according to the normal trend of demand uptick post monsoons and festive months. The increase is nominal - so we expect it to sustain," Ghose added.

Industry officials noted that demand was expected to improve from November when largescale construction activity will pick up and government spending, especially in the rural sector, is expected to help push demand.

# Who did you meet? Chhattisgarh cops ask NSO on WhatsApp row

NEHA ALAWADHI  
New Delhi, 11 November

The Chhattisgarh Police has written to the Israeli company behind the Pegasus spyware that was used, according to recent revelations, to snoop on around 1,400 individuals, including 121 Indians, by misusing a WhatsApp vulnerability.

In a letter to Shalev Hulio, a co-founder of NSO Group, which developed and sells Pegasus, the police have asked for information on the Israeli firm's alleged meeting and presentation to senior police officers of the state in 2017. According to news reports, the presentation was made to sen-



ior IPS officers in Raipur during 2017 (when an earlier government was in place). People in the state were allegedly subjected to the snooping enabled by Pegasus through WhatsApp. In the letter dated November 5, according to sources, the state police has asked NSO Group about particulars of their visit to Raipur, who was in their team, whom they met in the state police and details of the meeting. The department is also considering writing to WhatsApp. In May, WhatsApp has said it became aware of NSO Group having used a coding glitch in the messaging app that let its customers spy on some people. WhatsApp fixed the issue, and worked with Citizen Lab, a digital and human rights research group, to contact all those affected, telling them what they could do to keep their communications safe. On October 29, WhatsApp decided to sue NSO Group for misusing the messaging platform's code to compromise user privacy.

## CRISIL SME TRACKER

### Double whammy looms for plastics and plastic products SMEs

CRISIL Research expects a combination of weak demand from end-user industries and the ban on single-use plastics to slash growth of the plastics and plastic products industry by 200 basis points, to 5-6 per cent (in value terms) annually through fiscal year 2021, compared with 8 per cent in the three years through fiscal year 2019.

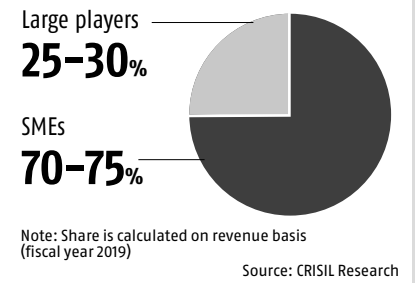
Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) - which account for nearly 75 per cent of the 30,000-odd registered plastics processing units in the country, with Mumbai and Chennai among the big clusters - are expected to be hit particularly hard.

Weak demand from automobiles, coupled with moderating demand from consumer appliance and household segments, is expected to impact revenue growth in the current fiscal year. Realisations are expected to shrink, too, accompanied by a drop in prices of raw materials such as polyethylene and polypropylene.

Added to this is the sharper focus of the central and state governments on moving away from single-use plastics, which is expected to impact the revenues of SMEs.

The Centre had earlier announced a nationwide ban on single-use plastics effective October 2, 2019. However, later

### SMEs DOMINATE DUE TO LOW CAPITAL AND ADEQUATE AVAILABILITY OF RAW MATERIAL



- following objections of industry over non-availability of ready alternatives - it decided to phase out single-use plastics by 2022. However, several public and private organisations, as well as state and central government departments, have banned single-use plastics already, with some states (Maharashtra, Odisha, Goa and Andhra Pradesh) implementing the ban.

Added to all this, intense competition in this highly fragmented industry is expected to put operating margins under pressure.

**NOTICE**  
Late Mr. DILIP BHAGWANT SAWANT, was the co-owner of Flat no. 202 (Old flat No. 2), Second floor, Dewans Kalkapeka Co-op. Hsg. Soc. Ltd., situated at Survey No. 2, Village Diwanman, Vasai Road (W), Tal. Vasai, Dist. Palghar.  
Mr. DILIP BHAGWANT SAWANT expired and the society transferred the shares of the said flat in the name of the other co-owner Mr. RAVINDRANATH BHAGWANT SAWANT. Currently my client Mr. Nitin Bhalchandra Pimple is the owner of the above said flat. Claims / Objections are also invited from the heir or heirs or other claimants/objects or objections to the Transfer of the said Shares and interest of the deceased member in the capital/property of the society, or to us at the below mentioned address. If no claims/objections are received within the period prescribed above, the shares and interest of the deceased member in the Capital/property of the society and title of the said property shall be considered to be clear in the name of the present owner Mr. Nitin Bhalchandra Pimple.  
Adv. Parag J. Pimple  
S/4, Pravin Palace, Pt. Dindayal Nagar, Vasai Road (W), Tal. Vasai, Dist. Palghar  
Mob: 9890079352  
Place: Vasai Road (W) Date: 12/11/2019

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Fax : +91-11-23720201

For Subscription and Circulation enquiries please contact:  
Ms. Mansi Singh  
Head-Customer Relations  
Business Standard Private Limited,  
H/4 & I/3, Building H, Paragon Centre, Opp. Birla Centurion, PB.Marg, Worli, Mumbai - 400013  
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**INDO COUNT INDUSTRIES LIMITED**  
CIN- L72200PN1988PLC068972  
Regd. Office: Office No. 1, Plot No. 266, Village Aite, Kumbh Road, Taluka Hatkanangale, District Kolhapur - 416 109  
Tel : (0230) 2463100 / 2461929  
Email: [icilinvestors@indocount.com](mailto:icilinvestors@indocount.com) | Website: [www.indocount.com](http://www.indocount.com)

**Extract of Consolidated Financial Results for the Quarter and Half Year ended 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2019**

(Rs. in Crores except EPS)

SR NO	PARTICULARS	30/09/2019 (Unaudited)	30/09/2019 (Unaudited)	30/09/2018 (Unaudited)
1	Total income from operations	587.18	1105.64	508.85
2	Net Profit for the period before Exceptional item and tax	59.96	111.95	37.65
3	Exceptional Item (Refer Note (iv))	94.27	94.27	-
4	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before tax	(34.31)	17.68	37.65
5	Net Profit for the period after tax	10.61	45.28	25.78
6	Total Comprehensive Income for the period	(12.06)	25.53	(37.94)
7	Paid up Equity Share Capital	39.48	39.48	39.48
8	Earning Per Share (of Rs. 2/- each) Basic and Diluted (Not Annualised)	0.55	2.31	1.31

**Notes :**  
i) Company's Standalone Financial information is as below:

SR NO	PARTICULARS	30/09/2019 (Unaudited)	30/09/2019 (Unaudited)	30/09/2018 (Unaudited)
1	Total income from operations	566.16	1043.13	486.02
2	Net Profit for the period before Exceptional item and tax	58.70	110.06	33.60
3	Exceptional Item (Refer Note (iv))	94.27	94.27	-
4	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before tax	(35.57)	15.79	33.60
5	Net Profit for the period after tax	8.89	42.52	21.77
6	Total Comprehensive Income for the period	(13.29)	22.98	(37.81)

ii) The above results were reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors at their meeting held on November 11, 2019. The Statutory Auditors have carried out a Limited Review of the above financial results except consolidated results of quarter ended September 30, 2018 which are certified by the Management.

iii) The Group has adopted Ind AS 116 "Leases" effective April 1, 2019, using modified retrospective method. The Group has applied the standard to all its leases with the cumulative impact recognised on the date of initial application i.e. April 1, 2019. Accordingly, previous period information has not been restated. This has resulted in recognising a Right-of-Use (ROU) asset and corresponding lease liability of Rs. 16.05 Crores. In the Statement of Profit and Loss for the current period, operating lease expenses which were recognized as other expenses in previous period is now recognized as depreciation expense for the ROU and finance cost for interest accrued on lease liability. The adoption of this standard did not have significant impact on the profit for the period and earnings per share.

iv) Exceptional Item includes Rs. 94.27 Crores provided against refund of excess export benefits of earlier years by way of MEIS claimed to the extent of Rs. 72.68 Crores along with interest thereon against Adjudication Order issued by office of The Commissioner of Customs to Holding company of the Group.

v) Holding Company of the Group elected to exercise the option permitted under section 115BAA of the Income-tax Act, 1961 as introduced by the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019. Accordingly, the Company has recognized Provision for Income Tax for the Half Year Ended September 30, 2019 and re-measured its Deferred Tax Assets based on rate prescribed in the said section. The full impact of this change has been recognized in the Statement of Profit & Loss for Quarter and Half Year Ended September 30, 2019.

vi) The Group mainly operates only in one segment namely "Textiles" and hence segment details are not required to be published.

vii) The above is an extract of the detailed format of Financial Results of the Quarter and Half Year Ended September 30, 2019 filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulation, 2015. The full Financial Results for the Quarter and Half Year Ended on September 30, 2019 are available on the website of the Stock Exchanges at [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com) and [www.nseindia.com](http://www.nseindia.com) and on the Company's website at [www.indocount.com](http://www.indocount.com).

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors  
**Kailash R. Lalpuria**  
Executive Director & CEO  
DIN 00059758

Place: Mumbai  
Date : November 11, 2019

## TENDER CARE

### Allahabad Bank's total Business Rs. 3,81,767 crores

Total Business of the Bank as on 30.09.2019 stood at Rs. 3,81,767 crore as against Rs. 3,65,577 crore as on 30.09.2018. Bank earned an Operating Profit of Rs. 632.87 crore in Q 2 FY 2019-20 as against Rs 533.96 crore in Q-2 FY 2018-19 and a consolidated Operating Profit of Rs 1492.43 crore for half year FY 2019-20. Total income from marketing of wealth products increased by 31.19% YoY. Share of CASA in total deposit improved to 48.12 % in September 2019 as against 46.87% at the end of September 2018, one of the highest in the industry. Retail Credit grew by more than 11.73% YoY basis. Cost of Deposit improved to 5.06% in Q-2 of FY 2019-20 from 5.13% in Q-2 of FY 2018-19. Provision Coverage Ratio (PCR) significantly improved to 79.30% at the end of September 2019 as against 67.81% at the end of September 2018. NNPA significantly reduced to 5.98% as on 30.09.2019 from 7.96% as on 30.09.2018. Total income increased to Rs 4622.91 cr in Q-2 FY 2019-20 from 4410.72 cr in Q-2 FY 2018-19. Net Interest Margin (NIM) stood at 2.61% as on September 2019.

### SAIL reaches out to local industries through Customer Meet

With an aim to explore business opportunities and cater to the needs of the local industries, SAIL's IISCO Steel Plant in association with Durgapur Steel Plant, Alloy Steel Plant, Central Marketing Organisation and Paschim Bardhaman Chamber of Commerce organized an outreach initiative program today at Bumpur. A total of around 50 (fifty) industry representatives, mostly from Medium and Small Scale industries situated in and around Bumpur, including Kolkata, Dhanbad, Bokaro and Durgapur participated in the program. Interacting with the industry representatives CEO (ISP, DSP & ASP) Mr A V Kamalakar highlighted the impor-



tance of local industries in developing a mutually beneficial industrial ecosystem. Underlining the potential of the Eastern region of India in becoming a Steel hub he invited industry majors to join hands with SAIL in developing upstream and downstream facilities in the region. All the Executive Directors of IISCO Steel Plant, the marketing team headed by ED (Marketing-CMO) Sri Gautam Ghosh, ED (ASP) Sri S Subbaraj, Sri V K Dhal, President- Chamber of Commerce & Industries (Paschim Bardhaman), Sri Jagdish Bagri; Secretary, Chamber of Commerce & Industries (Paschim Bardhaman), Chief General Managers and senior officials of ISP and DSP were present in the interactive session that was inaugurated by Mr Kamalakar.

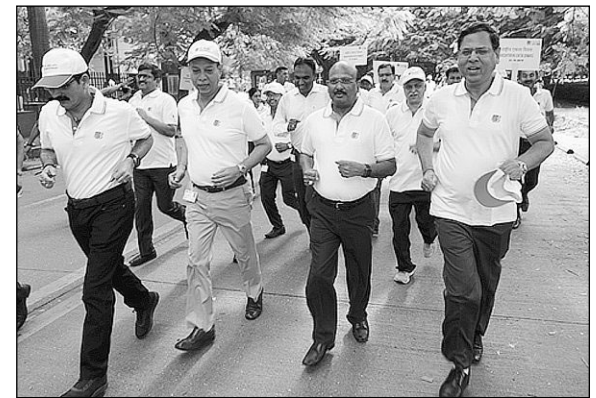
### CMD of PNB met Honorable Chief Minister



Ch. S. S. Malikarjun Rao CMD, PNB did a courtesy meeting with our honorable Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. During this, he discussed the role of the bank in the development of the state and give the detail information of bank's scheme. DZM Raman Grover, Circle head Shikha Sharma AGM Anupam Sharma were also present on this occasion.

## Commercial Feature

### 'Run for Unity' observance for 'Rashtriya Ekta Diwas'



Bank of Baroda officials celebrated 'Rashtriya Ekta Diwas 2019' by organizing 'Run for Unity' at Mumbai

### Mini Marathon rally by Union Bank



Union Bank of India, Zonal Office / Regional Office, Pune organized a 5 Km Mini Marathon / Walkathon today as part of Bank's Centenary Year Celebrations. The event was flagged off at 0730 am from Union Bank office, LIC Building, Shivajinagar by Field General Manager Shri Deepak Kambale in the presence of Shri OP Balodi, DGM Union Bank and Shri Sheshagiri Rao, DGM, Corporation Bank. About 500 people including staff members of Union Bank / Corporation Bank and general public participated in the event, marking an energetic start to the Bank's 101st Year beginning on 11.11.2019.

### Town Hall Meeting of Allahabad Bank and Indian Bank in Kolkata

A Joint Town Hall Meeting was organized on 6th November, 2019 at Kolkata by Allahabad Bank, a leading Public Sector Bank of the country, to take forward the process of amalgamation of Allahabad Bank and Indian Bank following the decision of Government of India. The Town Hall Meeting evoked overwhelming response as the members of staff of both



the Banks participated in large numbers with enthusiasm. The historic and successful Town Hall Meeting at Kolkata was the Third (3) Town Hall Meeting of the proposed Merged entity after Chennai & Vijayawada. The mammoth gathering of Executives, Officers and members of staff was addressed by Ms. Padmaja Chunduru, IMD & CEO, Indian Bank. Shri K Ramachandran & Shri P R Rajagopal, Executive Directors of Allahabad Bank also addressed the participants of both the Banks.



