

(This document comprises news clips from various media in which Balmer Lawrie is mentioned, news related to GOI and PSEs, and news from the verticals that we do business in. This will be e-mailed on every Monday.)

## BL in News

### **New LTC rules: Government officials can take private airline to travel to Jammu & Kashmir**

Central government officials have been permitted to travel to Jammu and Kashmir by private airlines as per the new Leave Travel Concession (LTC) rules. The DoPT has relaxed Central Civil Services (Leave Travel Concession) Rules, 1988 to allow travel by officials through private airlines to visit J-K.

Air tickets are to be purchased directly from the airlines (booking counters, website of airlines) or by utilising the service of authorised travel agents viz M/s Balmer Lawrie & Company, M/s Ashok Travels & Tours and IRCTC, the order said, adding that booking of tickets through other agencies is not permitted. The order, which was issued on Friday, will remain in force for a period of one year.

*The Economic Times - 2.12.2014*

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/new-ltc-rules-government-officials-can-take-private-airline-to-travel-to-jammu-kashmir/articleshow/45335815.cms>

*This piece of news has been covered in other publications as well. The links are as below:*

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/ltc-govt-servants-can-travel-by-private-airlines-to-jk/article6652810.ece?homepage=true>

[http://zeenews.india.com/news/jammu-and-kashmir/new-ltc-rules-babus-can-take-private-airline-to-travel-to-jk\\_1507687.html](http://zeenews.india.com/news/jammu-and-kashmir/new-ltc-rules-babus-can-take-private-airline-to-travel-to-jk_1507687.html)

<http://www.gconnect.in/orders-in-brief/leave-ltc/ltc/relaxation-travel-private-airlines-visit-jk-ltc.html>

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/new-ltc-rules-babus-can-take-pvt-airline-to-travel-to-j-k-114120100749\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/new-ltc-rules-babus-can-take-pvt-airline-to-travel-to-j-k-114120100749_1.html)

<http://news.statetimes.in/new-ltc-rules-babus-can-take-private-airline-travel-jk/>

### **Core sector output accelerates to 6.3% in October**

Growth in eight key infrastructure sectors reached an impressive four-month high of 6.3 per cent in October compared to 1.9 per cent the previous month but analysts said expansion in industrial production was still likely to be mild.

The October growth was mainly due to a surge in coal production, electricity generation and refinery products. The eight (core) sectors' output rose 4.3 per cent in the first seven months of this financial year, slightly higher from 4.2 per cent in the same months of last year. During the month, coal production grew 16.2 per cent, closely followed by electricity generation that rose by 13.2 per cent. Production of petroleum refinery products grew by 4.2 per cent compared to the corresponding month of 2013-14, according to data issued on Monday by the ministry of commerce and industry.

*Business Standard - 02.12.2014*

<http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/core-sector->

### **Gain from PSU divestment**

In Budget 2013-14, the government had set a target of raising Rs 37,000 crore by divesting public sector undertakings (PSUs) to meet its fiscal deficit target. With just four months to go, it is expected to flood the Street with PSU stocks. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has already given its approval. "Divestments will pick up from January," says Prithvi Haldea, chairman and managing director, Prime Database. Here's why and how you can benefit from the divestment drive.

Experts say Prime Minister Narendra Modi will turn around PSUs in the same way he improved their performance as chief minister of Gujarat. The government has already approved the revival of sick PSUs-HMT Machine Tools, Tyre Corporation, Tungabhadra Steel Products, HMT Bearings, Richardson & Cruddas, Central Inland Water Transport, and Hooghly Docks & Port Engineers. In addition to better performance, the investors' change in perception towards PSUs can help generate better valuations.

[output-accelerates-to-6-3-in-october-114120100955\\_1.html](http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/ipo-news/retail-investors-to-get-greater-pienext-psu-divestments_1246735.html)

## **Retail investors to get greater pie in next PSU divestments**

To encourage participation of small investors in PSU disinvestments, government has decided to double the quota reserved for retail investors to 20 percent for the forthcoming stake sales in bluechip companies like ONGC and Coal India. The decision assumes significance following the enthusiastic response from retail investors in the Friday's stake sale in steel major SAIL, which fetched the government Rs 1,715 crore. "In the forthcoming OFS, 20 percent of the offer size shall be reserved for retail investors," an official told PTI. So far 10 percent of the share sale was reserved for retail investors, who are allowed to invest up to Rs 2 lakh in the OFS. Also a 5 percent discount was offered to them over the bid price. However, in Follow on Public Offer (FPO), 35 percent is reserved for small investors.

*Money Control - 07.12.2014*

[http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/ipo-news/retail-investors-to-get-greater-pienext-psu-divestments\\_1246735.html](http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/ipo-news/retail-investors-to-get-greater-pienext-psu-divestments_1246735.html)

## **Disinvestment process to begin with SAIL on Friday**

Finally kicking off the disinvestment line-up for the fiscal, the government is set to divest 5 per cent stake in state-owned SAIL on Friday.

"The offer shall ... commence on December 5, 2014, at 9:15 am and shall close on the same date at 3:30 pm," said the state-owned steel firm in a filing to the stock exchanges on Wednesday. At current market prices, the stake sale is likely to raise over Rs 1,700 crore. While this is just a small chunk of the Rs 43,425 crore that the Centre has Budgeted from disinvestment proceeds in 2014-15, it is significant as it is the first stake sale this fiscal. "This is a start. Market conditions are good and over the next two months, we will have a host of stake sales. Disinvestment in ONGC as well as CIL is likely to take place early in the new year," said a senior official.

*Indian Express - 03.12.2014*

<http://indianexpress.com/article/business/business-others/disinvestment-process-to-begin-with-sail-on-friday/>

*The Times of India - 08.12.2014*

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Business/India-Business/Gain-from-PSU-divestment/articleshow/45408023.cms>

## **CPSEs like Coal India, NHPC, MMTc and others functioning without regular chief execs: GM Siddeshwara**

The government has said that 32 central public sector enterprises are functioning without a regular chief executive. The list includes marquee companies such as Coal India, NHPC, MMTCBSE 1.47 % and Power Finance Corporation. "These posts are being manned by making additional charge arrangements so that the regular functioning of concerned CPSEs is not affected," minister of state for heavy industries GM Siddeshwara said on Tuesday. The government has proposed to divest 10% stake in Coal India BSE 0.30 % and 11.36% stake in NHPC. The other companies on the list include telecom operators BSNL and MTNL BSE 8.24 %, and Airport Authority of India (AAI).

*Economic Times - 03.12.2014*

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/cpses-like-coal-india-nhpc-mmtc-and-others-functioning-without-regular-chief-execs-gm-siddeshwara/articleshow/45354120.cms>

## **Brent crude falls to 5-year low**

Crude oil markets rose on Monday after hitting a five-year low, rebounding after data suggested that tumbling prices may have started to affect drilling activity in the fast-growing US shale oil industry. A weaker dollar, which makes commodities denominated in the greenback more affordable to holders of other currencies, also enticed buying in oil and other natural resource markets, traders said. Benchmark Brent crude oil was up \$1.15, or 1.7 per cent, at \$71.30 a barrel by 10:25 am EST (1525 GMT). It had fallen \$2.62 earlier to \$63.72, a low since July 2009. US crude was up \$1.35, or 2 per cent, at \$67.50, after a five-day bottom hit at \$63.72. "There's a sense that the market got a little bit ahead of itself, and we're seeing some producer buying come in and it's driving the market back up," said Phil Flynn, analyst at the Price Futures Group in Chicago.

*Business Standard - 02.12.2014*

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/international/brent-crude-falls-to-5-year-low-114120200014\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/international/brent-crude-falls-to-5-year-low-114120200014_1.html)

## **PSU refiners want specialised trading desks for crude oil**

When it comes to importing oil, every cent saved matters. And that's why public sector oil companies want to have a specialised trading desk to source crude oil, so that they can bargain better in the spot market. Their private sector counterparts Reliance and Essar already have such a desk, with experts negotiating prices.

Currently, state-owned oil firms buy crude oil in the spot market after a tendering process, which means they may not be always be able to get the market price. "A trading desk will help in negotiating the best price at any time," said a senior Indian Oil Corporation official. India imports a bulk of the crude required for its 215-million-tonne refining capacity. Between April and October this fiscal year, the crude import bill was \$80.1 billion. The public sector refiners — IndianOil, Bharat Petroleum Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation — imported nearly 43 million tonnes of crude during this period.

*The Hindu Business Line - 02.12.2014*

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/psu-refiners-want-specialised-trading-desks-for-crude-oil/article6658973.ece>

## **Excise duty on petrol, diesel raised; to have no impact on retail prices**

The government has raised the excise duty on petrol by Rs 2.25 per litre and diesel by Rs 1 per litre without raising retail prices, the second such move in three weeks that will split the benefit of the steep fall in crude oil prices between consumers and the exchequer. Consumers have already gained with a 11% fall in petrol prices and 8% cut in diesel in recent months as crude oil entered a bear market and plunged about 37% since June. For the government, it means addition revenue of Rs 10,000 crore in the current fiscal year, which will help meet India's fiscal deficit target of 4.1% of gross domestic product. This includes Rs 4,000 crore from Tuesday's tax increase and balance from higher tax of Rs 1.50 per litre on both the fuels announced last month.

*The Economic Times - 03.12.2014*

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/excise-duty-on-petrol-diesel-raised-to-have-no-impact-on-retail-prices/articleshow/45346636.cms>

## **Vajpayee's birthday to be celebrated as 'Good Governance Day'**

Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's birthday on December 25 would be observed as national 'Good Governance Day', Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday. Modi was

## **Gross refining margins fall to four-year low as fuel prices slump**

State-owned refineries in India have seen their gross refining margins, (GRMs) a key metric of profitability, fall to a four-year low due the low prices of petrol and diesel which account for the bulk of sales for these firms. GRM is the difference between the price at which refiners purchase crude oil and the price at which they sell the end product after refining. Major refined products are petrol (gasoline), diesel (gas oil), kerosene, LPG, furnace oil and naphtha. According to data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC), a statistical body under the ministry of petroleum and natural gas, Indian Oil Corp. Ltd (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum Corp. Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corp. Ltd (HPCL) are operating at GRMs which are the lowest in the last four fiscals. At September-end 2014, IOCL posted an average GRM of \$0.09 per barrel, BPCL \$2.36 per barrel and HPCL \$2.09 per barrel.

*Mint - 08.12.2014*

<http://www.livemint.com/Industry/Pay28pG1nQeHBOFBTb4vXO/Gross-refining-margins-fall-to-four-year-low-as-fuel-prices.html>

## **Green concerns raised to derail India developmental efforts: Anant Geete**

Holding developed countries responsible for environmental imbalance, Anant Geete, Union Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises, has said concerns over environment are often raised to derail India's efforts to join the list of developed countries. Addressing the inaugural PSU edition of the Express Technology Sabha in Hyderabad last Saturday, Geete, who was the chief guest, said: "The way we are concerned about environment, even the developed countries are not as concerned. I don't think India can be held responsible for the imbalance in environment existing today. The developed countries are responsible."

*The Financial Express - 03.12.2014*

<http://www.financialexpress.com/article/miscellaneous/green-concerns-raised-to-derail-india-developmental-efforts-anant-geete/15069/>

## **Central PSUs like NTPC, NHPC queue up to take part in Vibrant Gujarat**

State-run energy majors are making a beeline for the upcoming Vibrant Gujarat summit, which they had cold-shouldered before Narendra Modi became the prime minister,

addressing party MPs at the meeting of the BJP parliamentary party, where BJP president Amit Shah was also present.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi told the party MPs that the birthday of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee would be observed as national 'Good Governance Day' on December 25, where all BJP MPs and government officials will make the day symbolic of good governance," minister of state for parliamentary affairs Rajiv Pratap Rudy told reporters. He said the Prime Minister also asked all party MPs to highlight all BJP-run governments and bodies across the country as models of good governance on the day.

*The Times of India - 02.12.2014*

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Vajpayee-s-birthday-to-be-celebrated-as-Good-Governance-Day/articleshow/45346872.cms>

### **Infrastructure must get top priority**

If industry is asked to list its problems, infrastructure will be right on top, probably second only to "ease of doing business." As in most other issues, there are too many players involved in infrastructure, the result being that responsibility cannot be pinned on any one agency. For instance, while the Centre takes care of the national highways, it still needs the co-operation of the States to improve them. Roads, other than national highways, are maintained by the States. As far as the power sector is concerned, the regulation is framed by the Centre, but power is a State subject. Both roads and electricity, not to mention ports and airports, are crucial for the manufacturing sector. The 12th Plan document says manufacturing enterprises require good physical infrastructure to be competitive and this means improving transportation, uninterrupted power and adequate land to build. "The quality and efficiency of the physical and administrative infrastructure are a basic requirement for productive manufacturing enterprises. This is a major weakness in India at present," it says.

*The Hindu Business Line - 03.12.2014*

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/macro-economy/infrastructure-must-get-top-priority/article6655630.ece?homepage=true>

### **Freight rates for select destinations slide**

Freight rates for nine-tonne pay load section for select destinations were down Rs 500 in the local truck transport market today on restricted cargo movements against adequate availability of trucks. Transporters said besides restricted cargo movements, easy availability of trucks mainly led to the decline in select destinations freight rates. Freight rates for Mumbai, Pune and Kolkata were down by Rs 500 each to Rs 26,500, Rs 28,500 and

while private sector energy giants such as Reliance Industries, Cairn India and Suzlon are top sponsors for the three-day event in the second week of January.

"The prime minister and key ministers from the Centre will attend Vibrant Gujarat summit for the first time and Indian corporate houses including PSUs are trying to put up their best show. Following the promising feedback from large number of central PSUs, we have already earmarked space for them for trade exhibition," said a Gujarat government official.

*The Economic Times - 04.12.2014*

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/central-psus-like-ntpc-nhpc-queue-up-to-take-part-in-vibrant-gujarat/articleshow/45366965.cms>

### **Prices of goods moved by freight trains may rise**

Prices of goods transported by container trains may rise as freight rates are set to go up in December. A series of increases in charges imposed by the Indian Railways and container shipping lines may push firms that move goods on container trains to raise prices of their products. The railways has levied a 10% congestion charge on base freight rates for goods that originate at ports. The new surcharge has been effective since 24 November. To add to the woes of firms that transport goods through trains, haulage charges have also been raised by 27%, starting 5 December. Haulage charges are imposed for using railway tracks, signals and telecommunications infrastructure and constitute about 75% of the operating cost of container train operators. This, in turn, will increase transport and logistics costs for firms, forcing them to pass the additional costs to customers. Sectors that may be hit include fast-moving consumer goods, steel, automobiles and ancillaries among others.

*Mint - 02.12.2014*

<http://www.livemint.com/Industry/zqJyyadQNaOj3HA1CZx60N/Prices-of-goods-moved-by-freight-trains-may-rise.html>

### **All Above Board | Time to set up a rail tariff regulator**

Beginning 5 December, the rates for moving cargo containers by rail will go up by as much as 41% after the Indian Railways decided to hike rail haulage charges for this segment. The hike in rail haulage charges, the ninth since the sector was opened to private funds in 2006, will have a crippling impact on some 15 licensed container train operators who have

Rs 29,500 respectively. Following are today's freights per nine-tonne load (in Rs): Jaipur 13,500 Hyderabad 56,000 Chandigarh 15,500 Vijayawada 58,000 Ludhiana 16,500 Bangalore 63,000 Kanpur 18,000 Chennai 63,000 Indore 19,000 Mysore 67,000 Ahmedabad 20,000 Pondicherry 64,000 Baroda 22,000 Coimbatore 69,000 Patna 25,000 Kochi 74,000 Surat 25,000 Thiruvananthapuram 77,000 Mumbai 26,500 Goa 51,000 Pune 28,500 Gwalior 13,000 Kolkata 29,500 Guwahati 52,000.

*Business Standard - 02.12.2014*

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/freight-rates-for-select-destinations-slide-114120200612\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/freight-rates-for-select-destinations-slide-114120200612_1.html)

### **Major ports regulator on way out; rates to be market-based**

In the first instance of a government winding down a sectoral regulator, the Tariff Authority for Major Ports (TAMP) will soon be disbanded, leaving major ports free to set market-driven rates. The government plans to amend the port laws for this purpose. The shipping ministry is moving the Cabinet for approval to place a Port Laws Amendment Bill, 2014, in Parliament during the current session. TAMP was formed in 1997 through amendments to the Indian Ports Act, 1908, and Major Ports Trust Act, 1963. With the initiation in recent years of encouragement for private investment in the sector, it had been thought necessary to keep a central regulatory body as a check against economic destabilisation, by introducing rate ceilings. TAMP was also meant to protect against development of private monopolies.

*Business Standard - 05.12.2014*

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/major-ports-regulator-on-way-out-rates-to-be-market-based-114120401040\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/major-ports-regulator-on-way-out-rates-to-be-market-based-114120401040_1.html)

### **IndiGo goes for lighter seats to fly more cargo, cut fuel costs**

IndiGo, the country's largest airline, is learnt to have opted for lighter aircraft seats in a move that will allow it to fly more freight and cut annual fuel costs by ₹40 crore. The operating empty weight (OEW) of every aircraft will come down by about 700 kg as the carrier is going in for thinner and lighter seats called Sicma Dragonfly, manufactured by France's Zodiac Aerospace. The 'Dragonfly' seats are expected to offer 1-2 inches of extra legroom. However, the thinner cushioning may be uncomfortable for some passengers. Seventy aircraft from IndiGo's fleet have already been retrofitted with the SICMA seats, it is understood. IndiGo, which operates a fleet of 85 single-aisle Airbus 320 aircraft, previously used 'Weber 5600 seats'. Industry watchers say that all

invested hundreds of crore to buy rakes and set up inland cargo terminals. These operators have to pay rail haulage charges to railways for using its track, signalling and telecommunications infrastructure. Such charge typically accounts for about 80-85% of the operational expenses of a rail operator. The railways has also imposed a congestion surcharge of 10% on all rail traffic originating in ports. About 55% of India's container traffic originates in ports.

*Mint - 04.12.2014*

<http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/BzM9Z10xp8dc8z7nXemRaJ/All-Above-Board--Time-to-set-up-a-rail-tariff-regulator.html>

### **GST still not in place, states dismantle VAT**

Even before a debate began on how exclusion of petroleum products and a high revenue neutral rate (RNR) among other regressive proposals could sully the image of the proposed Goods and Services Tax (GST), several major states had already impaired the structure of its precursor, the Value Added Tax. While experts vouch for the principles that must guide the GST/VAT design, namely levy at every transaction of businesses above a threshold and input tax credit for every buyer except the final consumer, these state governments have over the past few years violated them, almost recklessly. The state VAT launched about a decade ago has been deprived of its ability to produce incremental economic growth. The states' policies that run contrary to the tenets of the VAT system began as they hiked tax rates by a quarter post-2009 when the Centre was still to withdraw a fiscal stimulus.

*The Financial Express - 02.12.2014*

<http://www.financialexpress.com/article/economy/gst-still-not-in-place-states-dismantle-vat/>

### **Railside warehouses to be constructed at 5 locations**

The Central Railside Warehouse Company (CRWC) is in talks with the Railways for constructing railside warehouse in five locations across the country at an average cost of Rs 15 crore each. In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Food and Consumer Affairs Raosaheb Patil Danve informed that these warehouses would be located at Gandhidham (Gujarat), Bhiwandi Road (Maharashtra), Pahleja (Bihar), New Guwahati (Assam) and Yashwantpur (Karnataka). "The estimated average cost of construction of each warehouse is approx Rs 15 crore," he added. The minister said that there are four projects where work is yet to start. He said that for two sites at Gandhidham and Guwahati, approval for the

future aircraft procured by the budget airline will be pre-fitted with SICMA seats. Recently, IndiGo placed the single-largest order ever for narrow body aircraft, signing an agreement with Airbus for 250 A320 neo (new engine option) planes.

*The Hindu Business Line - 02.12.2014*

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/logistics/indigo-goes-for-lighter-seats-to-fly-more-cargo-cut-fuel-costs/article6652349.ece?homepage=true>

## **Railways Take Various Steps to Improve Freight Share**

The Ministry of Railways has approved a pilot project on trial basis for running of RoadRailer train and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a private firm to increase freight earnings. Presently, transportation of trucks by Railway wagons is undertaken under the nomenclature 'Roll-on-Roll-off' (Ro-Ro) scheme on the network of Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd. To improve freight share of Railways, the following inventive steps have been taken by Indian Railways:(1) Procurement of wagons by private investors through Public Private Partnership mode

*Business Standard - 05.12.2014*

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/government-press-release/railways-take-various-steps-to-improve-freight-share-114120500698\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/government-press-release/railways-take-various-steps-to-improve-freight-share-114120500698_1.html)

## **Logistics firms build up capability to cater to e-commerce**

Growth in online shopping has prompted logistics companies to build efficiencies to handle demanding tasks for the e-commerce industry. Grappling with the challenges thrown by this sector, logistics firms, especially those catering to e-commerce, are expanding their distribution coverage and upgrading IT infrastructure apart from training people to ensure timely delivery.

"Most players are gearing up to improve their last mile connectivity and cater to customer requirements like returns, trials and cash on delivery. There also has been a strong emphasis to set up fulfilment centres either on their own or outsourced to third parties across all points of presence," said Ritesh Chandra, Executive Director and Head of Consumer Group, Avendus Capital. Most logistics service providers have focused on delivering superior customer experience.

*The Hindu - 04.12.2014*

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/logistics-firms-build-up-capability-to-cater-to-ecommerce/article6662186.ece>

proposed layout plans is awaited from the Railways. The other two sites at Malda and Cochin have been refused by the Railways due to their other requirements. Alternate sites have not been identified.

*Business Standard - 02.12.2014*

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/railside-warehouses-to-be-constructed-at-5-locations-114120200901\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/railside-warehouses-to-be-constructed-at-5-locations-114120200901_1.html)

## **Don't derail container train operators**

The Railways may have several reasons to justify its decision to hike haulage charges on private container trains by 25 per cent from December 5. However, such a steep increase at one go could be counter-productive for a variety of reasons. One, private train operators, generally referred to as CTOs, may not be able to pass the entire burden on to their customers. This is because, they assert, the overall increase in haulage charges--the fee paid by them to the Railways for using its line-works out to 27-41 per cent. In addition, there is a 10 per cent congestion surcharge on cargo originating from ports. Private operators fear they would lose cargo to road if they try to recover the additional levy from their customers.

*The Hindu Business Line - 05.12.2014*

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/logistics/dont-derail-container-train-operators/article6665142.ece>

## **50 Major Railway Stations identified for integrated cleanliness through outsourcing**

The Railway Board has issued a set of guidelines to all Zonal Railways for inviting tenders for engaging professional/reputed agencies for the purpose of outsourcing of cleanliness at 50 major railway station of A1 & A categories on Indian Railways. The Minister of Railways Shri Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu has been emphasizing on sustained cleanliness activities on Indian Railways. Some of the general guidelines are;

The cleanliness contract should be an integrated contract covering the entire station which shall include the whole geographical area of the station covering tracks, platforms, all parts of the building, concourse, approach road, parking area.

*Business Standard - 02.12.2014*

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/government-press-release/50-major-railway-stations-identified-for-integrated-cleanliness-through-outsourcing-to-114120200950\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/government-press-release/50-major-railway-stations-identified-for-integrated-cleanliness-through-outsourcing-to-114120200950_1.html)

## **Suresh Prabhu forms another panel for suggesting ways to get railway finances back on track**

Railway minister Suresh Prabhu has set up a panel to suggest ways to improve the financial health of the transporter. The mandate of the committee headed by D K Mittal—former secretary, financial services—is to identifying avenues to reduce expenditure while studying the efficacy and sufficiency of the existing revenue structure. It is also tasked with recommending ways to raise revenues besides locating financial leakages in the system. The nine-member panel will also propose methods to monetize resources of railways.

A senior official said that the minister has formed the committee, which would submit its report by December 21, to project a much clearer picture about railway finance and concrete steps to be taken to push transporter out of the financial mess to bring it in line with budget announcements.

*The Times of India - 04.12.2014*

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Suresh-Prabhu-forms-another-panel-for-suggesting-ways-to-get-railway-finances-back-on-track/articleshow/45368010.cms>

## **Domestic airline bookings up 73% as discounts fuel Christmas travel**

Domestic airline bookings for this year's Christmas-New Year travel season have risen 73 per cent over last year, as passengers are looking to cash in on discount offers and advance purchase fares, say executives of leading online travel agencies.

Between July and November, there has been a 73 per cent growth in the number of bookings for flights in the holiday period from December 22 to January 4. In November alone, year-on-year growth in flight bookings for the season was almost 40 per cent, said Ranjeet Oak, senior vice-president (flights), MakeMyTrip, a leading Indian online travel agency. The current one-way fares on popular routes like Delhi-Goa and Mumbai-Goa for December 24 are up 25-35 per cent over those last year. But fares for the festive holiday season on tickets booked during the June-November period were seven per cent lower than in 2013.

*Business Standard - 05.12.2014*

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/domestic-airline-bookings-up-73-as-discount-offers-fuel-christmas-travel-114120400130\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/domestic-airline-bookings-up-73-as-discount-offers-fuel-christmas-travel-114120400130_1.html)

## **Govt launches e-visa for 43 countries**

Giving tourism sector a significant push, the government on Wednesday launched the much-touted online visa facility for 43 countries including the US, Australia, Japan, Israel, Germany and Singapore. Travelers can apply for a visa from the comfort of their homes and receive it within 72 hours.

The electronic travel authorization (ETA) will be valid for 30 days and visa fee has been fixed at \$62. Those traveling on leisure, short duration medical treatment, casual business visit or to meet friends and relatives will be eligible to apply. The facility will be made available at nine airports including Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kochi, Goa, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Thiruvananthapuram. Assuring safe and secure tourism for foreign tourists, home minister Rajnath Singh said, "We want to promote tourism in the country in a big way. The contribution of tourism in the GDP is approximately 7% and we want to double it."

*The Times of India - 03.12.2014*

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Govt-launches-e-visa-for-43-countries/articleshow/45367887.cms>

## **Will ensure 24x7 power to all Indians by March 2019: Piyush Goyal**

Reiterating the promise of 24x7 electricity to all by 2019, Power Minister Piyush Goyal today said use of information technology will help in achieving the target. "IT-enabled smart grids can have tremendous impact on the energy sector in India - right from power generation to power consumption. We will ensure that all Indians have 24x7 electricity by March 2019," Goyal said while addressing the inaugural session of Digital India Conclave 2014.

The minister said the government is committed to preventing widespread coal thefts by use of CCTV cameras. Goyal had earlier said the government has initiated speedy environmental clearances, steps to protect environment, renewed thrust to wind power capacity addition besides clearing the long-pending transmission projects worth Rs 12,272 crore. The minister had stated that these steps would be the government's vision for providing 24x7 consistent power.

*The Economic Times - 05.12.2014*

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/power/will-ensure-24x7-power-to-all-indians-by-march-2019-piyush-goyal/articleshow/45384992.cms>

## **Users to soon get choice of selecting power discom: Goyal**

Consumers will soon be able to choose their power supply company as the government is making necessary amendments to the Electricity Act to enable this provision which is aimed at encouraging greater competition in the distribution sector. Shifting focus from generation, the government plans to fix electricity distribution which is often described as the Achilles heel of the power sector.

*The Times of India - 06.12.2014*

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Business/India-Business/Users-to-soon-get-choice-of-selecting-power-discom-Goyal/articleshow/45396953.cms>

## **Shri Avijit Ghosh appointed as CMD, HECL**

Govt has appointed Shri Avijit Ghosh, Director (Mining), HCL, as CMD, Heavy Engineering Corporation Limited

*Indian Buzz - 03.12.2014*

<http://indianbuzz.com/avijit-ghosh-cmd-hecl/>