

(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 uploaded on intranet and website every Monday.)

Balmer Lawrie in News

Business Standard – 21.03.2017

The Telegraph – 22.03.2017

Observance of National Safety Week at Balmer Lawrie



The 46th National Safety Week was observed from 04 to 10 March, 2017 at all the units and establishments of Balmer Lawrie. The observance of the week commenced with employees taking the safety pledge followed by C & MD's Message. A series of events like spot the hazard, quiz, extempore, safety skit, essay and slogan writing, were organized for the employees. A Training on Defensive Driving was also conducted for Balmer Lawrie officials by Hubert Ebner (India) Pvt. Ltd.

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Observance of National Safety Week (Balmer Lawrie)

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The Indian
Express
24.03.2017

बामर लॉरी ने मनाया राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा सप्ताह

जागरण संवाददाता, कोलकाता : बामर लॉरी की सभी इकाइयों एवं कार्यालयों में 46वां राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा सप्ताह मनाया गया। सी एंड एमडी के संदेश के बाद कर्मचारियों ने सुरक्षा का संकल्प लिया। इस अवसर पर सुरक्षा संबंधी कई कार्यक्रम आयोजित किए गए। प्रश्नोत्तरी, निबंध लेखन इत्यादि कार्यक्रमों का आयोजन किया गया। मौके पर बामर लॉरी के अधिकारियों को कार्पोरेट ऑफिस में रक्षात्मक ड्राइविंग का प्रशिक्षण दिया गया। यह प्रशिक्षण हबर्ट एल्नर (इंडिया) प्राइवेट लिमिटेड द्वारा दिया गया। कंपनी ने सभी विनिर्माण एवं सेवा व्यवसाय के क्षेत्र में वर्ष 2016-17 के दौरान जीरो लॉस्ट टाइम इंज्युरी (एलटीआइ) हासिल की है। यह कंपनी के इतिहास में मील का पत्थर है। कंपनी द्वारा अपनाए गए 10 स्वर्ण सुरक्षा नियमों का उद्घाटन निदेशक एसएस खुटिया (वित्त) ने किया।

India to be No 3 Consumer Market by 2025

India is set to be the world's third largest consumer market by 2025 with consumption expected to triple to \$4 trillion by then as rising income drives changes in consumer behaviours and spending patterns, The Boston Consulting Group said in a report. India's year-on-year expenditure growth is currently 12%, more than double the anticipated global rate of 5%, the report said. "India's consumer market is poised for fundamental change," said Nimisha Jain, a BCG partner and co-author of the report titled 'The New Indian: The Many Facets of a Changing Consumer.' "As the consumer market continues to grow and evolve, companies will need to shed conventional wisdom, try multiple business models simultaneously, and be prepared for rapid change internally to adapt to changing consumer needs and behaviours," she added. The elite and affluent income segments will constitute 40% of all spending by 2025 and the report said that for the first time, the wealthy will represent the largest consumption segment.

The Economic Times - 22.03.2017

<http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com/Article.aspx?eid=31817&articlexml=India-to-be-No-3-Consumer-Market-by-22032017005022>

FM says it's urgent to pass GST bills in this Parl session

The Indian government on Thursday emphasised the urgency to pass the GST laws during the current session of Parliament, saying the Centre and the states would otherwise lose their right to collect indirect taxes after September 15. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said in the Rajya Sabha that the government is keen to roll out the GST on July 1 and other aspects like bringing petroleum and land under its ambit will be considered after the first year of implementation of the new system of indirect tax collection. Replying to a debate on the Budget which was approved by the House later, he said four bills supporting the Constitution amendment law on GST enacted last year will be introduced in the Lok Sabha shortly. These have to be passed in this session to meet the September 15 deadline for switching over to the new indirect tax regime, Jaitley said. The ongoing Budget session ends on April 12. He said the GST Constitutional Amendment Bill does not provide for extension of the deadline beyond September 15 this year for transition to GST regime.

Millennium Post - 23.03.2017

<http://www.millenniumpost.in/business/fm-says-its-urgent-to-pass-gst-bills-in-this-parl-session-221539>

Profit growth for manufacturing cos improved significantly in Q3: RBI

Net profit growth of listed private sector manufacturing companies improved significantly in the third quarter of this fiscal, while there was a contraction in the services (other than IT) sector, the RBI said today. Releasing data on abridged financial results of 2,784 listed private non-financial companies for October-December period of 2016-17, the Reserve Bank said improved profit growth despite rise in expenditure characterised performance of the private corporate business sector during the third quarter. "Net profit growth improved significantly for the manufacturing sector, which also pulled up net profit growth at the aggregate level, despite a contraction in the services (other than IT) sector," it said. The net profit of listed private non-financial companies in the third quarter was Rs 53,000 crore, up 24.6 per cent year-on-year. The expansion in net profit was about 16 per cent in the previous two quarters of the current fiscal. The net profit of manufacturing companies stood at Rs 33,600 crore, up 57.5 per cent year-on-year.

The Economic Times - 23.03.2017

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/profit-growth-for-manufacturing-cos-improved-significantly-in-q3-rbi/articleshow/57797419.cms>

How four PSUs are paying dividends in record time

Four public sector undertakings—Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum (BPCL), Hindustan Petroleum (HPCL) and Coal India — are paying an out-of-turn second interim dividend to help the government shore up its revenues. Most of these companies paid interim dividends less than a month ago. To ensure the latest dividend pay-out take place before the end of the fiscal, the state-owned entities had to obtain market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India's (Sebi's) leeway on certain regulations. The state-owned entities got exemption from the applicability of regulation 29(2), regulation 42(2) and regulation 42(3) of Sebi LODR (listing obligations and disclosure requirements) Regulations, 2015. Regulation 42 acts as a guideline for all listed entities on intimation of record date during declaration of dividend, issue of bonus or right shares and other corporate actions like mergers, de-mergers, stock splits, among others.

Business Standard - 24.03.2017

http://www.business-standard.com/article/markets/how-four-psus-are-paying-dividends-in-record-time-117032400385_1.html

CPSEs' profitability rises but turnover down in FY16

Financial year 2016 turned out to be a mixed one for central public-sector enterprises (CPSE), according to the government's Public Sector Enterprise survey for the year. While net profitability increased for the CPSE segment as a whole, rising 12.54 per cent compared to the previous year, gross turnovers declined by 7.04 per cent. SAIL, with a net loss of Rs 4,137.25 crore, topped the top 10 loss-makers list. The list of top 10 loss-making central public-sector firms saw five new entrants – Steel Authority of India, ONGC Videsh Limited, Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited, PEC Limited and Bharat Heavy Electricals. The steel-major had entered the loss-making list after three years, with the company posting a net profit of Rs 2,092.68 crore in 2014-15. Others topping the loss-makers list were Bharat Sanchar Nigam, embroiled in a highly competitive battle with other telecom majors for new and existing subscribers, and Air India. BSNL posted a net loss Rs 3,880 crore in 2015-16 and Air India posted a net loss of Rs 3836.78 crore.

The New Indian Express - 25.03.2017

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/business/2017/mar/25/cpses-profitability-rises-but-turnover-down-in-fy16-1585563.html>

Mann ki Baat: PM urges people to use less cash for daily needs

Asking the people to take the fight against black money and graft to the 'next level', Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged them to use less cash in their daily lives and continue to support the movement towards digital payments started after the note ban. In his monthly 'Mann ki Baat' programme, he also spoke of building a 'New India', which he said can be achieved when 125 crore Indians take a pledge and unitedly work towards it. "My dear countrymen, we must take our fight against black money and corruption to the next level. ... We should contribute towards ensuring reducing the use of cash, of currency notes," the prime minister said. Asking the people to pay school fees, buy medicines or items from fair price shops or purchase air and train tickets digitally, he said, "We can do this in our day to day lives. You can't imagine how you can serve the country in this way and become a brave soldier in the fight against black money and corruption."

Rediff.com - 26.03.2017

<http://www.rediff.com/news/report/mann-ki-baat-pm-urges-people-to-use-less-cash-for-daily-needs/20170326.htm>

Yes bank, Indian Oil among Business Superbrands winners for 2017

Superbrands India unveiled the fifth edition of 'Business Superbrands' on March 24. As many as 1,100 brands were screened against its proprietary six-point mark on a scale of 1-10. Superbrands India Private Limited, the Indian partner of London-headquartered Superbrands Worldwide, awarded the winners for 2017. Superbrands is internationally recognised as the Oscar's of Branding in over 90 countries. The winning brands, whose stories are captured in a coffee table book – Business Superbrands – will have the privilege of using the Superbrands award seal, as a mark of distinction in all its communications for the next 18 months. In a departure from the norm, when a senior minister from the central cabinet usually gave away the award, this time in keeping with the Prime Minister's initiative of taking the entire country along, the awards were presented by SOS Children's Villages, to the heads of 33 important organisations in India.

Millennium Post - 26.03.2017

<http://www.millenniumpost.in/business/yes-bank-indian-oil-among-business-superbrands-winners-for-2017-222040>

Efforts on to reduce crude oil imports, says Pradhan

Steps are being taken to enhance oil and gas production to reduce crude oil imports, which has accounted for 82 per cent of the total domestic consumption this fiscal, the government said today. Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said the target is to reduce energy imports by 10 per cent by 2021-22. To reduce imports to meet the energy needs, the government has "taken several steps to enhance exploration and production of oil and gas in the country," he told the Lok Sabha during Question Hour. In the current fiscal till January, the share of imported crude on the basis of domestic consumption stood at 82 per cent. Last financial year, the same was at 80.9 per cent, as per figures provided by the Minister in a written reply. Over the last three financial years, the amount of imported crude has been on the rise. In 2013-14, it stood at 77.6 per cent and rose to 78.5 per cent in 2014-15.

PTI - 21.03.2017

http://www.ptinews.com/news/8520280_Efforts-on-to-reduce-crude-oil-imports--says-Pradhan.html

6.73 lakh LPG consumers have given up subsidy

Ever since the Central government announced the Give It Up scheme for LPG where consumers gave up subsidy on refills, a total of 6,73,347 families in the State have opted for the scheme. In July 2015, the number of persons who gave up subsidy on cylinder refills was 1,01,354 in the State. "Each month, an average of around 10,200 consumers of the three oil majors are giving up the subsidy. Through our sustained campaign, people use the option on the IVRS mode and also go online to opt out of getting subsidy," explained an oil industry source. Tamil Nadu has 1.01 crore active LPG consumers. However, there are consumers who get back to the respective oil companies to reverse the opting out. "Some say they have pressed the wrong entry on the IVRS mode and request us and we do oblige them.

The Hindu - 23.03.2017

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-tamilnadu/673-lakh-lpg-consumers-have-given-up-subsidy/article17596622.ece>

Crude oil production fell 3.4% in February

Crude oil production fell 3.4 per cent in February 2017 as compared to the corresponding period last year. According to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, crude oil production stood at 27.97 million tonnes in February. Natural gas production fell by 1.66 per cent compared to the corresponding period last year. Natural gas production stood at 2522.54 MMSCM in February. Refinery production in February 2017 was 190.50 mt, which was 2.33 per cent lower as compared to that in February 2016. Crude oil production by ONGC was 2.17 per cent lower as compared to February 2016. ONGC's crude oil production in February 2017 stood at 17.41 mt. The reasons for shortfall in production were delays in deployment of MOPU-Sagar Samrat, implementation of Development of Western Periphery of MHS (ZC) Project, and a natural decline in matured fields of the Western Offshore.

The Hindu Business Line - 23.03.2017

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/crude-oil-production-falls-34-in-february/article9595975.ece>

Demand for minimum gas price

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has sought a review of the natural gas pricing formula as rates have dropped below cost. India's largest natural gas producer demanded a floor or minimum price of natural gas be fixed at \$4.2 per million British thermal unit (mBtu) for the business to make economic sense. The BJP-led government in October 2014 had evolved a new pricing formula using rates prevalent in gas surplus nations such as the US, Canada and Russia to determine the rates for the country. Prices have halved to \$2.5 per mBtu since the formula was implemented. "Keeping in view of cost of production of gas, cost of alternate fuels and other market dynamics, the ministry of petroleum and natural gas is requested to review the existing domestic gas price formula and provide a floor price at least to the level of earlier APM (regulated) price (\$4.20 per mBtu)/non-APM price (\$4.20 to \$5.25 per mBtu) fixed in June 2010," ONGC said in a letter to the oil ministry.

The Telegraph - 23.03.2017

https://www.telegraphindia.com/1170323/jsp/business/story_142106.jsp

Petroleum ministry, DIPAM monitoring oil PSU integration process, says Dharmendra Pradhan

The ministry of petroleum and natural gas, along with the department of investment and public asset management (DIPAM), is closely monitoring the process of integration of oil and gas companies, oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Friday, adding the government has given a policy guideline to the companies. "We have asked the companies to hire consultants, look at the profit and loss situation and then come up with concrete proposals," added Pradhan at a press conference in New Delhi to launch an integrated social media platform — MoPNG e-Seva — which will be used to address grievances of consumers. Finance minister Arun Jaitley had in his Budget speech announced the government plans to merge state-owned oil and gas entities to create an integrated company which will have the "capacity to bear higher risks, avail economies of scale, take higher investment decisions and create more value for the stakeholders".

The Financial express - 25.03.2017

<http://www.financialexpress.com/economy/petroleum-ministry-dipam-monitoring-oil-psu-integration-process-says-dharmendra-pradhan/601747/>

India's crude steel output up 8.9% at 8.1 MT in Feb

Oil Ministry seeks integration road map from state oil companies

The oil ministry has directed state oil firms to prepare a roadmap for creating integrated firms. Oil secretary Kapil Dev Tripathi held a short meeting with the chairmen of state oil firms last week and asked them to submit their respective plans for integration within weeks, according to the people present in the meeting. Top executives of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), Oil India, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum (BPCL), Hindustan Petroleum (HPCL) and GAIL attended. In their plan, companies have to indicate who they will prefer to combine with and what kind of synergy that will bring, a person privy to the meeting said.

Khabar India - 23.03.2017

<https://www.khabarindia.in/oil-ministry-seeks-integration-road-map-state-oil-companies/>

Oil min puts cure for gas troubles on social media

Next time you have an issue or query about your LPG supply or service at a petrol pump, just take to social media for immediate redressal through the oil ministry's latest e-initiative. Oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Friday launched a dedicated grievances redressal platform - MoPNG_eSeva - on Twitter and Facebook. It will be expanded to other social media in due course. MOPNG e-Seva will serve as a single-point interface, allowing consumers to convey their grievances and feedback directly to the government for real-time response. A team of officers from state-run fuel retailers and allied services have been formed to monitor conversations and address complaints and queries in real time. MOPNG e-Seva will also provide 24x7 support to consumers. It is these features which differentiates the latest portal from the social media accounts of the ministry or companies.

Economic Times - 27.03.2017

<http://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/oil-min-puts-cure-for-gas-troubles-on-social-media/57847603>

Dharmendra Pradhan reaches out to Odisha with PM's energy lifeline

Indian crude steel production registered a growth 8.9 per cent to 8.1 million tonnes (MT) in February compared to the same month last year, the World Steel Association said. India, which is the third largest global steel producer, recorded an 8.9 per cent rise to 8.1 MT in crude steel output last month as compared to lesser percentage growth in production by other countries like China, Japan and South Korea in Asia, as per the latest report from the World Steel Association. India had produced 7.45 MT of steel in February 2016. "China's crude steel production for February 2017 was 61.2 MT, an increase of 4.6 per cent compared to February 2016," the report said. China had produced 58.46 MT of crude steel in February 2016. "Japan produced 8.3 MT of crude steel in February 2017, a decrease of 0.1 per cent compared to February 2016," according to the report. It further said: "World crude steel production for the 67 countries reporting to the World Steel Association (worldsteel) was 126.6 MT in February 2017, a 4.1 per cent increase compared to February 2016".

Business Standard - 24.03.2017

http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/india-s-crude-steel-output-up-8-9-at-8-1-mt-in-feb-117032301090_1.html

OPEC, non-OPEC committee recommends extending oil output cut by 6 months

A joint committee of ministers from OPEC and non-OPEC oil producers recommended extending by six months a global deal to reduce oil output, a draft press release from their meeting on Sunday showed. OPEC and rival oil-producing countries were meeting in Kuwait to review progress with their global pact to cut supplies. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and 11 other leading oil producers including Russia agreed in December to cut their combined output by almost 1.8 million barrels per day in the first half of the year. The oil ministerial committee "expressed its satisfaction with the progress made towards full conformity with the voluntary production adjustments and encouraged all participating countries to press on towards 100 percent conformity," said the draft, seen by Reuters. The December accord, aimed at supporting the oil market, has lifted crude to more than \$50 a barrel. But the price gain has encouraged U.S. shale oil producers, which are not part of the pact, to boost output.

Moneycontrol - 26.03.2017

<http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/markets-business/opec-non-opec-committee-recommends-extending-oil-output-cut-by-6-months-2247199.html>

Oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan brought PM Narendra Modi's 'Urja Ganga', an energy lifeline for eastern India, to his home state Odisha on Saturday by kicking off work on city gas networks in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. The networks will help clean up the air in these populous cities by piping clean cooking fuel to households and supplying CNG to automobiles. The networks will be laid by state-run gas utility GAIL at an investment of Rs 1,750 crore -Rs 1,000 crore in Bhubaneswar and Rs 750 crore in Cuttack. The networks will bring these two Odisha cities at par with Delhi and Mumbai in terms of developing less polluting gas-based transport system. The networks will also create thousands of direct and indirect employment in the two cities. The Bhubaneswar project will benefit around 25 lakh people in Khordha district and pipe clean cooking fuel to around 2.5 lakh households. Besides, 24 CNG stations will come up in the next 3-5 years and provide clean fuel to 1 lakh vehicles.

The Times of India - 21.03.2017

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bhubaneswar/pradhan-reaches-out-to-odisha-with-pms-energy-lifeline/articleshow/57728216.cms>

UP leather industry on tenterhooks over action against abattoirs

Possible action against illegal slaughterhouses in Uttar Pradesh, as promised in the election manifesto of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), is keeping the Rs 20,000-crore UP leather industry on tenterhooks. In its UP Vision Document, the BJP had promised it would shut down illegal and mechanised abattoirs in the state if it came to power. With Yogi Adityanath as chief minister with the support of a three-fourths majority in the Assembly, things are likely to get the head-start once the ministerial portfolios are distributed. There are about 45 licensed, mechanised slaughterhouses in UP operating in the private sector, with most units having the beef export licence. The UP Pollution Control Board (UPPCB) has started drawing up a list of abattoirs that are flouting the norms or operating without the licence. On Monday two illegal abattoirs were closed down in Allahabad, but the order on that had predated the Yogi regime. But this has fuelled anxiety in the leather industry.

Business Standard - 22.03.2017

http://www.business-standard.com/article/markets/up-leather-industry-on-tenterhooks-over-action-against-abattoirs-117032100767_1.html

Govt giving final touches to special package for leather and footwear industry

The government is giving final touches to a special package for the leather and footwear industry that is expected to boost exports, generate employment and make the sector competitive globally. "The package will be finalised in about a week's time. It will be sent for inter-ministerial consultation thereafter, and finally to the Cabinet for its approval," a senior government official told Moneycontrol. "This (getting Cabinet's approval) would take about two months' time," the official said. In the Budget 2017-18, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had said that a special scheme for creating employment in the leather and footwear industries will be launched and will be on lines of the Rs 6,000 crore package that was announced for the textile sector last year. "As compared with the allocated amount of Rs 990 crore, Rs 1,145 crore has already been spent during 2012-17. We want to increase the funding by nearly four times (for next three years)," the official said.

Moneycontrol - 24.03.2017

<http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/economy/govt-giving-final-touches-to-special-package-for-leather-and-footwear-industry-2246621.html>

Domestic travellers spend more on hotel stay

Average spending in accommodation by domestic travellers has seen a rise in 2016 with several Indian cities recording double-digit growth rates. A study by online booking website Hotels.com shows that the spending pattern in five out of the 10 major domestic locations has recorded a double-digit growth rate in 2016 compared with the previous year. While Mumbai tops the spending chart with a 4 per cent growth in average spend at Rs 7,436 per night, New Delhi, Goa, Jaipur, Pune and Ahmedabad all recorded double-digit growth rates. Calcutta recorded a 7 per cent growth rate with an average price of Rs 6,019 compared with Rs 5,610 a year ago. A combination of factors, including a change in spending patterns on leisure travels, currency volatility and a higher cost of air travel, have encouraged travellers to explore options within the country, according to industry officials. "There is no doubt that domestic tourist visits have significantly gone up in 2016.

The Telegraph - 22.03.2017

<https://epaper.telegraphindia.com/detail/247824-15484753.html>

Govt nod for 18 new airports costing Rs30,000 crore

The government has given in principle approval for setting up 18 airports which together are estimated to cost nearly Rs30,000 crore. Minister of state for civil aviation Jayant Sinha on Tuesday said the government has granted "in principle" approval for the greenfield airports. Citing information provided by developers, the total estimated cost for setting up of the 18 airports "comes out to Rs30,000 crore (approximately)", Sinha said. "As regards construction of new greenfield airports, execution of project including finalisation of project cost and financing arrangement is the sole responsibility of the respective airport promoters," he said, as per an official release. The 18 airports which have received in principle nod for construction include Mopa (Goa), Navi Mumbai, Shirdi and Sindhudurg (Maharashtra), Bijapur, Gulbarga, Hasan and Shimoga (Karnataka), Kannur (Kerala), Pakyong (Sikkim), Karaikal (Puducherry), Dholera (Gujarat) and Bhogapuram (Andhra Pradesh).

Mint - 21.03.2017

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/1cahplAC8KLv5qhb1JiviO/Govt-nod-for-18-new-airports-costing-Rs30000-crore.html>

Railway's Vikalp scheme for waitlisted train travellers: Rollout on April 1, but read the fineprint

From April 1, those with wait-listed train tickets will get an option of selecting a "Vikalp", an alternative choice of any other train on the same route, if the original ticket does not get confirmed on the day of the journey. After a six-month pilot in six sectors, Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu is set to announce the rollout of the Vikalp Scheme for the entire country on Wednesday. Initially, Vikalp will be open only for e-ticket booking process. The catch in the scheme is that if the passenger does not like the alternative offered, she can cancel the ticket but it would be treated as cancellation of a fully confirmed ticket. As per existing refund rules, fully confirmed tickets attract heavy cuts as cancellation fee. For instance, no refund is allowed after the chart is prepared. For cancellations of confirmed tickets between 12 and four hours prior to departure, 50 per cent is levied as cancellation charge.

The Indian Express - 22.03.2017

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/rollout-on-april-1-but-read-the-fineprint-vikalp-scheme-for-waitlisted-train-travellers-4579801/>

Dreams of cheap airline tickets may be still fare away

Some of the deeply discounted fares that low-cost carriers offer have — contrary to popular perception — only a few seats available at the special rate. Though it varies from one airline to another, only between 8 per cent and 10 per cent of the seat factor (the number of seats filled) is allotted for the most discounted fares. So, an airline with an 85 per cent seat factor or passenger load factor (PLF) of a 180-seater A320 will have about 12-15 seats reserved for the highest discounted fare. Therefore, the Rs.899 fare that a few airlines regularly offer could get filled up as soon as the window opens. In some cases, an airline may decide not to offer any discounts for a particular flight if the traffic is too heavy. According to Praveen Iyer, Jet Airways' Vice President, Commercial, India, between zero and 15 days from the date of travel, airlines tend to get about 55 per cent of the total booking. Beyond 15 days is when airlines offer discounted fares to fill up the seats.

The Hindu Business Line - 22.03.2017

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/specials/flight-plan/flightplan/article9594776.ece>

Airfares set to rise as Centre hikes airport charges

Airfares are set to go up as the government has decided to raise airport charges across all non-major airports operated by Airports Authority of India (AAI) by 5% every year beginning April 1. This is the second time the government has raise airport charges in the last five months. The passenger service fee, which is charged as a part of air ticket fare, will increase from ₹85 per passenger at present to ₹89 in 2017-18. The fee will subsequently be increased to ₹93 in 2018-19 and ₹98 per passenger in 2019-20, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said, following the Civil Aviation Ministry's decision on March 15. The raise in fares will be applicable on non-major airports such as Amritsar, Nagpur, Bagdogra, Madurai, Vijayawada, Jammu, Vadadora, among others, which handle an annual traffic of less than 15 lakh. Besides, the user development fee at Amritsar, Udaipur, Trichy and Varanasi airports have been raised from ₹165 at present to ₹173 in 2017-18.

The Hindu - 26.03.2017

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/airfares-set-to-rise-as-centre-hikes-airport-charges/article17668121.ece>

Airfares in India among 'lowest' globally, says Jayant Sinha

India has one of the lowest and "most competitive" airfares in the world despite high cost of planes and fuel, Union Minister Jayant Sinha said on Wednesday. "These are the two most important costs for an airline. Our taxes are also quite high," said the Minister of State for Civil Aviation. "But when you look at pricing in India, as far as Indian airlines are concerned, I can assure you that we are among the lowest and most competitive air fares in the world," he added. In efforts to make air travel more affordable as well as connect unserved and under-served airports, the government has come out with the regional connectivity scheme. Under the scheme -- UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik) -- fares are capped at Rs 2,500 for one-hour flights. "Our effort is to provide air services at an affordable cost and the regional connectivity scheme UDAN is aimed at that only," Sinha said.

Business Standard - 22.03.2017

http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/airfares-in-india-among-lowest-globally-says-jayant-sinha-117032200881_1.html

50% of US-bound Indian flyers to be impacted by US govt curbs on e-devices

Washington DC's decision to impose curbs on taking iPads and laptops as cabin baggage will impact nearly half of the passengers between India and the US. Data compiled by aviation consultancy CAPA showed that in FY16, at least 1.3 million passengers flew to the US via airports in the Persian Gulf, and accounted for 49 per cent of the 2.69 million passengers between the two countries. An overwhelming 82 per cent of passengers to the US travelled via the Gulf, Europe or East Asia. Gulf airlines, especially Emirates, Etihad and Qatar Airways, carried the bulk of the 49 per cent flown on the route, an indication of their dominance in the market. About 27 per cent of US-bound passengers flew via Europe and 6.2 per cent via airports in East Asia. The data are for one-way traffic to the US. The proportion of flyers from Mumbai and Delhi who travel (one stop) via the Gulf is 30-40 per cent. In case of Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Chennai, the share is 53-63 per cent.

Business Standard - 23.03.2017

http://www.business-standard.com/article/international/50-of-us-bound-indian-flyers-to-be-impacted-by-us-govt-curbs-on-e-devices-117032201117_1.html

Travel travails: Indians to face ban heat on flight back home

Indians living in the US, particularly those along the East Coast or Mid West, are in a quandary over their travel plans to India this summer following the ban on electronic goods. While those who live in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, San Diego and San Jose have decided to fly through Singapore or Hong Kong and avoid Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Doha, those in New York City, Chicago, Washington DC, Maryland, Virginia or Miami are in a dilemma over which route to choose during their trips to Kolkata. Travellers between American cities and Kolkata are among the worst hit by the Trump administration's in-flight restrictions on flights originating or transiting 10 airports in the Gulf as nearly 90% of those from the East Coast and Mid West fly through the hubs in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Doha. Nandini Bhattacharya, a microbiologist with FDA who lives in Olney, Maryland, and visits her mother in Salt Lake every year, says it will be a big hassle to take Gulf carriers as she won't be able to utilise the 8-hour layover at Dubai.

The Times of India - 24.03.2017

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/travel-travails-indians-to-face-ban-heat-on-flight-back-home/articleshow/57802481.cms>

Deccan, Alliance Air, others to fly on regional routes

Private charter firms Deccan Charter and Air Odisha together are learnt to have bagged around 50 regional air routes to propel the government's ambitious regional connectivity scheme, UDAN. The process of selection of the routes and the operators is nearly complete and the government is likely to make an announcement on this issue in the next few days, sources close to the development told PTI here. Air India's subsidiary Alliance Air, regional carrier TrueJet's holding company Turbo Megha Airways and budget airline SpiceJet are among other operators which have won the bids for the UDAN flights, the sources said. While the first RCS (Regional Connectivity Scheme) flight is likely to be operated by Alliance Air to Bhatinda from the Indira Gandhi International Airport here soon, full-scale operations are expected to commence from May, they said. In all, as many as 70 routes have been allocated to five operators for 43 airports, the sources said.

The Economic Times - 26.03.2017

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/airlines/-aviation/deccan-alliance->

India pips Japan, is 3rd in domestic air travel

Propelled by the tail wind generated by increasing domestic air travel demand, the Indian aviation industry continues to soar to new heights. The world's fastest-growing air travel market for several months in a row has added another feather on its cap by becoming the third largest domestic aviation market globally with more people flying within the country last year than Japan, which has been pushed to number four spot. Last year saw 10 crore domestic flyers in India, more than the 9.7 crore in Japan, according to Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA). "In 2015, India was at number four in domestic air travel and now it is at number three. Japan was number three in 2015," said Kapil Kaul, India head of CAPA. "On the international cum-domestic air travel front, India saw a combined traffic similar to the UK in 2016 and they are both at the number four spot now. UK was ahead of India on this front in 2015. Given the way our air traffic is growing, India is all set to overtake UK this year," said Kaul.

The Times of India - 25.03.2017

<http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com/Article.aspx?eid=31812&articlexml=India-pips-Japan-is-3rd-in-domestic-air-26032017007033>

10 Multi-Modal Hubs Likely Under Transport Master Plan

The Narendra Modi led government is working on a Rs.10 lakh crore National Transport Master Plan that will provide seamless movement of freight and passengers across multiple modes of transport. This is the first time that the country will have a National Transport Master Plan, which will be jointly developed by the ministries of road transport and highways, shipping, aviation and railways. The plan will include construction of multi-modal transport hubs that will have railway stations, light railway stations (metro) and bus terminals under one roof. "National Transport Master Plan (NTMP) will be a strategic framework and investment plan for sustainable development of the transport infrastructure," a draft note on the plan said. "It will forecast the future transport demands and projected infrastructure and service requirements, and will develop a framework of a transport strategy and investment plans to meet the demands as well as the tools for implementation.

The Times of India - 27.03.2017

air-others-to-fly-on-regional-routes/articleshow/57838613.cms

Warehousing companies part of JNPT's new plan

In a likely breather to Container Freight Station (CFS) operators which otherwise ran the risk of losing massive amounts of business, the customs department at the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) has put out a tender calling for bids for CFSs to be part of the operations in the new Direct Port Delivery regime that the Narendra Modi government is trying to implement. CFSs are port warehouses where the cargo is stored after being offloaded from a vessel. DPD ideally seeks to cut out the presence of CFSs facilitating direct transfer of shipments from the port terminal to an importer. JNPT, which handled India's largest container cargo tonnage, currently has 33 CFS operators including Allcargo Logistics, Ameya Logistics, GDL and Hind Terminal. Under DPD, the customs department and JNPT had appointed one single CFS to which all goods would be transferred if they were not cleared 48 hours after landing. Under the latest call for bids that was out on Friday, a maximum of 10 CFSs may be selected, giving importers more options to stock their goods, JNPT deputy chairman Neeraj Bansal told ET in an interview.

The Economic Times - 24.03.2017

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/shipping/-transport/warehousing-companies-part-of-jnpts-new-plan/articleshow/57800496.cms>

Rail freight corridor may lead to lower bidding for road projects

The construction of a dedicated rail freight corridor may lead to investors lowering their bids for road projects, even as more and more stretches of the Railways have started moving trucks on trains, says a research paper. According to Crisil Research estimates, the first 75 operational highway projects tendered under the toll-operate-toll model may fetch around Rs.40,000 crore against original estimates of about Rs.70,000 crore, which was later revised downward. The lowering of bids are likely because investors would factor in the freight-heavy nature of national highway traffic in India, the associated volatility, and the reduction in road freight growth expected after the implementation of the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) by the Railways, Crisil said in a release. The calculation assumes annual toll revenue growth of 7-8 per cent and return on equity of 14-16 per cent. Theoretically, Rs.40,000

<http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com/Article.aspx?eid=31817&articlexml=10-Multi-Modal-Hubs-Likely-Under-Transport-Master-27032017013001>

Containers start to move at Kolkata port

Import containers finally started leaving the confines of Kolkata Dock System (KDS) and Haldia Dock Complex (HDC) of Kolkata Port Trust (KoPT) on Monday, albeit at a very slow pace. The directorate of revenue intelligence (DRI) and the department of customs had stopped movement of containers from these port facilities over the weekend after an alert on the movement of fake notes and sophisticated arms from foreign shores. "Containers unloaded on Monday weren't allowed to leave but we are now moving out those cleared on Saturday. There is no congestion as yet. We can sustain for two more days at this pace," said S Balaji Arun Kumar, deputy chairman, KoPT. While importers have adopted a wait-and-watch policy, port officials believe that if this continues for too long, productivity will fall and year-end results will suffer. Senior officials from security agencies, however, said that it is high time better checking measures are adopted at the major ports like KoPT.

The Times of India - 21.03.2017

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/containers-start-to-move-at-city-port/articleshow/57740878.cms>

Logistics companies will have to sweat it out for GST benefits

There is a widespread belief that the implementation of the goods and services tax (GST) will herald a new era for logistics firms. The new regulation will strengthen organized companies' competitive position vis-à-vis the unorganized sector, as customers will be allowed to offset service tax under GST. Currently, a large part of the surface logistics business is handled by the unorganized sector as tax avoidance helps them keep prices lower. The second benefit is the transformation of India into one market. Post GST, stakeholders expect customers to consolidate their warehousing requirement to the hub and spoke model and drive business to efficient transportation solutions providers. "As inefficiencies and costs come down, inland transport would be more cost effective. This increases business, creating the space for

crore can fund the construction of 2,800 km of four-lane national highways. Further, implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime, while not necessarily negative for road traffic, may alter the type of vehicles that would be used on certain routes.

The Hindu Business Line - 22.03.2017

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/logistics/investors-fear-loss-of-traffic-on-roads-with-dedicated-freight-corridor-coming-up/article9596039.ece>

expansion," says Prakash Tulsiani, executive director and chief operating officer, Allcargo Logistics Ltd. But the Street is not yet fully convinced. As GST implementation is now round the corner, shares of TCI Express Ltd and Gati Ltd have gained 19-38% in the past two months.

Mint - 27.03.2017

<http://www.livemint.com/Money/7bADuqm1wCDRWvqk8WIPBK/Logistics-companies-will-have-to-sweat-it-out-for-GST-benefi.html>