

(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.)

India among 10 largest IMF members with historic reforms

The International Monetary Fund's historic quota and governance reforms that for the first time place four emerging market countries - Brazil, China, India, and Russia - among its 10 largest members have become effective. The reforms that also increase the financial strength of the IMF, by doubling its permanent capital resources to SDR 477 billion (about US\$659 billion) from about SDR 238.5 billion (about US\$329 billion) entered into force Tuesday. Other top 10 members 188-nation agency include the US, Japan, and the four largest European countries - France, Germany, Italy, and Britain. The reforms represent a major step toward better reflecting in the institution's governance structure the increasing role of dynamic emerging market and developing countries, according to an IMF announcement. The entry into force of these reforms will reinforce the credibility, effectiveness, and legitimacy of the IMF, it said.

Business Standard - 28.01.2016

http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/india-among-10-largest-imf-members-with-historic-reforms-116012800344_1.html

GDP growth for 2014-15 revised downward to 7.2%

The government on Friday slightly revised downwards India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth for 2014-15 to 7.2 per cent from the 7.3 per cent estimated earlier, according to an official statement here. "The real GDP or GDP at constant (2011-12) prices for the years 2014-15 and 2013-14 stands at Rs 105.52 lakh crore and Rs 98.39 lakh crore, respectively, showing growth of 7.2 per cent during 2014-15, and 6.6 per cent during 2013-14," Central Statistics Office's (CSO) revised estimates of national accounts released here showed. The GDP growth rate for 2013-14 has also been revised downwards to 6.6 per cent from the earlier 6.9 per cent. The CSO said estimates of GDP and other figures for the years 2011-12 to 2013-14 have also undergone revision, as a result of latest available data on agricultural and industrial production. In terms of real gross value added (GVA) at 2011-12 basic prices, there has been a growth of 7.1 per cent in 2014-15 as compared to a growth of 6.3 per cent in 2013-14.

India's growth more vulnerable to external risks: Moody's

India's growth story is now more vulnerable to potential spill over of external risks such as interest-rate tightening in the US and China's ongoing slowdown than seven months ago, according to a poll of investors conducted by rating agency Moody's Investor Services and its Indian arm ICRA Ltd earlier this month. Of those surveyed, 35% saw external shocks as the greatest challenge facing India's economy, up from just 10% in Moody's previous poll in May. However, Moody's said this is more likely a reflection of the broad-based spike in global risk-aversion rather than India's relative vulnerabilities. "Investors still regard the country as much better placed than most of its similarly rated emerging market peers," it added. The poll suggested the risk from sluggish reform momentum and infrastructure constraints to India's growth story reduced from their levels in May last year.

Mint - 25.01.2016

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/6eHFCZ862k452SF7JLrcUO/Indias-growth-more-vulnerable-to-external-risks-Moodys.html>

There is a need for better computation over GDP growth rate methodology: Raghuram Rajan

There are problems with the way we count GDP which is why we need to be careful sometimes just talking about growth." Raising doubts over the new GDP growth rate methodology, RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan on Thursday said there is a need for better computation of numbers so as to avoid overlaps and capture the net gains to the economy. "There are problems with the way we count GDP which is why we need to be careful sometimes just talking about growth," Rajan told the students of the RBI-promoted Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research. In his convocation address, citing the example of two mothers who babysit each other's kids, he said there is a rise in economic activity as each pays the other, but the net effect on the economy is questionable. "We have to be a little careful about how we count GDP because sometimes we get growth because of people moving into different areas. It is important that when they move into newer

GVA for 2014-15 was earlier estimated at 7.2 per cent.

Business Standard - 29.01.2016

http://wap.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/gdp-growth-for-2014-15-revised-downward-to-7-2-percent-116012901288_1.html

India Inc profit up just 1% in Q3, says Crisil

The worst is still not over for India Inc. Aggregate net profit of corporate India (excluding financial services and oil firms) has inched up by just 1% year-on-year (y-o-y) in the third quarter of 2015-16, the second worst performance in the last three years, results announced so far showed. In fact, net profits declined 2.5% on a quarter-on-quarter basis during the period for these companies. While net profits advanced to around Rs 23,600 crore, revenues of these companies increased 7.8% y-o-y to about Rs 15,1360 crore, data compiled by ratings agency Crisil showed. Only media and cement firms recorded double-digit growth in net profits. IT (information technology) and power generation companies registered a single-digit increase in earnings. "Early results of 85 companies (excluding financial services and oil companies) for the quarter indicate a weak earnings growth with some pockets of outperformance," said Prasad Koparkar, senior director, Crisil Research.

The Times of India - 26.01.2016

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/India-Inc-profit-up-just-1-in-Q3-says-Crisil/articleshow/50725364.cms>

E-tender must from Apr 1 for govt purchases above Rs 2 lakh

Come April 1, all central ministries and public sector units will have to float e-tenders for procuring goods and services exceeding Rs 2 lakh, a move aimed at bringing transparency in government purchases. At present, e-procurement is mandatory for purchases of Rs 5 lakh or more. Government procures goods, services and work contracts. In January, the Expenditure Department had decided the tender value limit of Rs 10 lakh spent in respect of e-procurement would be brought down to Rs 5 lakh from April 1, 2015 and further down to Rs 2 lakh from April 1, 2016. As per its instructions it is mandatory for all central ministries, departments and Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSE), and autonomous/statutory bodies to publish their tenders on the Central Procurement Portal (CPP) after a certain threshold limit. In 2014-15, about 3.81 lakh e-tenders were floated worth Rs 2.12

areas, they are doing something which is adding value.

DNA - 28.01.2016

<http://www.dnaindia.com/money/report-there-is-a-need-for-better-computation-over-gdp-growth-rate-methodology-raghuram-rajan-2171229>

We have taken India to the top of global league tables: PM Narendra Modi at ET GBS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid down his development design for India's future as the government builds on the country's economic success and takes it to the next level of growth, improving livelihoods and lifting vast sections of the people out of poverty. A great deal has been achieved since his government took over in May 2014, the prime minister told the distinguished gathering at the second Airtel-Economic Times Global Business Summit in New Delhi on Friday evening. India has emerged as the world's fastest-growing economy that's become an engine of global growth and a draw for overseas investors amid worldwide uncertainty. "Much more is expected of us. And there are challenges ahead. Yet, I am now confident that we can successfully go forward, that we can successfully go faster, and that we can do so in a way that will benefit the common people," he said in his keynote address

The Economic Times - 29.01.2016

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/we-have-taken-india-to-the-top-of-global-league-tables-pm-narendra-modi-at-et-gbs/articleshow/50775797.cms>

Govt to give priority to locally made goods in oil PSU tenders

In a bid to give a fillip to domestic manufacturing, the Petroleum Ministry today proposed to give preference to locally manufactured goods and services in the Rs 90,000-crore of tenders issued annually by oil PSUs. Under the Purchase Preference Policy, public sector oil firms like ONGC and GAIL will give preference to a firm supplying a minimum threshold of goods and services sourced from local manufacturing unit or plant, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said today. Accordingly, where the price quoted by a company, whether foreign or domestic, is within 10 per cent of the lowest bidder (L1) price, purchase preference may be granted to the said firm if it was willing to match the L1 price and supply the minimum threshold of locally sourced products and services. In case the L1 itself is supplying the requisite locally sourced content, which will vary

lakh crore. As per the latest data, in 2015-16 so far, 471,826 e-tenders have been floated entailing an amount about Rs 3.49 lakh crore.

Business Standard - 26.01.2016

http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/e-tender-must-from-apr-1-for-govt-purchases-above-rs-2-lakh-116012600193_1.html

India's manufacturing sector bounces back to growth in January

Indian manufacturing activity unexpectedly returned to growth in January as firms raised output on stronger demand, a survey showed, adding to expectations the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will likely leave policy unchanged this month. The Nikkei Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), compiled by Markit, jumped to a four-month high of 51.1 in January after slumping to a 28-month low of 49.1 in December. The 50-mark demarcates contraction from expansion. A Reuters poll predicted a more modest rise to 49.6. "The opening month of 2016 saw a rebound in new business—from both domestic and external clients—leading manufacturers in India to scale up output following a short-lived downturn recorded in December," said Pollyanna De Lima, economist at Markit. "January's PMI data paint a brighter picture of the Indian economy." The new export orders sub-index rose to 52.5 from 51.5, the highest reading in five months,

Mint - 01.02.2016

<http://www.livemint.com/Industry/8dmZC9QnrJNoYUK5LMTYrM/Indias-manufacturing-sector-bounces-back-to-growth-in-Janua.html>

Govt may re-impose customs duty on crude oil imports

With international oil prices slumping to 12-year low, the government may look at re-imposing 5 percent customs duty on crude oil imports to shore up revenue by close to Rs 18,000 crore. The government had cut customs duty on crude oil imports to zero from 5 percent in June 2011 when rates zoomed to over USD 100 per barrel. But with oil prices hovering at USD 30 a barrel now, the duty may be back, official sources said. As the government looks to shore up its revenue without hurting economic growth, re-imposing import duty on crude oil presents a viable alternative the Budget 2016-17 to be presented on February 29, the sources said. Alongside, customs duty on petroleum products, petrol and diesel may also be increased in equal proportion to duty levied on domestic refiners. Petrol and diesel currently attract 2.5 percent import duty. This duty

for different categories of product, the other bidders will not be asked to match the offer, he said.

Business Standard - 27.01.2016

http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/govt-to-give-priority-to-locally-made-goods-in-oil-psu-tenders-116012701015_1.html

Oil prices falls as Asia economies slow, prospect of crude output cut dims

Oil prices fell in early trading on Monday after South Korea posted its weakest export data since 2009 and the prospect of a coordinated production cut by leading crude exporters seemed remote. Front-month Brent crude was trading at \$35.55 per barrel at 0047 GMT, down 44 cents or over 1.2 percent from the last close. U.S. West Texas Intermediate was down 32 cents at \$33.30 a barrel. South Korea posted an 18.5 percent year-on-year drop in exports on Monday to \$36.7 billion, down to levels last seen at the height of the global financial crisis in 2009. The slump in the export-oriented northern Asian economy is the latest indicator of an accelerating slowdown in Asia's biggest economies. At the same time, the prospects of a coordinated cut in production by leading exporters like the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and Russia seem difficult to realise due to differences between these producers.

The Financial Express - 01.02.2016

<http://www.financialexpress.com/article/markets/commodities/oil-prices-falls-as-asia-economies-slow-prospect-of-crude-output-cut-dims/205013/>

Fuel prices: Govt to request airlines to transfer benefit to passengers

With airlines taking advantage of the falling prices of aviation fuel, Centre today said it will request them to transfer its benefit as much as they can to passengers. Civil Aviation Minister Ashok Gajapati Raju, however, said the government will not dictate on air ticket rates. "Well, crude goes up, crude comes down. And airlines were going under lots of losses and accumulative losses were tremendous. Now they have a respite. Now, we will request them to transfer (the benefit) as much as they can to the travelling public," Raju said when asked whether the government will ask airline companies to reduce the airfare in view of falling aviation fuel prices. "If you start dictating on ticket prices, then there is going to be another type of problem. We don't intend to do that," the minister said. Aviation fuel prices have declined

differential is maintained so as to protect domestic industry by making import of product costlier as compared to domestic manufacturing. If import duty on crude oil is raised in the Budget for 2016-17, it would go up on allied products too from 2.5 percent to 7.5 percent, sources said.

Moneycontrol - 28.01.2016

http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/economy/govt-may-re-impose-customs-duty-crude-oil-imports_5190061.html

Weakening rupee altering holiday travel plans: survey

As the rupee continues to weaken against the dollar, touching Rs. 68 as of Thursday, a survey by travel portal Yatra.com reveals that travellers are making alterations to holiday plans — European vacations, for instance, are taking a backseat to more affordable Thailand trips. The survey of 2,000-odd respondents compared responses collected in early 2014 when the rupee was at approximately Rs. 61, to responses collected this week — 89 per cent were planning to travel abroad earlier, compared to 33.8 per cent this time around. While favourite destinations earlier were Europe, the United States and Australia, they had now shifted to Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia, the survey revealed. Almost 43 per cent of the respondents also said they would opt for budget accommodation. Sharat Dhall, president, Yatra.com, said in a statement, "We have always seen a change in the Indian traveller's behaviour with the fluctuation in the rupee. City-based travel agent M.K. Ajit Kumar, CEO, Asia Pacific Travels, concurs.

The Hindu - 29.01.2016

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/weakening-rupee-altering-holiday-travel-plans-survey/article8165142.ece>

Railways limits online booking to prevent touting

To prevent touts from hogging e-tickets on the IRCTC website, railway ministry has introduced checks that will ensure that an individual can book only six tickets in a month. Effective from February 15, this will replace the existing provision that allows a user to book up to 10 tickets in a month. A railway spokesperson said that this will facilitate genuine users, who sometimes found it difficult to get confirmed seats. There will be no change in existing rules whereby an individual is allowed to book only two tickets per user ID in a day, both under Tatkal and Advance Reservation Period. Railway officials said that an analysis of usage of

as international oil prices have slumped. Raju, who visited the Cochin International Airport Limited to understand its solar powered electricity generation system, said the Aviation Ministry had conducted an analysis on ticketing and it was found that only 1.7 per cent of air tickets were higher priced in a whole year in the country.

The Financial Express - 31.01.2016

<http://www.financialexpress.com/article/economy/fuel-prices-govt-to-request-airlines-to-transfer-benefit-to-passengers/204868/>

Railways to build 500 private freight terminals in 3 years

In a bid to boost private investment in rail sector, Indian Railways is aiming to build 500 private freight terminals (PFT) in next three years under public private partnership (PPP) model, Union Minister of State for Railways Manoj Sinha said here on Wednesday. Further, to attract more investment in rail sector, the central government is working on liberalising policies, Sinha said. Sinha was here to inaugurate a PFT set up by Continental Warehousing Corporation (NhavaSeva) Limited (CWCNSL), a flagship company of the NDR Group at Sachana village of Viramgam taluka in Ahmedabad district. "Private investment can play major role in growth of rail sector. Under PPP model, Indian Railway will set up 500 PFT in next three years," Sinha said in his address during the inauguration. Currently there are 27 PFT in India. According to Sinha, government is working on investor friendly atmosphere to attract investment from private players in railway sector.

Business Standard - 27.01.2016

http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/railways-to-build-500-private-freight-terminals-in-3-years-116012700690_1.html

Govt drops plan to cap airfares

The government has abandoned the plan to cap airfares on domestic routes and will let the market determine the price. According to an official in the ministry of civil aviation, there is consensus among the airlines and the ministry that fixing an upper limit in airfares will not be a constructive idea. "The airlines are competing among themselves to acquire customers. In such a situation, there is no need to cap fare," said the official. According to the official, given the lesser number of flights on regional routes, airlines tend to over charge. "The government is keenly observing the fares charged on such routes and will do everything that is necessary

quota was carried out. It revealed that 90 per cent of users were booking up to 6 tickets in a given month whereas only 10 per cent were reserving more than six tickets. "It is suspected that the 10 per cent users might be involved in touting activities.

The Economic Times - 28.01.2016

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/railways/railways-limits-online-booking-to-prevent-touting/articleshow/50758713.cms>

Seaborne cargo growth falls

Indian ports are witnessing a declining growth rate in the volume of cargo handled by them, statistics by the Indian Ports Association (IPA) showed. Reflecting the current gloom in global economic situation, the total volume of seaborne cargo handled by a dozen major ports in the nine months of the current financial year witnessed a declining trend, according to IPA. During the first quarter of the current financial year the 12 major ports posted a growth rate of 4.3 per cent in the volume of cargo handled by them compared to the year ago period. In the second quarter, from July to September, the growth rate fell to 3.8 per cent before slipping to 1.4 per cent from October to December period. The growth for the first three quarters stood at 3.2 per cent. During the last financial year the Shipping Ministry fixed a target of 604.45 million tonnes of cargo. However, ports ended up by handling only 581 million tonnes. At the commencement of the financial year 2015-16, the Shipping Ministry had fixed a target of 695 million tonnes for major ports, an increase of almost 15 per cent over the 2014-15's target.

The Hindu - 27.01.2016

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/seaborne-cargo-growth-falls/article8155035.ece>

Tide Water board gets new faces

Tide Water Oil has agreed to give two board slots to Mumbai-based Standard Grease & Specialities, which had mounted an open offer to wrest majority control in the public sector firm. A decision to this effect was taken at today's board meeting that also declared a 1:1 bonus issue and decided to split the stock into two. The move is aimed at increasing liquidity and promoting retail participation in the scrip. Standard Grease now holds 29.38 per cent in Tide Water, maker of Veedol lubricant, up from 23.24 per cent before the open offer.

The Telegraph - 29.01.2016

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1160129/jsp/business/story_66339.jsp#.Vq8J2tJ97IU

to make air travel affordable in remote routes," said the official. The draft civil aviation policy had proposed a cap of Rs 2,500 on one-hour flights in regional routes. "Earlier, there used to be uproar over higher fares in Parliament, especially during winter sessions. This time, it was different as the fares did not shoot up above average," the official noted.

Business Standard - 01.02.2016

http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/govt-drops-plan-to-cap-airfares-116013100778_1.html

Government ropes in Gurdeep Singh as Chairman & MD of NTPC

Government on Thursday appointed Gurdeep Singh, currently head of Gujarat State Electricity Corp, as the Chairman and Managing Director of NTPC Ltd, India's biggest power producer. Singh, 51, will be the first person to be appointed to the top job at a Maharatna company through a search committee route. Government head-hunters, Public Enterprise Selection Board (PESB) normally selects board appointees to state-owned firms but in case of NTPC a Search-cum-Selection Committee was constituted after Arup Roy Choudhury was denied an extension of service in August. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the appointment of Singh for a period of five years from the date of assumption of charge of the post, official sources said. Singh was selected after the Committee headed by PESB Chairman Ajit Seth interviewed eight shortlisted candidates out of a list of 24.

DNA - 28.01.2016

<http://www.dnaindia.com/money/report-government-ropes-in-gurdeep-singh-as-chairman-md-of-ntpc-2171262>

R. S. Dhillon has been promoted to the post of ED (Projects), PFC

Ravinder Singh Dhillon has been promoted to the post of Executive Director (Projects), Power Finance Corporation Ltd. A post-graduate in Power Systems from IIT, Delhi, he has more than three decades of experience in various areas of power sector. He is currently looking after the commercial operations of PFC in the Northern Region. Dhillon joined PFC in the year 1993 and has worked in various capacities in the Projects Division.

Sarkaritel - 27.01.2016

<http://www.sarkaritel.com/r-s-dhillon-has-been-promoted-to-the-post-of-ed-projects-pfc-196782/>