

(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.)

## **China's growth slips to seven-year low in third quarter: Survey**

China's growth slipped to a seven-year low of 6.6 per cent in the third quarter, according to a survey, despite ample stimulus and a red-hot property market in the world's second-largest economy. The median forecast for expansion in gross domestic product (GDP), based on a poll of 18 economists, represents an easing from the second quarter's 6.7 per cent. It would be the slowest quarterly growth since the first three months of 2009, in the middle of the global financial crisis. As the world's biggest trader in goods China is crucial to the global economy and its performance affects partners from Australia to Zambia. GDP expanded 6.9 per cent in 2015 — its weakest in a quarter of a century — and the government has targeted growth in a range of 6.5-7.0 per cent for this year. The AFP poll forecast China will just meet the goal, with the median full-year prediction at 6.6 per cent.

*The Indian Express - 18.10.2016*

<http://indianexpress.com/article/business/world-market/chinas-growth-slips-to-seven-year-low-in-third-quarter-survey-3087450/>

## **PPP model needs to develop to boost infra investment: Moody's**

Moody's Investors Service said PPP model in India's infrastructure needs to be developed further to attract more private investment for the sector that would help propel growth. Stating that historical underinvestment and rapid economic growth are straining India's existing infrastructure, Moody's said adjustments to the public-private partnership (PPP) framework to align it more with more mature markets globally could help attract new private investment. While the country's PPP mechanism has seen reasonable success in some sectors over the last 20 years, the level of activity has been low in the last four fiscal years due to challenges, Moody's V-P and Senior Analyst Abhishek Tyagi said. "As such, India's PPP framework will benefit if it is developed further to address key issues regarding improved risk allocation, the ability to renegotiate unpredictable factors in bid documents and a move away from project awards based on one metric such as estimated revenues," Tyagi said.

## **Exports hit by domestic issues, not global slump: HSBC report**

India is faring poorly in exports due to domestic bottlenecks more than the global downturn, HSBC has said in an analysis, according to which currency depreciation is not a must for economic revival. The London-headquartered bank said removal of sector-specific bottlenecks is likely to spur job creating low-technology exports while improvement in business environment to attract foreign direct investment can be beneficial for the more sophisticated high-technology exports. However, trade negotiations and lower tariff rates can benefit both, the bank said while calling for a sector specific approach to spur exports since the factors affecting exports in different sectors are different. "Weakening the rupee is not a cure. In fact, too much exchange rate volatility could be counterproductive by hurting FDI inflows. Obsessing about the rupee misses the woods for the trees," said HSBC's chief India economist Pranjul Bhandari.

*The Economic Times - 18.10.2016*

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/markets/commodities/news/exports-hit-by-domestic-issues-not-global-slump-hsbc-report/articleshow/54909086.cms>

## **Indian firms must take on China's manufacturing might: Govt**

Acknowledging that India's manufacturing sector is in "trouble", Union Minister Anant Geete on Thursday exhorted companies to counter the challenge posed by the growing Chinese clout by selling products at globally competitive prices. "India's manufacturing sector is in trouble for last many years. In the era of globalisation, competing in international markets has become a challenge for the country's private as well as state-owned firms," the Union heavy industries minister said at an Assocham conference. "If we fail to compete globally, we will get isolated. We have to compete with China, which has occupied a dominant place in markets worldwide. We need to accept this challenge." The Nikkei Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) -- a gauge of manufacturing performance -- fell to 52.1 in September from 52.6 in August, indicating that growth in the sector lost some momentum.

*The Indian Express- 21.10.2016*

<http://indianexpress.com/article/business/economy/ppp-model-needs-to-develop-to-boost-infra-investment-moodys-3092802/>

## **Govt seeks float relaxation for sick public units**

The government has sought relaxations from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) on meeting the 25 per cent minimum public shareholding (MPS) requirement, the deadline for which is August 21, 2017. According to sources, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (Dipam) has entered into discussions with Sebi over hurdles in bringing down its stake in some companies, particularly non-profitable public sector units (PSUs). Sebi, meanwhile, is open to accommodations on a "case-to-case basis", said a source. "We are working on the road map for closure and strategic sale of government stake in some PSUs. There are issues of compliance with some firms that need to be addressed," said a senior official of Dipam. The government will have to divest shares worth over Rs 21,500 crore (at current prices) before August 21, 2017, to meet Sebi's 25 per cent MPS requirement. Currently, there are 24 PSUs where the government holding is more than 75 per cent.

*Business Standard - 21.10.2016*

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/markets/govt-seeks-float-relaxation-for-sick-public-units-116102001462\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/markets/govt-seeks-float-relaxation-for-sick-public-units-116102001462_1.html)

## **PSUs Exceed India Inc in Social Spending**

India Inc's social spending rose 28% in fiscal 2016 from the year before, but at Rs. 8,345 crore it missed estimates, show data compiled from company filings. Government-owned companies grossly outperformed their private sector peers, with their spending expanding 41% in the year ended March 31, according to the data provided by PrimeDatabase. A large number of companies contributed their CSR money to the Prime Minister's funds -the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund and other such government managed funds saw proceeds from CSR payments rising more than five times. The data are for 920 out of the 1,579 companies listed on the NSE and this is the first comprehensive compilation of the numbers after the CSR law came into force in April 2014. The law mandates companies to invest 2% of their net profit in CSR projects. Those who don't meet this have to cite the reasons. The total spending is much lower than the Rs. 20,000 crore that was expected to be spent by corporates each year on CSR. The data capture spending by most big companies.

*The Economic Times - 19.10.2016*

*Millennium Post - 21.10.2016*

<http://millenniumpost.in/NewsContent.aspx?NID=329643>

## **First time In 5 years, PSU profits fell in 2015**

For the first time in five years, the profits of India's state-owned companies shrank, by about 20 per cent in 2015, with 77 public-sector units (PSUs) reporting losses and contribution to the exchequer dropping Rs 20,000 crore (\$3 billion) over the previous year, according to the latest government data available. The drop in profits - from Rs 1.28 lakh crore (\$22 billion) to Rs 1.03 lakh crore (\$17 billion) -- over 2013-14 comes in the backdrop of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2016 Independence-day declaration that a "new culture" had helped flag carrier Air India and telephony provider Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) improve their performance. As many as 235 PSUs -- companies in which the central government or other government companies held at least 51 per cent of shares -- surveyed by the Ministry of Heavy Industries and public enterprises saw profits drop in a year that India's economy grew 7.3 per cent over 4.7 per cent in 2013-14.

*One India - 21.10.2016*

<http://www.oneindia.com/india/first-time-5-years-psu-profits-fell-2015-2239432.html>

## **Centre plans four GST slabs, cess on luxury and sin goods**

The Centre has proposed four slabs for the goods and services tax (GST) in addition to a cess on sin and luxury goods that will help it mop up close to Rs 50,000 crore to compensate states for any possible revenue loss under the new tax regime. At a meeting of the GST Council on Tuesday, the Union finance ministry proposed slabs of 6%, 12%, 18% and 26%, along with a 4% levy on gold. For environmentally sensitive items such as coal (where a cess is already in place), sin goods such as aerated drinks, tobacco and pan masala and luxury cars and watches, a cess has been suggested, revenue secretary Hasmukh Adhia told reporters. The cess will ensure that the levy on these items is not changed and the money raised will flow into a special fund to meet compensation requirements. While the cess on coal fetches Rs 26,000 crore annually, the tax on sin and luxury goods is expected to help the Centre mop up another Rs 24,000 crore.

*The Times of India - 19.10.2016*

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/Centre-plans-four-GST-slabs->

<http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com/Article.aspx?eid=31817&articlexml=PSUs-Exceed-India-Inc-in-Social-Spending-19102016019032>

### **Here's the list: What is cheaper and what is dearer after GST**

Salt, bread, fresh fruit and vegetables, eggs, milk, curd, blood (yes blood, the human kind), prasad (the sacred kind), the national flag, kumkum, bindi-sindoor, glass bangles, even contraceptives — all these will continue to enjoy a taxfree run under the proposed goods and services tax (GST) regime. A few essential services will also escape the levy under the new regime that the government wants to roll out from April next year. All the same, the list of exempted items that will be thrashed out by state and central government officials shortly after the rate structure is finalised will be getting shorter. "The exemption list is to be pruned," said a government official outlining the broad principle that will be followed in deciding what doesn't get taxed under GST. But "those items that are exempted under value added tax will likely remain out of the tax net." This includes the items listed above. The exemptions are aimed at making sure that the common man isn't subjected to tax shock. Shortening the list will ensure that the tax base is broadened.

*The Economic Times - 21.10.2016*

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/gst-may-make-oil-chicken-dearer-tv-air-conditioner-cheaper/articleshow/54956738.cms>

### **Modi to gift CGD project of Rs 1000 Cr to Varanasi**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will gift 'City Gas Distribution Project' (CGD) of Rs 1000 crores to his parliamentary constituency during his forthcoming Varanasi visit on Monday. Modi will also mark the launching of CGD project and Jamshedpur-Haldia and Bokaro-Dhamra Pipeline (JHBDPL)- named as Urja Ganga for five eastern states including UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha on this occasion. This project would not only fulfill energy requirement for household, industries, hotels, cold storages, dairies and vehicles but also help in bringing natural gas based crematoriums at cremation grounds including Manikarnika and Harishchandra ghats in Varanasi. According to Gas Authority of India Limited's (GAIL) director (HR) M Ravindran and director (projects) Ashutosh Karnataka, PM will launch the ambitious 2540 km Urja Ganga project for five eastern states. This project will fulfil energy requirement of 40 districts and 2600 villages of these states. The total cost of project is 12,940 crores of which the union government has sanctioned a grant of Rs 5,176 crores. To develop CGD for seven major cities including Varanasi,

[cess-on-luxury-and-sin-goods/articleshow/54927359.cms](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/Oil-minister-Dharmendra-Pradhan-asks-states-to-help-bring-petro-products-under-GST/articleshow/55017046.cms)

### **Oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan asks states to help bring petro products under GST**

Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Sunday nudged the states to agree on bringing all petroleum products under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime. Speaking at the Global Investors Meet here, he said petroleum is currently under 'state list' for the the purpose of taxation under GST. "GST Council will decide on this (taxation of petroleum products). On behalf of the industry, I would request the states to allow petroleum products to be brought under GST taxation," he said. As per the GST Constitutional Amendment Bill, petroleum products like LPG, kerosene and naptha would attract GST. However, other products -- crude oil, natural gas, petrol, diesel, high speed diesel and aviation turbine fuel -- have been excluded from GST for initial years. Hence, these products will continue to be taxed in the hands of the states as they are being taxed at present.

*The Times of India - 2.10.2016*

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/Oil-minister-Dharmendra-Pradhan-asks-states-to-help-bring-petro-products-under-GST/articleshow/55017046.cms>

### **Dharmendra Pradhan: 5 crore LPG connections to BPL families in 3 years**

Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan today said that the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojna (PMUY) aims at providing five crore LPG connections to Below Poverty Line households in the country within three years. The ambitious project, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Ballia on May 1 this year, would transform the lives of women of BPL families by reducing the drudgery of cooking with polluting fuels and go a long way in reducing indoor pollution and other health hazards. Pradhan said that PMUY aims at replacing the polluting cooking fuels mostly used in rural areas with more clean and efficient LPG. He said that in Amethi, the number of LPG connections have more than doubled to reach two lakh households and in the next two years, the target is to ensure 100 per cent penetration of the LPG connections. Pradhan said that nearly 90 lakh LPG connections have been released to needy families under the scheme and the 'Pahal Yojna' — another scheme initiated by his ministry — has received worldwide acclaim. The scheme directly credits cash into the beneficiaries'

Patna, Jamshedpur, Kolkata, Ranchi, Bhubaneswar and Katak, falling on the pipeline route of Urja Ganga project, they said, the government of India has assigned the GAIL.

*The Times of India* - 22.10.2016

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/varanasi/Modi-to-gift-CGD-project-of-Rs-1000-Cr-to-Varanasi/articleshow/54999307.cms>

## **Rosneft, BP Entry May Fuel Retail Competition**

India's fuel retailing sector is poised for unprecedented competition with Russia's Rosneft and Britain's BP Plc set to operate petrol pumps with global best practices, which can shake up the state dominated sector and give consumers international quality service. Armed with fat balance sheets and a welcoming government, these aggressive oil biggies can challenge the dominance of state firms, which have 95% share in the business. This will also pose a stiff challenge for Reliance Industries, which also has a presence in fuel retail. Pump owners and state firms are already talking about how foreign firms can snatch their customers with sleek marketing, branding and international quality services. BP Plc has just received a license to set up 3,500 pumps, while Rosneft will inherit 2,700 retail outlets following a deal to acquire Essar Oil. Foreign oil producers, struggling with low oil prices for two years, are targeting large markets such as India.

*The Economic Times* - 20.10.2016

<http://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/rosneft-bp-entry-may-fuel-retail-competition/54949350>

## **Focus on oil asset buys in Latin America**

India plans to source more crude from Latin America as it expands its refinery capacity with units configured to process the heavy crude from the region. The government wants its oil companies to buy energy assets in the continent and as part of the strategy, it is focusing on Latin American countries in Petrotech next month. "We are expecting increased participation from Latin American nations. The industry event will provide an opportunity for the energy firms to look for opportunities there and enter into agreement with the energy-rich nations," a senior oil ministry official said. According to industry sources, importing crude from Latin America will be quite profitable to the refiners because heavy crude is cheaper than the variety exported by West Asia. The Paradip refinery in Odisha is configured to process the toughest, heaviest and dirtiest crude, which is cheaper than the cleaner and more easily processed varieties. "This would increase the

account and has put to rest the leakage of LPG subsidies, which are now reaching the people more efficiently. Pahal has been acknowledged by the Guinness Book of world Records for being the largest cash transfer programme in the world and 16 crore LPG customers are receiving their subsidies directly in their bank accounts, the Minister said.

*Financial Express* - 22.10.2016

<http://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/5-crore-lpg-connections-to-bpl-families-in-3-years-dharmendra-pradhan/426891/>

## **Reliance forays into LPG retailing**

Reliance Industries, operator of the world's biggest oil-refining complex, has forayed into cooking gas retailing, launching a 4-kg LPG cylinder on pilot basis. "Four-kg LPG cylinder launched in 4 districts on pilot basis," RIL said in an investor presentation on second-quarter earnings. LPG consumption is growing by over 10 per cent and private refiners RIL and Essar Oil want a pie of it. Currently, public sector retailers Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum control retail LPG market, selling cooking gas in 5-kg, 14.2-kg and 19-kg cylinders. They sell 12 cylinders of 14.2-kg or 34 bottles of 5-kg per year to households on subsidised rates and any requirement above that on market price. The 19-kg cylinder is for commercial use. Private firms are not entitled for government subsidy and they have to sell fuel at market price.

*Moneycontrol* - 23.10.2016

[http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/reliance-forays-into-lpg-retailing\\_7669961.html?utm\\_source=ref\\_article](http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/reliance-forays-into-lpg-retailing_7669961.html?utm_source=ref_article)

## **Exxon boss, Saudi minister differ on oil supply outlook**

Exxon Mobil's boss Rex Tillerson and Saudi Arabia's energy minister on Wednesday took opposing views on declining investment in the oil sector setting the stage for a possible major supply crunch. More than two years of downturn that saw oil prices halve to around \$50 a barrel today after a boom in U.S. shale oil production have led to a sharp decline in investment. But Tillerson, who heads the world's largest listed oil and gas company, said that shale oil producers' resilience in cutting costs to make some wells profitable at as low as \$40 a barrel means that North American production has effectively become a swing producer that will be able to respond rapidly to any global supply shortage. "I don't quite share the same view that others have that we are somehow on the edge of a precipice. I think because we have confirmed

refinery margins," sources said. The move is also part of the strategy to meet the growing energy demand in the country. India's fuel consumption rose about 11 per cent last year, surpassing China's 7 per cent. However, Indian oil companies are facing payment problems in the region. Venezuelans has not paid ONGC Videsh \$530 million as its share from the sale of oil from the San Cristobal field.

*The Telegraph - 23.10.2016*

[http://www.telegraphindia.com/1161024/jsp/business/story\\_115172.jsp#.WA2xwNJ97IU](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1161024/jsp/business/story_115172.jsp#.WA2xwNJ97IU)

## **Gulf Oil Lubricants Q2 net increases 28%**

The Hinduja Group firm Gulf Oil Lubricants reported a 28 per cent increase in net profit for the quarter ended September 30 to ₹ 30.2 crore against ₹ 23.6 crore in the corresponding period year-ago. Total sales during the July-September quarter increased 9.2 per cent to ₹ 315 crore from ₹ 288.4 crore in the corresponding quarter of FY2015-16, the company said in a press statement. "In spite of July-September quarter being seasonally a low offtake quarter due to the monsoons and reduced vehicle and equipment movements, the company achieved all-round volume gains across segments to notch up overall double digit volume growth during the quarter," the company said. "Industrial distributors channel was expanded to grow faster in small and medium industries. B2B volume gains continued at a faster pace than overall company volume growth," it added.

*The Hindu Business Line - 21.10.2016*

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/gulf-oil-lubricants-q2-net-increases-28/article9251916.ece>

## **Centre working fast on new steel policy**

The government is working on a new steel policy in a bid to steer the over \$100 billion industry out of the rut and ensure that the growth is evenly spread across all the related sectors. "We are in favour of a new steel policy and I am already on the job," Steel Minister Chaudhary Birendra Singh said. He added that India led the world in growth in production and consumption last year, which has continued so far in 2016 as well. "But, we need to ensure that this growth continues and for that we have to plan accordingly and come out with a policy that ensures that not only steel, but the related sectors such as iron ore, etc also grow," he explained. Government's think-tank Niti Aayog too has pitched for for a "new and dynamic steel policy" to bring the industry back on track as well as meet the target of 300 million tonnes (mt) capacity by 2025.

*Millennium Post 20.10.2016*

viability of very large resource base in North America that serves as enormous spare capacity in the system," Tillerson told the Oil & Money conference. "It doesn't take mega-project dollars and it can be brought on line much more quickly than a 3-4 year project," he said. His stance contrasted with that of Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih, who minutes earlier warned the same event that the sector faces challenges due to the drop in investment.

*Reuters - 19.10.2016*

<http://www.reuters.com/article/oil-conference-exxon-mobil-idUSL8N1CP3F5>

## **India's steel output up 6% in Jan-Sept; global production declines**

India's steel production rose by almost 6% to 71.09 million tonnes (MT) in the first nine months of this year, even as the global output contracted by 0.5% to about 1.19 billion tonne. According to the latest data by World Steel Association (World Steel), Asia was the only region where production of the metal registered an upward trend. "In the first nine months of 2016, Asia produced 825.9 MT of crude steel, an increase of 0.6% over the first three quarters of 2015," it said in a statement. The EU produced 121.3 MT of crude steel during the first nine months of 2016, down by 4.8% year-on-year, while output in North America's stood at 83.9 MT, a decrease of 1.4% over the same period. The CIS nations produced 76.4 MT of crude steel in the January-September 2016, a decrease of 0.1% over the same months of 2015, World Steel said.

*DNA - 21.10.2016*

<http://www.dnaindia.com/money/report-india-s-steel-output-up-6-in-jan-sept-global-production-declines-2266153>

## **Govt unveils UDAN, fares capped at Rs 2,500 for 1-hour flights**

Come January and the Modi government will roll out its ambitious plan to introduce budget regional flying+ by connecting small towns+ by flights whose fares will be capped at Rs 2,500 for a one-hour flight. Termed "Ude Desh ka Aam nagrik" or UDAN, this regional connectivity scheme+ (RCS) will be funded by levying a fee on aircraft landing at bigger airports. Aviation secretary RN Choubey on Friday said the levy, "which will be a very nominal one" will be announced by the month-end. It is estimated that if airlines pass on this levy to flyers, the increase in cost per ticket is unlikely to be more than Rs 60. Existing airlines are opposing the move to introduce one more levy on flyers in the form of RCS fee and they feel the government should have found some other way of funding this scheme instead of taxing passengers more.

<http://www.millenniumpost.in/NewsContent.aspx?NID=329482>

## **Govt to further ease visa regime to boost tourism, business: Sushma Swaraj**

Government today said it is planning to further relax the visa regime "shortly" to attract more tourists and businesses to the country. "We plan to further liberalise our visa regime for tourism, business as well as other areas shortly," External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said at the valedictory session of the Global Investors Meet here. She said visa was one of the areas of concern for foreigners and Indians living abroad. The minister said she has already taken steps to address these concerns. In November 2014, government launched the e-visa scheme for over 100 countries. It was extended to 37 more countries this year, taking the total number to 150. "With the launch of the e-visa scheme, tourist arrivals in India has steadily increased," she said, adding the 25 million strong Indian diaspora, comprising NRIs and PIOs, are a significant force for promoting India's interests abroad.

*The Economic Times - 24.10.2016*

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/nri/visa-and-immigration/govt-to-further-ease-visa-regime-to-boost-tourism-business-sushma-swaraj/articleshow/55016484.cms>

## **Flight to Singapore after six years**

Air India and its subsidiary Air India Express are launching a slew of services from Kolkata in the winter schedule. From November 20, AI Express will start a direct flight between Kolkata and Singapore after a six-year hiatus. The 180-seater Boeing B 737-800 will operate four flights a week. AI will also introduce a second daily flight to Dhaka with its subsidiary. AI's other subsidiary Alliance Air will relaunch its service to Ranchi from October 30. The 48-seater ATR-42 aircraft will operate daily in the sector. To meet the growing rush between Kolkata and Agartala, AI is introducing Kolkata and Agartala, AI is introducing an additional evening flight with enhanced capacity by deploying an Airbus-319 aircraft with 144 seats. The national carrier is also enhancing capacity in the Kolkata-Imphal, Kolkata-Aizwal, Kolkata-Dibrugarh and Kolkata-Dimapur sectors. These sectors being serviced by combined flights will now have direct flights.

*The Times of India - 24.10.2016*

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/Flight-to-Singapore-after-six-years/articleshow/55022681.cms>

*The Times of India - 22.10.2016*

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Government-launches-UDAN-for-regional-air-connectivity/articleshow/54977100.cms>

## **Foreign carriers show interest in launching regional airlines**

In a big boost to the Modi government's ambitious regional connectivity plan, carriers from the gulf region have shown interest in launching regional airlines to implement the scheme that aims to give wings to aam aadmi's flying dream. "Lots of people have come to us with queries about the regional connectivity scheme. Some large global airlines have expressed interest in the scheme and some of the gulf carriers too have shown interest in starting a regional airline in the country to provide regional connectivity," Minister of State for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha told ET. He added that Indian domestic carriers, regional carriers like Air Pegasus (shut operations due to unavailability of aircraft), Air Costa, non-scheduled operators, state-owned helicopter operator Pawan Hans and players from the US and UK have also shown interest.

*The Economic Times - 24.10.2016*

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/airlines/-aviation/foreign-carriers-show-interest-in-launching-regional-airlines/articleshow/55020081.cms>

## **MakeMyTrip, Ibibo merge to create mega online travel co**

Two of India's biggest online-focused travel groups, MakeMyTrip and Ibibo Group, are merging. The alliance will create a mega entity that will control a fifth of the lucrative airline booking market and have significant shares in the bus and hotel bookings, and ride-sharing spaces. The merged entity will operate as MakeMyTrip. The deal size was not disclosed. But the companies said South Africa's Naspers and China's Tencent, the joint owners of Ibibo Group, will become the single largest shareholder in MakeMyTrip, owning a 40% stake. MakeMyTrip's share price on the Nasdaq soared by 44% soon after the deal was announced. Analysts estimate that Ibibo was valued at \$400-700 million. The merged entity will make the going tough for rivals Cleartrip and Yatra. MakeMyTrip has been the strongest player in the online airline ticketing space.

*The Times of India - 19.10.2016*

<http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com/Article.aspx?eid=31812&articlexml=MakeMyTrip-Ibibo-merge-to-create-mega-online-travel-19102016019026>

## **MakeMyTrip-Ibibo Merger Leaves No Room for Number 2**

MakeMyTrip's acquisition of smaller rival Ibibo Group, in what has turned out to be the biggest M&A deal in the country's online travel space, has now turned the spotlight on its rivals, leading to expectations of greater consolidation in the space. According to analysts, given its sheer scale, the all-stock transaction, announced on October 18, and valued at about \$1.8-2 billion, has created a massive vacuum, changing industry dynamics as they existed, and removing the perception of an existing number two operator in the market. "Nature abhors vacuum, and with MakeMyTrip and GoIbibo coming together, there's no longer a number two in the market," said Yogendra Vasupal, CEO of Stayzilla. The newly-merged entity is now expected to dominate the space with an overall market share of between 50% and 60%, and particularly in the more lucrative hotels and travel packages segment, which is seen as the growth driver for travel companies, going forward.

*The Economic Times - 21.10.2016*

<http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com/Article.aspx?eid=31817&articlexml=MakeMyTrip-Ibibo-Merger-Leaves-No-Room-for-Number-21102016008018>

## **Sept domestic airline passenger growth flies 23.5% to 82.3 lakh**

Registering robust growth, domestic airlines carried over 23 per cent more passengers at 82.3 lakh in September compared to the year-ago period, according to official data released on Wednesday. Even though the growth rate is 23.46 per cent for September, the overall number is slightly lower than 83.81 lakh passengers flown by carriers in August. Last month, budget carrier IndiGo remained the market leader with 40 per cent share while rival SpiceJet had the highest passenger load factor of 93.5 per cent. Latest data from aviation regulator DGCA showed that local carriers flew 82.3 lakh people last month compared to 66.66 lakh people in September 2015. "Another month of record growth for Indian aviation. Maintains its top rank with 23.4 per cent growth in Sep 2016," Civil Aviation Minister Ashok Gajapathi Raju said in a tweet. The sustained domestic air passenger traffic growth of more than 20 per cent over the past year also comes against the backdrop of airlines coming out with attractive fares to garner increased market share amid stiff competition.

*Millennium Post - 20.10.2016*

<http://www.millenniumpost.in/NewsContent.aspx?NID=329481>

## **India to Become 3rd-largest Aviation Market by 2026**

India will become the third-largest market in the world by displacing the UK in 2026, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said in a passenger forecast issued on Tuesday. The 20-year forecast also says that China will displace the US as the world's largest aviation market (defined by traffic to, from and within the country) around 2029. "The biggest driver of demand will be the Asia-Pacific region, which is expected to be the source of more than half the new passengers over the next 20 years. China will displace the US as the world's largest aviation market (defined by traffic to, from and within the country) around 2029. India will displace the UK for third place in 2026, while Indonesia enters the top ten at the expense of Italy," said the IATA forecast. Growth will also increasingly be driven within developing markets.

*The Economic Times - 19.10.2016*

<http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com/Article.aspx?eid=31817&articlexml=India-to-Become-3rd-largest-Aviation-Market-by-19102016018029>

## **Tourist arrival up by 13.4% in Sept compared to last yr**

Over 6 lakh foreign tourists arrived in India in September, an increase of 13.4 per cent as compared to the same period last year, the government said today. The footfall last month led to foreign exchange earnings to the tune of Rs 11,781 crore as compared to Rs 10,415 crore in September 2015, recording a growth of 13.1 per cent, an official release said. Foreign tourist arrival registered a growth of 13.4 per cent in September with 6.15 lakh visitors coming to India as compared to 5.42 lakh in the same month last year, it said. Among the top 15 source countries, Bangladesh accounted for the highest share of tourist arrivals last month at 20.58 per cent, followed by the US (10.96 per cent), the UK (7.97 per cent), Malaysia (4.98 per cent), Sri Lanka (3.98 per cent) and Australia (3.47 per cent). The share of China share was 3.36 per cent, while that of Germany 2.83 per cent, Japan 2.79 per cent, Canada 2.58 per cent, Nepal 2.16 per cent, France 2.15 per cent, Singapore 2.08 per cent, Afghanistan 1.57 per cent and Pakistan 1.36 per cent.

*PTI - 21.10.2016*

[http://www.ptinews.com/news/7991430\\_Tourist-arrival-up-by-13-4--in-Sept-compared-to-last-yr.html](http://www.ptinews.com/news/7991430_Tourist-arrival-up-by-13-4--in-Sept-compared-to-last-yr.html)

## **46% Indians do not wait for a special occasion or holiday to travel: OYO Survey**

According to a recent survey by budget hotel brand OYO, Indians no longer look for a special occasion or holiday to travel. Administered to OYO's select customer-base, the survey received responses from over 800 customers in 180 cities. 83% of respondents revealed that they do not worry about the distance of the travel destination. This suggests that logistics are no longer seen as a barrier and travellers now just like to go with the flow. The survey coincided with Dussehra holidays and was anchored to the theme of employing travel to defeat modern-day evils. Kavikrut, chief growth officer, OYO, said: "This survey has helped us identify key travel drivers for different customer-sets and their needs. For example, we inferred that people prefer to travel to Kerala and Manali to combat evils of stress, traffic and pollution. Also, without exception all groups surveyed have displayed an overwhelming preference for natural and serene retreats - highlighting that we travel to escape our hyper-connected existence."

*The Economic Times - 19.10.2016*

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/travel/46-indians-do-not-wait-for-a-special-occasion-or-holiday-to-travel-oyo-survey/articleshow/54937071.cms>

## **Cargo Traffic at Major Ports grows by 5.2 % during first six months of FY 2016-17**

The Major Ports in India handled 315.4 MT (Million Tonnes) of cargo during the first six months of FY 2016-17 (April-September) and showed a positive growth of 5.1 percent as compared to the same period last year. The cargo traffic handled by the Major Ports during the same period last year was 299.5 MT. This improvement of performance is the result of many measures initiated by the Ministry of Shipping to improve the performance of the ports. These include mechanization of the terminals, improving the TAT (turn-around time), quick evacuation of cargo, expansion of infrastructure and skill development of employees. The slew of measures taken by the Ministry of Shipping to improve performance of Ports has started to yield positive results. Major Ports with the highest increase in traffic during April - September 2016. Mormugao Port recorded the highest growth in traffic during the first six months of FY 2016-17 (April-September); Mormugao Port showed an increase of 61 % followed by Paradip at 18.3 % Vishakhapatnam at 11 %.

*Business Standard - 18.10.2016*

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-cm/cargo-traffic-at-major-ports-grows-by-5-2-during-first-six-months-of-fy-2016-17-116102000529\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-cm/cargo-traffic-at-major-ports-grows-by-5-2-during-first-six-months-of-fy-2016-17-116102000529_1.html)

## **Festive airfare at par with rly sleeper class, bookings could fly past 10 million**

Airfares usually climb during festive seasons but a flurry of flash sales made air tickets considerably cheaper this month as compared to the same period in September, found a study that compared fare differences across 24 domestic routes. The report by travel portal Ixigo.com states that average airfare between October 1 and 15 was 18% cheaper than for the same period last month. For instance, a Mumbai-Chennai economy class one-way fare in October was Rs 3,281 as compared to Rs4,249 in September. Similarly, a Mumbai-Ahmedabad journey was 14% cheaper this month. The study added that flight bookings this month increased by 40%. "Owing to the ongoing flash sale, we observed that most travellers booked flights for as far as the next 6 months. Airlines have offered fares as low as Rs835," said Alok Bajpai, chief executive officer and co-founder, Ixigo.com.

*The Hindustan Times - 19.10.2016*

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/festive-airfare-at-par-with-rly-sleeper-class-bookings-could-fly-past-10-million-mark/story-6zjxS2t4Bl2FqY0kHKHeYP.html>

## **Railways to lease out abandoned buildings to ecommerce companies**

Ecommerce companies such as Flipkart, Amazon and Snapdeal may soon get to set up warehouses and pickup points at railway stations. A senior official of the Railway Board said the railway ministry is working on a scheme to lease out its abandoned buildings and spaces near railway stations to e-tailers. Meanwhile, the non-fare revenue cell of the Board is in talks with the ecommerce companies in this regard, the official said. The move is seen helping the railways become an end-to-end logistics provider and monetise its real estate, while also reducing the delivery time for ecommerce companies as their warehouses and pickup points are mostly on the periphery of big cities. "We want to be end-to-end logistics providers. Presently, we see a huge gap in the market where ecommerce companies are unable to get spaces in the city because the cost is too high," the official, who did not wish to be named, told ET. "We are offering them our abandoned building and other spaces to set up warehouses and pickup points, that too at a cost-effective price."

*The Economic Times - 24.10.2016*

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/railways/railways-to-lease-out->



## Shipping ministry moves to scrap monopoly policy for major ports

The shipping ministry is weighing a plan to scrap a policy that was designed to check the emergence of private monopoly in terminal operations at state-owned ports, holding that it was no longer relevant and continuing with it may deter private investors from bidding for cargo terminals. "If there is only one private terminal/berth operator in a port for a specific cargo, the operator of that terminal/berth or his associates shall not be allowed to bid for the next terminal/berth for handling the same cargo in the same port," according to the policy for preventing private sector monopoly in major ports (a term used to refer ports run by the Union government) that was issued by the shipping ministry in August 2010. The Indian Private Ports and Terminals Association (IPPTA), an industry lobby, says the move to scrap the monopoly policy was positive for port investors.

*Mint - 17.10.2016*

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/n0ntZpPFdzi7Er68Rhw6cI/Shipping-ministry-moves-to-scrap-monopoly-policy-for-major-p.html>

## Mumbai now in world's 15 wealthiest cities list

India's financial hub Mumbai has been named among top 15 cities globally in terms of total wealth held, while London topped the list, says a report. According to New World Wealth, the wealthiest cities in the world are London with \$2.7 trillion of total wealth, followed by New York City (\$2.6 trillion) and Tokyo (\$2.2 trillion) in the second and third place respectively. Mumbai featured on the 14th place in the list with a total wealth held in the city worth \$820 billion. "Home to 45,000 millionaires and 28 billionaires, Mumbai is the economic hub of India. It is also home to the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE)," the report said. The report further noted that among the 15 cities, Beijing, Shanghai, Mumbai and Sydney were the fastest growing in terms of wealth over the past decade (2006-2016). "Going forward, Mumbai is expected to be the fastest growing city (in terms of wealth growth over the next 10 years)," the report added.

*Millennium Post - 22.10.2016*

<http://www.millenniumpost.in/NewsContent.aspx?NID=329834>

[abandoned-buildings-to-ecommerce-companies/articleshow/55020164.cms](http://www.abandoned-buildings-to-ecommerce-companies/articleshow/55020164.cms)

## Govt approves Rs 234 cr proj for ferry services in Gujarat

To promote coastal shipping under its Sagarmala project, the government has approved a Rs 234-crore dredging project for ferry services between Gogha and Dahej in Gulf of Cambay, Gujarat. "As part of promoting coastal shipping in the country under Sagarmala programme, the Ministry of Shipping has sanctioned the Capital Dredging Project for Ro Pax Ferry Services between Gogha and Dahej in Gulf of Cambay in Gujarat," Ministry of Shipping said in a statement. The Ministry has released Rs 58.50 crore as first instalment of grant-in-aid to Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB). "The total project cost is estimated to be Rs 234 crore and of which 50 per cent will be funded by central government under the Sagarmala programme," it said. The project would result in reduction in motorable distance of 231 km between Gogha & Dahej to mere 31 kms and reduce the travel time from 7 hours to 1 hour only by crossing the Gulf in Cambay in 17 nautical miles.

*India Today - 18.10.2016*

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/govt-approves-rs-234-cr-proj-for-ferry-services-in-gujarat/1/789022.html>

## PE inflows dive 53% to \$2.5bn in July-Sept

Private equity investments declined 53% to touch \$2.5 billion during July-September this year, lowest in the last nine quarters, largely owing to absence of big ticket deals, says a report. According to advisory firm Grant Thornton India LLP, there were 241 PE transactions worth \$2,538 million in the September quarter this year, while there were 303 deals worth \$5,446 million in the corresponding period last year. The decline in PE activity is due to the reduced investment in the new economy companies in comparison to the previous year when such investments were in full swing, according to Harish HV Partner Grant Thornton India.

*The Times of India - 24.10.2016*

<https://www.pressreader.com/india/the-times-of-india-new-delhi.../282321089542829>