

(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 displaces Japan to become third-largest world economy in terms of PPP: World Bank

India has displaced Japan to become the world's third biggest economy in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP), according to a World Bank report released on Tuesday.

The 2011 round of the bank's International Comparison Program (ICP) ranked India after the US and China. The last survey in 2005 had placed the country on 10th place.

PPP is used to compare economies and incomes of people by adjusting for differences in prices in different countries to make a meaningful comparison.

India's share in World GDP in terms of PPP was 6.4% in 2011 compared with China's 14.9% and the US' 17.1%, the latest ICP showed. The survey covered 199 economies.

Economic Times - 30.04.2014

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/india-displaces-japan-to-become-third-largest-world-economy-in-terms-of-ppp-world-bank/articleshow/34392694.cms>

India's infrastructure output growth slows down to 2.5 per cent in March

India's infrastructure output growth (Core sector) slowed to 2.5 per cent in March from 7 per cent in the same month a year ago as production of crude oil, natural gas and fertiliser declined.

The eight core industries -- fertilisers, cement, steel, electricity, crude oil, coal, petroleum refinery products and natural gas -- have a combined weight of about 38 per cent in the Index of Industrial Production.

For 2013-14, core sector growth slowed to 2.6 per cent from 6.5 per cent in 2012-13, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. In March, crude oil, natural gas and fertiliser output fell 1.6 per cent, 9.3 per cent and 6.1 per cent, respectively.

The Financial Express - 30.04.2014

'Industrial sector to grow 4.1 pc in FY15'

The industrial sector will grow by 4.1 percent in the financial year 2015, driven by better mining and electricity sector performance, said India Ratings & Research (Ind-Ra) on Monday. "The uptick in industrial activities in FY15 will also emanate from election-related expenditure, excise duty cuts for the auto sector, project clearances by the Cabinet Committee on Investment and construction activities in Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor and Dedicated Freight Corridor," the rating agency added.

Even though the manufacturing sector will contribute to industrial growth, Ind-Ra does not see sharp sector revival in the short-run due to the low demand. The mining sector, though still in red, is recovering and is likely to reverse its trend of contraction since FY12 in FY15, the rating agency viewed. However, Ind-Ra does not expect a quantum jump in iron ore mining in FY15 due to depressed domestic as well as export demand. It added that GDP for FY15 will grow at 5.6%.

SME Times - 29.04.2014

<http://www.smetimes.in/smetimes/news/top-stories/2014/Apr/29/industrial-4.1-pc-fy15-india-ratings-research29217.html>

Public sector undertakings funds may prove a good choice for medium-term

Does the recent outperformance of public sector undertakings (PSUs) indicate a change in fortunes of the sector? Many investment experts believe so. Mutual fund schemes investing in shares of PSUs have outperformed the broader market in the last three months. According to Value Research, a mutual fund tracking firm, PSU funds have delivered in the range of 14.61 per cent to 20.27 per cent in the last three months, compared with 8.23% by the Nifty.

"The PSU theme has underperformed the broader market for almost a decade. However, PSUs can be very good investment theme with a three-year view, given the reforms in the oil sector, possibility of a stable government at the Centre and an economic recovery," says Ashish

<http://www.financialexpress.com/news/indias-infrastructure-output-growth-slows-down-to-2.5-per-cent-in-march/1245767>

SCOPE seeks greater autonomy for CPSEs

The Standing Conference of Public Enterprises (SCOPE) today pitched for greater autonomy and efficiency through reforms aimed at separating the management from ownership in CPSEs.

The SCOPE executive board, which met here, also discussed the idea of having a holding company representing government ownership-- to start with for Mahartna and Navratna CPSEs.

"The Board emphasised on measures for greater autonomy and efficiency of CPSEs through further reforms aimed at separating the management from ownership in these organisations," SCOPE Chairman C S Verma told reporters after board meeting.

Business Standard - 02.05.2014

http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/scope-seeks-greater-autonomy-for-cpses-114050201474_1.html

SpiceJet allows passengers to use electronic devices onboard

Budget passenger carrier SpiceJet Monday became the first airline in India to allow passengers to use personal electronic devices (PEDs) in non-transmitting mode during flights.

"Our customers can now use their smart phones during the flight to watch movies, listen to music, read books, read and compose emails and other documents, and use their phone cameras (where permitted) like customers already do inflight in many other parts of the world," Sanjiv Kapoor, chief operating officer, SpiceJet was quoted as saying in a statement.

India.com - 28.04.2014

<http://www.india.com/business/spicejet-allows-passengers-to-use-electronic-devices-onboard-46801/>

Shanker, head – investment advisory, Motilal Oswal Private Wealth Management.

The Economic Times - 29.04.2014

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/markets/stocks/stocks-in-news/public-sector-undertakings-funds-may-prove-a-good-choice-for-medium-term/articleshow/34353747.cms>

21% rise in Indians travelling abroad: TripAdvisor

Notwithstanding the economic slowdown and currency fluctuations, travelling abroad seems to be high on the agenda of many Indians this year. A recent survey by travel website TripAdvisor shows a 21 per cent rise in Indians planning to take a foreign trip this year, compared to 2013. Seven of 10 Indians surveyed are planning to travel abroad in 2014, to destinations such as New Zealand, France, Switzerland, among others.

"It is encouraging to note that the travel sentiment remains strong with Indian travellers looking to raise their travel spend by 15 per cent, despite only 14 per cent of them spending more on travel because they feel more confident about the economy," said Nikhil Ganju, country manager at TripAdvisor India.

Business Standard - 29.04.2014

http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/21-rise-in-indians-travelling-abroad-tripadvisor-114042800765_1.html

Air India launches 'upgrade' scheme to lure passengers

Aiming at filling up vacant business class seats, Air India today launched a scheme where a domestic economy passenger can upgrade to Executive Class after paying Rs 5,000 or Rs 7,000 over and above the original ticket price. The upgrade scheme, open to domestic passengers holding revenue tickets in economy class including the cheap advance purchase fares, would be available only at the airport before check-in, subject to executive class seat availability and on first-come, first-serve basis.

The scheme, called 'Get Up Front', which is valid till October 31, would be available for travel to 43 cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad, an Air India spokesperson said.

The Financial Express - 28.04.2014

<http://www.financialexpress.com/news/air-india-launches-upgrade-scheme-for-business-class/1244945>

Indian tourists inflow to Australia rose by 13 per cent for Jan-Feb

Indian tourists inflow to Australia has increased by over 13 per cent for the first two months of 2014 as compared to the same period last year.

The total number of tourists this year for the period stood at 27,800, an increase of 13.9 per cent from previous year, according to the data released by the Tourism Australia. There were 16,200 visitors from India during February in Australia this year alone.

The Economic Times - 30.04.2014

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/travel/indian-tourists-inflow-to-australia-rose-by-13-per-cent-for-jan-feb/articleshow/34415491.cms>

Air India to join Star Alliance in July

In a major boost for national carrier Air India, the world's largest airline alliance - Star Alliance on Wednesday said that Air India will formally join the alliance in July and become the first Indian airline to do so.

"Air India has completed 45 of the 64 requirements already and the remaining will be completed in May," said Air India chairman and managing director Rohit Nandan.

Following the completion of the requirements, Star Alliance's member airline CEOs would meet in London on June 23 for an endorsement vote, said Mark Schwab, chief executive officer Star Alliance.

The Economic Times - 30.04.2014

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/airlines/-aviation/air-india-to-join-star-alliance-in-july/articleshow/34437257.cms>

Quick update: Cargo traffic at 12 major ports up by 1.78% in FY14

Cargo traffic at 12 major ports recorded a marginal rise of 1.78% at 555.5 million tonnes during 2013-14. The cargo handled by these ports stood at 545.79 mt in 2012-13. The Kandla port handled the highest 87 mt traffic last year, followed by 68 mt by Paradip port and 62 mt by the Jawaharlal Nehru port, data from the Indian Ports Association shows

The Financial Express - 30.04.2014

<http://www.financialexpress.com/news/quick-update-cargo-traffic-at-12-major-ports-up-by-1.78-in-fy14/1245489>

SpiceJet announces another sale offer; fares starting at Rs 1899

Budget carrier SpiceJet is upping the ante, again. On Wednesday, it announced another sale offer with all-inclusive fares as low as Rs 1,999 and Rs 1,899.

The first set of fares is from cities such as Ahmedabad, Belgaum, Chandigarh, Coimbatore, Rajamundhry and Kochi. The lower fares of Rs 1,899 are specifically for eastern cities such as Agartala, Bagdogra, Guwahati and Kolkata.

The Economic Times - 01.05.2014

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/airlines/-aviation/spicejet-announces-another-sale-offer-fares-starting-at-rs-1899/articleshow/34419453.cms>

Air cargo agents up in arms over new payment mechanism

Air cargo agents are upset with the International Air Transport Association (IATA) over a proposed centralised payment system which, they say, the Association has not discussed with them. IATA says the new Cargo Accounts Settlement System (CASS) will simplify billing and settling of accounts between airlines and freight forwarders. But, agents say lack of standard operating procedure on the billing cycle and resolving payment dispute could affect them.

IATA will receive all fees payable to various airlines from an agent and subsequently distribute it to individual airlines. By end of 2013, CASS collectively served over 500 airlines, General Sales and Service Agent and Ground Handling Companies, settling a combined \$31 billion.

The Hindu Business Line - 02.05.2014

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/air-cargo-agents-up-in-arms-over-new-payment-mechanism/article5970458.ece>

Freight rates up on high cargo movements

Freight rates for 10-tonne payload section to select destinations rose up to Rs 1,000 in the local truck transport market, following tight position of trucks amid better cargo movements. Transporters said less availability of trucks coupled with busy cargo movements, mainly led to rise in freight rates for select destinations.

Deccan Chronicle - 03.05.2014

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/140503/business-economics/article/freight-rates-high-cargo-movements>

Shipping ministry to launch new projects worth Rs 13,700 crore

Encouraged by last financial year's success in awarding projects, the shipping ministry has drawn up another ambitious target to award over 35 ventures worth over Rs13,700 crore and plans to add about 259 million tonnes capacity this year. However, this time, the shipping ministry will shift its focus from capacity augmentation projects like in the past to port infrastructure and connectivity projects, the lack of which has often been highlighted by private developers. Officials said about 23 projects worth Rs5,202 crore will be taken up on a priority basis while the rest have been marked as standby projects.

The Economic Times - 29.04.2014

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/shipping/-transport/shipping-ministry-to-launch-new-projects-worth-rs-13700-crore/articleshow/34354433.cms>

Dr Sameer Sharma appointed as MD of ITDC

Dr Sameer Sharma, IAS(AP:85) has been appointed as Managing Director, India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) under the Ministry of Tourism for a period of 5 years.

Bureaucracybuzz.com - 28.04.2014

http://bureaucracybuzz.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10594:dr-sameer-sharma-appointed-managing-director-of-itdc&catid=46:bureaucracy&Itemid=1