

(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

Coverage received for the Annual General Meeting



Prabal Basu in Calcutta on Wednesday. A Telegraph picture

The Telegraph –
13.09.2018

Balmer Lawrie strategy

A STAFF REPORTER

Calcutta: Diversified public sector firm Balmer Lawrie has set its sights on revenues of around Rs 2,000 crore in 2018 with growth across all three of its businesses — industrial packaging, grease and lubricants, and logistics. The company earned revenues of around Rs 1,800 crore in the last fiscal.

The miniratna company plans to commission its seventh manufacturing plant in industrial packaging at Vadodara to manufacture mild steel drums amid a bullish outlook for the petrochemicals market in the western part of the country. “The plant will probably be commissioned by this month-end or the first half of October. The capacity would be 6 lakh drums per annum.

“There is a growing market in Gujarat for petrochemicals. So the plant has been made. Total spend is around Rs 30-32 crores,” said Prabal Basu, chairman and managing director, on the sidelines of the annual general meeting of the company on Wednesday. With the plant commissioned, the overall production capacity of the company would be around 60 lakh drums per annum.

In the logistics business the company is expanding through new warehouses and a multimodal logistics hub in Visakhapatnam is expected to commence operations by the end of 2018.

Millennium Post – 13.09.2018

Balmer Lawrie eyes ₹125 cr capex in FY19

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Diversified PSU Balmer Lawrie & Co, under the ministry of petroleum and natural gas, is planning to make a capital expenditure of Rs 125 crore in the current financial year, an official said.

The money would be mainly spent to strengthen the company's logistics, grease and lubricants, and industrial packaging verticals, its chairman and managing director Prabal Basu said Wednesday.

The company published its financial report in Kolkata following its 101 annual general meeting at GD Birla Sabhaghar on Wednesday.

Balmer Lawrie recorded net turnover of Rs 1,797 crore during 2017-18 as against Rs 1,779 crore in 2016-17 registering an increase of around one per cent than the last financial year. The



company also recorded a profit before tax (PBT) of Rs 261.12 in 2017-18 as against Rs 254.11 crore in the previous financial year.

While talking to the media during a press conference, CMD Basu said that the upcoming Vadodara plant in Gujarat would be commissioned by the month-end which would manufacture steel drums with an annual capacity of six lakh units.

A warehouse has also been constructed in Hyderabad which will be commissioned in June-July next year where various medical equipments

would be produced.

Balmer Lawrie bagged a contract for providing warehousing and distribution facility for medical equipment manufacturing unit which has already been set up at Andhra Pradesh Med Tech Zone Ltd on Build, Operate, Manage and maintain (BOMM) basis.

Considering the potential in cold chain logistics, the company has also set up two temperature controlled warehouses — one at Hyderabad and the other at Rai in Haryana. The third one at Patalganga near Mumbai is expected to be ready

for commercial operation by the end of this year. It may be mentioned here that the company is in the process of commissioning the multi model logistic hub (MMLH) at Visakhapatnam for handling Exim and domestic cargo.

Logistics Services (LS) suffered a de-growth of 9 per cent due to stiff competition in the air and ocean freight segments. LS had been able to increase its business from the private sector by 3 per cent on year-on-year basis, with the major increase coming from ocean export freight from Chennai, Mumbai and Kolkata branches.

Basu also mentioned that the company has a steel drum plant in Kolkata but it is not getting enough order. As there is no such demands of chemical and petroleum products it has an adverse impact on the steel drum market in this region.

Business Standard – 14.09.2018



Balmer Lawrie Guj mfg unit by Sept-end

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata: Balmer Lawrie & Co is set to commission its new steel drum manufacturing plant in Vadodara, Gujarat, by September-end.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Miniratna company's AGM on Wednesday, its CMD Prabal Basu said, "The plant is likely to be commissioned at the end of this month. This will be

our seventh such facility and will have a capacity to manufacture six lakh units per year." The plant will cater to the Gujarat market and will take the company's total steel drum manufacturing capacity to 60 lakh units per year. Around Rs32 crore was invested in the project so far.

The company has also acquired land in Bhubaneswar for a temperature-controlled warehouse. Spread across 1.5 acres, the facility

will have a capacity of accommodating 3,800 pallets. Here, the investment would be Rs 20-25 crore. Basu said, the steel drum manufacturing facility in Kolkata is not being utilized to capacity, because the Bengal market has not been generating enough orders. "We are manufacturing around 2.5 lakh units at the six-lakh capacity plant."

STEEL DRUM

Focusing on logistics, industrial

packaging and grease and lubricant segments, the total capex for this year for Balmer Lawrie will be around Rs 125 crore. Basu said, "At present, 60% of our cargo is sent through air. We want to ship more via oceans." Currently, ocean shipping for the company comprises around 20% of the total cargo.

Balmer Lawrie recorded a profit before tax of Rs 261.12 crore in 2017-18 against Rs 254.11 crore in 2016-17.

The Times of India –
15.09.2018

बामर लॉरी के कारोबार में एक फीसद की वृद्धि

Dainik Jagran –
13.09.2018

कोलकाता : सार्वजनिक उपक्रम बामर लॉरी एंड कंपनी लिमिटेड ने वित्त वर्ष 2017-18 में कुल 1797 करोड़ रुपये का शुद्ध कारोबार किया है। कंपनी ने पिछले वित्त वर्ष में 1779 करोड़ रुपये का शुद्ध कारोबार किया था जिसकी तुलना में इस वर्ष संस्थान ने लगभग एक प्रतिशत वृद्धि दर्ज की है। बामर लॉरी के अध्यक्ष सह प्रबंध निदेशक प्रबल बसु ने आज कंपनी की सालाना आम बैठक में इसकी जानकारी दी। यहां मीडिया को बताया कि कंपनी ने वित्त वर्ष 2016-17 में 254.11 करोड़ रुपये का लाभार्जन किया था। इसकी तुलना में वर्ष 2017-18 का कारोबार-पूर्व का मुनाफा बढ़ कर 261.12 करोड़ रुपये दर्ज किया गया है। उन्होंने बताया कि चालू वित्त वर्ष में कंपनी विस्तार पर 125 करोड़ रुपये निवेश करेगी। (जास)

बॉमर लॉरी करेगी 125 करोड़ रुपये का निवेश

सन्मार्ग संवाददाता, कोलकाता: पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्रालय के तहत विविध सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की उपक्रम बामर लॉरी एंड कंपनी ने इस वित्त वर्ष में 125 करोड़ रुपये के पूंजीगत व्यय करने की योजना बनाई है। साथ ही कंपनी ने 2016-17 के 1779 करोड़ की तुलना में 2017-18 में 1797 करोड़ रुपये का शुद्ध कारोबार किया है। इस तरह कंपनी ने कर से पहले 2016-17 के 254 करोड़ रुपये के खिलाफ 2017-18 में 261 करोड़ रुपये का लाभ कमाया है। कंपनी की 101वें वार्षिक आम बैठक में कंपनी के अध्यक्ष और प्रबंध निदेशक प्रबल बसु ने बुधवार को कहा कि यह पूंजीगत राशि मुख्य रूप से कंपनी के रसद, तेल और स्नेहक और



औद्योगिक पैकेजिंग वर्टिकल को मजबूत करने के लिए खर्च किया जाएगा। बसु ने कहा कि मौजूदा समय में 60 प्रतिशत कार्गो हवाई जहाजों द्वारा निर्यात किया जा रहा था। इसलिए कंपनी 20 प्रतिशत के वर्तमान स्तर से सागर के माध्यम से अधिक माल भेजने पर ध्यान दे रही है। उन्होंने हवा और महासागर के माध्यम से 50:50 अनुपात में कार्गो को भेजे जाने पर जोर दिया। उन्होंने कहा कि गुजरात में आने वाले वडोदरा संयंत्र को महीने के अंत तक

चालू किया जाएगा जो स्टील ड्रम का निर्माण छह लाख इकाइयों की वार्षिक क्षमता के साथ करेगा। कंपनी ने 5 करोड़ रुपये के एक कॉर्पस के साथ स्टार्ट-अप फंड भी गठित किया था। उन्होंने कहा, "हमने आईआईएम जोका के सहयोग से दो स्टार्ट-अप को फंड देने का फैसला किया है।" उन्होंने कहा, "हम निवेशकों के साथ कंपनी में 50 फीसदी इक्विटी लेने और एक बार निपटारे के माध्यम से कर्ज चुकाने के लिए चर्चा कर रहे हैं।"

Sanmarg –
13.09.2018

बामर लॉरी के शुद्ध कारोबार में एक प्रतिशत की वृद्धि

Prabhat Khabar

– 13.09.2018

● महानगर में कंपनी की वार्षिक आम बैठक हुई संपन्न

कोलकाता. बामर लॉरी एंड कंपनी लिमिटेड ने वित्त वर्ष 2017-18 में 1,797 करोड़ रुपये का कारोबार किया है. गत वित्त वर्ष यानी वर्ष 2016-17 में कंपनी ने 1,779 करोड़ रुपये का शुद्ध कारोबार किया था. यानी गत वित्त वर्ष की तुलना में इस बार कंपनी के शुद्ध कारोबार में करीब एक प्रतिशत की वृद्धि हुई है. इतना ही नहीं कंपनी को वित्त वर्ष 2017-18 में 261.12 करोड़ रुपये का मुनाफा हुआ है. पिछले वित्त वर्ष में कंपनी ने 254.11 करोड़ रुपये का लाभार्जन दर्ज किया था. इस बार मुनाफे के परिमाण में भी बढ़ोतरी हुई है. यह बात बुधवार को महानगर में आयोजित कंपनी की 101वाँ वार्षिक आम बैठक में बामर लॉरी एंड कंपनी लिमिटेड अध्यक्ष और प्रबंध निदेशक प्रबाल बसु ने बताया.

उन्होंने कहा कि कंपनी ने अपने 151 वर्ष पूरे किये कर लिये हैं. समय के साथ कंपनी और मजबूत स्थिति में पहुंच गयी है. इस दौरान कंपनियों ने कई चुनौतियों को स्वीकार किया



है. बाजार में प्रतिस्पर्धा के मुताबिक कंपनी ने कई सकारात्मक परिवर्तन भी किये. कंपनी ने हर बदलाव को एक फायदे के रूप में लिया. यह कोर व्यवसाय को मजबूत करके, नये कारोबार में भाग लेकर किया गया. श्री बसु ने कहा कि गत कुछ वर्षों में औद्योगिक पैकेजिंग यूनिट (आइपीयू) के विस्तार क्षेत्र का दायरा बढ़ा है. गुजरात के वडोदरा में एक नयी विनिर्माण इकाई स्थापित करने का कार्य जारी है. उसे जल्द शुरू कर दिया जायेगा. यह स्ट्रेटिजिक बिजनेस यूनिट्स (एसबीयू) को बढ़त प्रदान करेगा. वर्ष 2017-18 में ग्रीस व लुब्रिकेंट्स (जी एंड एल) यूनिट ने विक्रय की दर में 25 प्रतिशत से अधिक वृद्धि हासिल की है. चालू वर्ष में यह यूनिट पिछले साल की तुलना में

उत्पादन और बिक्री के मामले में अपने समग्र प्रदर्शन को बनाये रखने में सक्षम रही है. कोल्ड चैन लॉजिस्टिक्स की संभावित क्षमता को ध्यान में रखते हुए कंपनी ने वातानुकूल गोदामों की स्थापना की है, एक हैदराबाद में और दूसरा हरियाणा में. तीसरा गोदाम मुंबई के पास पातालगंगा में इस वर्ष के अंत में वाणिज्यिक परिचालन के लिए तैयार होने की उम्मीद है. बसु ने कहा कि घरेलू कारगो को संभालने के लिये कंपनी वीपीटी की साझेदारी में विशाखापत्तनम में मल्टी मॉडल लॉजिस्टिक हब (एमएमएलएच) तैयार करने की प्रक्रिया में जुटी है. कंपनी के अध्यक्ष ने लॉजिस्टिक, लुब्रिकेंट और इंडस्ट्रियल पैकेजिंग के क्षेत्र में व्यवसाय बढ़ने की

उम्मीद जतायी है. कंपनी की वार्षिक आम बैठक में फाइनेंस एंड सीएफओ के निदेशक एसएस खूंटिया, कंपनी की सचिव कविता भावसार समेत अन्य पदाधिकारी मौजूद रहे.

Balmer Lawrie after completing 151 years still growing strong

MI NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA: The 101st Annual General Meeting of Balmer Lawrie & Co. Ltd. was held at Kolkata on September 12.

On this occasion the Chairman Prabal Basu said that in an era, when the average life span of companies is shrinking rapidly world over, Balmer Lawrie completed 151 years of its existence and is still going strong.

There are very few corporate houses in India, perhaps across the globe that could stand the test of time that this Company has endured.

During this journey of over 150 years, Balmer Lawrie has survived myriad of challenges, reinvented itself and adapted to various changes, in order to stay ahead. Balmer Lawrie leveraged every change as an opportunity and remained profitable by strengthening core businesses, foraging into new businesses and exiting from those which were not doing well.

Overall financial performance:

He said that Balmer Lawrie recorded net turnover of Rs. 1,797 Crore during 2017-18 as against Rs. 1,779 Crore in 2016-17 registering an increase of approximately 1% above last year. Further, the Company recorded a Profit Before Tax of Rs. 261.12 Crore in 2017-18 as against Rs. 254.11 Crore in 2016-17, the increase being attributable to improved performance of various SBUs, particularly, SBU: Travel & Vacations and higher dividend income earned during 2017-18.

Performance of Strategic Business Units (SBUs):

Balmer Lawrie is a diversified PSU with a presence in both manufacturing and service sectors.

Industrial Packaging (SBU: IP): The SBU has shown consistent growth in volume, turnover, profitability and profits. Despite the shrinking of almost 15% of the addressable market due to MSME/Government regulations, the SBU has managed to increase its volumes over the last few years. A new manufacturing facility is being set up at Vadodra which is expected to be commissioned shortly and will provide a significant edge to the SBU for further growth.



Lubricants (SBU: GL) - Due to increased thrust in Channel Sales (Automotive and Industrial), this segment achieved an excellent growth of more than 25% in sales volume during 2017-18. During the current year, SBU: GL has been able to maintain its overall performance in terms of production and sales as compared to last year. There has been marginal improvement in the bottom-line performance. SBU: GL has worked out strategies in the perspective of substitution, cost effective formulation, value addition, bio-degradable products etc. to combat the challenge of margins in the coming financial year.

Leather Chemicals (SBU: LC): The SBU achieved higher revenues and remained profitable in spite of the escalating raw material prices through cost reduction, efficiency improvement in planning, manufacturing, sales & marketing, technical services and product development. Overall, the SBU delivered growth in volume and revenue. Both full-grown and syn-tan segments witnessed healthy growth. SBU: LC is optimistic about the business scenario and with concerted market development activity, is hopeful of better performance in the coming years.

Logistics (SBU: L) - Under this SBU, there are two verticals viz., Logistics Infrastructure and Logistics Services.

Logistics Infrastructure (LI) - The warehousing activity continued to perform well during the year due to better utilization of space. Balmer Lawrie successfully bid and bagged a contract for providing warehousing and distribution facility for the medical equipment manufacturing units being set up at Andhra Pradesh MedTech Zone Ltd. (AMTZ) on Build, Operate, Manage and Maintain (BOMM) basis.

Considering the potential in cold chain logistics, the Company has set up two Temperature Controlled Warehouses one at Hyderabad and other at Raichur. The third one at Patadanga near Mumbai is expected to be ready for commercial operation by end of 2018. Further, the company is in the process of commissioning the Multi-Modal Logistics Hub (MMLH) at Visakhapatnam in partnership with M/S Visakhapatnam Port Trust (VPT) for handling Exim and domestic cargo.

Logistics Services (LS) - Due to stiff competition in the air and ocean freight segments, LS suffered de-

crease of 9% in the top-line. As a consequence, the bottom-line also got affected marginally compared to the previous year. LS was able to increase its business from the private sector by 3% on year-on-year basis, with the major increase coming from ocean export freight from Chennai, Mumbai and Kolkata branches. The Project Logistics team was able to bag prestigious orders and executed them very efficiently earning accolades from the customers.

Travel & Vacations (SBU: TV) - This SBU has two verticals viz., Travel and Vacations. Travel - This business vertical has shown remarkable progress in turnover and profit in 2017-18, in spite of constant decrease in IATA commission being paid by all leading domestic and international airlines to the booking agents. This vertical is further driving growth by offering Self Booking Tool (SBT) facility to PSUs, a facility that helps in seamless booking and cancellation of tickets, payment and its appropriation against specific invoices. Travel vertical has registered an increase of 22% in net sales and over 100% in profits. The growth in turnover brings better Productivity Linked Bonus to the

Company. Vacations - The Vacations vertical during 2017-18 reported lower turnover due to reduction in NH business, lower GIT and FIT. However, there is buoyancy in bookings for the FY 2018-19. The SBU is presently undergoing a technology upgradation to further increase its efficiency. This up-gradation will aid in further streamlining the services and provide better interface to the valued customers and associates. 'Vacations Exotica' is being repositioned with a new theme and tag line of 'Collect Stories' and the website is being revamped to give the brand a much younger and new age look to target wider customer segments.

Hefnery and Oil Field Services (SBU: HOPS) - The novel process of hydrocarbon recovery from oil sludge has gathered momentum due to the high crude oil prices across the globe. The SBU is the pioneer in mechanized in-situ sludge processing and maintains leadership position in India with nearly 70% market share. The SBU is considering necessary technology upgradation, in not only maintaining its market leadership but also its superiority in terms of technology, he told.

Morning India -

14.09.2018

बॉमर लारी के कारोबार में हुई वृद्धि

Jansatta -

14.09.2018

कोलकाता, 12 सितंबर (जनसत्ता)।

बॉमर लारी के कारोबार में वित्तीय वर्ष 2017-18 के दौरान एक फीसद की वृद्धि दर्ज की गई है। इसके तहत इस वित्तीय वर्ष में कंपनी ने 1,797 करोड़ रुपए का कारोबार किया है, जबकि वित्तीय वर्ष 2016-17 की इसी अवधि में इसने 1,779 करोड़ रुपए का कारोबार किया था।

इसके अलावा कंपनी के प्रॉफिट बिफोर टैक्स भी 2017-18 में 261.12 करोड़ रुपए रहा, जबकि 2016-17 की इसी अवधि में यह 254.11 करोड़ रुपए था। यह जानकारी आज एक प्रेस बयान में बॉमर लारी एंड कंपनी लिमिटेड के चेयरमैन ने दी।

मालूम हो कि बुधवार को बॉमर लारी का 101वाँ सालाना आम बैठक (एजीएम) थी। इस मौके पर कंपनी के चेयरमैन ने अपने संबोधन में कहा कि जिस दौर में कंपनियों की जीवन-अवधि कम होती जा रही है, वहीं बॉमर लारी ने 151 साल पूरे कर लिए हैं और अभी भी मजबूती के साथ खड़ी है।

Coverage received online

- <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/balmer-lawrie-plans-rs-125-crore-capex-this-fiscal-2945851.html>
- <http://www.uniindia.com/balmer-lawrie-and-co-ltd-leverages-every-change-as-an-opportunity-and-remains-profitable-by-strengthening-core-businesses-cmd/business-economy/news/1348692.html>
- https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/balmer-lawrie-plans-rs-125-cr-capex-this-fiscal-118091200664_1.html
- <https://m.dailyhunt.in/news/india/english/millennium+post-epaper-millpost/balmer+lawrie+eyes+rs+125+cr+capex+in+fy19-newsid-96795095>

Container handlers draw survival plans

Container freight station service providers are looking at value-added services and improved efficiencies through technology adoption to protect their margins after the implementation of a direct port delivery system at the major ports of the country. Under direct port delivery, a shipment is directly delivered from the port to the importer instead of initially holding it at the container freight station (CFS). According to industry estimates, a CFS-bound cargo generally takes 6-9 days between offloading and stacking at the terminal yard of the port to loading the container at the importer's trailer for delivery. The number of days comes down to around 2.5-3.5 days under direct port delivery. Even public sector undertakings such as Balmer Lawrie, engaged in the CFS business, have pointed out direct port delivery as a major concern. "The company has three CFSs at Nhava Sheva (Navi Mumbai), Chennai and Calcutta. Although, the import volume in the three ports of JNPT, Calcutta and Chennai improved 2.3 per cent, the volumes moved to the freight stations from the port in these three cities went down by 4 per cent during 2017-18 over the previous year. The main reason for the negative growth was the implementation of direct port delivery at Nhava Sheva and Chennai locations," Balmer Lawrie said in its annual report of 2017-18.

The Telegraph - 17.09.2018

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/business/container-handlers-draw-survival-plans-259863>

Moderate growth

India's economic growth is expected to moderate in the second half of this financial year after a strong first quarter, owing to tighter financial conditions, high oil prices and slowing global growth, says a UBS report. The global financial services major expects real GDP growth to slow to 7-7.3 per cent in the second half of this fiscal from 8.2 per cent in the June 2018 quarter. "We believe headwinds, including tighter financial conditions, high oil prices, slowing global growth and a still muted private corporate capex recovery on legacy issues of high debt and weakened balance sheets will weigh on India's growth momentum," UBS Securities India's economist Tanvee Gupta Jain and strategist Rohit Arora said in a research note. According to official data, the Indian economy grew at a two-year high of 8.2 per cent in the June quarter on a good show by manufacturing and farm sectors. On the monetary policy front, the report said the MPC is expected to take a breather in the near-term amid rising global uncertainties.

The Telegraph - 12.09.2018

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/business/moderate-growth-258336>

Inflation cools to 10-month low of 3.69% in August

India's retail inflation fell below the central bank's medium-term target in August, increasing the likelihood it will keep interest rates on hold in October after raising them at its past two meetings. Consumer prices rose 3.69 percent from a year earlier, down from July's 4.17 percent, the Statistics Ministry said on Wednesday. August was the first month in 10 in which retail inflation was below the Reserve Bank of India's medium-term target of 4 percent. The median forecast of economists polled by Reuters for August was 3.86 percent, with three-quarters of those polled predicting inflation would be below the RBI's target. Forecasts ranged from 3.55 percent to 5.40 percent. "While weakness in the rupee adds to the upside risk, factors such as still sanguine domestic food prices and moderation in global commodity prices (excluding oil) are likely to provide some relief," said Garima Kapoor, an economist at Elara Capital in Mumbai. Slowing inflation in food prices, which make up nearly half of India's consumer price index (CPI), cancelled out price rises in imported goods stemming from the weakening rupee currency.

The Economic Times - 13.09.2018

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/inflation-cools-to-10-month-low-of-3-69-in-august/articleshow/65784292.cms>

Wholesale price relief

Inflation based on wholesale prices eased to a four-month low of 4.53 per cent in August because of the softening of food prices. The WPI-based inflation stood at 5.09 per cent in July this year, while it was 3.24 per cent in August last year. Food articles registered deflation at 4.04 per cent in August. Last month, deflation in this category was 2.16 per cent. Deflation in vegetables was 20.18 per cent in August against 14.07 per cent in the previous month. Inflation in the fuel and power basket was 17.73 per cent in August. "The decline in inflation, which is in line with the central bank's medium-term inflation target, should induce the RBI to resume the accommodative policy stance to support the incipient recovery currently underway in the economy which in turn would trigger the investment cycle by lowering the borrowing costs of industry," Chandrajit Banerjee, director-general of the CII, said. "The decline in WPI inflation was driven by the deepening deflation in food items. However, core inflation hardened to a series high of 5 per cent in August from 4.8 per cent in July, a signal that firms with pricing power are beginning to transmit the weaker rupee and rising costs associated with industrial inputs such as fuels, to final prices," Aditi Nayar, principal economist with Icra, said.

The Telegraph - 15.09.2018

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/business/wholesale-price-relief-259390>

Government brings in 5 big measures to get widening CAD under control

The government on Friday indicated that it may curb non-essential imports in the weeks ahead and take steps to boost exports besides announcing a number of measures to shore up the rupee and control the current account deficit. The five steps announced following a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to review the state of the economy include scrapping withholding tax on masala bonds — rupee-denominated debt sold overseas — and relaxations in the overseas debt regime. Modi was briefed by Reserve Bank of India governor Urjit Patel and finance ministry officials, finance minister Arun Jaitley told reporters after the meeting late on Friday. The decisions are aimed at checking the current account deficit (CAD) and increasing foreign exchange inflows, Jaitley said. The government will also take steps to promote exports and restrict non-essential imports, he said. Jaitley said the items on which

IMF tip to rein in CAD

The International Monetary Fund has said that India's current account deficit (CAD) at \$15.8 billion in the April-June quarter of 2018-19 is at a "moderate level" but exports need to be stronger in the light of the widening trade deficit. The current account deficit has jumped to 2.4 per cent of the gross domestic product in the first quarter of 2018-19 from 1.9 per cent for the quarter ended March 2018. A sharp depreciation in the rupee and a spike in crude oil prices have widened the deficit, resulting in capital outflows. Data from the Reserve Bank of India show that the widening of the current account deficit was led by a higher trade deficit of \$45.7 billion compared with \$41.9 billion a year ago. Portfolio investment recorded a net outflow of \$8.1 billion during the first quarter of 2018-19 compared with an inflow of \$12.5 billion in the corresponding quarter last year on account of net sales in both the debt and equity markets. The International Monetary Fund in its August report had projected the current account deficit to widen to 2.6 per cent of GDP in 2018-19 on account of rising oil prices and strong demand for imports, offset by a slight increase in remittances.

The Telegraph - 16.09.2018

https://epaper.telegraphindia.com/textview_218040_133519837_4_1_9_16-09-2018_71_1.html

Factory output grows at 6.6% in July as manufacturing, capital goods shine

Industrial production grew at 6.6 per cent in July on the back of good performance by the manufacturing sector and higher off-take of capital goods and consumer durables. Factory output measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production had expanded by just 1 per cent in July last year, according to the data released by Central Statistics Office (CSO). The IIP growth for June was also revised downwards to 6.8 per cent from the provisional estimate of 7 per cent released last month, the data showed. The manufacturing sector recorded a 7 per cent growth in July as against a contraction of 0.1 per cent in the same month year ago. The consumer durables sector recorded an impressive growth of 14.4 per cent in July against a dip of 2.4 per cent year ago. Capital goods production grew by 3 per cent in July as against decline of 1.1 per cent year ago. The IIP

import restrictions would be imposed will be finalised in consultation with stakeholder ministries and departments to ensure they are in sync with WTO norms.

The Economic Times - 15.09.2018

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/government-brings-in-5-big-measures-to-get-widening-cad-under-control/65817119>

Government determined to contain fiscal deficit at 3.3 per cent

The government is determined to keep fiscal deficit within the budgeted level of 3.3 per cent of GDP as the country cannot afford to have a twin deficit problem, a top official said. The official said a depreciating rupee and high crude import bill would definitely put pressure on the country's current account deficit (CAD), and a fiscal slippage at this juncture would lead to a twin deficit. Ruling out any excise duty cut on petrol and diesel, the official said the dependence on oil as a source of tax revenue has to be brought down and this can only happen when the share of non-oil tax to GDP goes up. "India will maintain the fiscal deficit target as we are a consumption driven economy and tax revenues are also increasing. We are determined to do that. We will not cut expenditure as it would have adverse impact on growth," the official said. He said cutting expenditure is the easiest way to trim fiscal deficit. "If we cut Rs 1 lakh crore in expenditure, it would lower fiscal deficit to 2.9 per cent. But then growth will be impacted," the official said.

The Economic Times - 13.09.2018

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/finance/government-determined-to-contain-fiscal-deficit-at-3-3-per-cent/articleshow/65788014.cms>

Compensation for Top Execs Needs No Govt Clearance

Corporates will no longer require government's approval for paying managerial remuneration to key executives beyond the prescribed threshold if they have got the nod of shareholders. The government has notified the rules to give effect to amendments to the Companies Act 2013 that liberalised the managerial remuneration provisions under the law. "In a move designed to empower common shareholders of a company, the government has notified that remuneration in excess of individual limits laid down for executive and non-executive directors will henceforth be approved by shareholders through a special resolution," the ministry said in a statement. This will be applicable for public companies. "The

growth in April-July period was 5.4 per cent compared to 1.7 per cent year ago. In terms of industries, 22 out of 23 industry groups in the manufacturing sector showed positive growth during July 2018.

The Hindu Business Line - 13.09.2018

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/factory-output-grows-at-66-in-july-as-manufacturing-capital-goods-shine/article24935833.ece>

Exports up by 19.21% in August; trade deficit at \$17.4 billion

India's exports grew by 19.21 per cent to \$27.84 billion in August on account of healthy performance by sectors such as petroleum. "Export trade during August 2018 recorded at \$27.84 billion, a positive growth of 19.21 per cent. Exports excluding petroleum also reported a positive growth of 17.43 per cent," Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu said in a tweet. Merchandise imports too rose by 25.41 per cent in August to \$45.24 billion due to the rising crude oil prices, leaving a trade deficit of \$17.4 billion. In July, trade deficit soared to a near five-year high of \$18.02 billion. During April-August this fiscal, the exports recorded a growth of 16.13 per cent, while the imports during the first five months of this fiscal grew by 17.34 per cent.

Business Today - 13.09.2018

<https://www.businesstoday.in/current/economy-politics/exports-up-by-19-21-percent-in-august-trade-deficit-at-usd-17-4-billion/story/282312.html>

FinMin may replace GAIL, EIL, Container Corp with new PSUs in CPSE ETF

The Finance Ministry is likely to replace GAIL, Engineers India Ltd (EIL) and Container Corporation with new PSUs in the CPSE Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) since the government holding in these companies has fallen below 55 per cent. CPSE ETF, which functions like a mutual fund scheme, comprises scrips of 10 bluechip PSUs namely ONGC, Coal India, IOC, Oil India, PFC, Bharat Electronics, REC, GAIL, EIL and Container Corporation of India. Officials said three PSUs or more would be included in the CPSE ETF basket to replace GAIL, EIL and Container Corp and the number

approval of the central government will no longer be required for payment of remuneration to managerial personnel (in excess of 11% of the net profit of a company)," the ministry said. In case of firms that have defaulted on payment of banks, financial institutions or any other secured creditor, the government has made it mandatory to secure creditor's approval before placing the matter of increasing remuneration for shareholders' approval. "It has been stipulated that where a company has defaulted on payment of dues to any bank, financial institution or non-convertible debenture holder or any other secured creditor, their prior approval will be required before placing the matter for consideration and approval in the general meeting of the shareholders," the statement said.

The Economic Times - 14.09.2018

<https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TheEconomicTimes/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=ETKM%2F2018%2F09%2F14&entity=Ar01503&sk=4493AE3E&mode=text>

Fuel in GST a long shot

The flare-up in the prices of petrol and diesel has raised the demand for bringing the fuels under the goods and services tax to provide relief to consumers. However, analysts said the prices are unlikely to come down as a result of this measure. Blaming global factors for the spike in crude prices, petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan said, "It has now become essential to bring petrol and diesel under GST." States such as Maharashtra and Punjab are in favour of bringing the two products within the indirect tax regime. Petrol and diesel under the GST is often cited as a long-term solution to ease the burden of high fuel prices on the common man. This is easier said than done though because the current rate of tax is 100 per cent for petrol and 67 per cent for diesel and these rates do not fall into any of the existing GST slabs. The proposal to include fuel under the GST is based on the assumption that the highest tax rate of 28 per cent will make the product cheaper than the current rates. The total taxes on petrol and diesel at present are already beyond the peak rate, and if the rates are kept at just 28 per cent, it would result in a big loss of revenue to both the Centre and states.

The Telegraph - 17.09.2018

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/business/fuel-in-gst-a-long-shot-259865>

would depend upon the value of the scrip and the corresponding weightage in the ETF basket. The Finance Ministry is likely to replace GAIL, Engineers India Ltd (EIL) and Container Corporation with new PSUs in the CPSE Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) since the government holding in these companies has fallen below 55 per cent. CPSE ETF, which functions like a mutual fund scheme, comprises scrips of 10 bluechip PSUs namely ONGC, Coal India, IOC, Oil India, PFC, Bharat Electronics, REC, GAIL, EIL and Container Corporation of India. Officials said three PSUs or more would be included in the CPSE ETF basket to replace GAIL, EIL and Container Corp and the number would depend upon the value of the scrip and the corresponding weightage in the ETF basket.

The Indian Express - 11.09.2018

<https://indianexpress.com/article/business/finmin-may-replace-gail-eil-container-corp-with-new-psus-in-cpse-etf-5348888/>

Fuel demand growth strong in August despite record high prices

Demand growth for petrol and diesel stayed strong in August despite record prices although overall oil demand growth decelerated to less than 1% in the country from nearly 8% in July. The weaker rupee and high crude oil prices have combined to take fuel prices to record highs in the country but that doesn't seem to have hurt demand for transportation fuel much. In August, consumption of petrol rose 7.8%, and diesel 4.2% from a year earlier. Petrol and diesel sales had grown by 7.8% and 4.9% respectively in July when prices were lower. Robust sales growth in petrol and diesel is partly due to the base effect as sales had contracted in August 2017, HPCL chairman MK Surana told ET. The Goods and Services Tax was launched in July last year, and initial confusion that accompanied the roll-out had contributed to contraction in fuel demand in August. Record fuel prices don't seem to have pushed consumers towards public transport or vehicle sharing. "People don't shift their transport behaviour on the fly.

The Economic Times - 17.09.2018

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/fuel-demand-growth-strong-in-august-despite-record-high-prices/articleshow/65833537.cms?utm_source=WAPusers&utm_medium=whatsappshare&utm_campaign=socialsharebutton&from=mdr&utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

Global oil production hits a new record, led by US and OPEC

The world's supply of oil hit a record last month, yet another sign of oil's dominance over the energy landscape. The International Energy Agency said Thursday that the global oil supply reached 100 million barrels a day for the first time ever, boosted by rising production in the U.S. and several OPEC nations. Demand for oil grew more slowly in the second quarter but will continue to rise this year and in 2019, the group said. Much of the increase in production is coming from OPEC and the United States, according to IEA, which advises oil-consuming nations. U.S. production has returned to 2014 boom levels, but the energy agency said U.S. output will grow more slowly next year due to bottlenecks in getting oil to markets. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries accounts for about one-third of all production. In August, rising output in Libya, Iraq, Nigeria and Saudi Arabia offset declines in Iran, which is about to face new U.S. sanctions that are already hurting Iranian exports, and in Venezuela. The Paris-based energy agency said falling output in Iran and Venezuela could drive up prices if it is not offset by more production elsewhere.

The Economic Times - 14.09.2018

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/global-oil-production-hits-a-new-record-led-by-us-and-opec/65803526>

'Crucial period' for oil as Iran exports shrink: Int'l agency

Global oil output hit a record of 100 million barrels per day in August, but the market may tighten and prices rise as exports from Iran and Venezuela decline, the International Energy Agency said on Sept. 13. "We are entering a very crucial period for the oil market," the IEA said in its latest monthly report. "Things are tightening up." The global record came as output from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries rose to a nine-month high of over 32 million barrels per day (mb/d). The cartel had agreed in Vienna in June to push up production in order to put a cap on soaring prices. In recent months, prices have wavered comfortably between the \$70 and \$80 per barrel on the Brent crude futures contract. According to the IEA, a rebound in Libyan production, near-record Iraqi output and higher supply from Nigeria and OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia have so far managed to offset the impact of shrinking production from crisis-hit Venezuela and Iran. But with the crisis in Venezuela showing no sign of abating, and with new U.S. sanctions on Iran's oil industry set to come into force on Nov. 4, other producers may have to ramp up production even further if they want to limit the impact on the market.

States may get Rs. 22,700 cr. from oil price rise: SBI report

The incessant increase in fuel prices may have given the Opposition a convenient tool to beat the government with. A research report of the State Bank of India (SBI), however, predicts that the rising fuel prices could after all fetch States a substantial windfall gain. "The increase in petrol and diesel prices is likely to give States a windfall gain of around Rs. 22,700 crore over and above the budget estimates for the current fiscal. Alternatively, a \$1/barrel increase in oil prices translates, on an average, into Rs. 1,513 crore revenue gain to all the major 19 States," the SBI research report said. "This windfall gain will have positive impact on State finances, which might push down the States' fiscal deficit by 15-20 basis points, other things remaining unchanged," the reported added. Since the States are having an incremental revenue over the budgeted one, they could cut, on an average, petrol prices by Rs. 3.20 a litre and diesel by Rs. 2.30 a litre without affecting their revenue arithmetic.

The Hindu - 12.09.2018

<https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-business/states-may-get-rs-22700-cr-from-oil-price-rise-sbi-report/article24930476.ece>

Oil slips from 4-month highs on economic concerns

Oil prices fell on Thursday, slipping back from four-month highs as investors focussed on the risk that emerging market crises and trade disputes could dent demand even as supply tightens. Benchmark Brent crude oil was down 65 cents a barrel at \$79.09 by 1200 GMT. US light crude fell \$1.15 to a low of \$69.22 a barrel and was last at \$69.50, down 87 cents. "A bout of profit-taking is pushing the energy complex (down) after two days of stellar gains," said Stephen Brennock, markets analyst at brokerage PVM Oil in London. The International Energy Agency said on Thursday that although the oil market was tightening at the moment and world oil demand would soon reach 100 million barrels per day (bpd), global economic risks were mounting. "Things are tightening up," the agency said in its monthly report, but added: "As we move into 2019, a possible risk to our forecast lies in some key emerging economies, partly due to currency depreciations versus the US dollar raising the cost of imported energy." "In addition, there is a risk to growth from an escalation of trade disputes," the Paris-based agency said.

The Economic Times - 14.09.2018

Hurriyet Daily News - 14.09.2018

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/crucial-period-for-oil-as-iran-exports-shrink-intl-agency-136786>

US curbs on Iran & Venezuela may raise oil prices, fears IEA

Global oil output hit a record of 100 million barrels per day in August, but the market may tighten and prices rise as exports from Iran and Venezuela decline, the International Energy Agency said Thursday. "We are entering a very crucial period for the oil market," the IEA said in its latest monthly report. "Things are tightening up." The global record came as output from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries rose to a nine-month high of over 32 million barrels per day (mb/d). The cartel had agreed in Vienna in June to push up production in order to put a cap on soaring prices. In recent months, prices have wavered comfortably between the 70 and 80 per barrel on the Brent crude futures contract. According to the IEA, a rebound in Libyan production, near-record Iraqi output and higher supply from Nigeria and OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia have so far managed to offset the impact of shrinking production from crisis-hit Venezuela and Iran. But with the crisis in Venezuela showing no sign of abating, and with new US sanctions on Iran's oil industry set to come into force on November 4, other producers may have to ramp up production even further if they want to limit the impact on the market.

Daily Hunt - 14.09.2018

<https://m.dailyhunt.in/news/india/english/millennium+post-epaper-millpost/us+curbs+on+iran+venezuela+may+raise+oil+prices+fears+iea-newsid-96866085>

Russia is India's largest investment destination in oil and gas sector: Dharmendra Pradhan

Hailing Russia as India's largest investment destination in the oil and gas sector, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Thursday said that Moscow will always be a priority in New Delhi's foreign and energy policy. Speaking at a conference titled 'India-Russia in the 21st Century: Enhancing the Special Privileged Strategic Partnership' here, Pradhan said: "I believe that our time-tested relationship has no expiry date. Russia will always be a priority in India's foreign and energy policy and both our countries will remain as a role model for global communities." He told on the sidelines of the

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/markets/commodities/news/oil-slips-from-4-month-highs-on-economic-concerns/articleshow/65798630.cms>

India's Iran crude oil purchases to fade ahead of U.S. sanctions

Indian refiners will cut their monthly crude loadings from Iran for September and October by nearly half from earlier this year as New Delhi works to win waivers on the oil export sanctions Washington plans to reimpose on Tehran in November. India's loadings from Iran for this month and next will drop to less than 12 million barrels each, after purchases over April-August had been boosted in anticipation of the reductions. The United States is renewing sanctions on Iran after withdrawing from a nuclear deal forged in 2015 between Tehran and world powers. Washington reimposed some of the financial sanctions from Aug. 6, while those affecting Iran's petroleum sector will come into force from Nov. 4. India, Iran's No.2 oil client behind top buyer China, does not recognise the reimposed U.S. sanctions, but winning a waiver from the restrictions is a must for New Delhi to protect its wider exposure to the U.S. financial system. India's oil ministry in June told refiners to prepare for a "drastic reduction or zero" imports from Iran from November. "Some refiners have either already exhausted or front-loaded their term contract to a large extent, which allows them the flexibility to go to zero if required, or until clarity on the waivers emerge," Amrita Sen, chief oil analyst at Energy Aspect, told Reuters.

The Economic Times - 17.09.2018

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/indias-iran-crude-oil-purchases-to-fade-ahead-of-u-s-sanctions/65836071>

Asia to dominate LNG demand growth over the next decade: BNEF

Asia will play a dominant role in driving global Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) demand in the coming decade, Bloomberg New Energy Finance's (BNEF) has said in its latest global LNG outlook 2018 report. LNG demand is set to grow 8.45 per cent in 2018, with half of the growth coming from China and the rest from Japan, South Korea and India. "The latest forecast from BNEF shows that LNG demand will be 308 million tonne per annum (MMTPA) this year, up from 284 MMTPA in 2017. Half of the 24MMtpa of growth will come from China and the remainder largely from Japan, South Korea and India," the report said. It highlights that

conference that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin share a "deep friendship" and that the two countries have built an 'energy bridge' between themselves. "Prime Minister Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin share a deep friendship and respect for each other which is beyond the business and diplomatic relations. Today Russia is the closest friend," he noted.

The Economic Times - 14.09.2018

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/russia-is-indias-largest-investment-destination-in-oil-gas-sector-pradhan/65798613>

India has become a favourite investment destination: Oil minister Pradhan

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has said that India has become a favourable destination for investors from all across the world. Addressing a gathering at the inaugural event of 11th Global Skills Summit in Delhi organised by FICCI and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, the Union Minister said that in coming years, one-third of primary energy requirement of the world will be received by India. "Today, in this competitive sphere, India has become a favourable destination for investors from all across the world. Incoming 25 years, one-third of primary energy requirement of the world will be received by India," he said. The Minister also called for a collective introspection on the changing nature of job profiles. He said, "Internet is changing the character of the workplace at a frenetic pace, and therefore, policy shapers need to astutely comprehend the jobs scenario." Hailing that India is blessed with intellectual manpower, the Union Minister said, "India was blessed with intellectual manpower, and the time was ripe to channelize this asset into the creation of useful employment for the people gifted with the right type of skills."

The Economic Times - 17.08.2018

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/india-has-become-a-favourite-investment-destination-oil-minister-pradhan/65826173>

Spends on foreign trips up 253x in 5 yrs

The biggest increase in Indians spending overseas has been on account of travel, where the monthly spend has increased nearly 457 times from less than a million dollars in July 2013 to \$450 million two months ago. The other large hike in expenditure has been on studies abroad, which

Asia will add a total of 143 MMTPA of LNG demand between 2017 and 2030, accounting for 86 per cent of the world's total LNG demand. According to the report, the rate of LNG imports will slow down in 2019 and 2020, before gathering steam again in 2021. The report estimates LNG demand to reach 450 MMTPA in 2030. The outlook has cut its long-term forecast for European LNG demand (including Turkey) to 60 MMtpa by 2030. "Growth of renewables and batteries will marginalize gas-fired generation in the European power system.

The Economic Times - 14.09.2018

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/asia-to-dominate-lng-demand-growth-over-the-next-decade-bnef/65797332>

Tourism Ministry to organise B2C roadshows abroad for the first time

The tourism ministry is readying to hold business-to consumer roadshows in foreign countries for the first time and is considering using Bollywood stars such as Aamir Khan to promote India in key markets such as China where they command a huge fan following, said Union minister KJ Alphons. In an interview to ET, Alphons said that revenue from foreign tourist arrivals grew 19.2% year-on year to \$27 billion last year and the target is to double this in three years and target \$100 billion in five years. "For that we have to aggressively campaign. Our big focus will be midtown China. In five years we want 10% of the Chinese market, i.e., 14.5 million. The prime minister himself is popular in China. He is our biggest brand ambassador. The number two brand ambassador is Aamir Khan. So, we will explore how to use Bollywood to promote tourism in markets such as China," said Alphons. The tourism minister said this year India will conduct multiple events in 27 tier 1 Chinese cities and then move on to tier 2 cities. The other roadshows will be held in the UK, France, Italy, Russia, Australia and the Nordic countries.

The Economic Times - 11.09.2018

<https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TheEconomicTimes/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=ETKM%2F2018%2F09%2F11&entity=Ar01614&sk=00E362B0&mode=text>

Flow of foreign tourists slowing down, say tour operators' body

Inflow of foreign tourists into the country for leisure travel looks muted this year after crossing 10 million for the first time last year. Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), the apex body for tour operators and standalone

has grown 22 times to \$343 million over the same period. While there might have been exceptional reasons for the month-on-month increase, the full-year numbers show that this is a consistent trend. For instance, the annual spend on foreign travel has gone up 253 times from \$16 million in FY14 to \$4 billion in FY18. Similarly, Indians spent \$2 billion on studies abroad in FY18 — 17 times more than the \$2.9 billion spent in FY14. While a part of the spike in spending is due to better reporting as payments shift to credit cards, there has also been a sharp increase in the number of Indians travelling abroad, which went up to 23 million in 2017. Besides the country's dependence on imports for oil and electronics, these direct spends by individuals are also having an impact on the country's balance of payments. To put things in perspective, the annual spending by Indians under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) — which allows each citizen to spend up to \$2,50,000 annually — was only \$1 billion in 2013-14.

The Times of India - 15.09.2018

<https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TimesOfIndia/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=TOIKM%2F2018%2F09%2F15&entity=Ar01502&sk=FB128874&mode=text>

No. of Indian visitors to US down for 1st time in 8 yrs

The number of Indian travellers to the US witnessed its first decline in the last eight years, according to US data. About 11.14 lakh Indians went to the US in 2017, down 5% from 11.72 lakh in the previous year, says the US department of commerce's National Travel and Trade Office (NTTO) "forecast of international travellers to the US by origin countries". The NTTO had in April temporarily suspended publication of overseas arrival "data due to anomalies in records received from US Customs and Border Protection (CBP)". As a result, the figures of international travellers to the US for 2017 were not known. On Wednesday, it released the forecast with figures for 2017, which showed a decline in the number of Indian travellers. However, this may be a temporary blip. The NTTO forecasts an increase in the number of Indian travellers to the US from 2018 to 2022. Before this, 2009 saw 5.5 lakh Indian travellers to the US, which was a decline of 8% over the previous year. This was the time when the global slowdown had set in and travellers, including corporates, businessmen and individuals, were cutting down on costs with travel being the first casualty. But since then, Indian visitors were increasing every year till 2016.

The Times of India - 14.09.2018

<https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TimesOfIndia/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=TOIKM%2F2018%2F09%2F14&entity=Ar00317&sk=8ED440EE&mode=text>

travel agents and tour operators, said business has been static year-on-year for operators catering to overseas tourists due to GST and lack of input credit, safety perceptions, rise in e-visa fees, state-centric regulations and other factors. Standalone tour operators and travel agents ET spoke to said business has declined or stayed static compared to last year. "Business for our operators has been static year-on-year and GST is the main factor. There is no input tax credit available for tour operators," said IATO president Pronob Sarkar. "There are also other factors like seat capacity and expensive air seats. Flights from the UK to Thailand are cheaper than from the UK to India and we are not competitive with international markets. We need to control these areas that are cost prohibitive. We are discussing all these matters with the ministry of tourism."

The Economic Times - 14.09.2018

<https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TheEconomicTimes/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=ETKM%2F2018%2F09%2F14&entity=Ar00618&sk=F6F4AC8D&mode=text>

Indian Railways to scrap flexi-fares for 40 trains

In what comes as a big relief for rail passengers, Indian Railways has decided to scrap flexi-fares for 40 trains. The national transporter is doing away with flexi fares or dynamic pricing in nearly a third of premium trains as it drove away customers. Flexi fares would at times end up being costlier than airfare. Indian Railways is also offering 50% discount for last-minute bookings - up to four days before the journey - for the remaining 102 trains under the scheme. Railways is also rolling out graded discounts for trains that see less than 60% bookings. The flexi-fare scheme was initially introduced for 44 Rajdhani, 46 Shatabdis and 52 Duronto expresses. As mentioned in a report in Times of India, the flexi fare system is scrapped for trains that have shown 50% utilisation - or in other words, bookings. The plan is tweaked to offer convenience and competitive fares to passengers as well as generate revenue for the Indian Railways. According to reports, a trial run on the Chennai-Mysuru Shatabdi showed that occupancy went significantly up after flexi fares were removed. The daily quoted a senior Indian Railways official saying that the focus of the new move is to find a solution that is a win-win for both the passengers and the Railways.

Business Today - 14.09.2018

<https://www.businesstoday.in/current/economy-politics/good-news-passengers-indian-railways-scrap-flexi-fares-40-trains/story/282371.html>

SpiceJet to Launch Air Cargo Service Soon

Budget carrier SpiceJet said it is launching a dedicated air cargo service to cash in on the "tremendous potential" the logistics industry offers. The Gurugram-based airline said the service will start from September 18 under the brand name SpiceXpress, which will operate as a separate business unit under SpiceJet. The service will initially cover Delhi, Bengaluru, Amritsar, Guwahati, Hong Kong and Kabul. "With our proven operational capability, this is an extension of our 'belly cargo' service to a 'dedicated freighter' with Boeing 737 aircraft," SpiceJet CMD Ajay Singh said in a statement. "There is a huge untapped market for air cargo services in India and a player like SpiceJet — with its low cost structure — is best suited to address this need." SpiceJet's existing fleet has a cargo capacity of about 500 tonnes per day. This includes the cargo space available in passenger aircraft. With the launch of SpiceXpress, this capacity will go up to 900 tonnes a day in a phased manner with the addition of four freighters by March 2019, the airline said. Singh said the freighter aircraft will be acquired on pure operating leases. The ground operations will either be self-handled by the existing Spicejet ground infrastructure or outsourced till the cargo unit develops a certain scale of operations, he said.

The Economic Times - 11.09.2018

<https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TheEconomicTimes/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=ETKM%2F2018%2F09%2F11&entity=Ar00704&sk=0C8D7F59&mode=text>