

(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.)

Deutsche Bank sees India's GDP growth at 7.8 per cent next year

Deutsche Bank sees India's gross domestic product growth at 7.8 per cent in 2017, up from this year's 7.5 per cent, noting that the economy seems to have bottomed out. "We see an economy that looks like it has bottomed out... some indicators have been improving in the last 18 months... may be it has reached the bottom," said Michael Spencer, the German Bank's Chief Economist, Asia Pacific. But for this year, the growth is flattish, forecast at 7.5 per cent, the same as last year. India's economic challenges includes the building of judicial and legal systems, especially to settle commercial disputes for businesses. Speaking to reporters during the bank's annual Asia Conference on Monday, Spencer said that Indian banks are putting in efforts to recapitalise and improve balance sheets while sorting out non-performing loans. Overall, India remains the world's fastest growing economy, ahead of China's 6.7 per cent forecast for 2017 and 2016, down from 6.9 per cent in 2015, according to data released by DB.

The Indian Express - 24.05.2016

<http://indianexpress.com/article/business/economy/db-sees-indias-gdp-growth-at-7-8-per-cent-next-year-2816794/>

Economic growth rate to be lower than CSO's forecast of 7.6 pct in FY16: India Ratings

The economic growth is expected to be 7.5 per cent in 2015-16, lower than advance estimate of 7.6 per cent by the Central Statistics Office, India Ratings and Research said today. "The FY16 real gross value addition (GVA) will be achieved as per the advance estimate of the CSO; however GDP growth may miss the estimate by 10 basis point," the ratings agency said in a release. India Ratings said it expects the growth rate for last quarter of 2015-16 at 7.4 per cent, which translates into the 2015-16 GDP growth of 7.5 per cent. "The 2015-16 GDP growth is likely to have been marginally lower than the advance estimate of 7.6 per cent," it said. Ind-Ra notes that any change in the fourth quarter of 2014-15 or the annual 2014-15 growth by the CSO, will have an impact on the quarterly

India's economic growth picked up pace at start of 2016: Poll

India's economic growth accelerated slightly at the start of 2016 on stronger demand, a Reuter's poll found, although recent surveys of purchasing managers suggest it lost some momentum going into April. The poll of 26 economists predicted gross domestic product expanded 7.5 percent January-March, faster than the previous quarter's 7.3 percent but still well short of the recent peak of 8.3 percent in mid-2014. A modest recovery in the agricultural sector and a steady performance in the services sector are the main drivers, Rishi Shah, an economist at Deloitte said. Only three respondents - DBS Bank, IHS Global Insight and ZyFin Research - said growth slowed in the Jan-March quarter. Forecasts in the poll ranged from 6.9 to 7.8 percent. While the median is still higher than China's first quarter rate of 6.7 percent year-on-year, there are signs India's economy might also face a few wobbles ahead.

The Economic Times - 27.05.2016

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/finance/indias-economic-growth-picked-up-pace-at-start-of-2016-poll/articleshow/52462806.cms>

CPSEs asked to draw up plans to monetise assets

In a bid to drive investment in the economy and prod state-run firms for capital expansion, the government has asked central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) to work out their plans for monetizing their assets. A senior government official said that CPSEs will also look at strategies to offload stakes in the subsidiaries and joint ventures as part of this exercise. According to government data, there are 63 subsidiary companies of CPSEs which are yet to start regular production. "The administrative ministries are in dialogue with their companies. Already, some power sector firms including Power Grid Corporation are working to set up an infrastructure investment trust (InvIT) to unlock value of their assets," he said. An executive with Power Grid Corp confirmed the development and

and annual growth estimates. Ind-Ra believes that the agricultural GVA growth can surprise positively, despite the second consecutive year of sub-par monsoons, mainly due to the unseasonal rainfall during the last quarter of 2014-15.

The Financial Express - 27.05.2016

<http://www.financialexpress.com/article/economy/economic-growth-rate-to-be-lower-than-csos-forecast-of-7-6-pct-in-fy16-india-ratings/267785/>

Centre to roll out PSU IPOs from October-November

After a gap of more than three years, the Centre will roll out initial public offers (IPOs) in PSUs once again with a 10% stake sale in Cochin Shipyard in October-November, a senior government official told FE. Cochin Shipyard stake sale will be followed by listing of Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) in the later part of the current fiscal. The IREDA stake sale would consist of 10% government equity disinvestment and 15% fresh equity to fund the company's expansion plans. While a 10% stake sale in Cochin Shipyard will fetch the government about `350 crore, the stake sale in IREDA could fetch it about `250 crore, the official said. While the government is likely list the Housing and Urban Development Corporation this year, its plan for a 10% stake sale in an IPO in military plane-maker Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) to raise about Rs.3,000 crore has come up as a cropper due to reluctance of the plane maker and ministry of defence to share financial details of the company due to security reasons.

The Financial Express - 27.05.2016

<http://www.financialexpress.com/article/economy/after-3-year-gap-centre-to-roll-out-psu-ipos-cochin-shipyard-first-in-line/266977/>

Govt eyes Rs 8,000 cr from stake sale in 4 PSUs

To meet its ambitious stake sale target this year, the government is planning initial public offerings (IPOs) of equity in four state-owned companies in 2016-17, to mop up around Rs 8,000 crore. The department of investment and public asset management (Dipam) has identified Housing and Urban Development Corporation (Hudco), Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL), and Rashtriya Ispat Nigam (RINL) as the companies it wants to take public after the IPO of Cochin Shipyard, preparation for which is well under way. The Centre plans to sell 10 per cent stake in Cochin Shipyard through an IPO and will also issue fresh shares. Dipam is conducting the selection of merchant bankers and legal advisors, and planning roadshows. According to sources,

said that the state-run firm will soon appoint consultants to look at monetizing its operational transmission assets.

The Economic Times - 27.05.2016

http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/finance/cpses-asked-to-draw-up-plans-to-monetise-assets/articleshow/52458499.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

Govt tells PSUs to settle disputes in time

Observing that there is a "considerable delay" in resolution of disputes, government today instructed central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) to "strictly adhere the timeline" stipulated for their settlement. The Department of Public Enterprises directed the Administrative Ministries/Departments to issue instructions in this regard to the CPSEs under them. "It has been observed that there is a considerable delay in submission of counter claim/clarifications/requisite documents whenever desired from the parties to the dispute, resulting in considerable delay in resolution of the dispute and giving awards. "All Administrative Ministries/Departments are, therefore, requested to issue necessary instructions to the CPSEs to strictly adhere the timeline and to submit counter claim/clarifications/requisite documents within the stipulated time as fixed by PMA," the Department of Public Enterprises said.

Business Standard - 27.05.2016

http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/govt-tells-psus-to-settle-disputes-in-time-116052701431_1.html

Loss-making PSEs may be merged with profitable peers for investment funds

The government will look to get weak state-run enterprises absorbed by profitable ones to leverage assets and generate resources for fresh investments. The move comes after the NITI Aayog submitted a report on loss-making central public sector enterprises (CPSEs), suggesting consolidation in some cases. A road map for the financial restructuring of CPSEs through various mechanisms, including mergers, will be drawn up soon, said a government official aware of the deliberations. "Eventually this (merger) will not be restricted to only loss-making entities as the aim is to improve both functional and financial efficiency of CPSEs," he said, adding that financially weak firms, unless serving a strategic purpose, will be

discussions have begun on these companies. However, planning is one thing and implementation will be another challenge. Plans for IPOs in HAL and RINL were discussed as early as 2014-15 and have not yet materialised.

Business Standard - 30.05.2016

http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/govt-eyes-rs-8-000-cr-from-stake-sale-in-4-psus-116053000040_1.html

PSUs: Return to commanding heights

Last week in an interview given to Wall Street Journal on the eve of the second anniversary of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "In any developing country in the world, both the public sector and the private sector have a very important role to play. You can't suddenly get rid of the public sector, nor should you." The PM's response to a pointed nudge on the need for faster privatization of public sector undertakings (PSUs) is revealing. It formalizes a shift in thinking within the government—a return to the commanding heights for the public sector. Yes, those battling for big ticket reforms will balk, but it is a fact that this NDA (unlike the one led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee) no longer subscribes to the theory of disbanding the public sector. There have been enough signals from various members of the Union cabinet over the last two years to suggest that a recalibration is underway.

Mint - 30.05.2016

<http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/G3YKTxflsHioFOyDZ58dkM/PSUs-Return-to-commanding-heights.html>

India seeks rights to operate Iran oil field

India has sought a discovered oilfield from Iran for raising crude oil imports from the Persian Gulf nation as part of efforts to widen economic and energy ties post lifting of sanctions. Indian Oil Corp (IOC), the nation's largest oil firm, has proposed to Iran that it be given rights to operate and produce crude oil from the discovered field to help move away from buyer-seller relationship to a strategic partnership, sources privy to the development said. The oil produced from the field can then be shipped home, the IOC has said. IOC had last fiscal imported 1.2 million tons of crude oil from Iran. In the fiscal year that began from April 1, it is looking to raise it by at least three-fold. Prime Minister Modi's visit to Iran was aimed at boosting trade and commerce between the two countries. His trip came just months after lifting of international sanctions on Iran following Tehran's

merged or folded up. In its recommendations, the Aayog had observed that there was a case for consolidation of some loss-making firms. "It is also suggested in some cases that revival of a sick public sector undertaking should not be on a standalone basis," said another government official.

The Economic Times - 30.05.2016

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/loss-making-pses-may-be-merged-with-profitable-peers-for-investment-funds/articleshow/52496741.cms>

Oil discoveries sink to lowest since 1952: Morgan Stanley

Oil discoveries in 2015 fell to their lowest since 1952 as energy companies slashed exploration budgets in the wake of the oil price fall, creating a gap for meeting future demand, analysts at Morgan Stanley said on Monday. The oil and gas industry discovered 2.8 billion barrels of oil outside the United States last year, the equivalent of one month of global consumption, the US bank said, quoting data from consultancy Rystad Energy. Including the United States, where the rapid expansion of the onshore shale industry unlocked major resources over the past decade, global discoveries rose to 12.1 billion figure - but still the lowest since 1952, when the oil industry was one-seventh of its current size. Oil discoveries are vital to replace resources, meet still-growing demand and offset the depletion of existing fields.

The Economic Times - 24.05.2016

<http://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/oil-discoveries-sink-to-lowest-since-1952-morgan-stanley/52401261>

First round of bidding for discovered small fields to begin from July 15

The first round of bidding for discovered small fields will start from July 15 with the last date of bid submission being kept on October 31. Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Petroleum and Natural Gas, said the Ministry will aim to complete the contract signing and award of the fields by maximum January 2017. On offer would be 67 fields clubbed into 46 contract areas. The fields have resources worth Rs. 70,000 crore locked and were previously owned by ONGC and Oil India, Pradhan said. The two companies could not develop the fields because of the small size and unattractive pricing. "Even if they were offered revenue sharing contract, marketing and pricing freedom, which is being offered to the bidders, ONGC and Oil India may not have been able to develop these fields,"

historic nuclear deal with the Western powers over its contentious atomic programme.

The Economic Times - 24.05.2016

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2016-05-24/news/73315221_1_indian-oil-corp-farzad-b-essar-oil-ltd

Oil prices push closer to \$50; US crude hits highest in 7 months

Oil futures pushed closer to \$50 a barrel on Wednesday, with US crude hitting its highest in over seven months after industry data suggested a larger-than-expected drawdown in US crude inventories last week. Oil markets were also supported by an overnight surge in US equities and strong home sales that could point to the Federal Reserve raising interest rates as early as June. US crude futures had climbed 71 cents to \$49.33 a barrel by 0652 GMT, after ending the previous session up 54 cents. The benchmark earlier on Wednesday touched its highest since mid-October at \$49.45. Brent futures rose 65 cents to \$49.26 a barrel, having ended the last session up 26 cents to snap a four-day slide. US crude, or West Texas Intermediate (WTI), remained at a premium to Brent after flipping above the international benchmark before the last close. US crude stocks dropped by 5.1 million barrels to 536.8 million last week, data from industry group the American Petroleum Institute showed.

The Hindu Business Line - 25.05.2016

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/markets/commodities/oil-prices-push-closer-to-50-us-crude-hits-highest-in-7-months/article8644384.ece>

Shell chalks out ambitious plans for Indian market

Diversified oil and natural gas company Shell India revealed its ambitious plans for India at the launch of the Shell Rimula R4 L 15W 40 diesel engine oil here on May 20. Speaking to media persons, Akhil Jha, vice president (Technical), Shell Lubricants India, said, "We have an ambitious plan for India. Lubricant is the oldest of all Shell businesses in the country. We are partnering with many OEMs (original equipment manufacturer). Our most recent venture has been the 'Shell Concept car', a co-engineering collaboration among leading vehicle, engine and lubricant designers. Shell provided all the fluids for the car, especially 'designing' the motor oil to complement and enhance the overall efficiency of the vehicle by minimising friction. Shell's Lubricants technology team created bespoke engine oil, based on its premium product Shell Helix Ultra with PurePlus

Pradhan said after launching the first round of bidding for discovered small fields.

The Hindu Business Line - 26.05.2016

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/first-round-of-bidding-for-discovered-small-fields-to-begin-from-july-15/article8645048.ece>

Saudi Arabia's new oil plan undermines OPEC

Saudi Arabia, one of the founders of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), is sounding the group's death knell. The world's biggest crude exporter has already undermined OPEC's traditional role of managing supply, instead choosing to boost output to snatch market share from higher-cost producers, particularly US shale drillers, and crashing prices in the process. Now, under the economic plan known as Vision 2030 promoted by the king's powerful son, deputy crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the government is signalling it wants to wean the kingdom's economy off oil revenue, lessening the need to manage prices. Moreover, the planned privatization of Saudi Arabian Oil Co. will make the nation the only member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries without full ownership of its national oil company. The first change of oil ministers in more than 20 years may also recast the country's relationship with OPEC.

Mint - 24.05.2016

<http://www.livemint.com/Industry/XbWI36rsYnS6yJq9UuFj7I/Saudi-Arabias-new-oil-plan-undermines-OPEC.html>

India among top 10 steel importers in 2015: WSA

India, the world's third largest steel producer, was among the top 10 importers of the alloy last year, according to the latest data by the global industry body World Steel Association (WSA). India imported 13.3 million tonnes (MT) of the metal in 2015 and was just a notchup from China, which imported 13.2 MT of steel during the same period. According to the WSA data, European Union as a bloc imported 37.7 MT of steel last year, which was followed by the US (36.5 MT), Germany (24.8 MT), South Korea (21.7 MT), Italy (19.9 MT), Turkey (18.6 MT), Vietnam (16.3 MT), Thailand (14.6 MT), France (13.7 MT) and India (13.3 MT). According to Indian government data, steel imports rose by 25.6 per cent to 11.71 MT during the 2015-16 financial year against 9.32 MT in the year-ago

Technology." He also elaborated on the Shell Helix Ultra extended warranty programme that provides lifetime engine warranty to passenger vehicles.

The Economic Times - 27.05.2016

<http://auto.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-lubes/shell-chalks-out-ambitious-plans-for-indian-market/52463980>

'Trying to take railways out of ICU': Prabhu

Asserting that Railways has been in "deep trouble" for last more than two decades, Union minister Suresh Prabhu today said efforts are on to take the public transporter "out of the ICU" and stabilise it. He also said a regulatory framework is being set up to decide passenger and cargo fare structure. "The Railways was in deep trouble not now but for the last 20-30 years. That is what the report of the Rakesh Mohan committee dealing with financial aspects of the sector has said. So, now we are trying to create a situation where the Railways will be able to breathe well," he told PTI. Asked whether the national transporter is still in the ICU, he said, "We are trying to take it out of the ICU." The Rakesh Mohan Committee in its report in 2001 said that Railways' financial situation was extremely difficult and suggested new strategy for revenue generation.

Deccan Herald - 30.05.2016

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/548998/trying-take-railways-icu-prabhu.html>

Air travel was cheaper this summer

Even as domestic airfares have come under the civil aviation ministry's scrutiny over a steep rise, a study by a travel portal showed that air travel this summer was cheaper compared to last year. In a report released on Tuesday, Makemytrip compared airfares on busy domestic and international routes for the peak summer travel period of April to June for this year and 2015. According to the report, while average domestic fares on certain routes fell by 35%, leisure travellers spent up to 16% less on flight tickets for foreign destinations. A one-way economy class ticket from Mumbai to New York in May was available for Rs60,538, around Rs22,000 cheaper over the same period last year. The fare difference on lean domestic routes such as the Mumbai-Leh sector also saw a significant fall from Rs17,993 to Rs11,935 for a trip booked in June, the report said. The report attributed the drop in fares to frequent flash sales by airlines and the addition of new flights.

The Hindustan Times - 25.05.2016

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai/air-travel-was-cheaper-this-summer/story-SsxaDPTpNt2BAcvYzsDZII.html>

period. India was a net importer of the metal in the last fiscal.

The Times of India - 29.05.2016

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/India-among-top-10-steel-importers-in-2015-WSA/articleshow/52492521.cms>

Railways extends alternate train accommodation facility

In a bid to make train ticketing more convenient for passengers, Indian Railways will offer passengers an alternate train accommodation facility on five major routes connecting Howrah, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore and Secunderabad from New Delhi. Passengers booked under Vikalp scheme will be provided with an option for getting alternate accommodation in another train, in case tickets don't get confirmed in the first train of choice. Though the scheme was announced in the rail budget, but so far it had only been implemented in Delhi-Jammu and Delhi-Lucknow sectors. Also, the scheme is valid only for Mail/Express and Superfast trains and not applicable in Rajdhani, Shatabdi and Duronto trains.

Business Today - 24.05.2016

<http://www.businesstoday.in/current/policy/railways-extends-alternate-train-accommodation-facility/story/232924.html>

Luxury travel outpaces the rest of the travel industry: Amadeus

A new Amadeus report looks at luxury travel trends until 2025 to help the travel industry better target and service its fastest-growing segment. The report was commissioned by Amadeus, a global travel technology provider, and developed with data from Tourism Economics and with dozens of expert interviews with global luxury travel experts across specialist travel concierge agencies, airlines, hoteliers and intermediary suppliers through Connections, a global networking event organiser for luxury travel providers. Global consumers are increasingly spending their disposable income on experiences rather than material goods. Consumers' desire for life experiences is spurring a growth in luxury travel that is outpacing the rest of the travel industry, finds a new Amadeus report featuring data from Tourism Economics.

Travel Trends Today - 25.05.2016

<http://traveltrendstoday.in/news1/technology/item/4079-luxury-travel-outpaces-the-rest-of-the-travel-industry-amadeus>

Government to soon announce measures to curb high airfares

After months of deliberations, the government is finally going to announce a mechanism soon to curb high airfares and unveil a new civil aviation policy to address all major issues affecting the sector. Minister of State for Civil Aviation Mahesh Sharma said the civil aviation policy will lay out a roadmap to make India a leading player in the sector which is growing at over 20 per cent currently. The policy will be placed before the cabinet within two weeks. He said government's priority is to improve infrastructure and it is investing around Rs 15,000 crore in 2016-17 in upgrading of the existing airports and setting up new ones. On fixing airfares, he said Prime Minister Narendra Modi was very keen to have an upper cap on the ticket price and government would announce the measures while taking views of the airlines and that it would be by consensus and not through any regulation.

Deccan Chronicle - 26.05.2016

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/business/in-other-news/260516/government-to-soon-announce-measures-to-curb-high-airfares.html>

Railways withdraw service charge

In another passenger-friendly move, the Railways have decided to withdraw the service charge of Rs.30 levied on transactions against credit cards and debit cards for purchasing railway tickets at Public Reservation System (PRS) counters in the country. From June 1, passengers booking tickets using credit cards and debit cards at PRS counters need not pay Rs.30 in excess of the ticket fare. The Ministry of Railways has already issued circulars to general managers of all zonal railways informing the withdrawal of the service charge, official sources said. The directive from the Director, Passenger Marketing, and Railway Board to the chiefs of the various railway zones says the decision has been taken at the initiative of the Finance Directorate of the Ministry of Railways, the sources said. The move taken during the observance of Rail Humsafar is being viewed as a step to encourage more bookings using credit and debit cards at the PRS counters across the country in the face of stiff competition from the web-based booking provided by the IRCTC.

The Hindu - 29.05.2016

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Thiruvananthapuram/railways-withdraw-service-charge/article8662376.ece>

Railways plans executive order route for fare panel

Convinced that a move towards market-based pricing of rail passenger services can't be put off indefinitely, the rail ministry has decided to set up the proposed Rail Development Authority (RDA) via an executive order. By July, the RDA proposal could come up before the Cabinet, a rail ministry official told FE on condition of anonymity, adding that Parliament's backing could be sought at an appropriate time later. The RDA's mandate, as recommended by the Bibek Debroy committee, includes recommending tariffs "when the market fails to discover them". Speaking to FE, railway minister Suresh Prabhu sought to remove the concern that the RDA might turn out to be an ineffective body, lacking independence and being subservient to the Railway Board. We are working towards making the authority very effective.

The Financial Express - 27.05.2016

<http://www.financialexpress.com/article/economy/how-indian-railways-looks-to-move-to-market-based-pricing-if-passenger-fares/266976/>

Get Ready to Pay More for Mobile Bills, Air Travel & Eating Out

Eating out, mobile phone usage and air and rail travel will become expensive with the new Krishi Kalyan Cess (KKC) of 0.5 per cent on taxable services coming into force from June. With imposition of Krishi Kalyan Cess (KKC) the total incidence of Service Tax will go up to 15 per cent. The Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) has notified that the Cess will come into force from June 1. The service tax is levied on all services, except a small negative list. Last year, the government had imposed Swachh Bharat Cess of 0.5 per cent on Service Tax. Prashant Deshpande, Senior Director, Deloitte in India said the input credit of KKC is not permitted to be used other than for payment output of KKC on taxable services. "By implication therefore, Krishi Kalyan Cess will be a cost to the manufacturers availing services on which KKC is being paid by the service provider. Perhaps a remedy can lie in exempting Krishi Kalyan Cess on services provided to manufacturers," he said.

News 18 - 28.05.2016

<http://www.news18.com/news/india/get-ready-to-pay-more-for-mobile-bills-air-travel-eating-out-1248982.html>

Govt to revise model pact for port projects

The government is preparing for a large-scale tinkering of a so-called model concession agreement (MCA) used by Union government-owned ports while granting rights to private firms for developing cargo-handling facilities, as it looks to boost investor sentiment in the sector through better allocation of risks between the government and the private firms amid slowing global trade. A concession agreement sets out the terms and conditions of a port contract. The MCA that is followed currently mandates that a private developer handles a minimum guaranteed cargo (MGC) every year specified in the 30-year contract. Failure to achieve the prescribed MGC for three consecutive years can lead to termination of the contract. The government plans to replace MGC with a minimum guaranteed revenue (MGR) that a private developer has to pay the port authority for each year of a 30-year contract.

Mint - 24.05.2016

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/apOjJcN9nKOWY2s25YFT4I/Govt-to-revise-model-pact-for-port-projects.html>

Reforms in Major Ports to promote "Ease of doing Business"

The Ministry of Shipping in the past year has taken up several initiatives to promote trade and improve India's ranking in the Trading Across Borders' indicator of World Bank's Doing Business Report. Following steps have been taken by the Ministry to facilitate ease of doing business: From manual to electronic interface: Form 11&13 in manual form have been eliminated at all three terminals at JNPT and replaced by web based e-form-13, which is now done electronically. Apart from JNPT, other Major Ports are also using electronic forms. Accommodation for laboratories of regulatory agencies within port premises: The Ministry has issued instructions to all Major Ports to facilitate and provide land area for setting up of laboratories for animal/ plant quarantine, for textile and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). Implementation of Direct Port Delivery Scheme: - The Ministry has directed all Major Ports to extend the Direct Port Delivery facility to all Accredited Client Programme (ACP) clients and to provide additional land area for parking of DPD containers.

Business Standard - 24.05.2016

http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-cm/reforms-in-major-ports-to-promote-ease-of-doing-business-116052401035_1.html

Govt. targets 120 mn tonne capacity addition in ports

Union Shipping Minister Nitin Gadkari has set an ambitious target of capacity addition at 12 major ports by 120 million tonnes in 2016-17. These ports had added the highest-ever capacity of 94 million tonnes in 2015-16. Mr. Gadkari has asked shipping ministry officials to aim for awarding new projects to add capacity of 180 million tonnes in the major ports over 2016-17, and ensure that new capacities for 120 million tonnes become operational during the year. "There is a significant focus of the government on improving operations. The target of improving the operational margin by 500 basis points is desirable but will also be a challenge. It is worth appreciating that the government is working on improving operational efficiencies of Shipping Corporation of India, Dredging Corporation of India and Cochin Shipyard," said Hemant Bhatt, Chief Executive Officer, HMSA Consultancy Services LLP.

The Hindu - 25.05.2016

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/govt-targets-120-mn-tonne-capacity-addition-in-ports/article8641698.ece>

Government drops plan to convert port trusts into corporate entities

The government has dropped a plan to convert 11 of the 12 ports it owns into corporate entities from a trustee set up, bowing to sustained opposition from the workers' unions. The decision to drop the proposal, first flagged off by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government in early 2000, is revealed in a draft bill written by the shipping ministry to overhaul the institutional structure of these 11 ports. These so-called major ports—Chennai, Cochin, Jawaharlal Nehru port, Kandla, Kolkata, Mumbai, New Mangalore, Mormugao, Paradip, V.O.Chidambaranar and Visakhapatnam—are proposed to be brought under a new law called Major Port Authorities Act. Currently, these 11 ports function as trusts under a law framed more than five decades ago called the Major Port Trusts Act 1963. Kamarajar Port Ltd is the only exception in this regard. Kamarajar, which runs the port at Ennore near Chennai, was formed as a company under the Companies Act 1956 when it was opened in 2001.

Mint - 26.05.2016

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/E2cQroyhcYbQpO424MOAHK/Government-drops-plan-to-convert-port-trusts-into-corporate.html>

Railways launch RO-RO service to attract more loadings

Railways today launched a new service 'Ro-Ro' to carry loaded trucks on goods train in a bid to attract more loadings and reduce carbon emission. Roll-on Roll-off (RO-RO) service was launched across the Digha rail bridge between Bihta and Turki stations in Bihar. "This is an important beginning as it has been promised in the budget. Our loadings are expected to increase and it will curb emission also," Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu said here after launching the Ro-RO service. Recently, Digha rail bridge over the Ganga river near Patna has been commissioned. After consultation with the truck operators, who are transporting sand in truck from North Bihar to South Bihar through road bridges like Mahatma Gandhi Setu, Vikramshila Setu, it has been decided to operate RO-RO service across Digha Bridge. Seeking a positive response from industry, Prabhu said, "We are walking extra mile and we expect industry to reciprocate by giving us more freight."

The Economic Times - 26.05.2016

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/railways/railways-launch-ro-ro-service-to-attract-more-loadings/articleshow/52436594.cms>

VRL Logistics to enter civil aviation sector

Vijay Sankeshwar, CMD of the company, in a letter to the board of directors said: "We are currently proposing to enter the civil aviation industry by incorporating a separate company to undertake the business of a regional airline." "We have taken this in-principle decision after a lot of study and inputs from industry experts. We intend to promote his new airline and induct a professional management to manage the day-to-day operations and grow the business," he explained. Talking about the financing, Sankeshwar said "We are deliberating internally on the method of financing of this venture. The board members should note that we may seek to dilute a portion of our present day holding in VRS Logistics Limited in order to provide us with liquidity to enable our investment for the aviation venture." "We however wish to assure you that such dilution will be undertaken in accordance with all applicable laws. We will continue to hold majority stake in the company," he added.

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<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/logistics/vrl-logistics-to-enter-civil-aviation-sector/article8636880.ece>