

Newsletter, 10-IX-2008

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Índice:

[1. Apollo Hospitals to invest US\\$ 2.27 billion and set up 250 speciality hospitals](#)

New Delhi: To meet the growing local medical needs, leading healthcare group, Apollo Hospitals, plans to establish 250 speciality hospitals - 'Apollo Reach Hospitals' - across rural and semi-urban India over the next seven years. The total investment planned for this project is US\$ 2.27 billion.

[2. India-China trade scales new heights in first half](#)

Sino-Indian bilateral trade continues to grow by leaps and bounds, with the trade value in the first half of calendar year 2008 hitting the \$ 29-billion mark, recording a 69 per cent jump over the corresponding period last year, a top Chinese Commerce Ministry official said here on Monday.

[3. Indo-German trade to expand to over US\\$ 42.35 billion by 2010: Sibal](#)

Trade between India and Germany was expected to cross US\$ 42.35 billion in 2010. Kapil also said that continued partnership in areas such as research and development would facilitate Indo-German trade to touch US\$ 70.64 billion in 2020.

[4. Philips to up production to meet global demand](#)

The EURO 27-billion Philips, which announced yesterday its plans to acquire Navi Mumbai-based cardiovascular X-ray system-maker Alpha X-Ray Technologies, is planning to scale production facilities to meet global demand for lighting solutions and other products.

[5. Yamaha plans to expand capacity to 8 lakh units](#)

The company is setting up additional facilities at its manufacturing plant in Surajpur, Uttar Pradesh. Yamaha Motor India's total production capacity at its Surajpur and Faridabad plants is 4 lakh units. The company utilises 60-70 per cent of its capacity.

[6. BHEL, Bharti Airtel among top ranked Indian companies in Forbes Asia's Fabulous 50](#)

Ten Indian companies, including state-run Bharat Heavy Electricals, Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries, Tata Steel, telecom major Bharti Airtel and IT majors Infosys and Wipro, have appeared in the Forbes' list of top 50 best listed companies in the Asia-Pacific region.

[7. India's foreign tourist arrival to reach 10 million by decade-end](#)

The Government of India is all set to ride the boom in Indian tourism industry and looking to attract 10 million foreign tourists by the end of 2010

[8. SEZ exports may notch up a growth of 451 per cent by 2008-09: Report](#)

An assessment by Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham) suggests that exports from special economic zones (SEZs) have registered a growth of 192 per cent between 2005-06 and 2007-08. The industry lobby has further projected a phenomenal growth of 451 per cent by 2008-09.

9. GTL Infra mops up Rs 3,500 cr for tower expansion

GTL Infrastructure (GIL), a subsidiary of telecom network major GTL, has raised around Rs 3,500 crore by way of debt from a slew of investors - both national and international - that will be used for rolling out an additional 17,000 telecom towers in the country.

10. GM buys India dream, to spend \$500m more

The company will invest half a billion dollar in India over next seven years to keep the growth momentum. A good part of this will go into the development of new models, including a small car next year, and upgrading the existing ones that will result in a new Optra in 2010.

11. India to be key R&D centre for Airbus A350 XWB

Designing work for the A350 is the next project for the Airbus Engineering Centre India (AECI), the company's high-tech aircraft component manufacturing facility in Bangalore, which started functioning in April last year. "The A350 is the next big project for us. The engineers at the facility are currently working on the development of tools to design the aircraft," said Kiran Rao, president, Airbus India.

12. 13 mega projects in Punjab gain Government approval

The Punjab chief minister Parkash Singh Badal-chaired committee approved 13 new mega projects to be set up in the state with an investment of about Rs 21,278.77 crore (US\$ 4.79 billion) on September 4, 2008.

13. Apollo rolls out signature stores

Taking its marketing cue from luxury car maker BMW and mass market players Maruti Suzuki India and Fiat, tyre maker Apollo is starting its own signature stores to showcase and sell its range in the country. Car companies are starting their signature stores in order to showcase their brand prowess and the \$1.2-billion Apollo has adopted the same format.

14. NLC plans Rs 45k-cr investment

Neyveli Lignite Corporation (NLC), a leading mining and power company, has worked out investment plans close to Rs 45,000 crore (~\$ 11bn) in India and overseas.

15. Vedanta subsidiary to invest US\$ 2.26 billion in Punjab power plant

Metal and mining major, Vedanta Resources Group said its subsidiary Sterlite Energy would pump in US\$ 2.26 billion to construct 1,980-mw thermal power project at Talwandi Sabo in Punjab on a build, own and operate basis.

16. TIL to pump \$350 mn into global start-ups

Tata Industries (TIL), a promoter company of the Tata group, is ready to invest up to \$350 million (about Rs 1,500 crore) in international start-up businesses. "We are looking at breakthrough technologies. If there is an emerging business, we can consider getting into it," TIL Managing Director Kishore A Chaukar said today.

17. Airlines set to ride on global platform

The two Indian international carriers, Air India and Jet Airways, currently have less than 25% share in the long-haul market to and from the country. With the third carrier Kingfisher Airlines joining the ranks this month, the Indian aviation scenario is all set to change.

18. Export growth to maintain high momentum in Apr-July

The country's exports during the first four months of the current fiscal (April to July) are likely to have cranked up at a faster pace of above 35 per cent in rupee terms and above 25 per cent in dollar terms when the provisional figures are released here on Monday.

19. 15 of world's top 20 pension funds head for India

Foreign pension funds are making a beeline for India despite the turmoil in global markets. More than 40 such funds (endowments and university and family foundations) have registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) in the past seven or eight months.

20. BPCL arm invests \$75 mn in Mozambique

Bharat PetroResources (BPRL), an exploration and production subsidiary of Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL), has spent \$75 million (around Rs 330 crore) to buy 10 per cent stake in an oil block in Mozambique, same as what Videocon paid.

21. Outbound travel: Indians champs at globetrotting

Not only have outbound numbers grown from India, especially on short-haul routes, average spend of travellers is also going strong, as per figures for January-July period shared by various international tourism boards. According to industry estimates, the number of Indian travellers visiting foreign shores is poised to touch 12 million by end of this year, about 2 million higher than last year.

22. SEZs expected to receive US\$ 45.73 billion as investments by 2009

India has approved 513 SEZs till date, of which 250 have been notified. Investments are expected to cross US\$ 45.73 billion by December 2009, providing incremental employment to 800,000 people.

23. Infosys sees sizable revenues from SEZs

Infosys Technologies sees incremental growth from special economic zones (SEZs). In the last couple of years, the company has been setting up SEZs in Chandigarh, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Mysore, and Pune and it has started construction in Mangalore and by April next year will set up one in Thiruvananthapuram.

24. Century Textiles plans Rs 3246 cr expansion

The company is planning to set up cement grinding facility with an output capacity of 1.5 million tonne per annum in West Bengal at a cost of Rs 1,800 crore.

25. 'India emerging most favoured investment destination'

"Trade between India and the US is doubling in every three years. Indian industry has huge opportunity for cooperation with US companies in the energy sector, especially to promote clean energy technologies."

26. India posts record increase in mobile subscriber base in July

India saw the highest ever increase in mobile subscriber base in July 2008 when it added 9.22 million new subscribers, taking the total user base to 296.08 million in the country. In June, the number of new users was 8.94 million.

1. Apollo Hospitals to invest US\$ 2.27 billion and set up 250 speciality hospitals

IBEF, Sep. 03, 2008

New Delhi: To meet the growing local medical needs, leading healthcare group, Apollo Hospitals, plans to establish 250 speciality hospitals - 'Apollo Reach Hospitals' - across rural and semi-urban India over the next seven years. The total investment planned for this project is US\$ 2.27 billion.

"During Phase-I of our project, we will be setting up 25 hospitals at a cost of Rs 1,000 crore in the next 24 months", Apollo Hospital Executive Chairman Dr Prathap C Reddy told the media in Chennai.

The first five hospitals are expected to come up in KarimNagar, Nellore and Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh and Karikudi and Tiruchirapalli in Tamil Nadu, he added.

Each hospital would have a complete range of diagnostic facilities in radiology and imaging sciences, a 100- bed-expandable-to-200 capacity facility. Each hospital will be built on a one-to-two acre area and afford close proximity to a bus stop or railway station, within a two km radius.

Some of the facilities that Dr Reddy mentioned included CT scanner, X-ray, diagnostic cardiology, neurology, endoscopy systems, comprehensive lab services and blood bank. "There will be about 600 medical professionals, paramedical and other administrative staff in each hospital," he said.

Dr Reddy is looking at a revenue of US\$ 9.09 million from each hospital in the next three years

2. India-China trade scales new heights in first half

The Hindu Business Line, Sep. 09, 2008

New Delhi: Sino-Indian bilateral trade continues to grow by leaps and bounds, with the trade value in the first half of calendar year 2008 hitting the \$ 29-billion mark, recording a 69 per cent jump over the corresponding period last year, a top Chinese Commerce Ministry official said here on Monday.

According to Mr Liang Shu He, Deputy Director-General of Foreign Trade Department in the Commerce Ministry of China, India and China were on course to raise their bilateral trade to \$ 60 billion by 2010, which was the target set by the Prime Ministers of both the countries in 2005.

Bilateral trade in calendar year 2007 stood at \$ 38.65 billion, registering an increase of 56 per cent over the previous year.

A delegation from China's foreign trade department is currently visiting New Delhi to promote Indian participation in the 104th edition of the Canton Fair beginning October 15. The Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) has been appointed as an agent in India for the fair.

Trade deficit rising

Although the bilateral trade may be scaling new heights with each passing year, the notable factor that is a matter of concern for the Indian side is the rising trade deficit each year. The country's trade deficit with China rose from the level of \$ 816 million in 2002-03 to \$ 9,159 million in 2006-07.

"China continues to maintain trade surplus even under increased bilateral trade. Restrictions on export of iron ore from India have widened the trade gap. Our estimate (going by Chinese data) is that trade gap could be about \$ 10 billion in the first half this calendar year. India's exports to China would be about \$ 9 billion and imports from China could be about \$ 19 billion in this period", Mr Ajai Sahai, Director-General of FIEO told Business Line.

3. Indo-German trade to expand to over US\$ 42.35 billion by 2010: Sibal

IBEF, Sep. 09, 2008

New Delhi: While delivering the keynote address at the Golden Jubilee of IIT Madras on September 8, 2008, the Union Minister of Science and Technology and Earth Sciences, Kapil Sibal said that with expansion in trade links and cooperation in various fields, trade between India and Germany was expected to cross US\$ 42.35 billion in 2010. He also said that continued partnership in areas such as research and development would facilitate Indo-German trade to touch US\$ 70.64 billion in 2020.

"In the year 2007-2008, the figures of Indo-German trade stood at 12.07 billion Euros (US\$ 17.05 billion)", he said. According to Sibal, the creation of an Indo-German International Centre for Excellence in Molecular Biology in India was also being considered. "We are also deepening and strengthening our cooperation with the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Humboldt Foundation, Fraunhofer Society and (DFG) Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, which has recently opened its offices in Delhi". Sibal further added that both countries had made headway in many collaborative projects in emerging Science and Technology fields like artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, biomedical research.

In addition to shared political, economic and social values, India considers Germany a very important collaborator in nation building. "Germany is one of the largest economies of Europe. About 22 per cent of the Euro-zone economy is contributed by Germany." Germany offers access to 454 million consumers with a highly advanced infrastructure, roadways, railroads and state of the art communication networks many Indian consumers, he said.

4. Philips to up production to meet global demand

Business Standard, Sep. 10, 2008

Mumbai: Philips Electronics India, the country arm of the Netherlands-based lighting systems, healthcare and consumer products major Royal Philips Electronics, plans to make India as a key hub for production, research and development (R&D) activities for its global operations.

The EURO 27-billion Philips, which announced yesterday its plans to acquire Navi Mumbai-based cardiovascular X-ray system-maker Alpha X-Ray Technologies, is planning to scale production facilities to meet global demand for lighting solutions and other products, said Murali Sivaraman, managing director and chief executive of Philips Electronics India.

The firm's Noida centre, which develops advanced lighting solutions, will be scaled up and linked to the global development centre at Shanghai, China. Philips will initially assign engineers with projects in Shanghai and will then transfer them to Noida to implement the solutions.

As part of this strategy, Philips will invest in testing facilities and ramp up operations by recruiting an additional 35 engineers, he said. However, the company refused to give details of how much they planned to spend to raise production capacities and development centres.

The Rs 2,890-crore Philips India has two manufacturing centres at Mohali and Vadodara for lighting solutions and plans to increase capacity to cater to the domestic and emerging market requirements. The manufacturing capacity of Compact Fluorescent Lamp (CFL) was recently increased in view of the domestic demand.

Lighting solutions account for about 40-45 per cent of Philips India turnover, and the company commands a market share of over 25 per cent for lamps and lighting electronic products in the country.

Philips is planning to launch new energy-efficient products such as LEDs, illumination solutions for shops, malls, stadiums and street lighting in the country. The firm has developed power solutions that

can handle extreme voltage fluctuations and the company plans to exports such products to countries having similar power problems, said Sivaraman.

Bert van Meurs, senior vice president, Philips Healthcare said company would ramp up the making and R&D facilities of acquired Alpha X-Ray Technologies for supply of economic cardiovascular X-ray systems for various emerging markets.

"We are looking at constant growth and Philips have spent over EURO 10 billion on acquisitions. India will be a major focus area for us, for both organic and inorganic opportunities for right technologies and products," he said.

At present, Philips is a market leader in the country for medical equipments such as critical care products like ECGs and intensive care equipments and diagnostics imaging products, said Anjan Bose, senior director and business head of Philips Healthcare.

5. Yamaha plans to expand capacity to 8 lakh units

The Hindu Business Line, Sep. 09, 2008

Mumbai: Two-wheeler manufacturer Yamaha Motor India will double production capacity to 8 lakh units in two years, said Mr Tsutomu Mabuchi, Managing Director & CEO.

He was speaking on the sidelines of the launch of Yamaha's company-owned showroom in Mumbai on Monday.

The company is setting up additional facilities at its manufacturing plant in Surajpur, Uttar Pradesh. Yamaha Motor India's total production capacity at its Surajpur and Faridabad plants is 4 lakh units. The company utilises 60-70 per cent of its capacity.

Yamaha sold 1.18 lakh units last year and has already crossed sales of one lakh units this year. "We hope the festival season will give a further push to our sales. We are targeting two lakh unit sales by the end of this year," said Mr Pankaj Dubey, National Business Head, Sales & Marketing, Yamaha Motor India.

The company, which has a market share of 2.6 per cent, has laid out plans for gaining a market share of 10 per cent by 2010. "Customers look for performance bikes with high-end technology from Yamaha. We are focusing on that segment and we will eventually expand our presence in mass market segments too," said Mr Dubey.

New Bike

The company is launching a bike, FZ, in the 150-cc + category on Saturday. This is the third product from Yamaha this year after YZF-R1 and Gladiator. The company is undertaking feasibility studies for introducing its gearless scooters in India. "We are the world's largest gearless scooter maker. We have a wide range starting from 50 cc to 500 cc. We are studying the market," said Mr Sanjay Tripathi, Head of Product & Strategy, Yamaha Motor India.

Dealerships & Consumer Finance

The company's focus is on expanding dealerships and facilitating consumer finance. By 2009, dealerships will be expanded to 450 from 307.

Yamaha has four company-owned showrooms, including two in Delhi and one each in Mumbai and Pune. The company-owned showroom in Kolkata will open in October. Yamaha's vehicle financing arm, Bussan Auto Finance, started operations in India in April and is present in 40 cities.

6. BHEL, Bharti Airtel among top ranked Indian companies in Forbes Asia's Fabulous 50

IBEF, Sep. 05, 2008

New Delhi: Ten Indian companies, including state-run Bharat Heavy Electricals, Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries, Tata Steel, telecom major Bharti Airtel and IT majors Infosys and Wipro, have appeared in the Forbes' list of top 50 best listed companies in the Asia-Pacific region.

Apart from these two top-ranked Indian companies, other Indian companies have made a decent appearance in the list with HDFC Bank enjoying the 22nd rank, IT major Infosys on the 25th position, ITC on the 27th position and Larsen & Toubro on the 30th position.

Others in the list include auto-maker Mahindra & Mahindra (34), Reliance Industries (39), Tata Steel (44) and Wipro (46).

The list which is topped by Taiwan-based computer maker Acer, has BHEL and Bharti Airtel at the overall fifth and sixth spots. Chinese steel maker Angang Steel, Taiwan's Asustek Computer and Indonesia's Bank Rakyat Indonesia grabbed the second, third and fourth spots, respectively.

The 'Asian Fabulous 50' ranking showed how companies stacked up on parameters of robustness like long-term profitability, stock price appreciation, sales and earnings growth, and projected earnings for every company in the region with revenues or market capitalisation of at least five billion dollars.

Among countries, India comes second with a representation of 10 companies after China (13 companies).

"Indian companies once again had a strong showing, with 10 making our cut. Infosys and Wipro, perennial top performers, are back for the fourth year. Reliance Industries, Bharat Heavy and Larsen & Toubro are back for the third year," the magazine said in a report. Today, BHEL commands 60-65 per cent market share of India's power capacity additions, the report said.

The magazine also highlighted the fact that consumer-oriented companies such as Bharti Airtel, HDFC Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra and ITC are showing a growth trend on the back of a progressive India's middle class.

The report said Bharti Airtel enjoys a massive subscription of 10 million every month for wireless access in India, and is maxing out its allotted airwaves. It suggested that more spectrum is the key to acquiring more wireless Web customers.

The magazine also waxed eloquent on RIL's strength as India's largest private sector company, contributing to 3 per cent of the country's GDP and accounting for 13 per cent of its exports.

It also said the company was striking a joint-venture with US office property developer Vornado to open shopping centers throughout India.

On the exemplary enterprising nature of Ratan Tata, the magazine said that he transformed Tata Steel from a south Asian foundry into an enterprise with a formidable presence in the rest of Asia, Europe and the US. It also mentioned the US\$ 13 billion takeover of Anglo-Dutch Corus Group last year.

7. India's foreign tourist arrival to reach 10 million by decade-end

IBEF, Sep. 05, 2008

New Delhi: The Government of India is all set to ride the boom in Indian tourism industry and looking to attract 10 million foreign tourists by the end of 2010. According to tourism secretary, Shilabhadra Banerjee, the government plans to establish four new terminals at Mumbai, Chennai, Kochi and Goa ports under public private partnership (PPP) model to promote cruise tourism in the country. According to shipping secretary A P V N Sarma, the government is mulling over the proposal of offering

incentives to these ports in order to enable them strike a balance between cruise ships and high revenue yielding cargo ships.

At a conference organised by industry body, Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Banerjee further emphasised that if the target of attracting foreign tourists is attained successfully, the country will earn around US\$ 9 billion in foreign exchange, besides generating an additional 15 million job.

Cruise tourism industry in the country has tremendous potential which is reflected through a 310-per cent growth in the number of cruise tourists in India between 2002 and 2006. The country has the capacity to raise the footfall of foreign tourists in Indian ports by over three-fold from the 180,000 in 2008 to 600,000 by 2010. The government is also trying to resolve certain issues, including speeding up of immigration norms and tax on bunkers to make the journey smooth-sailing for cruise tourism.

In general, the positive trend in Indian tourism industry is further reinforced with the facts that foreign tourist arrival and foreign exchange earning through tourism grew by 14.3 per cent and 24.3 per cent, respectively, in 2007. In absolute terms, India saw 5.08 million foreign tourists visiting the country in 2007 and spending US\$ 10.73 billion through the year. Tourism is projected to generate 6.36 per cent of India's gross domestic product (GDP), while accounting for 10.17 per cent of country's employment in 2008.

8. SEZ exports may notch up a growth of 451 per cent by 2008-09: Report

IBEF, Sep. 05, 2008

New Delhi: An assessment by Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham) suggests that exports from special economic zones (SEZs) have registered a growth of 192 per cent between 2005-06 and 2007-08. The industry lobby has further projected a phenomenal growth of 451 per cent by 2008-09.

The study revealed that after the enforcement of the SEZ Act in 2005-06, SEZ exports surged to US\$ 14.98 billion in 2007-08 from US\$ 5.13 billion, clocking an impressive 192 per cent growth.

By 2011-12, SEZ exports is expected to surge past US\$ 116.14 billion, according to Assocham president Sajjan Jindal who released the chamber assessment.

In 2007-08, official figures for total exports of India between April-December was estimated at US\$ 107.64 billion. The report said that "their contributions to the total domestic exports have gone up from 5.004 per cent in 2005-06 to 13.93 per cent in first nine months of 2007-08."

The chamber said that by end of the 11th Five-Year-Plan period, the SEZs would attract investments of about US\$ 225 billion. As per official estimates, SEZs would receive investments to the tune of US\$ 67.54 billion by December 2009.

Currently, 90 SEZs are operational and 353 units have come up in those. Also, 253 SEZs have been notified after the SEZ Act was passed.

9. GTL Infra mops up Rs 3,500 cr for tower expansion

Business Standard, Sep. 05, 2008

Mumbai: GTL Infrastructure (GIL), a subsidiary of telecom network major GTL, has raised around Rs 3,500 crore by way of debt from a slew of investors - both national and international - that will be used for rolling out an additional 17,000 telecom towers in the country.

This takes the company's total fund raised for tower rollout to around Rs 7,500 crore (around \$1.80 billion). It had raised around Rs 2,200 crore earlier. The company had also raised an additional Rs



1,800 crore by way of equity and quasi-equity offerings such as preferential warrants and foreign currency convertible bonds.

The Rs 3,500-crore debt was raised from international lenders including Europe's largest financial development group DEG (a part of KFW Bankengruppe, a company owned by the German government) and Asian Development Bank, Manila (a financial institution that promotes economic and social progress in the Asia-Pacific region), according to sources close to the development.

Financial institutions such as State Bank of India, Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) and Punjab National Bank were among the Indian lenders that have contributed to the kitty.

The exact contributions by each financial institution could not be ascertained. When contacted, GIL officials declined to comment.

The shared passive telecom infrastructure major will use the fund for rolling out an additional 17,000 base transceiver stations (BTS) across the 22 telecom circles in the country. GIL, which at present has a portfolio of over 8,000 towers under various stages of completion, is in the process of rolling out 23,700 towers by the financial year 2011.

The company already hosts 7 leading telecom operators and one WiMax operator on its towers and is scouting for acquisition both in the country and globally.

10. GM buys India dream, to spend \$500m more

The Financial Express, Sep. 04, 2008

General Motors India, a subsidiary of General Motors Corporation on Wednesday announced a top-up of \$500-million investment to the \$1 billion it has already committed to invest here.

The company's timing is significant as it comes a day after Tata Motors suspended work on its Nano car project in Singur over land woes. GM India's new investment plans conform to automaker's optimism about investments in India, disregarding the current industrial slowdown.

The additional investment, spread over seven years up to 2015, will go into capacity expansion at Halol, setting up a new plant in Talegaon, including a powertrain unit.

"The company will invest half a billion dollar in India over next seven years to keep the growth momentum. A good part of this will go into the development of new models, including a small car next year, and upgrading the existing ones that will result in a new Optra in 2010," said Karl Slym, president and managing director, General Motors India, at the launch of its utility vehicle, Tavera Neo 2. Maruti Suzuki India (MSIL), Hyundai Motor India (HMIL) and Ford India have also announced their plans for more investment.

At the recent annual general meeting of MSIL, Suzuki chief Osamu Suzuki had asked Maruti to increase its focus on R&D for small engines in India as the demand for such cars would surge in the near future. Suzuki Motor Corporation of Japan is seeking around 90% research & development on smaller engines here against 30% being done by MSIL. Suzuki is developing India as a base for small cars. Petrol engines below 1,200cc and diesel engines up to 1400cc have now got excise benefit from the government at 12% duty.

Suzuki has earmarked an investment of Rs 9,000 crore in India, a good part of which has gone into setting up a powertrain unit that will make Suzuki's K-Series or the next generation engines that would eventually be used in all global models. HMIL has invested Rs 1,210 crore in its second engine & transmission plant. This is part of Hyundai's over Rs 4,000-crore investments in the country until 2013.

"Investment of such huge scales is on a long-term basis and is done taking into consideration the fluctuations that would happen in the future. Though the domestic market is sluggish at the moment

there is a huge potential for small cars in India and there could be exponential growth... in the next few years," says Arvind Saxena, senior vice-president, HMIL. Ford India has earmarked Rs 2,000-crore to expand operations in India, which will include a second plant and an engine unit....

11. India to be key R&D centre for Airbus A350 XWB

Business Standard, Sep. 04, 2008

New Delhi: India will be one of the key centres for design and development of the A350 aircraft, European aircraft manufacturer Airbus' answer to the Boeing 787 Dreamliner.

Designing work for the A350 is the next project for the Airbus Engineering Centre India (AECI), the company's high-tech aircraft component manufacturing facility in Bangalore, which started functioning in April last year.

"The A350 is the next big project for us. The engineers at the facility are currently working on the development of tools to design the aircraft," said Kiran Rao, president, Airbus India.

"We will soon get the software for analysing the stress and strain on aeroplanes. We are working on the structural analysis of the aircraft among other things," he added.

Rao said Airbus was recruiting engineers for the work every month. The Centre has 35 engineers and the number is supposed to grow to 300 in the next four years.

The A350 XWB (Xtra Wide Body), the new and improved version of the A350, has been built to take on the Boeing 777 family and some of the models of the Boeing 787.

The aircraft has a wider fuselage, which makes it possible for it to accommodate nine people in every row.

"We have already sold (which means received orders) 480 A350s, out of which 15 to 20 are being bought by Kingfisher," said Rao. The aircraft will be put into service from 2013.

Airbus has been looking at various ways to use India for both component manufacture as well as leverage its research and development potential. The first manufacturing agreement was with Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) in 1998 to make doors for the A320.

"More than half the doors for the Airbus 320 are produced in Bangalore. And as we increase the production of A320s to 40 aircraft a month, which is the largest number of civil aircraft ever produced per month in the aviation industry history, more than 20 sets of doors will be produced in Bangalore every month," said Rao.

Earlier, Airbus had outsourced its engineering projects to other Indian companies like Infosys, which participated in the designing of the A380s, HCL and other companies like CADES, Satyam and Quest.

Airbus rival Boeing has also been striking deals in India. These include a 10-year agreement with HAL to get \$1 billion worth of business in the aviation space, a contract to the Tatas to make floor beams.

12. 13 mega projects in Punjab gain Government approval

IBEF, Sep. 04, 2008

New Delhi: The Punjab chief minister Parkash Singh Badal-chaired committee approved 13 new mega projects to be set up in the state with an investment of about Rs 21,278.77 crore (US\$ 4.79 billion) on September 4, 2008.



An official spokesman further revealed that the approved projects with a total investment of Rs 935.36 crore (US\$ 210.80 million), included two manufacturing projects, Nector Lifesciences Limited at Khanpur village in Patiala district and Tayal Energy Limited at Kotakpura in Faridkot district.

Also, two industrial park projects with a total investment of Rs 240.17 crore (US\$ 30.36 million), including Rhythm Textile and Apparels Park Limited (Rs 134.56 crore i.e., US\$ 30.36 million) in Nawanshehar district and another CCI Industrial Estate and Cluster Co-operative Industrial Society Limited (Rs 105.61 crore i.e., US\$ 23.83 million) in Mohali district, were amongst those approved, he added.

The entertainment and hospitality sectors in Punjab too gained a thrust when three multiplexes of Prime Infrawell Private Limited in Patiala and Stadia Infrastructure Project Private Limited and two hotel projects of Fantasy Hotels India Limited in districts of Patiala, Jalandhar and Amritsar with an investment of Rs 791.44 crore (US\$ 178.51 million) had earlier been approved.

13. Apollo rolls out signature stores

The Economic Times, Sep. 04, 2008

New Delhi: Taking its marketing cue from luxury car maker BMW and mass market players Maruti Suzuki India and Fiat, tyre maker Apollo is starting its own signature stores to showcase and sell its range in the country. Car companies are starting their signature stores in order to showcase their brand prowess and the \$1.2-billion Apollo has adopted the same format.

Its pan-India stores will cater to different segments- Apollo Radial World (ARW) will focus on passenger cars while Apollo Trust (AT) will meet the needs of commercial vehicle owners. The company has started its first ARW store in Patiala and plans to roll out 10 more this fiscal. It plans to launch 100 AT stores during the same period.

Apollo vice-chairman Neeraj RS Kanwar told ET, "The new chain of branded stores are part of our endeavour to offer personalised premium service to our customers. Under the new marketing strategy we are taking our products closer to customers. We have launched new age V&H-rated and tubeless tyres, which are being offered exclusively through these stores."

The retail experience will also be replicated in Europe, where the company plans to start operations in the next two years. It has planned to invest e200 million in Eastern Europe for an annual 7 million tyres capacity facility. "Our new retail marketing strategy is based on our experience in South Africa after we acquired Dunlop Tyres, two years ago. We have more than 200 signature stores called 'Dunlop Zone' which has helped us to roll out a similar marketing concept in India," he said.

The company currently makes four tyre brands --- Apollo, Dunlop, Regal and Kaizen -- for the domestic and international markets.

14. NLC plans Rs 45k-cr investment

The Financial Express, Sep. 03, 2008

New Delhi: Neyveli Lignite Corporation (NLC), a leading mining and power company, has worked out investment plans close to Rs 45,000 crore in India and overseas.

NLC may consider a joint venture proposal to own a coal mine in Africa and Indonesia to ensure adequate availability of coal for its expansion projects. The company will also explore option of a joint venture proposal for owning a lignite mine in Africa along with setting up of power plant. As far as NLC's plans in India are concerned, the company is exploring an option of setting up power plant at Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu, including setting up of a jetty for receiving coal in association with the Port Trust. Besides, the company has also worked out new mining and power projects in the country.

It has further planned an open-cast lignite mine of 2.25-million-tonne-per-annum (mtpa) capacity in Bithnok village of Bikaner district in Rajasthan, lignite-based power station of 1,000 mw capacity in Gujarat, under a joint venture between NLC and Gujarat Power Corporation Ltd, lignite-based power station of 1,000 mw capacity in Neyveli in Tamil Nadu, open-cast lignite mine of 13.5 mtpa capacity near Jayamkondam in Tamilnadu, lignite-based power station of 1,600 mw capacity near Jayamkondam in Tamilnadu, coal-based thermal power station of 2,000 mw capacity in Talcher in Orissa, coal-based thermal power station of 1,000 mw capacity in Madhya Pradesh as a joint venture between NLC and Northern Coalfields Ltd and coal-based thermal power station of 2,000 mw capacity in Uttar Pradesh as a joint venture between NLC and UP Power Corporation Ltd.

Sources have told FE that NLC proposes to fund all these projects through equity and debt in the ratio of 30:70.

The equity portion will be met out of internal resources generated by the company and remaining will be borrowed from banks and financial institutions. Sources said NLC has estimated an investment of around Rs 45,000 crore to carry out these projects in phases.

15. Vedanta subsidiary to invest US\$ 2.26 billion in Punjab power plant

IBEF, Sep. 02, 2008

New Delhi: Metal and mining major, Vedanta Resources Group said its subsidiary Sterlite Energy would pump in US\$ 2.26 billion to construct 1,980-mw thermal power project at Talwandi Sabo in Punjab on a build, own and operate basis.

Eyeing growth opportunity in leveraging its project execution and operating skills in building and operating power plants, Sterlite recently acquired Talwandi Sabo Power Ltd.

Talwandi Sabo Power Ltd, a special purpose vehicle of the Punjab State Electricity Board (PSEB) created for the implementation of the project, is the largest coal-based thermal power plant in Punjab. Electricity generated by the thermal power plant would be procured by Punjab State Electricity Board.

The site of the power plant is located about 45 km from Bhatinda and about 220 km from Chandigarh.

16. TIL to pump \$350 mn into global start-ups

Business Standard, Sep. 02, 2008

Hyderabad: Tata Industries (TIL), a promoter company of the Tata group, is ready to invest up to \$350 million (about Rs 1,500 crore) in international start-up businesses.

"We are looking at breakthrough technologies. If there is an emerging business, we can consider getting into it," TIL Managing Director Kishore A Chaukar said today.

In the past two years, according to Chaukar, TIL and Tata Sons have together invested Rs 125 crore in support of new technological research conducted by various individuals across the globe in the fields of solar energy, drug discovery, contract research, water recycling and biotechnology. The investments ranged from a maximum of Rs 50 crore to a minimum of Rs 60 lakh.

For instance, he said, TIL extended financial support to the Zurich-based Institute of Polytechnic where research for development of flexible photovoltaic cells is conducted. "If the technology clicks, they can put up 100 MW solar power plants in which TIL would like to have a significant stake." By 2010, TIL's plan is to set up a 120-MW solar power plant that would cost about Rs 600 crore.



Similarly, it has funded four persons from IIT Kharagpur and Kanpur, who were engaged in the development of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). "We said we will give them Rs 20 lakh. But they wanted Rs 60 lakh and we gave them the amount," he said.

Chaukar said a top defence official recently saw the prototype of the UAV and offered to "purchase the entire production". Following this, the IITians wanted an additional funding of Rs 5 crore, which TIL is ready to give.

A Harvard University professor in the US is working on a 'fluid' technology through which one can know a person's health profile. "She has the technology, which has to be fine-tuned. If this happens, we can invest up to Rs 1,000 crore depending on the terms and conditions," he said.

In the area of drug discovery, which is on top of TIL's agenda, the company has invested close to Rs 80 crore. The research it supports pertains to diabetes and metabolic dysfunctions. TIL has also invested in biopharmaceutical company, Indigene.

17. Airlines set to ride on global platform

The Economic Times, Sep. 02, 2008

New Delhi: Aiming to compete with their rivals in the international market, the fast-growing Indian airlines are looking at global platforms to widen their overseas presence.

The two Indian international carriers, Air India and Jet Airways, currently have less than 25% share in the long-haul market to and from the country. With the third carrier Kingfisher Airlines joining the ranks this month, the Indian aviation scenario is all set to change.

Kingfisher Airlines, which is starting its international operations on September 3 with a Bangalore-London flight, is considering options to join the SkyTeam Alliance led by Air France-KLM and Delta Airlines of the US. The national carrier, Air India, has already joined the Star Alliance, the world's largest airlines consortium led by Lufthansa and Singapore Airlines.

Mumbai-based Jet Airways could eventually become the Indian partner of the Oneworld Alliance, led by British Airways and American Airlines, according to industry sources. Under such global alliances, airlines agree to co-operate, tie up to provide better connectivity to international passengers, share terminals as well as expertise in back-end operations.

Indian airlines are aiming for a greater presence in the lucrative international market with the ambition of taking market share from the large number of international carriers such as Singapore Airlines, Emirates, Lufthansa and British Airways, which dominate international traffic to and from India.

Kingfisher executives said that it would be "most logical" for the airline to eventually join the SkyTeam alliance, given the growing links with the Air France-KLM.

"It is a bit early to comment on our global alliance plans, but we are already looking at developing synergies with Air France-KLM, which are providing back-end technical support in London to our aircraft," he said. Kingfisher has already entered into a maintenance and technical support pact with Air France-KLM for its wide bodied aircraft used in international operations.

Meanwhile, Jet Airways is currently evaluating our options. "We have not decided to join any alliance as of now. There are no specific time frames. The airline industry is going through a phase of consolidation and airline groupings could also possibly change in the immediate future. The recent example being Continental exiting the SkyTeam and joining Star Alliance," Jet Airways veep (marketing) Gaurang Shetty said.

Jet Airways currently has frequent-flier programme partnerships with 16 carriers and has codeshare partnerships with Qantas, American Airlines, Brussels Airlines, Etihad Airways and Air Canada.

18. Export growth to maintain high momentum in Apr-July

The Hindu Business Line, Aug. 31, 2008

"Thanks to the rupee depreciation vis-A-vis the US dollar that has begun in the current fiscal, Indian exports in rupee terms have been showing a salutary trend."

New Delhi: The country's exports during the first four months of the current fiscal (April to July) are likely to have cranked up at a faster pace of above 35 per cent in rupee terms and above 25 per cent in dollar terms when the provisional figures are released here on Monday.

Thanks to the rupee depreciation vis-A-vis the US dollar that has begun in the current fiscal, Indian exports in rupee terms have been showing a salutary trend, the Commerce Secretary, Mr Gopal K. Pillai, told Business Line.

He said engineering goods, auto companies and information technology companies would do well because of rupee depreciation.

Slowdown in US market

However, he said, there is a definite slowdown in the US market where out of Rs 100 of exports, Rs 20 came from the US and this would now come down to Rs 15.

But this has been made good by diversifying export destination to Latin America, South East Asia and Asean region by Indian exporters in recent period.

Mr Pillai expects pharmaceutical and engineering goods would partly make up the moderation in the export of petroleum products in the wake of recent fall in global crude prices even as petroleum exports from India currently account for 10 to 12 per cent of total exports.

Export credit

On the persistent plea of exporters for retention of the export credit subvention extended to a range of exporters when rupee was appreciating in 2007, Mr Pillai said the Commerce Ministry has recommended for its continuation beyond September 2008 and the Ministry of Textiles is preparing a note to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) explaining its crucial importance to textile exporters.

Asked about the recent wrap-up of the India-Asean FTA in Singapore, Mr Pillai said more than economic benefits, the FTA would ensure this has also a political advantage for India in linking itself starting from Myanmar to the entire East Asia.

Moreover, he said, Asean has an FTA with Japan, China and Korea and is due to launch one with New Zealand and Australia. Once the FTAs of Asean with these major countries in Asia are in place, India's engagement with Asean market would disappear if there is no India-Asean FTA. He said, "while every other country enjoying FTA with Asean would pay zero duty, you will be paying MFN duty" and hence, in order to maintain "our market share" it would be in the fitness of things that India also entered into an FTA with Asean.

19. 15 of world's top 20 pension funds head for India

Business Standard, Sep. 01, 2008

Mumbai: Foreign pension funds are making a beeline for India despite the turmoil in global markets. More than 40 such funds (endowments and university and family foundations) have registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) in the past seven or eight months.

The Bombay Stock Exchange's benchmark Sensex is more than 40 per cent off its peak this year. Yet out of the top 20 global pension funds, more than 15 are investing in India, according to Watson Wyatt.

Watson Wyatt estimated global pension assets at \$24,932 billion at the end of last year. Even if India were to receive 5 per cent of this, it will mean a boom for Indian markets.

"From what we have learnt allocations to emerging market equities are certainly going up simply because developed markets are slowing down," said Rashmi Mehrotra, business leader at investment consulting firm Mercer, which advises pensions, endowments and charities on the relative returns of fund managers managing different asset classes.

"Pension funds want to allocate more to alternative asset classes," she added, "so when we say foreign institutional investors (FIIs) are withdrawing from India, it may not actually be pension funds because these are long-term players."

Rolls-Royce Pension Fund, Walt Disney Retirement Plan and Teachers' Retirement System of Texas are some of the top pension funds that have registered in the current year. Foundations such as Broad Foundation and Malaysian Community and Education Foundation have also found a place.

One reason for pension funds' interest in India is easier regulation by Sebi. Last October, Sebi allowed pension funds to register as FIIs even if they are not regulated by their domestic securities market regulators but provided they are regulated by some other regulator like a tax authority in their home country.

"These funds, on account of their large capital base and longer-term commitments, are more stable and more resilient against temporary downturns in a market, focusing on long-term fundamentals that continue to be relatively strong for India," said Siddharth Shah of Nishith Desai Associates.

Many of these pension funds and endowments are LPs (limited partners) in India-focused private equity funds. Private equity and venture capital funds admit that there has been little change in their fund allocation stance except for taking a company's track record into greater account.

A case in point is Lightspeed Venture Partners, which recently raised a \$600-million fund. "It has not been difficult for us. In fact, we received more subscriptions than needed," said Srini Vudaygiri, managing director.

"They take a fairly long-term view because they have seen many of these market cycles. They expect anything ranging from three to four times their investment as returns," added Sateesh Andra, venture partner at Draper Fisher Jurvetson.

20. BPCL arm invests \$75 mn in Mozambique

Business Standard, Aug. 29, 2008

New Delhi: Bharat PetroResources (BPRL), an exploration and production subsidiary of Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL), has spent \$75 million (around Rs 330 crore) to buy 10 per cent stake in an oil block in Mozambique, same as what Videocon paid.

BPRL, through its subsidiary BPRL Ventures Mozambique BV, has bought the stake from US-based Anadarko Petroleum Corporation, BPCL said in a statement. Videocon Energy Ventures, a subsidiary of the oil-to-consumer durables Videocon group, announced on Wednesday that it too had bought 10 per cent stake in the same exploration block for \$75 million.

"The closing of the transaction under the agreement is subject to regulatory approvals of the Mozambique government," BPCL said in a statement. If approved, BPRL Ventures Mozambique will acquire the stake in the block with effect from May 1, 2008. With this acquisition, BPRL's interest in exploration blocks will increase to 14 spread across Australia, East Timor, Oman, Mozambique and UK, besides India.

BPRL, jointly with Videocon Industries, has entered into an agreement for acquiring stake in 10 offshore blocks in Brazil. "These are in the final stages of receiving approvals from the Brazilian authorities," the statement said.

21. Outbound travel: Indians champs at globetrotting

The Economic Times, Aug. 29, 2008

New Delhi: Outbound travel from India is bucking the trend even as inflation and slowdown coupled with increasing airfares is adversely affecting domestic traffic and corporate travel.

Not only have outbound numbers grown from India, especially on short-haul routes, average spend of travellers is also going strong, as per figures for January-July period shared by various international tourism boards. According to industry estimates, the number of Indian travellers visiting foreign shores is poised to touch 12 million by end of this year, about 2 million higher than last year.

"Indians who travel abroad are the top of the pyramid. This group of travellers are not impacted by inflation or increase in air fares as they have high disposable income," says SOTC COO Sunil Gupta. For instance, Indian arrivals visiting the island country Malaysia was up 30% to 3.35 lakh in the first seven month of this year from 2.6 lakh during the same period of last year. For Singapore, the inbound figures for Indians have increased by 8% this year compared to last year. Honeymooners haven, Mauritius, received around 25,000 Indians between January and June this year, a 10% increase from the same period last year.

Even an emerging destination Korea saw an 8.5% growth in arrivals from India in the January-June period this year, compared to the corresponding period last year. Long-haul destination Finland, that is witnessing a growth rate of over 25%, expects around 62,000 Indian tourists by 2008 end.

And, it's not just arrival figures, Indians are high spenders too. "Though an exact fix on spend for this year is not available, Indians for sure haven't reduced their spend either on shopping or F&B. The Great Singapore Sale was a big hit among Indians," says Singapore Tourism Board area director Kenneth Lim.

In 2007, the overall tourism receipts of Malaysia from India was above \$1 billion. "Since most Indians travel with their families, the average expenditure is significantly higher compared to inbound tourists from other countries," says Tourism Malaysia director-India P Manoharan.

Indian travellers are also getting more experimental than before. "Our analysis indicates that Indians not only spend on shopping but they experiment with cuisine too. Indian travellers are also upgrading to four and five star hotels paying more than \$100 per night," says Cox and Kings business development head Karan Anand.

Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) too is way too bullish about Indian outbound travel. The PATA-Visa 2006-07 report estimates that outbound travel from India in 2010 will be around 16 million. Similarly, Euromonitor International estimates the outgoing tourism expenditure from India to grow to \$21 billion by 2011, representing a growth rate of over 25.7 % between 2006 and 2011.

22. SEZs expected to receive US\$ 45.73 billion as investments by 2009

IBEF, Aug. 28, 2008

Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are set to see major investments after the straightening out of certain regulatory tangles. According to India's commerce secretary, G K Pillai, India has approved 513 SEZs till date, of which 250 have been notified. Investments are expected to cross US\$ 45.73 billion by December 2009, providing incremental employment to 800,000 people.



During the last three months, investments in excess of US\$ 3.65 billion in SEZs have been announced by various firms. Ansal Properties & Infrastructure Ltd will be investing around US\$ 823.42 million for IT SEZs in three states.

Tata Realty & Infrastructure is planning to invest more than US\$ 686.05 million to build an IT SEZ, in a joint venture with the Tamil Nadu government. Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services, in a tie-up with Maharashtra Industrial Development Corp (MIDC), will be investing about US\$ 1.82 billion in SEZs in Maharashtra. State-run trading firm, MMTC Ltd, has invited bids to set up SEZs in various sectors. MIDC will be developing 22 SEZs in Maharashtra. After MIDC faced hurdles in land acquisition in the state, it has set up a dedicated cell to recompense and rehabilitate displaced landowners. A draft of regulatory amendments to aid investments has been planned including one to make sure that developers also gain from the scheme.

Duty drawback credits, extended to exporters alone, will now be offered to developers as well. L B Singhal, Director General, Export Promotion Council for EOUs and SEZs, said that offshore banking units would also get exemption from complying with statutory liquidity ratio.

Till date, around US\$ 18.52 billion have been invested in SEZs, generating employment for around 350,000 people, as per statistics from the government's SEZ site. Last year, SEZs generated about US\$ 15.23 billion in exports, a 92 per cent rise from the previous year. India's total exports during the period grew by 23 per cent to US\$ 155.5 billion.

Commerce secretary, G K Pillai, has assured, "The Ministry of Commerce is very clear. No land can be forcibly acquired for SEZs." Sachin Saxena, operations director, OLS, Nokia India, said, "Whatever you do in India there are bottlenecks - whether you start an SEZ, airport or an airline, anything. We have absolutely no issue on that." Nokia India was among the first global firms to develop an SEZ in India.

Nirav Mody of JB SEZ, also the Vice President of strategic marketing and business development of JB Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals Ltd. said, "There are ambiguities in the regulations, but they are no major show stoppers."

Singhal further added, "The project looks good on paper. We hope to get some decent returns on it." "After Nokia, Motorola has come. Adidas and Nike have come. There is tremendous interest."

23. Infosys sees sizable revenues from SEZs

The Hindu, Aug. 28, 2008

Chennai: Infosys Technologies sees incremental growth from special economic zones (SEZs). In the last couple of years, the company has been setting up SEZs in Chandigarh, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Mysore, and Pune and it has started construction in Mangalore and by April next year will set up one in Thiruvananthapuram.

The company plans to invest Rs. 1,100 crore in setting up centres across the country for the current fiscal and of which it will invest Rs. 1,000 crore in SEZs. Last year, it invested Rs. 400 crore in the SEZs out of the total investment of Rs. 1,150 crore, according to T. V. Mohandas, board member.

He said the company's investment in SEZs had increased anticipating the removal of STPI (Software Technology Parks of India) norms by 2010. Among all the SEZ centres, Mahindra City, on the outskirts of Chennai, was considered to be the largest.

The total land taken up by Infosys was 129 acres, of which 2.1 million sq. ft. with 11,234-seat capacity had been built in the first phase.

Second phase

Work on the second phase would begin by next month. It will have two more buildings with a built-up area of 5.8 lakh sq. ft. and a seating capacity of 5,000. The planned investment for this project was Rs. 1,250 crore, of which Rs. 453 crore was invested in Phase-I.

The first phase consisted of six software development blocks. He said, when completed, the campus would have a built-up area of 3.5 million sq. ft. spread across 110.35 acres and a capacity to house 25,000 employees.

In Chennai, Infosys had two campuses - Mahindra City and Sholinganallur. The total headcount in the campuses stood at 10,750 as of June 30. Both these operations had together recorded exports of Rs. 2,072 crore for the 12 months ended June this year, he said.

On the industry, S. Gopalakrishnan (Kris), Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, said though there was uncertainty in macro economy, IT services business would continue to grow. The opportunity for IT services among the industry, customer and geography-wise was enormous.

The new services, which were added in the recent past, had been contributing over 50 per cent of the total revenue, he added.

Regarding the acquisition of U.K-based consultancy company Axon, Mr. Gopalakrishnan said "We have quoted a fair price and we do not want it be a speculative one. We are confident about it since it is an 'all cash deal' and it will be an attractive proposition for Axon".

24. Century Textiles plans Rs 3246 cr expansion

Business Standard, Aug. 27, 2008

Mumbai: Century Textiles and Industries will undertake expansion worth Rs 3,246 crore in the cement and paper business in the next three years, according to a statement released by the company to National Stock Exchange (NSE).

In the cement business, the company is planning to set up cement grinding facility with an output capacity of 1.5 million tonne per annum in West Bengal at a cost of Rs 1,800 crore. The company will place order for major equipment after getting receipt of confirmation of assured supply of bulk power from West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd.

In the Maharashtra (Manikgarh Cements), the company is setting up a new clinker line with a capacity of 2.5 million tonne with a 40 Mw captive thermal power plant. This will take Century's their total cement manufacturing capacity from 7.8 million tonne per annum to 11.8 million tonne per annum. The equipment for this project will be ordered after getting clearance in respect of forest land from Ministry of Environment and Forest.

In the paper business, Century Mills is setting up a prime grade tissue paper plant that is expected to be operational by third quarter of this year at the total cost of Rs 175 crore.

In addition, the company is also setting up 500 tdp multilayer coated packaging plant that will also have a 40 M w captive power plant. The total cost of this project will be will be Rs 775 crore and the plant is expected to be operational by December 2009.

The company is also expanding its pulp plant that will be completed by December 2009 at the cost of about 496 crore. This include a 450 tonne per day fibre line that will produce 1,200 tonne of pulp.



25. 'India emerging most favoured investment destination'

IBEF, Aug. 26, 2008

New Delhi: "India is emerging as the most favoured destination for overseas investment and an important trading partner for the US," said US Consul General, Aileen Crowe Nandi, on August 25, 2008, while addressing a symposium on 'Doing Business with USA'. The symposium was organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

Nandi informed, "Trade between India and the US is doubling in every three years. Indian industry has huge opportunity for cooperation with US companies in the energy sector, especially to promote clean energy technologies."

Nandi said that the four major challenges facing Indo-US trade were infrastructure development, bilateral investment promotion, financial sector reforms and cooperation in clean energy technologies.

She further added that US companies were eager for partnerships with their Indian counterparts in sectors such as IT, science and technology, pharma, biotech and space.

Ford India Executive Director, Nigel Wark, also present on the occasion, revealed that his company was considering an investment of US\$ 500 million, during the next three-five years and plans to double its present capacity from 100,000 to 200,000 units per annum.

26. India posts record increase in mobile subscriber base in July

IBEF, Aug. 26, 2008

New Delhi: According to The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), India saw the highest ever increase in mobile subscriber base in July 2008 when it added 9.22 million new subscribers, taking the total user base to 296.08 million in the country. In June, the number of new users was 8.94 million. A private player commented that the possibility of 10-million mobile user additions was now quite strong.

The overall tele-density in July 2008 was 29.08 per cent, against 28.33 per cent in June.

The number of telephone connections totalled 334.84 million at the end of July 2008, against 325.78 million in June 2008. The overall wireless subscribers [GSM, CDMA and WLL (F)], base was 296.08 million in July, compared to 286.86 in June, revealed TRAI, while the broadband subscribers' base touched 4.57 million in July, against 4.38 million in June.

The leading mobile operator in India, Bharti Airtel, had 72.07 million mobile users at the end of July, after an addition of around 2.67 million new subscribers.

Reliance Communications had 52.53 million subscribers with an addition of around 1.74 million users, and Vodafone Essar totalled 50.95 million, with an added 1.75 million mobile customers, in July, 2008.