

(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.)

Companies ask govt to relax 25% public shareholding deadline

With the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) talking tough on enforcing the 25 per cent shareholding deadline, companies facing the heat have started turning to the finance ministry for an extension. Senior finance ministry officials confirmed the development but strongly declined the possibility of extension in the deadline at this juncture. "The decision is a carefully thought out one and it will improve participation in the market. We have told this to the companies which have approached us for relaxing the deadline," said a senior ministry official.

The companies know the government could relax the deadline. Hence, they are approaching the ministry, said another official. "The government fixed the deadline in consultation with Sebi under the Securities Contract Regulation Act (SCRA) provisions and, technically, it can relax the same," he added. In June 2010, the government had amended the Securities Contract (Regulations) Act rules, by ordering all listed companies to have a minimum of 25 per cent public shareholding. It has set a deadline of June 2013 for all private sector companies and August 2013 for all PSUs to meet these norms.

Business Standard - 02.05.2012

<http://www.business-standard.com/india/news/companies-ask-govt-to-relax-25-public-shareholding-deadline/473124/>

Govt spending Rs 26,087 cr to revive 43 sick CPSEs

The Government is spending Rs 26,086.98 crore for the revival of 43 sick Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) based on the recommendations of the Board for Reconstruction of Public Sector Enterprises. This information was given in a written reply in the Lok Sabha by Mr Praful Patel, Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises. The funds spent on revival of the CPSEs include a cash assistance of Rs 4,491.64 crore.

"An amount of Rs 3,609.17 crore has been utilised by the CPSEs. Out of 43 CPSEs approved for revival, 22 CPSEs have posted profit-before-tax during 2010-11," the Minister said. Additionally,

Govt to hold a meet on May 9 on proposed Sovereign Fund

The government will hold a meeting on May 9 to decide on setting up of proposed Sovereign Fund of India that could be used, among other things, to buy overseas assets for the benefit of the state-owned companies. "A meeting of Secretaries of 10 government departments to decide on the nature of the Fund is slated on May 9. After this, the proposal has to be vetted by the Union Cabinet," a top government official said.

Secretaries in the ministries of finance, public enterprises, petroleum and natural gas, and power would be attending the meeting, which will be headed by Cabinet Secretary. Besides other things, the meeting will decide on the management of the corpus of the fund. The government will have to take a call on whether the fund would be managed by the selected public sector mutual funds or the Centre, the official added. As per the proposed structure, the disinvestment corpus will be used for investing in energy and raw material needs, recapitalisation of PSUs and National Investment Fund (NIF).

The Economic Times - 06.05.2012

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/finance/govt-to-hold-a-meet-on-may-9-on-proposed-sovereign-fund/articleshow/13020905.cms>

Tourism ministry takes up AERA hike with PMO

The tourism ministry has taken up with the Prime Minister's office the issue of hike in charges by airports regulator AERA that has made travel costly, hitting budget tourists hard. Minister of state for tourism Sultan Ahmed said here that his ministry has taken up the hike in airport charges and users fee at the New Delhi International Airport with the Prime Minister's Office and the civil aviation ministry.

"The government is looking at the issue of recent hike in airfares (on account of hike in various charges) at the New Delhi International Airport. The matter has been taken up with the Prime Minister's Office and Civil Aviation

two CPSEs, namely Bharat Ophthalmic Glass and Bharat Yantra Nigam, are also being closed down.

The Hindu Business Line - 03.05.2012

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/article3380412.ece>

Government toying with the idea of exchange-traded fund for PSU shares to raise funds

The government is toying with the idea of an exchange-traded fund for shares of public sector companies on the lines of Hong Kong's Tracker Fund, which has been a runaway success. The department of disinvestment is of the view that such a fund will offer the government a stable mechanism to raise large sums of money from the market with minimal disruption to the share prices of these companies. The idea has been mooted at a time the Centre is worried that choppy markets could make it difficult to meet its disinvestment target of Rs 30,000 crore this fiscal.

Economic Times - 30.04.2012

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-04-30/news/31508183_1_etf-exchange-traded-fund-disinvestment

Regulations for hedge funds soon, says SEBI chief

New regulations, governing 'pooled resources' of investors, are likely to be issued within the 'next two weeks', Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Chairman U. K. Sinha said on Tuesday. Mr. Sinha said the SEBI's guiding principle rests on the premise that "any entity that is involved in pooling money has to be registered." Hedge funds, for instance, were not regulated in India, he pointed out.

He observed that discussions in international fora such as the Financial Stability Board were veering around to the view that there needs to "registration and regulation of all funds." He said SEBI was considering a minimum threshold amount of "approximately \$200,000." The idea behind the threshold was that such funds should not be collecting from 'ordinary retail investors,' but from those who could understand the risks involved.

The Hindu - 01.05.2012

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/article3374319.ece>

Rise in taxes, airfares hit tourism

Heavy taxation and mounting airfares in the domestic sector are taking their toll on inbound and domestic tourist movement, and weaning away domestic travellers to cheaper international tourist destinations. The setback to the tourism

Ministry," he told reporters after the inauguration of Indian pavilion at the Arabian Travel Market here.

The Financial Express - 02.05.2012

<http://www.financialexpress.com/news/Tourism-ministry-takes-up-AERA-hike-with-PMO/944250/>

Government considering regulation for direct selling: Official

The government is actively considering setting up a regulatory framework for 'direct selling' in order to protect consumers from fraudulent players, a senior official said today.

"We will formulate regulations and guidelines for the direct selling industry to ensure that consumer interest is taken care of and they are protected," Department of Consumer Affairs Joint Secretary Manoj Parida told reporters here.

Economic Times - 02.05.2012

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-05-02/news/31538368_1_idsa-consumer-interest-regulatory-body

SEBI seeks McKinsey's help for restructuring

The stock market regulator, Securities and Exchange Board of India, has chosen McKinsey to help it 'restructure' itself. McKinsey will make recommendations on four internal and two external areas, confirmed sources. The consultant has the mandate to study and make recommendations on four internal areas — organisational structure, HR, reprioritise areas of focus and technology.

The two external areas are sharing of regulation and oversight with self-regulatory organisations and co-operation with external agencies. SEBI had called for bids to appoint a business and strategic management consultant in mid-January. Market men said regulator should not have included areas of focus, interface with self regulatory organisations and cooperation with external agencies in its brief.

The Hindu Business Line - 30.04.2012

http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/markets/article3371196.ece?ref=wl_companies

MakeMyTrip in talks with D Pauls Travel & Tours for an equity stake

Nasdaq-listed travel services provider MakeMyTrip's penchant for acquisitions is only growing keener. The travel company is believed to be in talks for an equity stake in a

industry during the peak domestic tourism season is mainly owing to the hike in the Union government's service tax from 10 to 12 per cent. As a result of the hike, which came into effect on April 1, holiday packages have become out of tourists' reach.

The Hindu - 03.05.2012

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/states/kerala/article3377690.ece>

Demand growth compromised by high oil prices: IATA

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) announced global traffic results for March showing that total passenger demand rose 7.6% and freight demand climbed 0.3% compared to the same month last year.

Comparisons with March last year are affected by events that depressed passenger demand in 2011, including the Arab Spring, which disrupted travel in the Middle East and North Africa beginning in February 2011 and the earthquake and tsunami in Japan in March 2011 that impacted air travel across the Asia-Pacific region. IATA estimates that the year-on-year rise in air travel in March was about two percentage points higher than it would otherwise have been in the absence of these events. Cargo demand, meanwhile, was affected by the timing of the Chinese New Year, which occurred in January this year - leading to stronger February shipments - but took place in February 2011 - leading to stronger March 2011 shipments and weaker y-o-y comparisons.

My Iris - 02.05.2012

<http://www.myiris.com/newsCentre/storyShow.php?fileR=20120502170346200&dir=2012/05/02>

Tea prices to go up by Rs 12-14 per kg'

Retail equity research firm of ICICI has predicated increase in the tea prices by at least Rs 12-14 per kg during 2012. According to the research, the Indian tea industry is witnessing a continuous rise in the realization of tea prices owing to growing consumption demand and a shortfall in production. Simultaneously, a significant dip in global production, especially Kenya, the Indian Tea companies fetched attractive prices from exports.

The Economic Times - 02.05.2012

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/news-by-industry/cons-products/food/tea-prices-to-go-up-by-rs-12-14-per-kg/articleshow/12966329.cms>

Tea Research Association (TRA) sets up Tlabs, a network of TRA laboratories

Tea Research Association (TRA) has set up Tlabs -

Delhi-based travel company D Pauls Travel & Tours, say industry executives. The bid, if successful, will help MakeMyTrip expand its portfolio of offline travel products and services, as it fends off increasing competition in the airline-ticketing space where carriers now offer cheaper fares on their own portals.

The Economic Times - 04.05.2012

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/news-by-industry/services/travel/makemytrip-in-talks-with-d-pauls-travel-tours-for-an-equity-stake/articleshow/12989055.cms>

Travel courses from Thomas Cook

Thomas Cook Centre of Learning has taken a step towards bringing in professionals to manage this growing trend by offering a Travel Professional Programme. Centre of Learning, is an initiative from Thomas Cook (India) to develop talent for the industry.

"We offer a wide range of programmes from basic to advanced levels for travel aspirants, students and working executives, ranging from four months to two years in duration," says Smeeta Gulvady, Vice President and Head - Thomas Cook Centre of Learning.

My India My Way, a four-month undergraduate programme offers students an opportunity to master one's knowledge on Indian tourist destinations. They can learn how to market various cities, build operational and selling skills.

Deccan Herald - 03.05.2012

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/246450/travel-courses-thomas-cook.html>

Weak Europe demand hits Darjeeling tea

The Euro zone crisis has affected the export of premium first flush Darjeeling tea. Muted demand from overseas markets coupled with a drop in production of almost 40% in first flush teas due to a drought-like situation at the start of the season is likely to affect the revenues of Darjeeling tea companies in the first half of this fiscal year.

The Economic Times - 07.05.2012

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/markets/commodities/weak-europe-demand-hits-darjeeling-tea/articleshow/13027160.cms>

TNT Express wins award for "Best Service Logistics Provider"

TNT Express, one of the world's largest express

a network of TRA laboratories - at Tocklai and Kolkata. These laboratories will assist the Indian tea industry in conforming to the required quality norms and produce clean teas. The Tlabs at Kolkata is one of the most modern labs in India with equipment which are at par that is available in the Europe and US.

The Economic Times - 03.05.2012

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-05-03/news/31558870_1_tea-industry-tea-research-association-tea-board

TCS becomes country's second most valued company

For the second time within a week, Tata Group software services company TCS became the country's second most-valued firm with a market capitalisation of Rs 2.43 lakh crore, surpassing oil and gas major ONGC. At the end of today's trade, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) commanded a market value of Rs 2.43 lakh crore -- the second highest for any listed company in India. This is nearly Rs 13,000 crore more than state-run ONGC's market value of around Rs 2.30 lakh crore.

Economic Times - 30.04.2012

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-04-30/news/31508183_1_etf-exchange-traded-fund-disinvestment

delivery companies, was selected by customers as the winner for the 'Best Service Logistics Provider' of the year at the LogisticsWeek Awards 2012. The award under the 'Users choice' category recognizes TNT for Excellence in operational performance, customer delight and change readiness among other parameters.

India PR Wire - 02.05.2012

<http://www.indiaprwire.com/pressrelease/other/20120502118779.htm>

Srivastava takes charge as Oil India CMD

Mr Sunil Kumar Srivastava took charge as CMD of Oil India Ltd where he has spent three decades of his over 35 years in the upstream sector. As CMD, Mr Srivastava will have a tenure of over three years till June 2015. Before this, Mr Srivastava was the Director-General in the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH).

The Hindu Business Line - 01.05.2012

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/article3373660.ece>