

(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.)

Business Briefs

Balmer Lawrie

Calcutta, Jan. 9: Balmer Lawrie, which had recently entered construction chemical business in collaboration with MUHU Construction Chemicals, is now expanding its range of products. It will launch the CON FLO UNF-5 for site mixed concrete applications in 20 kg-retail pack size.

The Telegraph – 09.01.2012

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1120110/jsp/business/story_14985286.jsp

Balmer Lawrie Launches Construction Chemicals in retail

Balmer Lawrie & Co. Ltd., a Mini- Ratna public sector enterprise under the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, has launched Sulphonated Napthalene Formaldehyde (SNF) based Superplasticiser , CON FLO UNF-5, for the site mixed concrete applications, in retail pack size of 20kg.

According to Mr K Gopinathan, Executive Director, ``this small pack will be within the reach of small builders to enable them to use superplasticisers in their construction activities”.

Balmer Lawrie has a strong presence in the Performance Chemicals business and in the year 2010, the Company entered the field of Construction Chemicals in technical collaboration with MUHU Construction Chemicals Co. Ltd., Beijing, China. The products are manufactured at its dedicated manufacturing facility at Manali, Chennai. An exclusive concrete testing facility has been established at Perungudi, Chennai for performance testing of the products, says a company press release.

Balmer Lawrie has developed and launched a number of products for site mixed concrete application. An unique Superplasticiser for High strength low water cement ratio based on Polycarboxylate ether, developed by Balmer Lawrie R&D, is ready for launch. In addition, products have been formulated and offered for concrete batching plants and ready mix concrete units, the release adds.

Sulekha.com – 10.01.2012

http://smehorizon.sulekha.com/balmer-lawrie-launches-construction-chemicals-in-retail_construction-viewsitem_6613

Portal launched to facilitate easy travel of defence personnel

Aiming to facilitate smooth ticketing service for defence personnel posted in remote places, Army today launched a web portal for booking their travel tickets online and through telephone. Launching the service, Army Chief General V K Singh said the web portal will make the task of booking e-tickets better for soldiers posted in faraway places.

The portal has been launched by Balmer and Lawrie (a government of India enterprise) - authorised travel agent for the defence personnel.

It provides various facilities such as a round-the-clock call centre and a toll free number for inquiries. It also facilitates booking for personnel availing LTC to any part of the country. The call centre would be upgraded to Interactive Voice

Deficit, disinvestment and PSUs: Enough of smoke & mirror

After months, if not years, of inaction, there is a buzz around disinvestment again. Not directly - that would be too much to expect from a government that has shied away from any kind of reform - but tangentially. So, like 'disinvestment', that uniquely Indian euphemism for 'privatisation' - the term used to describe the sale of government's stake in PSUs elsewhere in the world - the government is resorting to various ruses to sell its stake in PSUs instead of selling shares directly on the market.

The recent decision by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) to create a new institutional placement programme (IPP) that allows promoters to either issue fresh shares or sell existing shares directly to qualified

Recording (IVR) facility from February which will enable defence commuters to book tickets even on phone, CMD of Balmer and Lawrie Viren Sinha said. The website, which presently caters to Air India, will be upgraded to cater to all airlines in next two months, he added.

The Economic Times - 11.01.2012

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-01-11/news/30616136_1_defence-personnel-web-portal-booking

Targeting disinvestment, govt to incentivise PSU listings

Running short of disinvestment target in the current fiscal, the government will incentivise the unlisted PSUs to come up with initial share offerings in the stock market in 2012-13, sources said. "The Department of Public Enterprises will encourage listing by PSUs," an official told PTI.

At present, there are about 50 PSUs which are listed and their shares are actively traded in the stock market. However, about an equal number of the government-owned firms are eligible but unlisted for various reasons. The government has already decided that unlisted PSUs with no accumulated losses and having earned net profit in three preceding years should come out with Initial Public Offerings (IPOs) even as the state holding would not come below 51 per cent.

One of the options to incentivise the PSUs for IPOs is to put this task in the memorandum of understanding (MoU) which an individual enterprise signs with its administrative ministry. Under the MoU system, annual targets are set for the PSUs and CEOs get personal appraisal points if the tasks are achieved.

The Economic Times - 09.01.2012

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/targeting-disinvestment-govt-to-incentivise-psu-listings/articleshow/11425928.cms>

Hint of bubble in the big rally of PSU shares

Select stocks surge up to 50%, trading volumes rise manifold
When the chips are down, any move in the reverse direction is bound to draw extra attention. But if such a move is too much too fast, one has to turn cagey.

A similar situation has arisen in some of the PSU stocks, which have surged as much as 50 per cent in a matter of just 10 days after the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) announced new facilities for easier stake dilution through auction of shares or a scheme called institutional

institutional buyers (QIBs) such as banks, insurance companies and mutual funds is one such ruse. Permitting PSUs to buy back their shares is another. Creating a holding company, funded by public sector banks, to transfer underlying assets of the state-owned Special Undertaking of the UTI (SUUTI) is a third.

The Economic Times - 16.01.2012

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/opinion/columnists/mythili-bhusnurmath/deficit-disinvestment-and-psus-enough-of-smoke-mirror/articleshow/11505875.cms>

PSUs asked to invest Rs 1.76 lakh crore for stimulus

Against the backdrop of economic slowdown, the Prime Minister's office has directed cash-rich public sector undertakings to go for investments to the tune of over Rs 1.76 lakh crore, including Rs 1.41 lakh crore domestically to act as a stimulus in the next fiscal.

At a meeting chaired by the Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Pulok Chatterjee, 17 companies with cash and bank balance in excess of Rs 1000 crore were identified to undertake these investments primarily in the infrastructure sector whose status will be monitored periodically. As per the decision, the PSUs will invest Rs 1,41,389 crore domestically in the year 2012-13 and Rs 35,009 crore overseas, sources said here today.

The Principal Secretary observed that the PSU investment can provide stimulus to the economy and asked the companies to draw up credible investment programmes and implement those with "vigour so as to achieve maximum benefit for the companies themselves as well as the national economy."

The Economic Times 11.01.2012

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-01-11/news/30616259_1_psu-investment-investment-plans-infrastructure-sector

Govt's method to fight eco slowdown? Get PSUs to spend more

The government is pulling out all the stops to fight the economic slowdown. Sources say the government is working on a multi-pronged strategy, which may include higher expenditure from PSUs, reports CNBC-TV18's economic policy editor Siddharth Zarabi.

The new strategy in the new year is to try and combat a slowdown with government managers at the very top. Including the Prime Minister's office feels it will actually increase as we go along in the next few quarters. Several steps that are being considered are not exactly a

placement programme (IPP). These special windows have been created to allow promoters to offload their additional stakes quickly in order to meet the minimum public holding requirement.

Financial Chronicle - 15.01.2012

<http://www.mydigitalfc.com/stock-market/hint-bubble-big-rally-psu-shares-163>

Excessive regulation in PSUs leading to 'fear psychosis' & indecision

Serving officials have whispered it in recent months and former officials, perhaps openly and loudly. And now their collective angst has found support from an unlikely quarter.

A top government-appointed panel has said a cocktail of stringent vigilance norms, excessive regulation and accountability measures has created a 'fear psychosis' in state-run companies, cramping the effectiveness of their managements. The panel, headed by former SAIL chairman SK Roongta, has said in a report to the Planning Commission that a growing culture of indecision and risk-aversion has crept into state-run companies because of an environment of suspicion and easy presumption of guilt.

Noting that public sector companies were victims of "over-governance", it has suggested that these firms be spared of the oversight of central government-appointed chief vigilance officers and also sought a gradual disentangling of these firms from the government's bureaucratic system.

The Economic Times - 14.01.2012

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/news-by-company/corporate-trends/excessive-regulation-in-psus-leading-to-fear-psychosis-indecision/articleshow/11481102.cms>

Several faltering PSUs may lose Miniratna status

Several PSUs like BSNL, HMT, Hindustan Paper and Hindustan Newsprint may lose Miniratna status, as they have slipped on performance parameters set to retain the coveted position linked with their autonomy. Taking a stringent view, the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) has directed all the administrative ministries to "re-examine status of existing Miniratna public sector units [PSUs] under their control with respect to the laid-down criteria".

A Miniratna PSU should have made profit for three successive years and a positive net worth, as per the DPE norms. A comprehensive report has been sought before Monday, from the ministries and departments which have administrative control over the PSUs. While there are 67 Miniratnas,

stimulus of any sort because the ability of the center to provide a stimulus of the kinds that were provided in 2008-09 is very limited this time around because of the fiscal constraints.

Money Control - 11.01.2012

http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/cnbc-tv18-comments/govts-method-to-fight-eco-slowdown-get-psus-to-spend-more_649166.html

Govt to PSUs: Invest as claimed or face music

Upset by public sector undertakings backing out of the Government-mooted share buy-back plan on the grounds that their cash reserves would be needed for investments, the Centre has decided to hold them strictly to account on that front. PSUs will now have to ensure that investments promised in order to avoid share buy-back or cross-holding buying are actually carried out to plan.

Now, failure to implement planned investments on schedule will not only affect the unit's ratings, but also the prospects of the chairman concerned, PSUs have been warned. PSUs not playing ball had put a spanner in the Government's plans to bridge its fiscal deficit. The Prime Minister's Office read out the riot act to major Central PSUs when it reviewed their investment plans on January 3, highly placed sources said. The meeting was chaired by Mr Pulok Chatterjee, Principal Secretary, PMO, and was attended by 17 major PSUs such as ONGC, NTPC, SAIL, Coal India beside others.

The Hindu Business Line - 13.01.2012

http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/article2799098.ece?homepage=true&ref=wl_home

Infrastructure industry optimistic about growth outlook

After suffering a major setback last year due to policy delays, the infrastructure industry is expecting a marginal improvement in the situation this year, even as it continues to be sceptical about the outlook of the power sector. The slow growth in the infrastructure sector was primarily driven by a range of sector-specific issues, such as land acquisition, environmental clearances, high interest rate regime and macro-economic factors, say industry experts.

While the performance of the roads sector was quite satisfactory, others including, ports, airports, railways and water saw a marginal improvement, they point out.

several of them including BSNL, Hindustan Paper Corporation and Hindustan Newsprint have run into financial difficulties and are incurring losses. They may lose the status which gives them autonomy to invest up to Rs 500 crore without seeking government approval.

Business Standard -13.01.2012

<http://business-standard.com/india/news/several-faltering-psus-may-lose-miniratna-status/155245/on>

India signs MoU to boost tourism

MoU between India and ASEAN would serve as the key instrument for more action-oriented cooperation, encouraging both parties to cooperate in facilitating travel and tourist visit and further strengthening the close tourism partnership. Union Tourism Minister Subodh Kant Sahai said this after the signing of MoU at Manado, Indonesia on Thursday.

The Tourism Minister expressed his happiness towards the progress made in the implementation of the work plan for the development of ASEAN-India cooperation in Buddhist pilgrimage tourism including the production and promotion of materials and documentary films on Buddhist pilgrimage in ASEAN-India. He said Government of India is looking forward for more joint-tourism promotion and product activities in future.

The Pioneer - 14.01.2012

<http://www.dailypioneer.com/nation/35072-india-signs-mou-to-boost-tourism-.html>

After ICTT, Container Freight Station is Next

The Union government has approved the Cochin Port Trust's proposal to develop a Container Freight Station (CFS) at Vallarpadam near the International Container Transshipment Terminal (ICTT). The CFS, which will be the first of its kind in the vicinity of the ICTT, will be developed by Gateway Distriparks (Kerala) (GDKL), the joint venture company floated by Gateway Distriparks and Chakiat Group, which won a tender invited by the Port Trust to develop the CFS.

IBN Live -16.01.2012

<http://ibnlive.in.com/news/after-ictt-container-freight-station-is-next/221158-60-122.html>

The power sector continues to be hit the most due to several factors, including unavailability of funds, issues on coal linkages, high international fuel cost and uncertainty in government's policy about transfer of high tariff cost.

Express India - 09.01.2012

<http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/Infrastructure-industry-optimistic-about-growth-outlook/897629/>

India to sign MoU with Saudi Arabia to boost tourism

The Indian administration is working on a proposal to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Saudi Arabia to boost cooperation in the tourism sector. This information was revealed by Hamid Ali Rao, Indian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia at a tourism road show in Riyadh recently. It was also revealed that New Delhi will consider setting up a tourism representative office in Saudi Arabia at a later stage. Saudi Arabia is a key Arab nation for the Indian tourism market with 23,000 Saudi tourists visiting India last year. "An increase of 43 per cent in the number of Saudi tourists to India was reported last year compared to the year before," Rao said.

Travel Biz Monitor -16.01.2012

<http://www.travelbizmonitor.com/india-to-sign-mou-with-saudi-arabia-to-boost-tourism-15408>

GI tag to boost Darjeeling tea exports

Darjeeling tea exports are set to increase by volume and value, following its registration as a protected geographical indication (PGI) product from India. S. S. Bagaria, Chairman of Darjeeling Tea Association (DTA) told The Hindu that the industry closed 2011 by registering a 10 per cent increase in total Darjeeling tea exports. "In value terms, the rise has been 20 per cent. This will rise further following the GI registration," he said. Exports of Darjeeling tea stood at around 6.9 million kg in 2011, when production was around 9.2 million kg.

The Hindu - 16.01.2012

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/article2803987.ece>