

(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.)

Reforms don't mean subsidy cuts alone: Oil minister

Petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan has steered two crucial reforms in the energy sector. In an interview to TOI, he promises more steps in the coming months but makes it clear that the government's focus is on the common citizen.

Excerpts:

What's next on oil ministry's agenda?

The reform momentum needs to be continued. One issue is sharing - whether it will be revenue sharing or production sharing. But there is a third model, which is based on a synergy between the two. There are other issues such as unified licensing, NELP (New Exploration Licensing Policy) and the Oil and Gas Sector Safety Bill. The government's priority is to focus on gas as a major source of fuel. So far, the gas grid was 15,000 km. In the Budget, the government has announced it will add 15,000 km over the next five years. Piped natural gas and CNG will be put on mission mode. The government is actively looking at gas pooling.

What is your plan for subsidized gas cylinders?

We are not going to increase the burden. Instead, we will focus on direct subsidy transfer to consumers, which will help check pilferage. Currently, subsidized 5kg cylinders are not so popular. That's an area we want to focus on. The poor don't have the purchasing power to buy 14kg cylinders that cost Rs 417 in Delhi. Their requirement is lower. If shampoo can be sold in sachets and push up volumes, why can't we give the choice to the consumer?

The Times of India - 08.11.2014

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/Reforms-dont-mean-subsidy-cuts-alone-Oil-minister/articleshow/45075721.cms>

Centre may open up Govt jobs to private sector technocrats

In a step to rope in professional experts from the private sector, the Centre has asked all ministries to carry out an exercise for identifying posts that require people with specialised or technical knowledge. Keeping in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promise to the electorate, the government may also amend the recruitment rules in government services for accommodating

Corporates to pump in Rs 14,000 crore towards CSR in 2014-15: FM Arun Jaitley

Indian companies will spend close to Rs 14,000 crore on corporate social responsibility activity (CSR) in FY 15 and the amount will increase in the years ahead, finance minister Arun Jaitley said on Tuesday. Under the new Companies Act, companies with a net worth of more than Rs 500 crore or revenue of over Rs 1,000 crore or a net profit of more than Rs 5 crore need to spend at least 2% of the average net profit of the preceding three years on CSR activities.

CSR alone in its very first year is going to contribute about Rs 14,000 crore into the (social) sector and that's reasonably a large amount of money. This is going to increase year after year as corporate profits increase," he said while speaking at a function organised jointly by the Jubilant Bhartia and Schwab foundations. Jaitley also holds the charge of corporate affairs ministry that is responsible for CSR law. The UPA government had prescribed certain activities eligible for such spending. The new government has added contributions to Swachh Bharat Fund and Clean Ganga Fund as eligible spend under this law.

However, Jaitley said corporates have been a late entrant to the idea of charitable causes. "The best in the Indian society is yet to be realised...They (corporates) are essentially obsessed with their cause, they are convinced about their cause," he added.

Economic Times - 05.11.2014

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/corporates-to-pump-in-rs-14000-crore-towards-csr-in-2014-15-fm-arun-jaitley/articleshow/45038276.cms>

Loss-making PSUs may be privatized: Finance Minister

Finance minister Arun Jaitley told investors on Wednesday the government was open to the idea of privatizing loss making state-run companies and promised to pursue economic reforms and ensure a corruption free and fair business environment. Jaitley also said the government was hopeful that long pending Insurance Bill would be approved by Parliament

such experts on contractual basis with salaries matching that in the private sector, official sources said. According to sources, the aim of such a move is to ensure entry of best talents into higher government posts and to bring in a higher sense of participation among the citizens who would have an opportunity to contribute in the higher echelons of the government provided they possess the right qualifications and experience required for a job. This option is also available for government employees, and, in case, a government employee opts for an appointment on salary equivalent to that of private sector, he or she will have to resign or seek premature retirement before applying for the post.

'Candidates selected from outside the government will invariably be appointed on contract for a fixed tenure and their remuneration will be for a fixed term that could, however, be renegotiated once the term expires at the option of the employing agency,' according to a concept note prepared by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).

Millennium Post - 05.11.2014

<http://www.millenniumpost.in/NewsContent.aspx?NID=74541>

ETF fund manager: seven bids received

As the government seeks to raise Rs.15,000 crore through the sale of residual stakes in ITC, Larsen and Toubro (L&T) and Axis Bank, it has received seven bids from fund houses for managing an exchange traded fund (ETF) created for this purpose. The Union government holds these shares through the Specified Undertaking of UTI (SUUTI). While ICICI Securities has been appointed as advisor for selection of a fund house for managing an ETF for monetising these SUUTI shares, people familiar with the matter said that at least seven bids have been received for the mandate.

The bidders include SBI Mutual Fund, UTI MF, Reliance Asset Management Management, ICICI Prudential MF, Kotak MF, Birla Sun Life MF, and a consortium of Edelweiss and Sundaram Mutual Funds. The government had sold a 9% stake in Axis Bank held through SUUTI in March this year through the bulk deal on the stock exchanges.

Live Mint - 04.11.2014

<http://www.livemint.com/Money/LYee5RhyajlsOc7RcuqR8N/ETF-fund-manager-seven-bids-received.html>

House panel fiat to PSEs on RTI queries

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice, has urged some of the Kolkata-based public sector

in the Winter Session and the government is examining changes to the stringent Land Acquisition law. "There are still a large number of companies which are almost on the verge of closure where people are going to lose employment," Jaitley told the World Economic Forum's India Economic Summit. "Given a choice between them continuing in the present state and getting them privatized, the second would be a preferable option. Currently, they are being sustained merely on a government support. That is not a long-term solution. Taxpayers cannot pay for loss-making businesses."

On July 22, Jaitley had told Parliament that the government plans to shut down four public sector companies and was trying to revive seven ailing companies through disinvestment and joint venture route. Since then, heavy industry minister Anant Geete has announced plans to shut down six state-run firms.

Times of India - 06.11.2014

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/Loss-making-PSUs-may-be-privatized-Finance-minister/articleshow/45052015.cms?>

SCOPE launches Economic Forum to suggest reforms

Public sector body SCOPE has launched an Economic Forum to recommend innovative policy reforms to the government and take up issues pertaining to various sectors, with primary focus on PSUs. The SCOPE Economic Forum (SEF) also proposes to hold the Indian Economic Summit annually in line with World Economic Summit. The first such Economic Summit will be held in 2016.

The SEF shall approach the Secretariat of World Economic Forum (Davos) to have seamless interaction on economic issues with the Forum. In due course of time, the SEF will move towards affiliation with the World Economic Forum (WEF). The Forum will take up economic issues pertaining to various sectors like energy, oil & gas, steel, manufacturing, logistic & infrastructure services, world trade, construction, technology and community relations etc.

The Economic Times - 03.11.2014

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/company/corporate-trends/scope-launches-economic-forum-to-suggest-reforms/articleshow/45024498.cms>

Jet fuel prices down 7.3% but still no change in air fares

Oil market companies (OMCs) have announced

enterprises to be more responsive to RTI queries. According to EM Sudarsana Nachiappan, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee, the members met the Chairmen of various PSUs and government entities such as Coal India Ltd (CIL), National Insurance Company Ltd, Kolkata Port Trust and Allahabad Bank, among others. "We have urged these various PSU and public enterprises to respond to RTI applications. The organisations have also been suggested to put up more information on their websites so as to reduce the quantum of queries and applications," he told reporters during a press conference on Thursday.

The Hindu Business Line - 06.11.2014

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/state/house-panel-fiat-to-pses-on-rti-queries/article6571047.ece>

Domestic air traffic rises over 26.3 per cent in Sept

India's domestic air traffic grew at a record pace of over 26 per cent in September compared to the same month last year with low air fares stimulating the travel demand, IATA said on Tuesday. India's domestic air traffic grew at a record pace of over 26 per cent in September compared to the same month last year with low air fares stimulating the travel demand, IATA said on Tuesday. Indian traffic "spiked 26.3 per cent in September compared to a year ago", showed the latest data released by International Air Transport Association (IATA).

It attributed this growth, which was several times that of 7.6 per cent recorded in August, to market stimulation measures by the Indian carriers which continued to offer low fares on the domestic sectors. "Whereas previous improvements in growth rates potentially were attributable to revived confidence over the new business-supportive government, the strong increase in September was owing to market stimulation measures introduced by carriers," IATA said as it released the September air traffic figures. On international air travel, the IATA figures showed Asia Pacific airlines reported a demand growth of 4.8 per cent compared to a year ago.

Business Today - 04.11.2014

<http://businesstoday.intoday.in/story/domestic-air-traffic-iata-tony-tyler/1/211998.html>

Indians suffering from vacation deprivation, survey claims

Indians are the fourth most vacation deprived nation globally with 67% polled saying that they took only 15 days of leave in a year. Mumbai took the least vacations while Delhiites took the maximum holidays in a 5 city survey by Expedia.

a 7.3% reduction in aviation turbine fuel (ATF) or jet fuel, in the fourth straight cut since August. However, airline companies are unlikely to pass on the benefits to the consumers as the industry continues to bleed on higher operational costs. ATF in Delhi was cut by Rs 4,987.7 per kilo litre, or 7.3%, to Rs 62,537.93 per kl on Saturday. In Mumbai, it now costs Rs 64,414.98 per kl against Rs 69,610.5 per kl earlier. OMCs revise jet fuel prices on the first of every month, based on global prices the previous month. Rates vary from state to state because of differences in sales tax or VAT.

DNA - 02.11.2014

<http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-jet-fuel-prices-down-73-but-still-no-change-in-air-fares-2031351>

International tourist arrivals globally grow 5% during Jan-Aug 2014: UNWTO

International tourist arrivals worldwide grew by five per cent during the first eight months of 2014 according to the latest UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization) World Tourism Barometer. Despite geopolitical challenges and a lingering economic recovery, tourism demand was strong during June to August period, stated a release. For 2014, international tourist arrivals are expected to increase by 4 per cent to 4.5 per cent, slightly above UNWTO's long-term forecast of 3.8 per cent per year for the period 2010 to 2020.

"International tourism continues to grow above expectations despite rising global challenges", said Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General, UNWTO. "Yet, increasing geopolitical uncertainties and the fact that the global economy shows signs of weaker and uneven growth require our attention", he added. International tourists (overnight visitors) travelling the world between January and August 2014 reached 781 million, 36 million more than in the same period of 2013. With a five per cent increase, international tourism continued to grow well above the long-term trend projected by UNWTO for the period 2010-2020 (3.8%).

Travel Biz Monitor - 05.11.2014

<http://www.travelbizmonitor.com/international-tourist-arrivals-globally-grow-5-during-janaug-2014-unwto-25708>

Privatisation of Kolkata, Chennai airports unlikely

According to a Business Standard report, the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) is unlikely to award management contracts for the airports at Kolkata and Chennai to private operators. "The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has

About 40% of Indians cannot plan vacations in advance due to work. Indians rank fourth globally after Thailand (43%), Singapore & South Korea (42%) in vacation-deprivation. Indians also ranked second globally in cancelling holiday plans due to work (74%) after Thailand (77%). Globally, 15% feel guilty about taking their vacation days. Indians rank 4 at 20% while Japanese top the list at 26%. Within India, Mumbai residents took the least number of vacations with 97% saying they felt deprived of time off from work followed by Pune (88%), Bangalore (86%), Hyderabad (85%) and Delhi (83%). The survey interviewed 7855 people over 18 years of age. Indians receive an average of 19.6 vacation days from their employer each year. They take an average of 15.5 vacation days, with over half (52%) reporting taking fewer days than they receive.

Times of India - 07.11.2014

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Indians-suffering-from-vacation-deprivation-survey-claims/articleshow/45064220.cms>

Foreign earnings from tourism up 14% in Oct'14

Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) during the month of October 2014 increased by 13.9% to Rs 98.47 billion as compared to Rs 86.45 billion in October 2013 and Rs 81.54 billion in October 2012. Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) during the Month of October 2014 was 6.56 lakh as compared to FTAs of 5.98 lakh during the month of October 2013 and 5.56 lakh in October 2012 showing a growth of 9.70%. There has been a growth of 9.6% in October 2014 over October 2013 as compared to a growth of 7.5% registered in October 2013 over October 2012. FTAs during the period January-October 2014 were 58.35 lakh with a growth of 7.8%, as compared to the FTAs of 54.12 lakh with a growth of 5.6% during January-October 2013 over the corresponding period of 2012.

Myiris - 07.11.2014

<http://www.myiris.com/news/Live-News/Foreign-earnings-from-tourism-up-14-in-Oct14/20141107183646199>

Cargo growth continues to accelerate in September: IATA

IATA released data for global air freight markets showing an acceleration of demand in September. Measured by freight tonne kilometers (FTKs), volumes rose 5.2% compared to September last year, which is 0.8 percentage points ahead of the 4.4% average growth in demand reported for the year-to-date. Capacity grew by 3.8%. Although the overall growth rate continues the positive trend of recent months, regional variations are significant. Airlines in Asia-Pacific, North America, Middle East and Africa all posted strong growth

invested a lot of money in upgrading the airports at Kolkata and Chennai. We are evaluating whether it would be appropriate to manage these airports through public-private partnership or some other model," a senior MoCA official said. A decision is likely to be taken soon. Costs of upgrading the airports at Kolkata and Chennai were Rs 2,325 crore and Rs 2,015 crore, respectively. But there have been complaints about the quality of work and management of operations at both airports. The Kolkata airport can now handle 25 million passengers a year, a leap from the earlier capacity of 4.8 million. Apart from the 195,000-sq metre, five-level passenger terminal building, the airport has modern taxiways and an extended runway to handle bigger jets like the Airbus A-380.

Travel Biz Monitor - 07.11.2014

<http://www.travelbizmonitor.com/privatisation-of-kolkata-chennai-airports-unlikely-25739>

Book online ticket on IRCTC and win laptops, smartphones

Indian Railways seems to have taken a leaf out of the offers of domestic airline companies who have long been wooing customers with promotional and discounted airfare schemes. Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has introduced a lucky draw for new users who register and book at least one ticket during the week from mid night of Monday to next Sunday midnight on its e-ticketing website. Based on the booking, four lucky users will be selected through a random process by computerized draw, every Monday. In case Monday happens to be a holiday, the draw will be held on next working day. List of such lucky draw winners will displayed on IRCTC website.

Zeebiz - 03.11.2014

http://zeenews.india.com/business/news/companies/book-online-ticket-on-irctc-and-win-laptops-smartphones_111182.html

Government to put in place system to track movement of containers

The government would soon put in place a system to track the movement of containers real time with a view to remove logistical bottlenecks and ensure timely delivery of consignments. The project - Logistics Data Bank (LDB) - is being developed under the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC), which is at an advance stage of implementation. Different departments and ministries including the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) and the Shipping Ministry are

figures (between 5% and 17% above previous year levels). European airlines, however, saw a decline of 1.6% compared to September 2013 and Latin American airlines reported little difference from 2013 with just 0.3% growth.

"There were mixed messages in September's freight performance. The solid 5.7% growth for Asia Pacific airlines is a particularly positive sign given their 40% market share. But the 1.6% decline in demand for European airlines is a worrying trend that reflects the general uncertainty in the European economy amplified by sanctions resulting from the Ukraine-Russia conflict. Overall, improvements in global business confidence have stagnated-which could mean a bumpy road ahead for air cargo," said Tony Tyler, IATA's Director General and CEO.

Myiris - 03.11.2014

<http://myiris.com/newsCentre/storyShow/20141103155000199/sector/Sector%20Stories/2014/11/03.html>

Integrated Logistics Ministry essential to develop infrastructure: industry body

A separate Ministry for logistics integrating ports, railways, roads, airways and inland waterways will help in developing transport and shipping sector to contribute at least 2 per cent to the country's GDP, the Madras Chamber of Commerce and Industry said in a presentation to Union Minister of Roadways, Highways and Shipping Nitin Gadkari on Monday. J Krishnan, chairman of the logistics committee of the chamber, said in the presentation that infrastructure has to underpin the 'Make in India' programme launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently.

Inter-ministerial rivalries and trust deficit between the Centre and States due to different political affiliations has remained a major roadblock for commissioning and completing major infrastructure projects. To create a world class infrastructure, a holistic approach needs to be adopted.

Hindu Business Line - 04.11.2014

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/logistics/integrated-logistics-ministry-essential-to-develop-infrastructure-industry-body/article6564426.ece>

Cargo traffic up 4.6 % in major ports

Barring New Mangalore Port Trust and Haldia Dock Complex, all the major seaports in the country registered a positive growth in traffic volume from April to October 2014. The country as a whole recorded a 24 per cent dip in iron ore volume and 2.77 per cent in coking coal. There was no change in petroleum, oil and lubricant traffic at 109.85 million tonnes (MT). Major gainers were raw

in the process of finalising the project, conceptualised by Japan-based NEC Corporation.

"It will provide near to real time tracking of containers across the complete logistics value chain by way of integrating the software of different service providers and tracking of containers through installation of Radio-frequency identification (RFID) tags," a senior official said. Regulatory framework for charging mandatory user charges has been deliberated with the Shipping Ministry, the official said. The LDB would address the issue of tracking and viewing the movement of containers across the ports to the Inland Container Depot (ICDs) and end users.

Jagran Post - 04.11.2014

<http://post.jagran.com/Government-to-put-in-place-system-to-track-movement-of-containers-1415099960>

Major ports told to accord priority to coastal cargo

The Ministry of Shipping has directed all the major ports in the country to give priority to coastal cargo — movement of cargo from one place to another place within India — so as to save fuel and lessen the burden on road and railway network. Major ports not only should earmark dedicated berth for coastal cargo vessels, but also accord priority berthing for such vessels, the Ministry said in its recent guidelines issued to 12 major ports in the country, including the New Mangalore Port Trust (NMPT), the lone major port in Karnataka.

The directive also goes in line with the NDA government's promise to encourage water transportation. The guidelines said major ports should accord priority berthing, at least on one berth, to dry bulk/general cargo coastal vessels to enable shippers to transport goods from one port in India to another, irrespective of the origin and final destination of the cargo.

The Hindu - 05.11.2014

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/major-ports-told-to-accord-priority-to-coastal-cargo/article6564562.ece>

As mineral imports surge, Railways pushes for 'congestion surcharge'

The Railways have proposed to levy a 'congestion surcharge' at all ports in the country due to a surge in imports of coal, fertilisers and iron ore, a move strongly opposed by industry who have said that it would lead to a rise in prices of electricity, steel

fertilizers and other cargoes. Compared with the previous year's volume, 12 major ports handled 336.04 MT of cargoes against 321.13 MT in the previous year, marking an increase of 4.64 per cent.

The Hindu - 06.11.2014

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/cargo-traffic-up-46-in-major-ports/article6571396.ece>

Diesel price cuts not easing freight rates

Despite reduction in diesel prices twice totaling Rs 5.62 per litre in a span of 15 days, the truck rental/freight on trunk routes have not moderated. Contrary to the estimates of expected 3%-4% reduction in truck rentals because of cut in diesel price, the freight charges on 11 trunk routes including Delhi-Mumbai, Delhi-Nagpur and Delhi-Chennai have remained unchanged between October 1 and November 1, according to a report prepared by Indian Foundation of Transport Research and Training (IFTRT).

However, in case of contractual transport business, which constitutes about 25% of freight transport, the firms have reduced charges reflecting the cut in diesel price, says the report. The think tank on transport issues said this has happened because all such contracts have escalation and de-escalation clause.

The Times of India - 04.11.2014

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Diesel-price-cuts-not-easing-freight-rates/articleshow/45030055.cms>

and farm output. The railway board has written to the finance and commerce ministries on October 21 proposing that in view of the serious congestion at the ports a surcharge at the rate of 10 per cent of the base rate would be imposed.

The Indian Express - 03.11.2014

<http://indianexpress.com/article/business/business-others/as-mineral-imports-surge-railways-pushes-for-congestion-surcharge/>

Now, NET score to serve as passport to jobs in PSUs

The National Eligibility Test (NET) conducted by the UGC for the award of research fellowships and also for the appointment of assistant professors in the institutions of higher education in the country will now also serve as a passport to lucrative jobs in the public sector undertakings (PSUs). The UGC has decided to grant permission to PSUs to use its NET result database for recruitment of master's degree holders as their officers. Patna University (PU) pro-vice-chancellor Ranjit Kumar Verma, who has been pursuing this matter with the UGC for the last one year, told TOI here on Friday that now PSUs can utilize UGC-NET score for recruitment of executives in their organizations in disciplines like science (R & D), management, corporate communications, human resources, finance, etc.

Economic Times - 08.11.2014

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/jobs/now-net-score-to-serve-as-passport-to-jobs-in-psus/articleshow/45078123.cms>