

RIL, Tatas most admired for CSR activities

Corporate behemoth Reliance Industries and two Tata Group firms — Tata Motors and Tata Steel — have emerged as the country's most admired companies for their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, says a survey. According to a survey by global consultancy firm Nielsen, RIL is on top followed by Tata Motors and Tata Steel as the most admired companies by stakeholders for their CSR initiatives.

The companies have been engaged in various CSR activities such as promotion of primary and higher education among adults and economically disadvantaged sections of society, improving health care infrastructure



and increasing environmental consciousness in the country. Interestingly, as much as 86 percent of stakeholders feel that countering terrorism should also be taken up by companies under their CSR activities apart from the regular activities in the fields of education, health, infrastructure from corporates.

“Public expectations of corporations

are on the increase as stakeholders see significant impact they are having in various spheres, be it education, health infrastructure, environment conservation,” Nielsen Company associate director, consumer research, Vatsala Pant said.

The survey titled “Nielsen India Corporate Image Monitor 2008” was conducted for 27 companies based on their market capitalisation, sales and assets.

The report said CSR is an effective way of “building goodwill” for a company. Over 50 percent of respondents felt that corporate are honest towards their CSR activities.

But the motive behind these activities is seen to be many, ranging from economic and tax benefits (47 percent),

to enhanced corporate reputation (45 percent) and to build competitive advantage (30 percent), it said.

The Nielsen said top three social issues that stakeholders expect corporates to tackle are better health infrastructure, fighting diseases like HIV/AIDS, Malaria, TB, Cancer and immunisation programs and primary, higher education and adult literacy.

“It is interesting to note that seven out of 10 members of general public are willing to pay a premium for products and services to enable a company fulfill its CSR commitments. Considering the impact of CSR activities on a firm's reputation, organisations will have to plot a developmental path for CSR integrating it with the rest of the business,” Pant said.

HCL Info nets £31.6 mn BSNL order

HCL Infosystems has bagged a £31.6 million system integration order from state-run Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL).

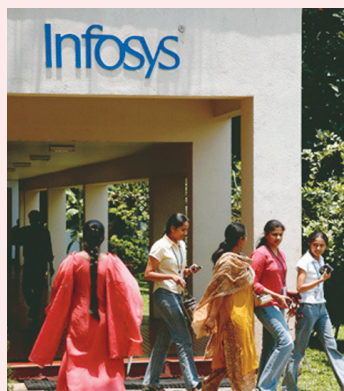
The seven-year contract entails a roll-out of over 60,000 Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) licences, including configuration, business process re-engineering, hardware, networking, operations and maintenance customisation, as well as training BSNL employees. The ERP system is aimed at enhancing the information flow for better decision-making, leading to overall improvement in the performance of the organisation, an HCL statement said.

“As a part of the business transformation programme, HCL will migrate BSNL's finance, commissioning and operations functions onto a single ERP system. The project rollout includes setting up of the main data centre at Hyderabad and disaster recovery data centre at Kolkata,” it said.

HCL expects the installation and commissioning at these centres to streamline business processes, provide a single view of the business, aiding compliance to storage, security, enterprise management, network management and access management systems of existing data centres.

In the past, HCL has carried out various projects for BSNL, including installing the National Internet Backbone, implementing the Call Detail Record-based customer care and convergent billing systems, and the more recent WiMax Rural project that involved setting up the infrastructure for providing Internet connectivity to rural community service centres through Wireless Access Network.

Bharti, Infy, TCS, Wipro amongst top tech list



Indian firms including telecom major, Bharti Airtel and technology firms Infosys, TCS and Wipro are amongst the list of 100 best performing technology companies in the world generated by American magazine, *BusinessWeek*.

The ‘Infotech 100’ list for 2009 — based on shareholder return, return on equity, total revenues, and revenue growth — ranks telecom giant Bharti Airtel at the sixth position. The three IT majors — Infosys, TCS and Wipro — feature in the top 50, with Infosys placed at No. 25, TCS at 30 and Wipro at 43.

The “2009 ranking of the tops in tech showcases companies that managed to thrive even in the face of a bruising global recession,” the magazine stated. Also, Bharti Airtel has beaten other major performers such as South African telecom entity, MTN Group (12), maker of Blackberry phones Research In Motion (14), technology giant Apple (19), software major Microsoft (22) and Google (37) in the list.

Further, American entities headed by India-origin CEOs also feature in the top 100. Francisco D'Souza-led Cognizant Technologies is ranked 51 while Adobe Systems with Shantanu Narayan as head stood at the 99th spot.

Indian e-learning outsourcing biz to touch \$603 mn

The e-learning outsourcing business in India is likely to grow at a rate of 15 percent annually for the next three years to touch \$603 million by the end of 2012, a study says.

According to a study by business intelligence and research provider ValueNotes, the e-learning outsourcing industry will suffer the impact of the global economic recession for the next 6-8 quarters but growth is likely to pick up after that. “While, the economic recession will impact the growth in the industry for the next 6-8 quarters, the market will recoup and grow much faster until 2012,” the study said.

Further, the market size of Indian e-learning outsourcing business will touch the \$603 million level by the end of calendar year 2012, it said. Last year, the revenues from the e-learning offshoring industry in the country stood at approximately \$341 million.

The study titled ‘e-learning Outsourcing 2009: Advantage India’ finds that the e-learning offshoring industry will grow at a compounded annual growth rate of 15 percent till 2012.

India Inc clocks PE deals worth \$494 mn in April

The month of April saw private equity deals worth \$493.94 million being announced taking the total number of such deal value during the first four months of this year to \$1.31 billion.

The total number of private equity deals (PE) announced during the month of April 2009 stood at \$493.94 million through 15 deals, global consultancy firm Grant Thornton said adding that the total number of PE deals during the first four months of this year stood at 56 deals with an announced value of \$1.31 billion.

“On the private equity front, we are

finally seeing some increase in the deal values compared to the first three months of the year, where deal values are close to half a billion dollars,” Grant Thornton partner, transaction support services, C. G. Srividya said.

However, the PE deal value so far this year represents a significant decline of over 72 percent from its year ago period. In the first four months of 2008, India Inc had announced private equity deals worth \$4.68 billion through 149 deals.

The total number of private equity deals announced during the calendar year 2008 stood at 312 with a total

announced value of \$10.59 billion. On a month-on-month basis the deal value is slowly narrowing the gap.

“The total number of private equity deals announced during the month of April 2009 stands at 15 deals with an announced value of \$493.94 million as against 32 deals amounting to \$562.85 million in the month of April 2008,” Grant Thornton said.

Some of the major private equity deals include Bennett Coleman and Co's \$44.44 million investment in Videocon Industries, and Navis Investment Partners' \$30 million infusion in Edutech India.

As per market experts the negative trend in the equity market had a negative impact on the private equity scenario. The Bombay Stock Exchange benchmark index Sensex has fallen 52.4 percent in 2008, its worst year ever, ending a five-year bull run that saw the market rise six-fold.

However, after the decisive win by the ruling government in the general election, the stock market witnessed an upsurge and is on a revival mode. Accordingly, experts believe this rebound in the capital market is likely to drive the private equity scene significantly as well.