

Govt open to selling more than 51% in PSUs

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THE government is open to selling more than 51 per cent in certain public sector entities as part of its 'strategic sale' through which it aims to collect Rs 28,500 crore next financial year, a top finance ministry official said.

"Strategic sale means

you are looking for a strategic partner, not selling to retail investor," finance secretary Rajiv Mehrishi said. Asked if strategic will only mean below 51 per cent, he said: "Not necessary."

For the whole of 2015-16, the government hopes to garner Rs 69,500 crore through stake sale in PSUs. Of this, Rs 41,000 crore is estimated to come from mi-

nority stake sale in PSUs and the remaining Rs 28,500 crore from strategic stake sale.

The government, which had set a target of Rs 58,425 crore for 2014-15, has now revised it to Rs 26,353 crore. In the current fiscal, the government has raised around Rs 24,257 crore through stake sales in Coal India and

Steel Authority of India (SAIL).

"We are not averse to the idea of strategic sale," Jaitley said in his budget speech, adding the government may consider both loss making and profitable PSUs.

Mehrishi said the ministry would 'go ahead' with the stake sales depending on need as well as the ap-

petite in stock markets.

As per the government's medium-term fiscal policy statement, the budgeted Rs 28,500 crore is expected to come from sale of government holdings in non-government commercial entities — Specified Undertaking of Unit Trust of India (SUUTI), Bharat Aluminium Company (Balco) and Hindustan Zinc (HZL).