

QUICKLY.

Shashi Ranjan appointed as Danone MD for India



New Delhi: Leading food and beverage company Danone has appointed Shashi Ranjan as the new Managing Director for Danone India. “In his new role, Shashi Ranjan will spearhead Danone’s strategic initiatives in India, focusing on expanding the company’s presence, strengthening partnerships, and fostering sustainable growth,” the company said in a statement. **OUR BUREAU**

Quess Corp Q4 PAT zooms 226% at ₹98 cr

Bengaluru: Business services provider Quess Corp reported 11 per cent year-on-year jump to ₹4,910 crore in revenues for the quarter ended March, and the profit after tax (PAT) saw a 226 per cent year-on-year increase at ₹98 crore. EBITDA was recorded at ₹195 crore — up 28 per cent. The company’s board has recommended a final dividend of ₹6 per share. **OUR BUREAU**

SEBI bans Varanium Cloud for misusing IPO proceeds



Mumbai: Capital markets regulator SEBI has passed an interim order against Varanium Cloud banning the company and its MD from accessing the securities market until further notice. The order observed that the money raised through the IPO and a subsequent rights issue was not used for the intended purpose mentioned in the offer document. **OUR BUREAU**

Essar-backed Pluckk aims to be key player in food segment in 5 years, enter more cities

Janaki Krishnan
Mumbai

With Pluckk, the Essar group has ventured into the food and beverage segment and aims to rapidly emerge as a key player in the category over the next five years. Supported by Exponentia Ventures and Essar Capital, Pluckk offers a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, and processed foods, including juices, salads, dips, ready-to-eat meals, and meal kits. Launched about two years ago, the brand has already doubled its revenues and sells 1.8 million packets a month with a customer base of 5 lakh, Chief Financial Officer Nelson D’Souza told *businessline*. It ended FY24 with annual recurring revenue (ARR) of ₹100 crore and is expected to

BPCL to spend up to ₹36,000 cr on capital expenditure till FY26

INVESTMENT PLAN. To focus on refineries, marketing, petrochem and green energy

Rishi Ranjan Kala
New Delhi

State-run Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL) will spend up to ₹36,000 crore on capital expenditure (capex) in the two financial years ending FY26, with major spends focussed on refineries, marketing and petrochemicals. The state-run oil marketing company (OMC) will incur a capex of ₹15,000-16,000 crore in the current financial year and ₹16,000-20,000 crore in FY26. This is part of the Maharatna company’s Project Aspire, under which it will invest ₹1.7-lakh crore till FY29 to increase refining capacity to 45 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) and add 4,000 new fuel stations, among others. “For FY25, our capex will



GROWTH GOAL. The capex spend is part of Project Aspire, under which the Maharatna PSU will invest ₹1.7-lakh crore till FY29

be around ₹15,000-16,000 crore. Major amount, around ₹4,200 crore, will go for refinery and petrochemicals. For marketing, we are going to allocate around ₹7,000 crore for various projects, including the CGD. BPRL, we plan to infuse ₹2,000-2,500 crore equity in FY25. In FY26, the capex will

investments in these two countries will depend on developments on ground.

GREEN INITIATIVES It will invest ₹25,000 crore on gas business and ₹10,000 crore setting up 10 gigawatt (GW) of renewable energy capacities. Besides, the company will also expand its EV charging network to 7,000 EV charging stations by FY25. It has already added 2,443 new EV charging and battery swapping stations, taking its total to 3,135. BPCL will set up 26 compressed biogas (CBG) plants in the near term. It also has plans to produce 30 kilo tonnes per annum (KTPA) of green hydrogen in its refineries by 2030 to meet 10 per cent of captive demand. A pilot green hydrogen refuelling station project is already under execution.

Finance Ministry pushes CPSEs to join NPS

KR Srivats
New Delhi

In a significant move, the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) in the Finance Ministry has shot off letters to various Administrative Ministries and government departments to sensitise the Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) under their control about the benefits of adopting the National Pension System (NPS) for their employees. As of March, 76 CPSEs had already adopted the NPS to extend the pension benefit to their employees. According to sources, the latest DPE letter has been sent to the Chief Executive Of-

ficers of about 120 CPSEs that are yet to adopt NPS for their employees. The NPS was made mandatory for all Central employees (except armed forces personnel) who joined service on or after January 1, 2004. Most States have also adopted the NPS. Since May 1, 2009, the NPS has been available to every citizen voluntarily, including corporates. The DPE has identified the CPSEs still not on board the NPS and letters have gone to their controlling ministries, sources added. **NPS ASSETS** Aided by a buoyant stock market, the NPS assets under management (AUM) grew 27

per cent year-on-year to ₹11.89-lakh crore as of May 4. The overall AUM, including that of the Atal Pension Yojana (APY), however, was only slightly up when compared to the end-March 2024 level of ₹11.73-lakh crore. The number of new NPS and APY subscriber registrations till May 6 stood at 82,061, PFRDA data showed. As of May 4, the number of subscribers in the non-government sector had grown 8.76 lakh year over year, while the increase in the government sector was just 7.14 lakh. In 2023-24, as many as 9.47 lakh new subscribers joined the NPS from the non-government sector. Of these, 8.10 lakh were from the ‘all citizen

Sundaram-Clayton Q4 standalone net up at ₹20.73 crore

Press Trust of India
Chennai

Auto-component manufacturer Sundaram-Clayton Ltd has recorded a standalone profit for the quarter ending March 31, 2024, at ₹20.73 crore. The city-based company had registered a standalone profit of ₹17.61 crore in the corresponding period of last year. For the year ending March 31, 2024, the standalone net stood at ₹64.52 crore. The standalone total income grew to ₹540.01 crore (₹533.78 crore). For the financial year ending March 31, 2024, the standalone total income was ₹1,375.90 crore. The Board of Directors at its meeting held on March 26, declared an interim dividend of ₹5.15 per share.

IHCL sets up ‘Ekyam’ with CG Hospitality

Our Bureau
Mumbai

Indian Hotels Company Ltd (IHCL) has expanded its partnership with CG Hospitality to tap hotel development opportunities in the Himalayan States, wildlife parks and the Indian Ocean region. The two groups have set up a platform called Ekyam that will have a portfolio of 25 hotels by 2025. This includes 11 existing properties, including resorts and wildlife lodges in Dubai, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Seven new hotels are being built in Bhutan, Dubai and Nepal by the CG group and will be managed by IHCL. Over the next 12 months, IHCL will transfer seven more hotels to this platform. **MARKETING PLATFORM** “Ekyam is not a hotel brand. It is a marketing and a development platform which brings alignment, transparency and growth

opportunities for both groups. The platform will have separate leadership who will drive growth and business in these properties,” said Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director and CEO of IHCL, on Thursday. CG Hospitality has invested ₹1,250 crore in operational and upcoming hotels thus far and is committed to onboarding 14 more hotels under this partnership, said Rahul Chaudhary, Managing Director, CG Hospitality. Seven of the existing properties are run as a joint venture between IHCL and CG group, while the other four are management contracts. IHCL has invested around ₹500-600 crore in the JV hotels. The total investment in 25 existing and upcoming hotels under the Ekyam platform will be around ₹4,000 crore. The groups are also planning to develop a hotel in Phuket in Thailand and will also explore opportunities in wellness tourism.

Anis Chenchah quits as Wipro’s APMEA president; Vinay Firake named CEO

Our Bureau
Bengaluru

IT major Wipro’s President-Asia Pacific, India, Middle East and Africa (APMEA), Anis Chenchah, has resigned from his role, adding to the senior-level exits at the company. Vinay Firake has been appointed as Chief Executive Officer, APMEA Strategic Market Unit (SMU), effective immediately. Chenchah had joined Wipro in April 22, after a 15-year stint across roles in Capgemini. The company said that he is stepping down to pursue opportunities outside the company. Further, Firake will report to Srinii Pallia and will also join the Wipro Executive Board. He has been with Wipro for 26 years and has grown with the organisation, serving in various leader-



Vinay Firake

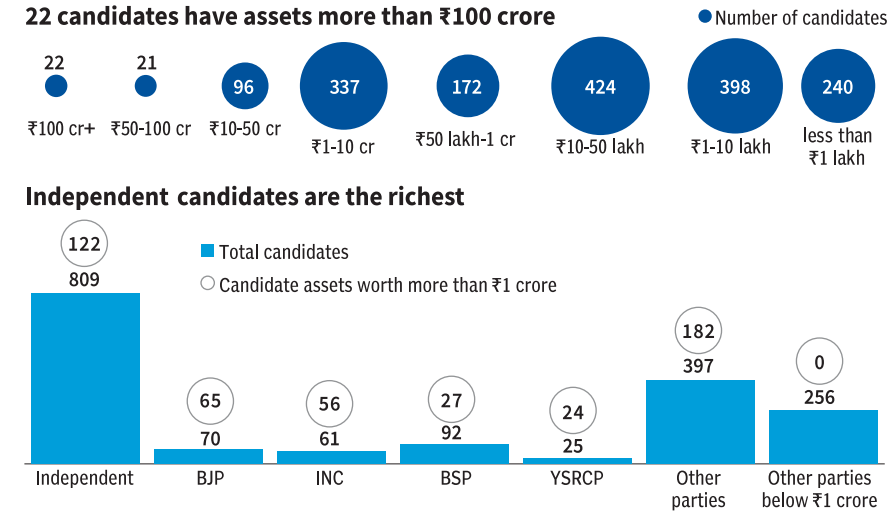
ship roles. He was most recently the Senior Vice-President and Managing Director of Wipro-Nordics Business Unit based in Stockholm, where he led operations across all industries and services. Prior to that, he led the Manufacturing & Automotive Business Unit in Europe and held various roles spanning Europe and North America, including Global Head for the Enterprise Digital Operations & Plat-

The rich and the powerful

The richest candidates who are facing the polls in phase 4

Contestant	Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani	Konda Vishweshwar Reddy	Prabhakar Reddy Vemireddy	Amrita Roy	CM Ramesh
Party	TDP	BJP	TDP	BJP	BJP
Constituency	Guntur	Chevella	Nellore	Krishnanagar	Anakapalle
Value of assets declared (₹ cr)	5,705	4,568	716	554	497
Value of assets declared in the previous election contested (₹ cr)	-	528	230	-	258
Year of previous election	-	2014	2018*	-	2018**
Priciest asset	JPM chase Investment Joint with spouse 50%	Shares in Apollo Hospital under spouse's name	Shares in NDR Invit Trust	Inherited assets under husband's name	Non-agricultural land
Value (₹ cr)	1,201	1,500	315	554	128

*Re-contested election in Rajya Sabha **Sitting MP of the Rajya Sabha



Phase 4 LS elections: Telangana, AP field the richest candidates

Jayant Pankaj
Chennai

Big money undoubtedly plays a crucial role in winning elections, which is a key reason why political parties often choose wealthy candidates. In the phase 4 Lok Sabha (LS) election, 1,710 candidates are contesting. The wealthiest candidates predominantly hail from the two South Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, according to data from the Association for Democratic Reforms.

DATA FOCUS.

In phase 4, there are 43 candidates with assets over ₹50 crore. Of these, 18 are from Telangana and 18 are from Andhra Pradesh. *businessline*’s analysis of the affidavits of the richest candidates had some interesting takeaways. **CROREPATI CANDIDATES** Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani (TDP), contesting from Guntur in Andhra Pradesh, is the richest candidate in this phase, with total assets valued at ₹5,705 crore. He is the founder and CEO of UWorld, a prepar-

atory educational hub for cracking exams. According to his affidavit, Pemmasani and his wife, Sriatna Koneru, hold shares in 101 listed companies, both domestic and foreign. Notably, his shares in the JP Morgan Chase Investment alone amount to approximately ₹1,201 crore. The second wealthiest candidate is Konda Vishweshwar Reddy (BJP). Reddy, a Telangana Rashtra Samithi MP in 2014 from Chevella, had total assets valued at ₹528 crore. During the 2019 LS election, which he contested from Congress’s ticket, his assets grew to ₹895 crore. However, his assets have skyrocketed to ₹4,568 crore in 2024. Reddy and his wife, K Sangita Reddy, possess movable assets worth ₹1,178 crore and ₹3,203 crore, respectively. His largest holding is shares in Apollo Hospital Enterprises Ltd, amounting to ₹973 crore. Sangita Reddy currently serves as the Joint Managing Director of Apollo Hospitals, a prominent healthcare group founded by her father Prathap C Reddy. Prabhakar Reddy Vemireddy, the third richest candidate from the TDP, is contesting from the Nellore constituency. Vemireddy holds deposits in 23 bank accounts and possesses 19 personal motor vehicles. His highest shares are invested in NDR Invit Trust, valued at more than ₹315 crore. He re-contested the election in 2018 as a Rajya Sabha MP with assets valued at ₹230 crore. By 2024, his assets had surged to ₹716 crore — representing a growth of around 211 per cent in wealth. Additionally, he owns nine properties across Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu. **WEALTH CHART** According to ADR’s data, among the 1,710 candidates, 22 candidates have wealth exceeding ₹100 crore, while 21 candidates possess wealth ranging from ₹50-100 crore. Additionally, approximately 96 candidates have wealth ranging from ₹10-50 crore. The data indicate that out of 809 independent candidates, 122 candidates have wealth exceeding ₹1 crore. Among the candidates from the BJP, 70 have acquired wealth exceeding ₹1 crore, followed by Congress with 56 wealthy candidates out of 61.

TVS Holdings to acquire 80.74 per cent stake in Home Credit for ₹554 cr

Our Bureau
Chennai

TVS Holdings Ltd has announced its plan to acquire 80.74 per cent of the equity stake in Home Credit India Finance Private Ltd for ₹554 crore. The Board of TVS Holdings has approved the proposal, and the remaining 19.26 per cent of the equity stake will be purchased by Premji Invest and other associates. Home Credit India, a part of the Home Credit Group, is an international non-banking financial institution founded in 1997 in the Czech Republic and headquartered in the Netherlands. Since it entered into India in 2012, Home Credit has served over 1.6 crore customers in India, both online and offline. As of March 31, 2024, Home Credit had an Assets under Management (AUM) of about ₹5,535 crore. “Financial services represent a huge opportunity as this growth unfolds. Home Credit is a significant player in consumer financing with much potential. Together with TVS Credit, the Group will now have a lending book of about ₹31,000 crore, taking us closer to our book-size



Sudarshan Venu, MD, TVS Holdings

goal of ₹50,000 crore in the next three years,” said Sudarshan Venu, Managing Director, TVS Holdings. Home Credit will operate as a subsidiary of TVS Holdings, maintaining its brand identity and focussing on its unique customer segment, while benefiting from the resources and support of TVS Holdings Group, according to a statement. “We are confident that this acquisition will help the company accelerate scale and profitability and build significant value for all stakeholders,” said TK Kurien, Managing Partner, and Chief Investment Officer, Premji Invest. TVS Holdings and Home Credit will seek approvals from the Competition Commission of India and the Reserve Bank of India, respectively.

TVS Credit Services posts ₹572-cr net profit

Our Bureau
Chennai

TVS Credit Services Ltd, a non-deposit taking non-banking financial company (NBFC) and a subsidiary of TVS Motor Company Ltd, has reported a 47 per cent rise in its profit after tax at ₹572 crore for the year ended March 31, 2024. Total income for FY24 rose 40 per cent to ₹5,795 crore. For the quarter ended March 31, 2024, the company reported a 33 per cent rise in PAT at ₹148 crore when compared with the year-ago period. Total income for the March 2024 quarter stood at ₹1,519 crore — a growth of 23 per cent. The company’s assets under management stood at ₹25,900 crore in FY24 — up 26 per cent over FY23.

businessline.

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QUICKLY.

Forex reserves rise
\$3.66 b to \$641.59 b



Mumbai: After three consecutive weeks of drop, the country's forex reserves increased by \$3.668 billion to \$641.59 billion for the week ended May 3, the RBI said on Friday. The overall kitty dropped \$2.412 billion to \$637.922 billion for the previous week ended April 26. Gold reserves decreased by \$653 million to \$54.88 billion during the week, it said.

Lakshmi Kanth Rao appointed ED of RBI

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India has appointed R Lakshmi Kanth Rao as Executive Director with effect from May 10. Prior to being promoted as ED, Rao was serving as Chief General Manager-in-Charge in the Department of Regulation. As Executive Director, Rao will look after the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation, Right to Information Act (FAA) and Department of Communication.

Govt mulls tweak in interest rates to fund capital-intensive green steel projects

Abhishek Law
New Delhi

India is pressing ahead with initiatives to fund green steel projects, embracing hydrogen as the 'game-changing alternative' to traditional coal methods. Discussions are underway over proposals, including the potential for imposing lower interest rates specifically tailored for upcoming capital-intensive green steel ventures.

Green steel is characterised by its low carbon footprint.

A senior official, aware of discussions, said options like "tweaking" the existing financing rates by banks are under-consideration too. For instance, if the interest rate is 10 per cent, for a green steel project, approved under various pre-determined parameters, it could slightly lower.

"Several Ministerial clearances are required, while financial institutions need to be brought on-board too if this proposal has to go through," the official said.

The establishment of a green steel project incorporating hydrogen technology is commonly perceived as double the expense of traditional steel plants. While the construction cost for a conventional steel plant with a capacity of one million tonnes

Russian oil discounts have halved to \$3-6/barrel from \$8-10 in FY24

CHALLENGES AHEAD. Softening discount threatens to inflate India's oil import bill in FY25

Rishi Ranjan Kala
New Delhi

Russian crude oil discounts have almost halved to \$3-6 per barrel at present, from an average \$8-10 during April 2023-March 2024, a development which threatens India's savings from discounted crude in its import bill during FY25.

For comparison, the world's third largest crude oil importer saved more than ₹1-lakh crore during FY23 and FY24 on its oil import bill due to Russian discounts.

"Discounts depend on consignment to consignment. Generally, we procure on spot basis, two months in advance. Last year, we used to get around \$8-10 per barrel. Maybe now it will be around \$3-4 or \$3-6 per barrel range," Bharat Petroleum Corporation's (BPCL) senior management said in an investor call on Friday. Russia now accounts for more than one-third of India's total imports.

HIGHER IMPORT BILL
According to ICRA, India saved around \$5.1 billion in FY23 and \$7.9 billion in 11 months of FY24 on its oil import bill due to discounts on

MODERATING TREND

- Russian crude oil discounts have been moderating since last year
- For Indian refiners, the discount translates to a lower value due to higher freight costs, insurance and expenses related to third-party traders
- It costs around \$7 per barrel to transport crude oil from Black sea ports to West India and \$10 from Baltic sea ports
- India saved more than ₹1-lakh crore in FY23 and FY24 due to discounts by Russia

Russian cargoes. The total comes to \$13 billion, or more than ₹1-lakh crore based on the exchange rate on Friday.

However, it also estimates that the extent of monthly discounts relative to price narrowed sharply over the fiscal, to around 8 per cent on an average in September-February FY24 from around 23 per cent in April-August FY24. Consequently, savings related to purchase of Russian crude are likely to have dipped to \$2 billion in September-February FY24 from \$5.8 billion in April-August FY24.

"With India's oil import dependency expected to remain high, if the discounts on purchases of Russian crude per-

sist at the prevailing low levels, ICRA expects India's net oil import bill to widen to \$101-104 billion in FY25 from \$96.1 billion in FY24, assuming an average crude oil price of \$85 per barrel in the fiscal. Additionally, any escalation in the Iran-Israel conflict and an associated rise in crude oil prices could impart an upward pressure on the value of net oil imports in the current fiscal year," it added.

SUPPLIES MODERATE
BPCL management said that Russian supplies have moderated, compared to FY24. The oil marketing company (OMC) imported around 36 million tonnes (mt) of crude

oil in FY24, of which Russian cargoes accounted for 13 mt, which is the highest among the PSU OMCs. In FY25, the company expects Russian oil processing to be in the range of "at least" 25 per cent.

"In FY24, BPCL imported around 39 per cent of its total crude oil requirement from Russia. As of date, we foresee getting Russian supplies. But the only thing is that most Russian supplies are on spot basis and not term basis. If there are no new geopolitical tensions, no new issues, we are estimating supplies to continue at similar levels," the management said.

Going ahead, the Maharatna company remains "cautiously optimistic" and expects crude oil prices to remain in the range of \$83-87 per barrel in the near future with geopolitical tensions and supply chain disruptions being potential hurdles.

On higher prices and margin impact, BPCL said, "Earlier also we said that as long as crude oil prices are hovering at \$80-85 per barrel, we are comfortable even at these prices. The margins may squeeze for a short period of time, but as long as crude is at \$80-85 we can reasonably generate marketing money."

cent) and final completion of project (remaining 10 per cent).

Failure to complete projects on time or diversion of funds will lead to refund of entire grant.

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India-EU FTA talks, TTC tie-up hold lot of promise: Jaishankar

Amiti Sen
New Delhi

The India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations and partnership in the Trade and Technology Council (TTC) hold a lot of promise and signify the growing intensity of economic exchange between the two, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said.

Speaking at the EU National Day celebrations in the national capital, he emphasised that India attaches a lot of importance to the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC), agreed upon last year, and looks forward to taking it forward. The event was hosted by EU Ambassador to India Herve Delphin on Thursday.

"The European Union is our largest economic partner. But it is more than that. It is an entity with which we have a very deep relationship spanning many domains. And it is expressed not just in the relationship between New Delhi and Brussels but in the aggregate of different bilateral relationships, in the regional and sub regional formats in which we engage each other.



S Jaishankar

And in a range of institutions that we are both members of and where we collaborate with each other," Jaishankar said.

In his speech, the European Union Ambassador said India is the country that has gained tremendous importance for the EU, and the partnership will deepen further.

"In this turbulent environment, there is one country, and one relationship that has gained tremendous importance for the EU, and it is India," Delphin said. Mentioning the partnership between India and the EU in the TTC, the minister pointed out that such partnership underlines the significance of not just the present relationship between the two but what portends for both.

Coromandel
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murugappa

COROMANDEL INTERNATIONAL LIMITED
NOTICE OF POSTAL BALLOT
[Pursuant to Section 110 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rules 20 and 22 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014, as amended]

Notice is hereby given to the Members that the Company has, on May 10, 2024, issued Postal Ballot Notice to members pursuant to Section 110 of the Companies Act, 2013 ("the Act"), in relation to the Ordinary and Special Resolutions as contained in the Postal Ballot Notice May 6, 2024, in electronic mode to the members, whose e-mail IDs are registered with the Company or the Depository Participants.

The Company has offered an e-voting facility for voting in accordance with the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 and Regulation 44 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The Company has engaged the services of KFin Technologies Limited (KFinTech) for this purpose. The Board of Directors of the Company has appointed M/s. R. Sridharan & Associates, Practicing Company Secretaries, as the Scrutinizer for conducting the postal ballot through the e-voting process in a fair and transparent manner.

Members are therefore requested to carefully read the instructions for e-voting and note the following:

Sr. No.	Particulars	Description
1	Statement of special business to be transacted by postal ballot	1. To appoint Mr. Arunachalam Vellayan (DIN: 08011680) as a Director of the Company. (Ordinary Resolution) 2. To appoint Mr. Arunachalam Vellayan (DIN: 08011680) as Whole-time Director, designated as Whole-time Director-Strategy and Planning of the Company. (Ordinary Resolution) 3. To appoint Mr. Narayanan Vellayan (DIN: 07774406) as a Director of the Company. (Ordinary Resolution) 4. To appoint Mr. Narayanan Vellayan (DIN: 07774406) as Whole-time Director, designated as Whole-time Director-Strategic Sourcing of the Company. (Ordinary Resolution) 5. To alter the Articles of Association of the Company. (Special Resolution)
2	Cut-off date for determining eligibility of shareholders for voting through electronic means	Wednesday, May 8, 2024
3	Date of completion of dispatch of Notice	Friday, May 10, 2024
4	Date of commencement of remote e-Voting	9.00 AM IST on Monday, May 13, 2024
5	Date of end of e-voting. E-voting will not be allowed beyond the said date.	5.00 PM IST on Tuesday, June 11, 2024
6	Day, date and venue of declaration of results and the link of the website where such results will be displayed	On or before Thursday, June 13, 2024, at the Company's Registered office "Coromandel House", 1-2-10, Sardar Patel Road, Secunderabad – 500 003 and on the Company's website www.coromandel.biz
7	Website details of the Company/ Agency where the Notice of the postal ballot is displayed	www.coromandel.biz and https://evoting.kfintech.com
8	Contact details of the persons responsible to address the grievances connected with e-voting	Mr. Vasant Rao Chowdhary, Manager – Corporate Registry KFin Technologies Limited, Selenium Tower-B", Plot No. 31 & 32, Financial District, Nanakramguda, Serilingampally, Hyderabad - 500032, Telangana. Toll-free No.: 1800 3094 001, Email: einward.ris@kfintech.com

Shareholders holding shares in electronic form who have not updated their e-mail details are requested to register /update the details in their account, as per the process advised by their Depository participants.

By Order of the Board
For **Coromandel International Limited**
B Shanmugasundaram
Company Secretary & Compliance Officer

Place : Chennai
Date : Friday May 10, 2024

'Major PC, server companies to start production under PLI scheme this year'

Our Bureau
New Delhi

Majority of personal computer and server makers selected under the information technology (IT) hardware production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme are expected to start production this year, said a senior government official on Friday.

The government, in November 2023, had approved the application of 27 companies, including Dell, HP, Foxconn, Lenovo and Netweb Technologies, under the new PLI scheme for IT hardware.

"About 17 out of 27 PLI companies will start production this year. Around six-seven of them started production last year and two have plans to start produc-



S Krishnan, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and IT

tion next year," S Krishnan, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY), said.

Among the big names that have been granted approval under the IT hardware scheme are Flextronics, VVDN and Optiemus. Other applicants that have received the green signal in-

clude Padget Electronics, SOJO Manufacturing Services, Goodworth, Neolync, Syrma SGS, Mega Networks, Panache Digilife and ITI Ltd.

AI MISSION

On the India AI mission, Krishnan said domestic companies will get preference. The Cabinet on March 7 approved the India AI Mission with an outlay of ₹10,372 crore for five years to encourage AI development in the country.

The approved corpus will be used to build a high-end scalable AI ecosystem in public-private partnership mode.

The mission will be implemented through the IndiaAI Independent Business Division under Digital India Corporation.

TATA MUTUAL FUND
NOTICE CUM ADDENDUM
MERGER OF TATA BANKING & PSU DEBT FUND WITH TATA CORPORATE BOND FUND

Notice cum Addendum is hereby given that the Trustees of Tata Mutual Fund have approved the merger of Tata Banking & PSU Debt Fund (hereinafter referred to as 'Transferor Scheme') with Tata Corporate Bond Fund, An open-ended debt scheme predominantly investing in AA+ & above rated corporate bonds, with flexibility of any Macaulay Duration & relatively high interest rate risk & moderate credit risk (hereinafter referred to as 'Surviving Scheme'). The record date for the merger is 15 June, 2024.

In accordance with Regulation 18(15A) of the SEBI (Mutual Funds) Regulations, 1996, the exit option of 30 days, at prevailing NAV, without exit load will be given to the unitholders of merging scheme i.e. Tata Banking & PSU Debt Fund and to the unitholders of Tata Corporate Bond Fund (i.e. surviving scheme).

The sale of units of Tata Banking & PSU Debt Fund (Transferor Scheme) (including switch-in & registration of systematic investment options) will stand suspended with effect from 11 May, 2024.

A written communication shall be sent to all Unitholders of all the concerned scheme informing the details about the merger including, basis of allocation of units in Tata Corporate Bond Fund - tax implication and financial information of the scheme.

Consequently, from the record date, Tata Banking & PSU Debt Fund will cease to exist and the unitholders of the above scheme will become unitholders of Tata Corporate Bond Fund.

Investors in Income Distribution cum Capital Withdrawal Option (IDCW-Payout & Reinvestment) of Tata Banking & PSU Debt Fund - (Regular Plan & Direct Plan) would be allotted units in the Income Distribution cum Capital Withdrawal Option (IDCW-Periodic - Payout & Periodic Reinvestment) Option of Tata Corporate Bond Fund - (Regular Plan & Direct Plan), investors in Growth Option of Tata Banking & PSU Debt Fund - (Regular & Direct Plan) would be allotted units in the Growth option of Tata Corporate Bond Fund (Regular Plan & Direct Plan) in lieu of their holding at closing Net Asset Value (NAV) of record date.

In terms of prevailing regulatory requirements, unitholders in Tata Banking & PSU Debt Fund and Tata Corporate Bond Fund are given an option to exit at the prevailing Net Asset Value without any exit load, in case they are not in favour of the merger. The period of this exit offer is from 15 May, 2024 to 14 June, 2024. If no request for Redemption/Switch is received by Tata Asset Management Pvt. Ltd. on or before 14 June, 2024 (upto 3.00pm) the units in Tata Banking & PSU Debt Fund will automatically be merged to Tata Corporate Bond Fund and a fresh Account Statement will be issued to the unitholders to that effect.

Unitholders who do not exercise the exit option during the exit period would be deemed to have consented to the proposed merger and will be allotted units without any entry load in the respective plan as mentioned above of Tata Corporate Bond Fund. Unitholders who opt to continue in the surviving scheme (i.e. Tata Corporate Bond Fund) shall be subject to load structure of surviving scheme prevailing on the record date of merger.

The Effective date for the merger/consolidation of schemes will be 15 June, 2024.

The existing Systematic Investment Plan (SIP)/Systematic Transfer Plan (STP)*/ Systematic Withdrawal Plan (SWP) in the merged scheme i.e. Tata Banking & PSU Debt Fund shall stand cancelled/discontinued in the surviving scheme i.e. in Tata Corporate Bond Fund. The investors who hold units in Tata Corporate Bond Fund post the merger, have the option to register for a fresh SIP / STP / SWP from the surviving scheme, i.e. Tata Corporate Bond Fund.

*Investors who have opted for Systematic Transfer Plan (STP) from Tata Banking & PSU Debt Fund to Tata Corporate Bond Fund or vice versa the same will stand cancelled from the date of merger of the scheme.

The unitholders who have pledged or encumbered their units will not have the option to exit unless they procure an effective release of their pledges/encumbrances prior to the redemption/switch-out requests.

In case a lien is marked on the units held in Tata Banking & PSU Debt Fund, the fresh units allotted in Tata Corporate Bond Fund will also be automatically subject to lien. In case of lien of units in demat mode, investors are requested to ensure revocation of lien before the record date to enable credit of proportionate units of the surviving scheme.

Unitholders who are holding the units in the demat mode shall note that the units of the respective options of the merged scheme (i.e. Tata Banking & PSU Debt Fund) will be extinguished from their demat account and proportionate units in respective option of the surviving scheme (i.e. Tata Corporate Bond Fund) will be credited to their demat account after the record date.

Load free exit period is available only for investors holding units as on 14 May, 2024 as per Registrars records.

Cut off timing for NAV applicability for redemption & switch out: In respect of valid redemption/switch out application accepted at a designated collection centre upto 3 p.m. on a business day by the Mutual Fund, the closing NAV of such day will be applicable.

In respect of valid redemption/switch out application accepted at a designated collection centre after 3 pm on a business day, the NAV of next business day will be applicable.

Unitholders are requested to read the detailed features of Tata Corporate Bond Fund in the Scheme Information Document (SID) which is available on the website www.tatamutualfund.com and at the Investor Service Centre in order to take a well-informed decision.

Tata Banking & PSU Debt Fund: (An open ended debt scheme predominantly investing in debt instruments of Banks, Public Sector Undertakings, Public Financial Institutions and Municipal Bonds. A Relatively High Interest Rate Risk and Moderate Credit Risk).

Tata Corporate Bond Fund: (An open-ended debt scheme predominantly investing in AA+ and above rated corporate bonds, with flexibility of any Macaulay Duration and relatively high interest rate risk and moderate credit risk).

Risk - O - Meter

Tata Banking & PSU Debt Fund is suitable for investors who are seeking*:	Scheme Risk O Meter	Benchmark Risk O Meter
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Regular Income Over Short Term to Medium Term.Predominant investment in Debt & Money Market instruments issued by Banks, Public Sector Undertakings & Financial Institutions. <p>*Investors should consult their financial advisors if in doubt about whether the product is suitable for them.</p>		

Tata Corporate Bond Fund is suitable for investors who are seeking*:

Tata Corporate Bond Fund is suitable for investors who are seeking*:	Scheme Risk O Meter	Benchmark Risk O Meter
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Regular income for medium term.Predominant investment in corporate debt securities. <p>*Investors should consult their financial advisors if in doubt about whether the product is suitable for them.</p>		

Potential Risk Class Matrix

	Credit Risk →	Relatively Low (Class A)	Moderate (Class B)	Relatively High (Class C)
Tata Banking & PSU Debt Fund	Interest Rate Risk ↓			
	Relatively Low (Class I)			
	Moderate (Class II)			
	Relatively High (Class III)		B-III	

Potential Risk Class Matrix

	Credit Risk →	Relatively Low (Class A)	Moderate (Class B)	Relatively High (Class C)
Tata Corporate Bond Fund	Interest Rate Risk ↓			
	Relatively Low (Class I)			
	Moderate (Class II)			
	Relatively High (Class III)		B-III	

Mutual Fund Investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully

● HAMMER AND TONGS

‘Congress promise on Muslim quota will be a loss for BCs’

STRONG PITCH. PM attacks Congress and promises plenty for Hyderabad

Naga Sridhar
Hyderabad

By promising religion-based reservations to the Muslims, Congress and its allies are trying to take away the benefits of reservation for some Backward Classes (BCs) which is against the Constitution, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said.

Addressing a public meeting at LB Stadium here on Thursday, on his last leg of election campaigning in the Telugu States, Modi said Congress was adopting ‘appeasement policies’ to secure vote banks. Alleging that Congress is ‘racial’ in its attitude he said, “Some Congress leaders are calling people of Telangana as Africans. A tutor of the Congress Prince is also saying construction of the Ram Mandir at Ayodhya and worship of



PICTURE PERFECT? Narendra Modi being felicitated during a public meeting ahead of Lok Sabha elections, in Hyderabad on Friday *ANI*

Ram is against idea of India.”

‘NO IDEA OF INDIA’

The Congress had no idea of India, the Prime Minister said, adding the idea of India was a reflection of ancient Indian culture, *Satyameva Jayate, Ahimsa and Vasudaiva Kutumbakam*, among others. The Congress was planning to take away personal property of individuals which should not be allowed as they were following a ‘di-

vide and rule’ policy to break the nation, Modi alleged.

“Hyderabad is a city of solutions. By voting for BJP, it can provide many solutions to India,” Modi said, stating that there was a lot of discussion about “RR” tax in Telangana with one R from Hyderabad and another from Delhi. “There is one more R in Hyderabad which is Rajakar,” he said.

Referring to the alliance between the BRS and AIMIM

in Telangana, Modi said even the Congress government was also hand in glove with AIMIM as part of vote bank politics. Both the parties stayed away from celebrating Hyderabad Liberation Day on September 17 every year to please AIMIM but the Centre had declared official celebrations, he added.

The NDA government was committed to the speedy development of Telangana and sanctioned its first All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Turmeric Board, four Vande Bharat trains and an NTPC unit, among others, Modi said. Earlier in the day, Modi also addressed a well-attended public meeting at Narayanpet in Mahabubnagar Lok Sabha constituency and said that the present elections would decide the future of the nation and asked people to vote for a ‘strong’ government led by the BJP.

● STAR POWER

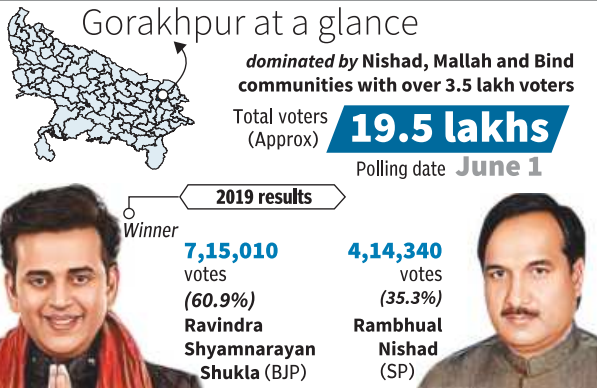
Friendly cop in *Laapataa Ladies* is favourite to win in Gorakhpur

Shishir Sinha
Gorakhpur

Forty-year-old Sheela rushed to a public rally early on Friday morning with her 18-year-old daughter, Minal. At Digvijay Nath Park, near Tara-mandal in Gorakhpur city, she hurried to find space to catch a glimpse of the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath who was five-term MP from Gorakhpur before he entered the State Assembly. But her daughter is only interested in hearing Ravindra Shyam-narayan Shukla alias Ravi Kishan Shukla, the TV celebrity and actor, who won the last Lok Sabha elections from Gorakhpur on a BJP ticket.

Ravi Kishan has been in a heated poll campaign on the back of the huge successes of the film *Laapataa Ladies* where he plays the part of a benevolent police inspector and another hugely popular web series *Mamla Legal Hai* that portrays him as a canny lawyer with a heart of gold. “I think of the good inspector in the film who helped out a young girl in need. He is a hero,” Minal, a student, said. She cannot really recall his work as an MP but is very impressed by his *filmi* charisma.

Ravi Kishan, fresh from his success as lawyer VD Tyagi



in *Mamla Legal Hai*, thinks his connections in the film world have helped him as a politician. “I have been student of cinema for 33 years. For the last five years, I invited 100-150 people from the film industry and they have started shooting here which has given employment to many. I have the potential to create job opportunities with the help of cinema. I train people. I provide skilling, upskilling and reskilling to youth so that they can be absorbed in cinema and TV industry. Please remember every one can’t get government job,” said Kishan, who filed his nomination on Thursday to seek a second term as MP.

‘SERVING PEOPLE’ People generally believe that the city has seen “good development”. It now has an

AIIMS, four big universities, an industrial park developed by GIDA and a functional airport. However, for all these they give credit to Yogi Adityanath, who is also called “Gorakshpeethadhiswar” heading the much-revered Gorakhnath Math. “Result is predictable here. Ravi Kishan will win. The only question is by how much margin,” said Anil, a local shopkeeper. Gorakhpur district has two parliamentary constituencies – Gorakhpur and Bansgaon – and both are represented by BJP in the 17th Lok Sabha. In the 2019 election, Ravi Kishan defeated Rambhul Nishad of Samajwadi Party by over 3 lakh votes from Gorakhpur.

This time SP has fielded TV actress Kajal Nishad, 41. She is not new to politics. She contested on a Congress ticket in 2012, but lost. She joined SP in 2021 and contested in the assembly polls of 2022 but again lost. She is relying on the large Nishad community to vote for her. Ravi Kishan says he will continue serving the people while working in the film industry. “Cinema is my bread and butter and politics is a medium of service to the people. I put money from my own pocket to serve the people.”



UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath being felicitated by the BJP candidate from Gorakhpur, Ravi Kishan

Modi exhorts Pawar, Thackeray to join BJP alliance

OLIVE BRANCH. Asks them to fulfil ‘dreams with dignity’; Pawar says Modi is creating confusion as the mood is against BJP

Radheshyam Jadhav
Pune

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday appealed to NCP (SP) President Sharad Pawar and Shiv Sena (UBT) President Uddhav Thackeray to join the BJP-led alliance and “fulfil dreams with dignity” after the Lok Sabha elections instead of “merging” with the Congress.

Pawar responded by suggesting that the Prime Minister’s statements indicate a realisation that the BJP is facing potential losses in the elections. He implied that the PM’s remarks are a sign of restlessness, aimed at creating confusion.

Addressing an election rally at Nandurbar in Maharashtra, Modi, without naming Sharad Pawar, said that

the veteran leader is worried after the elections in Baramati and has made a statement that smaller parties would merge with the Congress after the LS elections. Modi said that Pawar must have made this statement after discussions with his colleagues.

‘MODI IS RESTLESS’

“He is so desperate and disheartened that he feels that after June 4, small parties should merge with Congress if they have to survive in public and political life. It means that *nakli* NCP and *nakli* Shiv Sena have mentally prepared themselves to merge with the Congress. Instead of dying by joining the Congress after June 4, proudly come with Ajit *dada* (Pawar) and (Eknath) Shindeji, all your



POLL GOOGLY. Narendra Modi addresses a public meeting for Lok Sabha elections, in Nandurbar, Maharashtra, on Friday *PTI*

dreams will be fulfilled with dignity,” said PM Modi. This is the first time PM Modi has openly appealed to Sharad Pawar and Thackeray during the election campaign to join the BJP-led alliance.

Sharad Pawar, speaking to reporters in Jalna, said, “Parliamentary democracy is in danger because of Modi. Arrests of Delhi and Jharkhand Chief Ministers were impossible without the central

BACK IN ACTION



READY FOR POLL DUTY. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal greets supporters from a car after walking out of Tihar Jail on Friday following grant of interim bail in the Delhi excise policy case *REUTERS*

Mahua Moitra hopes to avenge her Parliament expulsion with huge victory

Mithun Dasgupta
Krishnanagar

She is travelling in a black jeep and the roads are narrow. But that’s not hindering her from going deeper into her constituency on the last leg of the campaigning.

It’s Friday morning and Congress’ firebrand leader Mahua Moitra is in a jeep rally in Nakashipara, some 30 km from Krishnanagar city. It’s quite a festive mood in this part of rural South Bengal under Nadia district.

People of different ages throng to see the popular leader, who has been a fierce critic of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party. While some women came out hurriedly from their mud or half concrete small houses, others wait patiently with children on their lap.

“Mahua Moitra *Zindabad. Jai Bangla*,” chant Trinamool Congress workers, who follow Moitra’s jeep, riding on their bikes, as a huge crowd greets her. Moitra waves her hands to the crowds, frequently shaking hands too. They are elated.

The 49-year-old TMC leader is seeking re-election from her Krishnanagar seat, which is going to polls on May 13 in the fourth phase. Ever since TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee has fielded Moitra again in this constituency, the seat has become a fierce battleground for the BJP and the ruling TMC in the State.

Parliament expelled the former investment banker in December last year, accusing her of taking bribes in exchange for asking questions. Moitra denied the allegations, and said she was ex-



POINT TO PROVE. TMC candidate from Krishnanagar constituency Mahua Moitra during an election roadshow in Nadia *PTI*

pelled “without proof”. “Vote for Trinamool Congress. Vote for Mahua Moitra. Send her to Parliament again with a huge margin. And, that will be a befitting reply to the BJP and Narendra Modi,” says a local TMC leader to the crowd.

BJP’S CANDIDATE

In a surprise move, the BJP fielded Amrita Roy from the erstwhile royal family of Krishnanagar to take on Moitra. Roy, the Rajmata of the local royal family, was not a public face at large before the saffron party named her as the Krishnanagar candidate.

For the INDI alliance, SM Saadi of CPI (M) will be contesting from the seat. “Candidate is irrelevant. The TMC versus BJP is the fight. But our fight is against the symbol, the candidate is irrelevant,” Moitra said, amid her election campaign, when asked who would be the major contestant for her.

MOITRA CONFIDENT

On Modi’s recent Adani-Ambani jibe at Rahul Gandhi, she said, “Modi’s only guarantee is that every time he opens his mouth, he lies. He is the king of telling lies.” “Now his tempo (of election campaign) has gone. That is why

he is talking about all these. All the truth may now come out,” Moitra told *businessline*.

“In this constituency, our lead will be more than that of last time,” a confident Moitra said. In 2019, Mahua won her first Lok Sabha polls from the Krishnanagar seat. She defeated BJP’s Kalyan Chaubey, a former football player, by over 60,000 votes.

“In Krishnanagar city, BJP may garner some votes. The party would have got more votes in the city, had it fielded a strong leader. Amrita Roy has no strong base across the constituency. Moitra will get huge leads in the rural belts, especially in Muslim-dominated areas. The CPI-M candidate may get some votes too in the Muslim-dominated regions. Thus, the BJP may come out as the third party in terms of vote share,” a local political observer said. The Prime Minister, who has been visiting West Bengal frequently, questioned if the ruling Trinamool can form the government at the Centre if it manages to win only 15 seats in the elections. “TMC isn’t even winning 15 seats in the country. Now tell me, can TMC form the government with just 15 seats?” Modi had said while speaking at a rally in Krishnanagar earlier this month.

QUICKLY.

EC warns Kharge against making claims that question credibility of electoral steps

The Election Commission of India (ECI) Friday issued a point by point rebuttal to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge’s charges of glaring mismanagement and delay in release of voter turnout data in the ongoing 2024 Lok Sabha poll, and advised him to “exercise caution and refrain in making such statements”. In a cryptic remark, the Commission said the Congress president’s letter, made public through social media platform X, was ‘unwarranted’ and ‘reflective of a biased and deliberate attempt to spread confusion on credibility of electoral steps’. “A trend of irresponsible statements attacking or attempting to degrade the credibility of elections in terms of men and material by a national political party is disconcerting,” the ECI lamented. The Commission stated that the voter turnout numbers and figures were in the possession of the Opposition party through its field functionaries with whom it was shared on the polling days itself. *OUR BUREAU*



BJP’s Taranjit Sandhu files nomination from Amritsar

BJP candidate from Amritsar Lok Sabha seat and former diplomat Taranjit Singh Sandhu on Friday filed his nomination papers for the June 1 election. Sandhu held a roadshow before filing his papers in Amritsar and was accompanied by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and other BJP leaders.

Speaking to reporters after Sandhu filed his papers, Jaishankar exuded confidence that the former Indian ambassador to the US would win, “We have full confidence that the people of Amritsar will elect him and send him to Delhi (Parliament). He will be a very good MP in Parliament. He is the most popular ambassador of India,” the Union Minister said.

He served the country a lot and now he will serve Amritsar, he said. “If Punjab’s side and Amritsar’s interest have to be put forward, you cannot choose a better man than Taranjit Singh Sandhu,” Jaishankar said. *PTI*



Abhishek Banerjee files nomination from Diamond Harbour LS seat

Trinamool Congress’ national general secretary and party’s candidate from Diamond Harbour seat, Abhishek Banerjee on Friday filed his nomination for Lok Sabha elections. Abhishek Banerjee, who is also West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee’s nephew, is contesting for a third consecutive term from the seat in West Bengal’s South 24 Parganas district. After filing his nomination, he expressed confidence in his victory in the Lok Sabha election from the Diamond Harbour seat and said, “I am contesting an election. I am not an astrologer. I can’t predict the future but I have left no stone unturned in serving the people.... I am hopeful and optimistic that the margin that Diamond Harbour delivered last time will eventually increase and people’s love and blessings will continue to be showered upon us as we have worked in the last ten years,” he said. *ANI*



QUOTE.



Modi *ji* says remove corruption, they (Opposition) say save the corrupt and make them flourish

JP NADDA
BJP chief



What is PM Modi doing if Congress is getting tempo loads of money from Adani and Ambani? After three phases of polls, Modi and Shah Saab got worried. They stopped talking about their manifesto, but are only abusing Congress

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE
AICC president

QUICKLY.

2024 Porsche Panamera makes its Indian debut

The 2024 Porsche Panamera has been launched in India with prices starting from ₹1.69 crore, ex-showroom. It's powered by a 2.9-litre turbocharged V6 petrol engine which makes 348 bhp and 50.98 kg-m. Like the latest-generation Cayenne, which was launched last year, the Panamera benefits from a new cabin, complete with a 12.6-inch instrument panel, a 10.9-inch touchscreen and a passenger display. The luxury sedan also gets a dual-chamber air suspension to ensure it doesn't just look smooth, it offers a smooth ride, too.

Isuzu updates the D-Max

Isuzu has launched a slightly updated version of the D-Max in the Indian market. There are three variants to choose from: Hi-Lander, V-Cross Z, and V-Cross Z Prestige. The pickup truck is priced at ₹21.19 lakh onwards and mechanically unchanged, it continues to be powered by a 1.9-litre diesel engine which makes 160 bhp and 36.70 kg-m. For this update, some of the exterior bits are now finished in grey whereas the wheels are painted black. On the inside, while no major alterations have been carried out, the rear bench is said to have more recline for a comfortable ride. Isuzu has updated the feature set of the D-Max and it now gets a three-point seat belt for all its passengers, accompanying which is a seat-belt reminder. The manual gearbox model now also gets traction control, stability control and hill assist.

2024 Maruti Suzuki Swift launched

Priced at ₹6.49 lakh, ex-showroom, onwards, the fourth-generation Maruti Suzuki Swift has been launched in the Indian market. An all-new car, the Swift is powered by a new three-cylinder 1.2-litre petrol engine, which makes 80.8 bhp and 11.4 kg-m. It now gets six airbags standard across the range, and the feature set includes a 9-inch infotainment unit, rear AC vents, connected car functionality, hill assist, ESP, analogue instrument panel with a 4.2-inch multi-info display, among others. The Swift can be specced with either a 5-speed manual gearbox or an automated manual transmission.

BMW announces M4 CS

BMW has unveiled a new iteration of the M4, positioned between the M4 Competition and the M4 CSL. It's called the BMW M4 CS, and owing to the presence of an all-wheel-drive system and lightweight carbon-fibre panels, it's now the fastest accelerating among all the current variants of the M4. It clocks in 0-100 km/h in just 3.4 seconds. Powering the car is the same engine as the M4 CSL, a 3-litre twin-turbo straight-six unit which makes 543 bhp and 66.28 kg-m. How light? It's said to be about 20 kg lighter than the M4 Competition xDrive. Not bad!

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Anubhav Sharma

Since its launch two years ago, the BMW iX has made momentous progress in the EV space. It's said to be the best-selling luxury EV in the Indian market, and for a car priced at upwards of a crore, that's quite something. Taking this momentum seriously, BMW has launched the flagship variant of the iX's line-up, one with more performance and a better range, the BMW iX xDrive50. We take this all-electric BMW for a spin, to find out if it can further the model's success, given that it retails for a slightly higher ₹1.39 crore, ex-showroom. From the larger 105.2 kWh battery, the BMW iX xDrive50 extracts a longer range at 635 km (claimed; WLTP), which, in comparison to the iX xDrive40, is an increment of 200 km. Impressive, but that's only until you hear about the power figures because the xDrive50 isn't the flagship variant for no reason. Powered by two motors, the all-electric arrangement develops 523 bhp and 78 kg-m, which, when compared to the xDrive40's numbers, represents a huge jump of nearly 200 bhp. This results in a 0-100 km/h time of 4.6 seconds. Now, that despite the SUV's 2.5-tonne weight, sounds exhilarating.

LOADED WITH FEATURES Since this is the flagship variant, BMW has loaded the iX xDrive50 much more than the lower-specced version, and



some of these inclusions are extremely useful. Like, for instance, air suspension transforms the way this SUV drives. Vegan leather is standard, too, and the overall mix of materials which look and feel great seems fitting for an upmarket cabin like this. Other bits which make the interior special are a panoramic sunroof, a Bowers &

Wilkins sound system, and of course, the hexagonal steering wheel. If they were to reinvent the wheel, maybe this wouldn't be a bad place to start... Not much has changed on the outside, but one thing's for sure, and that is the ease with which this BMW makes heads turn. Still polarising, the iX xDrive50 makes its flagship status known

with the presence of 22-inch alloy wheels and new paint schemes.

ENGAGING DRIVE To drive, the BMW iX xDrive50 feels pretty unreal. The surge of acceleration is what you'd expect from an electric car, but the way this 2.5-tonne SUV picks up pace is worth a standing ovation.

Toggle between different driving modes, and it's easy to select 'Sport' because it delivers the most smiles per kWh. The ADAS features are slightly oversensitive, especially for Indian traffic conditions, whereas the ride quality is even better than before. The charging abilities are improved as well: it accepts up to 22kW wall-box chargers and

up to 195 kW chargers at fast-charging stations. According to BMW, the former takes just under an hour to add 100 km to the range, whereas, a fast-charger will do that in just six minutes. Quite impressive, isn't it? The iX xDrive50 does a fair bit more than the xDrive40, and we're certain that's going to re-

flect in the upward sales chart that BMW has witnessed in the EV space. Plus there's not much taking away from the fact that you can now go faster, drive for longer and even announce your arrival while keeping a tight check on your carbon footprint. If that's not a win, then what is?

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Battle-Ready

TRUE TO ITS NAME. A new Gurkha is in town and it appears ready to take on its rivals head-on

Pablo Chaterji

To anyone in the market for a serious off-road SUV, the Force Gurkha is an easy recommendation. For it is, after all, something that's proven itself not just in the highly modified competition-ready form but also in the standard guise. The constant improvement over the last few years has seen this SUV shine despite it being a slightly less than adequate performer on well-surfaced tarmac. With the latest iteration, Force Motors has tried to widen the Gurkha's abilities, to turn it into a better road car, without taking away its off-road credentials. While at it, Force Motors has also introduced a model that was being awaited with bated breath: one with a longer wheelbase, two more doors, and an extra row of seats. We sample both the 3-door and the 5-door model to see if it can make space in this fairly niche segment, and more importantly, to gauge if Force Motors is indeed ready for when Mahindra launches the five-door iteration of the Thar.

DESIGN

The Gurkha isn't a new player in this game, it first arrived in 1997 with a slightly longer name, 'Trax Gurkha.' A thoroughly updated model was brought out in 2013, which is also when they began using the slightly over-the-top '4x4x4' moniker. It has since found a day job not just with the Indian armed forces but also in various countries in Africa, while being the off-roader of choice of keen enthusiasts. For a non-mass-market car to have such an impressive Curriculum Vitae isn't common, but then the Gurkha isn't the one to follow conventions. Having said that, with a 5-door/seven-seat model, Force Motors offers an SUV that fits the conventional definition of an everyday SUV well, too. It's not short on size: at 4390 mm long, 1865 mm wide and with its roof carrier in place, at over two metres in height. The design on the outside isn't too different from the 3-door sibling,



BIGGER AND BETTER. The Force Gurkha, now also available in a bigger 5-door guise, is better equipped for both on-road and off-road driving

although it doesn't get the large non-opening side glass panel. The 5-door also has a longer wheelbase, but the 3-door wins in the looks department. Regardless of how many doors your chosen Gurkha might have, it'll still be offered with the Mercedes-Benz G-Wagen-esque overall design, large 18-inch wheels, flared arches, windscreen guard and even a snorkel.

INTERIOR

Between the two models, there isn't a huge difference in the interior based on the looks, equipment, build and the excellent view from the driver's seat. The 5-door model is offered with the ability to seat seven people in total: the second row is a bench whereas the third row is comprised of two individual captain chairs. The 3-door model, on the other hand, doesn't have the luxury to seat as many people and has just a row of individual captain seats at the back. Surprisingly, though, the 5-door Gurkha's second row isn't the most comfortable and if the front seats are pushed back (not even completely), the second-row occupants will find it difficult not just to sit there but also to get in and out of the car. The third row isn't too bad; it doesn't lack in either space or comfort and as long as you are all right with climbing aboard from the rear. Similarly, in the 3-door model, the rear seats can be accessed via the back door, although the head room can be inadequate for some. Where the 3-door excels

again over the 5-door model is with the ability to carry more luggage — its boot space is rated at 500 litres, whereas the 5-door has not much space left in it with the last row up. The list of equipment is long enough to not make the Gurkha appear under-equipped: there's a powerful AC (the 5-door gets vents for the second row, too), a 9-inch touchscreen infotainment system, dual airbags, TPMS, cornering lamps, ABS with EBD, steering adjust for both reach and rake, a high-res digital instrument console, among others. That said, in terms of fit and finish, the Gurkha is far from ideal. A bit rough around the edges, the Gurkha's cabin isn't free from uneven panel gaps, and surprising for a new car, a handful of rattling bits already.

VEHICLE DYNAMICS

Following customer feedback, Force Motors wanted to change two things about the Gurkha: its low power output and the car's less-than-ideal vehicle dynamics — which is how it behaved on the road. Tackling the first issue, Force Motors has managed to extract more juice out of the Mercedes-Benz-sourced 2.6-litre, four-cylinder diesel engine. It now makes 138 bhp and 32 kg-m, a hefty increment over the previous 90 bhp or so. To improve the Gurkha's handling, Force Motors has given it an all-new independent front suspension. To see if the mentioned changes have made any difference to the Gurkha, we drove both the



3-door and 5-door models, over a variety of terrain. The first impressions aren't bad, as the car feels quite robust on the move, although you can feel the left in its control weights, too: the clutch, steering and gear lever, all need some effort. Quite the opposite is the engine's behaviour, which, with more power than before, has made the Gurkha more tractable, especially with the peak torque available between 1400 and 2600 rpm. This reduces the need to shift gears constantly, while reaching high-way speeds and cruising is improved drastically.

DRIVING EXPERIENCE

The Gurkha showcases great improvements in the way it handles corners. This is for the 3-door model; the 5-door version doesn't feel as docile — it's like an old SUV, with a fair bit of unwanted body movements. At over 300 kg lighter than the 5-door, it's understandable why the 3-door gets our vote among the two, as far as driving goes. Thankfully, both absorb road undulations equally well, giving a hint that if you want to enjoy your Gurkha to the fullest, an off-road trail is where you ought to be heading... There's no questioning the Gurkha in terms of its off-road prowess, regardless of the model you choose. The 3-door model seems more fitting, with its slightly shorter wheelbase, but the 5-door is also well-equipped. There's shift-on-the-fly 4WD (which means you can engage 4WD on the

move), two lockable differentials (front and rear), and even 4-low gearing for even more challenging situations. Force Motors claims that the Gurkha can wade through water up to 700 mm deep, it has 233 mm of ground clearance, and even the various off-road-focused specs are impressive. It has an approach angle of 39 degrees, a departure angle of 37 degrees and a ramp break over angle of 28 degrees. In addition to that, the Gurkha is equipped to tackle grad-ability of 35 degrees.

VALUE PROPOSITION

Now comes the most important question pertaining to the Gurkha and that is whether or not it can be a good everyday car. Priced at ₹16.75 lakh onwards for the 3-door and ₹18 lakh onwards for the 5-door, the Gurkha isn't going to be a cheap car to buy. In its favour are its off-road capabilities, which to a large extent, justify the premium over what you'd pay for the Thar, considering the Thar doesn't come as well-equipped in terms of off-roading gear. The latest upgrades haven't just made it easier to live with, they've also widened the car's appeal, which is further aided by the introduction of a 5-door model. All this combined, the Gurkha, which was never on its back foot when it came to tackling rivals, seems readier than ever. The more important question now is: are you ready to take the proverbial leap of faith?

© Motoring World



QUITE IMPRESSIVE. The BMW iX xDrive50's superb cabin leaves a lasting impression



PHOTO: SHUBHAM S

ND-NDE

Prudent move

RBI's proposal for tighter infra lending norms welcome

The Reserve Bank of India's draft guidelines on project financing have created a ripple of anxiety among lenders and infrastructure players, with many of the industry groups approaching the regulator to relax the rules. The bone of contention is the proposal that lenders should make a general provision of 5 per cent of the outstanding loans in all existing as well as fresh project loans. Lenders are of the opinion that this will reduce the funds available for giving credit and will increase the cost of project financing.

While the provisioning by lenders could go up a little, the central bank's move seems to be guided by prudence. The higher provisioning is a pre-emptive action which will prevent risks from building-up in bank balance sheets. The cautious stance adopted by the central bank is influenced by past lending mishaps, notably during 2004 to 2008, when large loans given to infrastructure projects turned into bad loans, severely impairing bank balance sheets. Financing large infrastructure projects continues to be a risky proposition given their long duration and the numerous uncertainties which can derail the execution. RBI's latest Financial Stability Report notes that GNPA for infrastructure, excluding electricity, was at an elevated level of 4.9 per cent as of September 2023. GNPA in the construction sector was higher, at 8.7 per cent. Corporates could be waiting for political uncertainty around the general elections to end before embarking on capital expenditure. The central bank is right in tightening the rules for project lending at this juncture, so that the future growth in private capital investment is smooth.

The fears among lenders regarding the capex cycle getting impeded by these rules are largely unfounded. Once demand improves, private sector will come forward to make investments, regardless of the small jump in finance cost. With the interest rates set to trend lower in the coming months, finance cost will move down anyway. Also, the central bank is not asking banks to increase the provisioning from the current 0.4 per cent to 5 per cent immediately. The provisioning has to increase gradually by 1.5 per cent every year, to reach 5 per cent by March 2027. That said, the central bank should take the feedback from industry and other stakeholders regarding the 5 per cent limit and calibrate it lower if required. Similarly, the timeline for making the provision can also be extended, if considered necessary.

The tighter regulations could turn out to be a boon if it makes borrowers look for alternate project financing avenues. The longer tenure of project finance results in asset-liability mismatch in banks since their deposits are typically of shorter duration. Shifting borrowers to the NaBFID (National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development), which finances loans for longer duration is a good option. Allowing infrastructure companies to tap the bond market with long duration bonds is another option which can be encouraged.

POCKET



CAPITAL IDEAS.
RICHA MISHRA

In May 2014, when Piyush Goyal took over as Minister of State (Independent Charge) of Ministries of Power, Coal and New & Renewable Energy, he had said that one of his major priorities is to de-bottleneck the system and ensure fast delivery. But as luck would have it, soon after he assumed office he found himself dealing with Northern grid failure, which was mainly due to poor infrastructure — weak transmission network. Since then, successive power ministers have continued with the reform process in the power sector. Measures have been taken to correct the situation and average availability of power has increased to 22.5 hours in rural areas and to 23.8 hours in urban areas, according to government data. AT&C losses in power sector have come down due to reforms in revamped distribution sector scheme to help distribution utilities (Discoms) improve their operational efficiencies and financial sustainability. One of the key contributors to the Modi-led NDA getting a second term was promises of rural electrification and subsequently the promise of electricity in every household. According to the Power Ministry, in the 10-year NDA reign, from a power deficient situation we are now in a power self-sufficient state, thanks to the substantial generation capacity added. Substantial transmission capacity has also been added, it said. Earlier this year, RK Singh, Minister of Power and New & Renewable Energy, had said that the power sector in India rewards its customers, adding that the government was racing to add electricity capacity to meet the growing demand. Singh had further said that “we are the only country to have brought in general network access...” Singh had also claimed that he has tried to insulate the system and to curb the practice of making electricity a part of political parties' freebies. But critics would say that is easier said than done. During election time, promises are made across sectors.

LAST MILE ISSUES
The challenge that remains for any government in this sector is the last mile connectivity — that is to ensure a healthy sub transmission and distribution network which can flow power from producer to distributor to the consumer with ease. According to Power Ministry statement of January 2024, during 2023, 14,390 ckm of transmission lines, 61,591 MVA of transformation capacity and 4,290 MW Inter-regional Transfer



The power situation has improved in the last decade. But there is a tangle with respect to distribution, transmission issues

Capacity have been added. In the last nine years, with the addition of 1,87,849 ckm (64.48 per cent increase), the transmission network of 4,79,185 ckm has evolved as the largest national synchronous grid in the world. The total inter-regional capacity to transfer power from one region to another has been enhanced to 1,16,540 MW (224.17 per cent increase) from 35,950 MW in the last nine years. But herein lies the challenge. India has huge ambitions in energy transition and plans to have 500 GW of non-fossil based electricity installed capacity by 2030.

RENEWABLE PLANS
The Ministry of Power had constituted a high level committee under the Chairperson, Central Electricity Authority with representatives from Solar Energy Corporation of India, Central Transmission Utility of India Ltd, Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd, Grid-India, National Institute of Solar Energy, and National Institute of

Despite the impressive milestones achieved in generation and transmission, last mile connectivity remains a challenge

Wind Energy for planning the transmission system required for having 500 GW of non-fossil fuel based installed capacity by 2030. The Committee prepared a detailed Plan titled “Transmission System for Integration of over 500 GW RE Capacity by 2030”. The Plan has identified major upcoming non-fossil-based generation centres in the country, which include potential RE Zones in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, Maharashtra, RE park in Ladakh etc. and based on these potential generation centres, transmission systems have been planned. The transmission plan also includes transmission system required for evacuation of 10 GW off-shore wind located in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. The plan provides broad transmission system requirement for having about 537 GW of Renewable Energy capacity by the year 2030. However, the challenge is evacuation of renewable energy — transmission availability. The location of the sub-station to lift the power makes a difference for small players in the sector to succeed. Ideally, sub-station should be located within 5-10 km. However, the actual location may substantially vary from the projected location. Since the IPP is responsible to connect transmission lines till the substation, the cost of laying

transmission lines increases if the sub-station is located from the acquired land. The development of transmission infrastructure — challenges persist with the dominant role of PSU — holding 60-70 per cent market share, which deter private players due to mismatched return requirements, according to the industry. Connectivity - Access to grid continues to be a challenge. Many States have not invested in upgrading their grids. Despite the Centre's initiative for a unified national grid, varied State regulations and infrastructure deficiencies persist, hampering the seamless flow of renewable energy. Streamlining processes and investing in grid upgrades are essential to facilitate timely project commissioning and maximise renewable energy utilisation. And above all, availability of land and potential litigation issues are also major hurdles. In case of remote locations, the transmission infrastructure required to move power generated to consuming centres also increases costs for the IPP. All these plus high transmission and distribution losses, which are more due to political factors, end up burning a hole in the consumer's pocket. These make all reform efforts seem half baked. For any government to fully succeed in this sector some harsh decisions need to be taken.

Better prospects ahead for IoT start-ups

A manufacturing rebound and pressure to decarbonise factories and buildings may widen IoT start-ups' clientele

Bharti Krishnan
The Internet of Things (IoT) revolution, now a decade old in India, promised to digitise factories and buildings, aiming to reduce their maintenance and energy costs. These expenses typically make up to 30 per cent of operational costs, making technology-driven scalable solutions for cost reduction a significant opportunity. Over the past decade, numerous start-ups such as Ecolibrium Energy, Faclon Labs, Minion Labs, 75F, Zenatix Solutions, and Nebeskie Labs have utilised IoT and data analytics to offer asset maintenance and energy cost reduction solutions. However, very few have scaled up with revenues exceeding even ₹50 crore. Consequently, there's a scarcity of venture-backed companies in this sector. Yet, shifting industry dynamics, including a rebound in the manufacturing sector and mounting pressure to decarbonise factories and buildings, may provide IoT start-ups with fresh momentum for growth. Industrial automation, commonly known as Industry 4.0, encompasses start-ups offering asset management solutions for commercial real estate buildings and factories by digitizing

machinery and systems. They connect existing machinery with sensors to collect operational data on machinery, energy consumption, air and water quality, and other critical aspects. This data is then analysed to provide insights on energy consumption and machinery health, enabling facility managers to take timely action. This approach is typically offered through the Software as a Service (SaaS) model, with start-ups being paid a portion of the savings accrued by clients. However, these young companies have found it difficult to find the right customer segment. Industry 4.0 solutions are typically targeted at large commercial buildings and energy-intensive industries, who need a wide variety of solutions apart from energy efficiency, and hence prefer to either work with automation majors such as Schneider Electric, Honeywell, or with consulting companies. On the other hand, mid-sized companies are not keen to incur upfront expenses in sensors. Despite these challenges, several factors indicate potential avenues for growth. For example, with reducing emissions becoming crucial, there's a separate budget for energy savings, especially for large real estate companies pursuing green certifications. Additionally, there's a surge in smart



IoT. The future of industry/ISTOCKPHOTO
manufacturing, with aggregators such as Zetworks and Karkhana.io outsourcing manufacturing to mid-size SMEs, potentially making digitalization more cost-efficient. Start-ups are also working on reducing the upfront investment required by their clients in sensors and innovating on the business models. For example, Bangalore-based Clairco is proposing to manufacture its own sensors and offer energy efficiency as a service, thus eliminating the need for clients to make any investments in sensors. Similarly, Hyderabad-based Zodhya went back to the drawing board to reduce the fixed investment needed to install its AI-based plug-in that optimizes energy efficiency. Additionally, automation companies and facility management companies are

partnering with start-ups to leverage their expertise and explore new markets. For example, 75F has raised investment from Siemens AG, and Zenatix Solutions has been acquired by Schneider Electric. Recently, Panasonic India also started Panasonic Ignition, an accelerator program to identify start-ups that offer energy management solutions in commercial spaces. Similarly, facility management firm JLL runs Idea Labs, a program to identify and nurture start-ups who offer building management solutions. Investors are taking note too. Recently, Pavestone VC invested in the Series A round of LivNSense, which offers IoT-based solutions to reduce GHG emissions of global companies in “hard-to-abate” sectors like cement and asphalts, metals, mining, heavy engineering, and Petro-chemical manufacturing industries. Also, Accel Partners recently picked Industry 5.0 as a theme for its latest batch of AccelAtoms, a programme to nurture and fund early stage start-ups. As such, there is reason for optimism for Indian IoT start-ups. Let us hope that this time, we see the emergence of a few large companies.

The writer is founder of FineTrain, a boutique investment bank for climate start-ups.

✉ **LETTERS TO EDITOR** Send your letters by email to bleditor@thehindu.co.in or by post to 'Letters to the Editor', The Hindu Business Line, Kasturi Buildings, 859-860, Anna Salai, Chennai 600002.

‘Uniform’ policy
This refers to the article “The value of workplace uniforms” (May 10). The effect of uniforms on productivity, teamwork, and sense of belonging depends on the organisational culture and the top management leadership style because uniforms are enablers, not drivers. If the organisation emphasises egalitarian culture, then wearing the same uniform by all employees will foster team cohesiveness. A bone of contention arises about who bears the cost — the company or the workforce. It becomes a

critical factor in large entities. If supplied free, withdrawal of the same may be difficult. A final decision should be taken by weighing all parameters including the need for them in matters of safety and functionality.
YG Chouksey
Pune
Rural demand woes
The focus was on the rural economy during the sixties. Early Five year Plans were highly rural oriented, till urban might usurped central resources for itself. Rural infrastructure that could have

sustained income levels throughout the year was put on the back burner for years. The result, relentless mass migration of rural labour to urban work hubs. The Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2022-23 is revealing. The rural average monthly consumption spending per person was ₹3,773 against ₹6,459 for the urban. The real income of farm families is the real indicator of agri growth. There has to be avenues for non-farm income in villages to even out seasonal earnings. The rural sector deserves to be raised from

the existential to the aspirational.
R Narayanan
Navi Mumbai
Air turbulence
Indian airline industry is facing turbulence and Air India is not an exception to this. Airlines are facing several challenges and flyers are hit by high fares. Though the turbulence seems to be over for now for the Air India Express, the flight cancellations and the persistent HR challenges within the Indian aviation sector remain.
Jayanthi Subramaniam
Mumbai

Tax compliance
Appropos the article on the subject, despite the substantial hike in IT collections in 2023-24, there is no doubt that there are huge disparities in the income levels. Certainly, increased compliance by collection of data from various sources and the information flowing through GST has helped in higher reporting of income. Also, with buoyant stock market, increase in capital gains may also have contributed to the IT mop up, since long-term capital gains and dividend are also taxed.
Kasiraman Ramachandran
Chennai

QUICKLY.

LIC's April premium hits decade high of ₹12,384 cr



New Delhi: Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) on Friday said its premium collection in April was ₹12,384 crore, the highest for the month since 2014. Quoting Life Insurance Council's latest figures, the insurance behemoth said the total premium collected by LIC in April 2024 was ₹12,383.64 crore —113.14 per cent higher than the ₹5,810.10 crore premium collected the same month a year ago. **PTI**

Chola Finance Holdings Q4 PAT surges 27%

Chennai: Cholamandalam Financial Holdings Ltd. reported a 26.9 per cent increase in consolidated profit after tax at ₹1,143.75 crore for the March 2024 quarter. The company's net profits for the year ending March 31, 2024, grew by 37 per cent to ₹3,850.56 crore. **PTI**

Non-life insurance firms' premium collection up 13% in FY24

Press Trust of India
New Delhi

As many as 42 general insurance companies garnered a premium income of ₹2,89,738 crore in 2023-24, around 13 per cent higher than that of the year ago. Non-life insurance industry had collected a premium of ₹2,56,894 crore in the preceding year, according to data posted by General Insurance Council. Of this, 35 general insurance firms reported an increase of 14 per cent in their premium at ₹2,45,433 crore during the year against ₹2,14,833 crore in the previous year. Five standalone health insurers together collected a premium of ₹33,116 crore during the year, up 26 per cent from ₹26,244 crore a year earlier, the data showed.

BoB reports muted growth in Q4 net at ₹4,886 cr due to multiple headwinds

SILVER LINING. Total business crosses ₹24-lakh crore milestone; declares dividend of ₹7.60/equity share

Our Bureau
Mumbai

Bank of Baroda (BoB) reported a muted net profit (standalone) growth in the fourth quarter at ₹4,886 crore against ₹4,775 crore in the year-ago quarter. One-off provisions towards employee cost and an aviation sector account, and lower net interest income growth weighed on the bottomline in the reporting quarter. The board of directors of the public sector bank recommended a dividend at ₹7.60 per equity share (face value ₹2 each fully paid up) for FY24. Debadatta Chand, MD & CEO, BoB, emphasised that this is the fifth consecutive quarter that the bank has announced net profit in excess of ₹4,000 crore and the asset quality is much better as compared to last year. The total business (depos-

its plus advances) crossed the ₹24-lakh crore milestone. Net interest income/NII (difference between interest earned and interest expended) nudged up 2.30 per cent yoy to ₹11,793 crore (₹11,525 crore in Q4FY23). Chand attributed the slow growth in NII to increased cost pressures on account of deposits. NON-INTEREST INCOME Total non-interest income, comprising fee income (loan processing charges, miscellaneous fee income, etc), forex income, profit or loss on sale/revaluation of investments, etc, rose about 21 per cent to ₹4,191 crore (₹3,466 crore). “We are focussing on fee and flow and this is showing traction in terms of non-interest income,” the BoB Chief said. In FY25, Chand expects global deposits (domestic



plus international) to grow 10-12 per cent (against 10.2 per cent in FY24). Further, global advances are seen growing 12-14 per cent (12.5 per cent). Ian De Souza, CFO, said the one-off provision of ₹400 crore has come in the employee cost line and one-off accelerated provision of ₹550 crore was for an aviation sector account. Analysts say the bank made provision for the troubled Go First Airline. It has an exposure of ₹1,700 crore to this airline. The BoB Chief said, in

Q4 SCORECARD

- Net interest income up 2.30% yoy to ₹11,793 crore
- Asset quality improves, with gross NPAs declining to 2.92% of gross advances as at March-end 2024
- Global advances rose 12.5% to ₹10,90,506 crore

the last couple of quarters, the bank made provisions for the non-ECLGS (Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme) component of the aviation sector account. But this quarter, it made provision for the ECLGS component (one-third of the total loan exposure) also. So, the account is full provided. “This account is highly

Bank of India Q4 profit rises 7% to ₹1,439 crore on higher net interest income, fall in total provisions

Our Bureau
Mumbai

Bank of India (BoI) reported a 7 per cent year-on-year (yoy) increase in fourth quarter standalone net profit at ₹1,439 crore, supported by growth in net interest income (NII) and decline in total provisions, including tax. The public sector bank had reported a net profit of ₹1,350 crore in the year ago quarter. Its board of directors recommended a dividend of ₹2.80 per equity share (face value ₹10 each fully paid up) for FY24. The board also approved capital raising up to ₹5,000 crore by issue of Basel III compliant Additional Tier 1 and Tier 2 bonds of ₹2,500 crore each. He observed that the



In FY25, the bank expects to grow advances by 13-14 per cent (against 13.52 per cent in FY24) and deposits by 12-13 per cent (10.21 per cent), said Rajneesh Karnatak, MD & CEO. The BoI chief underscored that the bank has a robust loan sanctions pipeline of about ₹50,000 crore. He observed that the

IN THE PIPELINE

- The board of directors recommended a dividend of ₹2.80 per equity share for FY24
- The board also approved capital raising up to ₹5,000 crore through the issue of Basel III compliant additional Tier 1 and Tier 2 bonds of ₹2,500 crore each
- The bank expects to grow advances by 13-14% and deposits by 12-13% in FY25

bank has a sanctions pipeline of ₹4-lakh crore, with private sector entities accounting for 75 per cent of these sanctions and public sector accounting for the rest. Surplus holding of statutory liquidity ratio securities stood at ₹3.5-lakh crore. NII RISES Net interest income/NII (difference between interest earned and interest

expended) was up 7 per cent yoy at ₹5,937 crore (₹5,523 crore in Q4FY23). Total non-interest income, comprising fee income (loan processing charges, miscellaneous fee income, etc), forex income, profit or loss on sale/revaluation of investments, etc, declined 43 per cent to ₹1,751 crore (₹3,099 crore). Net interest margin (whole bank) declined to 2.92 per cent in the report-

ing quarter from 3.15 per cent a year ago. While loan-loss provisions shot up 274 per cent to ₹2,043 crore, the bank received write-back from standard assets provisions (₹139 crore) as well as from non-performing investment provisions (₹78 crore). Tax burden was 63 per cent lower at ₹292 crore. Asset quality improved, with gross non-performing assets (NPAs) declining to 4.98 per cent of gross advances as at March-end 2024 against 5.35 per cent as at December-end 2023. Net NPAs nudged lower to 1.22 per cent of net advances from 1.41 per cent. As on March-end 2024, gross advances increased by 13.52 per cent yoy to ₹5,85,595 crore. Total deposits rose 10.21 per cent to ₹7,37,920 crore.

Union Bank of India Q4 net grows 19% to ₹3,310 crore

Our Bureau
Mumbai

Union Bank of India reported a 19 per cent year-on-year (yoy) increase in fourth quarter standalone net profit at ₹3,310.55 crore, supported by growth in net interest income (NII) and sharp decline in loan loss provisions. The public sector bank had reported a net profit of ₹2,782 crore in the year-ago quarter. Its board has recommended a dividend of ₹3.60 per equity share of ₹10 each for FY24. Net interest income/NII (difference between interest earned and interest expended) rose 14 per cent yoy to ₹9,437 crore (₹8,251 crore in Q4FY23). Total non-interest income, comprising fee income (loan

processing charges, miscellaneous fee income, etc), forex income, profit or loss on sale/revaluation of investments, etc, declined 11 per cent to ₹4,707 crore (₹5,269 crore). Loan-loss provisions declined 58 per cent to ₹1,485 crore (₹3,567 crore). ASSET QUALITY Asset quality improved, with gross non-performing assets (NPAs) declining to 4.76 per cent of gross advances as at March-end 2024 against 4.83 per cent as at December-end 2023. Net NPAs nudged lower to 1.03 per cent of net advances from 1.08 per cent. As on March-end 2024, gross advances increased by 14.29 per cent yoy to ₹8,70,776 crore. Total deposits rose 9.28 per cent to ₹12,21,528 crore.

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Extract of statement of consolidated audited financial results for the quarter and financial year ended 31 st March, 2024			
(₹ in Crores except per share data)			
Particulars	Quarter Ended		Year Ended
	31.03.2024	31.03.2023	31.03.2024
	Audited	Audited	Audited
Total Income from Operations	1,516.98	1,406.45	6,228.63
Net Profit for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/ or Extraordinary Items)	182.85	116.17	631.83
Net Profit for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/ or Extraordinary Items)	182.85	116.17	631.83
Net Profit for the period after tax attributable to shareholders of the Company (after Exceptional and/ or Extraordinary Items)	178.21	152.60	615.82
Total Comprehensive Income for the period	166.70	151.42	604.98
Equity Share Capital	39.31	39.31	39.31
Earning Per Share (Face Value of ₹ 2/- each) Basic & Diluted	9.07	7.76	31.33
Notes:			
1. Standalone details	Quarter Ended		Year Ended
	31.03.2024	31.03.2023	31.03.2024
	Audited	Audited	Audited
Income from Operations	1,474.55	1,307.12	5,874.06
Profit Before Tax	216.16	84.01	704.23
Profit After Tax	201.87	130.54	666.48
2. The above is an extract of the detailed format of the audited financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges. The detailed Financial Results are available on the Company's website at www.alembicpharmaceuticals.com and the Stock Exchange's website at www.nseindia.com and www.bseindia.com			
For Alembic Pharmaceuticals Limited			
Place: Vadodara			Sd/-
Date: 9 th May, 2024			Chairman and CEO
Note: The above results were also published yesterday. However, inadvertently, the details for the financial year ended 31 st March, 2024 was missed out and hence this publication.			

Blackstone-backed Nexus Select shopping for more malls

Janaki Krishnan
Mumbai

Blackstone-sponsored Nexus Select Trust is planning to acquire more malls in major and strategic locations across the country, as part of its overall plan to ramp up its presence not only geographically but, also in terms of area, at an average rate of 1-1.5 million square feet, annually. The mall-focused real estate investment trust has progressed significantly, in concluding the acquisition of three malls in Hyderabad with a total area of 1 msf. “Hopefully, if we get the government approvals, this should happen pretty soon,” Chief Executive Officer Dalip Sehgal told *businessline*. This acquisition was announced last year. “We are looking at both markets where we are present – that’s the first choice – and then somewhere we may not be represented,” Sehgal said. He pointed out that the REIT already has malls in Hyderabad and “having three more assets in Hyderabad, makes a lot of sense.”

PROSPECTIVE BUYS

The REIT, currently has a portfolio of 17 malls with a gross leasable area of around 10 msf across 14 cities. Sehgal said that prospective acquisitions could be in metro and non-metros. Its non-metro malls in Bhubaneswar and Mangaluru, were doing “very well”, he added. The trust had turned around many of the malls in its port-

“We now have a playbook that allows us to acquire and quickly stabilise the asset and then make it grow substantially more than its track record.”

“I think that model of acquisition and then setting the assets right, is working and I think that’s the route by and large that we wish to grow,” said Sehgal. He added a rider that if there was a good market and “no asset in that market that can be a possible acquisition target,” then it would even look to do a couple of greenfield sites, but that would be an exception rather than the rule.

DALIP SEHGAL
Chief Executive Officer



folio by getting good tenants and rejigging the profile. “We now have a playbook that allows us to acquire and quickly stabilise the asset and then make it grow substantially more than its track record.” In FY24, Nexus Select Trust reported net operating income at ₹1,760 crore, meeting its guidance, while tenant sales rose 13 per cent to ₹12,000 crore. In FY25, it has guided for a 9 per cent growth in NOI and 9-10 per cent higher payout. TENANTS Both domestic and international brands, were looking for more and larger spaces, Sehgal said. “They are all increasing stores.” Some of the existing brands are launching new formats such as Zara with Zara Home and H&M also with a home outlet. Direct-to-consumer brands such as Nykaa and Mamaearth, were also adding more stores as they expand their omnichannel reach. While supermarkets are shrinking, other formats are taking up larger spaces, Sehgal said. Footwear stores for instance, were looking at larger stores where they can have more merchandise and have better engagement with customers.

“Very clearly, I think that’s something that is possible going forward as well every year.” He added that it could be lumpy depending on the acquisition targets available and the time to conclude the deals. “But, I think the key really, is that we now have a playbook that allows us to acquire and quickly stabilise the asset and then make it grow substantially more

Sundaram-Clayton Limited

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CIN : U51100TN2017PLC118316

STATEMENT OF STANDALONE AND CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND PERIOD ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024

(₹ in Crores)

Sl. No.	Particulars	Standalone			Consolidated		
		Quarter ended	Quarter ended	Period ended	Quarter ended	Quarter ended	Period ended
		31.03.2024	31.12.2023	31.03.2024	31.03.2024	31.12.2023	31.03.2024
		Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited
1	Total Income	540.01	533.78	1,375.80	562.49	587.05	1,449.19
2	Net Profit / (Loss) before tax (before Exceptional Items)	29.59	28.70	88.80	(38.40)	(51.81)	(95.77)
3	Net Profit / (Loss) before tax (after Exceptional Items)	29.22	27.58	87.20	(38.77)	(52.93)	(97.37)
4	Net Profit / (Loss) after tax (after Exceptional Items)	20.73	17.61	64.52	(47.34)	(62.90)	(120.13)
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income / (Loss) (after tax)]	20.06	17.58	62.92	(48.01)	(62.93)	(121.73)
6	Equity share Capital (Face value of Rs.5/- each)	10.12	10.12	10.12	10.12	10.12	10.12
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	-	-	787.49	-	-	590.04
8	Security Premium Account	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	Networth	797.61	787.12	797.61	600.16	656.99	600.16
10	Outstanding Debt	975.78	861.46	975.78	1,417.37	1,305.72	1,417.37
11	Outstanding redeemable Preference Shares	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87
12	Net Debt Equity Ratio (Times)	1.22	1.08	1.22	2.34	1.94	2.34
13	Earnings Per Share (Face value of Rs.5/- each) (not annualised) (In Rs.)	10.25	8.70	31.89	(23.40)	(31.08)	(59.38)
	(i) Basic	10.25	8.70	31.89	(23.40)	(31.08)	(59.38)
	(ii) Diluted						
14	Capital Redemption Reserve	NOT APPLICABLE					
15	Debenture Redemption Reserve	NOT APPLICABLE					
16	Debt Service Coverage Ratio (Times)	2.00	1.81	2.07	0.40	0.11	0.32
17	Interest Service Coverage Ratio (Times)	5.22	5.20	5.91	0.97	0.57	1.07
18	Current Ratio (Times)	0.76	0.72	0.76	0.62	0.67	0.62
19	Long term debt to working capital (Times)	-	-	-	-	-	-
20	Bad debts to Accounts Receivable (Times)	-	-	-	-	-	-
21	Current Liability Ratio (Times)	0.64	0.68	0.64	0.61	0.59	0.61
22	Total debts to total assets Ratio (Times)	0.41	0.40	0.41	0.53	0.52	0.53
23	Debtors Turnover Ratio (Times)	6.58	6.58	6.61	8.49	8.10	8.15
24	Inventory Turnover Ratio (Times)	3.39	3.37	3.24	3.18	3.12	3.04
25	Operating Margin (%)	11.45	8.81	11.26	2.71	(1.35)	2.18
26	Net Profit Margin (%)	3.98	3.76	4.93	(8.46)	(11.22)	(8.38)

Notes:

- The above financial results were reviewed and recommended by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors at their meeting held on 10th May 2024. The statutory auditors of the Company have expressed an unmodified opinion on these financial results.
- The above is an extract of the detailed format of financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulations 33 & 52 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the financial results are available on the Stock exchange website www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com and on Company's website www.sundaram-clayton.com.

Date : 10th May, 2024

For Sundaram-Clayton Limited
Sd/-
R.Gopalan
Chairman

QUICKLY.

Sensex, Nifty rebound on strong global cues



Mumbai: Sensex and Nifty found firmer ground on Friday, propelled by a rally in Reliance Industries, ITC and Bharti Airtel amid a supportive trend overseas. However, unrelenting foreign fund outflows and investors' cautious approach capped the sharp gains, traders said.

TBO Tek IPO receives 86.70 times subscription

New Delhi: The IPO of TBO Tek was subscribed 86.70 times on the closing day of subscription on Friday. The ₹1,551-crore IPO received bids for 80,50,71,440 shares against 92,85,816 shares on offer, as per NSE data.

SBI Q4 results: Brokerages remain bullish

THUMBS UP. They have increased the target price on the stock and retained the 'buy' rating after the PSU posted record profits

Madhu Balaji Bengaluru

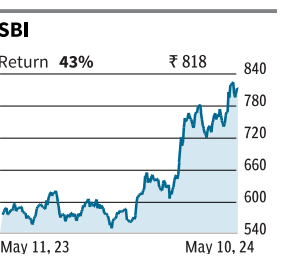
Majority of domestic and global brokerages have maintained their 'buy' call on SBI after India's largest PSU posted record profits. State Bank of India, after market hours on Thursday, reported its highest standalone quarterly net profit at ₹20,698 crore in Q4 FY24 on the back of robust growth in non-interest income.

The bank's decisive financial performance has boosted the confidence of analysts, who in turn have increased the target price up to ₹1,000.

Nomura has increased the target price on SBI stock, its top pick, to ₹1,000 from ₹825. Jefferies retained its 'buy' call and has



ON A HIGH. SBI reported its highest standalone quarterly net profit at ₹20,698 crore in Q4 FY24 on the back of robust growth in non-interest income



strong RoA/RoE at 1.1 per cent/17-18 per cent," it said. They retained 'buy' call with a revised target price of ₹950 from ₹750.

SWIFT RECOVERY Motilal Oswal has reiterated 'buy' call at a target price of ₹925. The brokerage noted that the bank has made swift recovery in earnings from a loss of ₹65 billion in FY18 to profits of ₹611 billion in FY24. "We also note that the cumulative profit of the bank over the past three years (FY22-

24) is equivalent to what the bank earned in the prior 20 years combined. We believe that SBIN is well positioned to deliver steady earnings, with FY26E RoA/RoE of 1.1 per cent/18.5 per cent," Motilal Oswal said in a report.

Prabhudas Lilladher remained positive on SBI although valuation has touched 1.3x given recent run-up, which limits upside.

"Rolling forward to March 26 ABV, we tweak multiple to 1.5x and raise SOTP-based target price to ₹910 from ₹770," the brokerage said retaining its 'buy' call.

However, Citi has maintained 'sell' call with a target price raised to ₹701.

Shares of SBI hit an all-time high on the NSE at 839.65 on May 9. The stock on Friday ended at ₹816.85, down by 0.36 per cent.

Aadhar Housing Finance IPO subscribed 25.49x on final day

Press Trust of India New Delhi

The IPO of Aadhar Housing Finance, which is backed by private equity major Blackstone, received 25.49 times subscription on the closing day of the share-sale on Friday. The ₹3,000 crore initial share-sale received bids for 1,78,65,45,247 shares against 7,00,89,373 shares on offer, according to the NSE.

The QIBs part fetched 72.78 times subscription and the portion for non-institutional investors got subscribed 16.50 times. The quota for Retail Individual Investors attracted 2.46 times subscription. The IPO of Aadhar Housing Finance is a combination of fresh issue of equity shares worth ₹1,000 crore and an OFS of ₹2,000 crore by promoter BCP Topco VII Pte Ltd, an affiliate of Blackstone Group.

SEBI findings on Manpasand, Add Shop-E Retail are disturbing

RINGSIDE VIEW.



KS BADRI NARAYANAN

Two recent orders by market regulator, the Securities and Exchange Board of India, on Manpasand Beverages Ltd (MBL) and Add Shop-E Retail are disturbing and reveal how promoters can go to any extent to manipulate the company's books to dupe the entire system.

According to SEBI, Manpasand created 38 bogus/paper firms to inflate its turnover, with inward and outward transactions with such bogus firms amounting to ₹188.48 crore and ₹691.30 crore, respectively. Further, Manpasand also used input

tax credit from fake invoices for payment of GST liabilities, resulting in a loss of GST revenue to the exchequer.

Mehra Goel & Co., statutory auditors, resigned on July 4, 2019, due to this investigation. After search and seizure proceedings by CGST, eight directors, including three independent directors, also resigned from their positions between May 25, 2019 and September 30, 2019.

Finquest Financial Solutions, a non-banking financial company that had sanctioned secured term loan of ₹100 crore to MBL, appointed Ernst & Young to carry out the due diligence as one of the conditions for disbursement of the loan. It was later brought to the notice of the Board that sales in-



voices, purchase invoices, production records and bank statements had not been made available by Manpasand to E&Y. The audit firm observed that the company entered into repetitive transactions with unexplained parties, the volume of which was extraordinarily high.

Subsequently, Batliboi & Purohit, appointed as statutory auditors in place of Mehra Goel & Co, also quit after the company did not allow its audit team members to enter the Vadodra factory for conducting a statutory audit.

"The forensic audit stood corroborated by other factors, it was apparent that the financial statements of MBL for FYs 2018-19 and 2019-20 were manipulated and the fig-

Chokshi & Chokshi LLP revealed overstatement of purchases, overstatement of sales, adjustment using tax invoices, ledger balances adjusted through 'Other JV entries', understatement of debtors, transactions with parties having same PAN, understatement of creditors, reimbursement of branding expenses and overstatement of expenses.

IRREGULARITIES Similarly, in an interim order, SEBI found that Add-Shop E-Retail and White Organics Agro engaged in irregularities pertaining to related party transactions, fake announcements regarding supply orders, etc. Besides, SEBI discovered that significant related-party transactions lacked proper audit committee approval.

The more shocking findings were circular transactions among ASERL, White Organics Agro and Dada Organics. They were booking sales and purchases without having any real stock from each other. It was found that WOAL, DO/DOL and ASERL rotated funds to settle the fake circular transactions booked by them. Add-Shop E-Retail was listed on the BSE-SME platform in September 2018 and moved to the main board in October 2020. The promoter's stake in the company dropped from 62.99 per cent in April 2020 to 27.2 per cent in December 2023.

In its response, ASERL said, "The management does not foresee any material impact on the financial/opera-

tion activities of the company, as the interim order cum show-cause notice based on misinterpreted facts and assumptions and shall be contested." The company will be reviewing the order and taking all necessary steps to take this to the logical conclusion and safeguard the interests of company and stakeholders at large, it further said.

CALL FOR VIGILANCE Recently in an "X" post, RPG Group Chairman Harsh Goenka said, "With a booming stock market, all the malpractices of Harshad Mehta/Ketan Parekh era are back primarily in Kolkata. Promoters are inflating profits (through profit entry) and in nexus with Gujarati-Marwari brokers driving their stock prices to unrealistic levels. It's

time for SEBI and @FinMinIndia to step in and investigate before small investors suffer severe losses."

The shocking revelation by SEBI indicates that Goenka's fear is not unfounded. Despite a lot of checks and balances and constant vigil from regulator, exchanges, government agencies and departments, companies still find loopholes and indulge in these activities.

One hopes the regulator takes strong action against the manipulators and gives them severe punishment. Besides, the auditors should also escalate the issues at the initial stages itself before the fraud grows manifold. Better communication among various agencies will help mitigate these wrongdoings at the outset.

BROKER'S CALL.

InCred Equities

TVS MOTOR (REDUCE) Target: ₹1,627 CMP: ₹2,056.10

TVS Motor Company's Q4-FY24 EBITDA rose 36 per cent y-o-y and was flat q-o-q at ₹930 crore, 9/5 per cent above our/Bloomberg consensus estimates, respectively. Lower raw material costs and other expenses helped improve the EBITDA margin by 13 bp q-o-q.

Adjusted for one-off subsidiaries' investment's mark-down loss of ₹46 crore, PAT growth of 2 per cent q-o-q was above our/Bloomberg consensus estimates. Management indicated net debt reduction of ₹1,000 crore in FY24 with the help of strong operating cash flow.

Investment in the subsidiaries stood at ₹310 crore in Q4, as their EBIT loss spiked to ₹200 crore.

The sustained domestic 2W market share gain by TVS Motor in recent times is impressive along with EV dominance, despite subsidy cuts. However, the worsening capital allocation policy is not factored in with the current rich P/E and P/BV valuations being above +2SD. New spending on Norton, management feels, will lead to new launches in FY26F.

We retain our Reduce rating on it with a higher SOTP-based target price of ₹1,627 or 30x FY26F EPS and TVS Credit's valuation at 1.5x P/BV.

Upside risk: Strong recovery in the domestic market or industry's export volume recovery.

Geojit Financial

ICICI PRU LIFE (BUY) Target: ₹670 CMP: ₹590

ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Co. Ltd. (IPRU), a joint venture between ICICI Bank and Prudential Corp. Holdings, offers life, health and pension products.

In Q4FY24, net premium income rose 17.1 per cent y-o-y to ₹14,788 crore, driven by robust growth in non-par life insurance, annuity non-par, and linked life. The annualised premium equivalent (APE) grew 9.5 per cent y-o-y in Q4-FY24, underpinned by a strong distribution network and digital support.

Value of New Business (VNB) declined 19.5 per cent y-o-y to ₹2,227 crore in FY24, and the VNB margin weakened to 24.6 per cent from 32 per cent in FY23. In the future, IPRU management aims to maintain the growing absolute VNB margin, as the effect of commission guidelines has already been factored in. A better product mix and strong customer demand should support VNB margin.

IPRU witnessed better business growth as a result of increased premium income and APE in Q4FY24. The company's continuous focus on strengthening its distribution network, product and process innovation, and digitalisation in business processes, is expected to boost future performance and provide a sustainable outlook on the stock.

Therefore, we retain our BUY rating on the stock, with a target price of ₹670 based on 1.7x FY26E EV

BSE to take steps to mitigate options volatility

Ashley Coutinho Mumbai



The BSE is taking steps to mitigate sudden spikes in options prices. The bourse had seen sudden spurts in two of its derivatives indices on February 2 and April 12, which has prompted the exchange to ramp up surveillance measures. It recently introduced what is called a "limit price protection", which will place restrictions on the price range for orders in the derivatives market.

In an analyst call earlier this week, the bourse's chief executive said such spikes were not unique to any particular product or any particular exchange and could not be blamed on system stability.

VOLATILITY SPURTS "If the order book is not very deep and the stop loss orders get triggered because of the change in volatility profile, trades happen at whatever prices that are available in the order book. And so you find the graph (of options strike prices) showing a sudden spurt and then coming back to normal. In the last 6-7 months, this behaviour during intraday volatility spurts has been seen in every exchange," MD and CEO S

Ramamurthy said. He said the exchange would continue in its efforts to ensure whatever best it could do to smoothen the volatile movements.

"Market movements are not in our hands. But the impact on the order books will reduce if we deepen and broaden the market. That's what we are focussing on," he said.

BSE has more than 400 members trading its derivative products, representing 36 lakh active clients. The aim is to increase this number to 600 in the coming months. Similarly, it wants to increase the number of foreign portfolio investors trading in its products to 250 from about 100 at present. It is in the process of allocating 100 co-location racks, which will be ramped up gradually as well.

The exchange also plans to make its foray into single stock futures from July 1.

Go Digit eyes ₹2,615 cr via IPO; sets price band at ₹258-272/share

Press Trust of India New Delhi

Go Digit General Insurance, a firm backed by Canada-based Fairfax Group, on Friday fixed a price band of ₹258-272 per share for its ₹2,615-crore initial public offering (IPO). The initial share-sale will open for public subscription during May 15-17 and the bidding for anchor investors will open for a day on May 14, the company announced.

Go Digit's proposed IPO comprises fresh issuance of equity shares worth ₹1,125

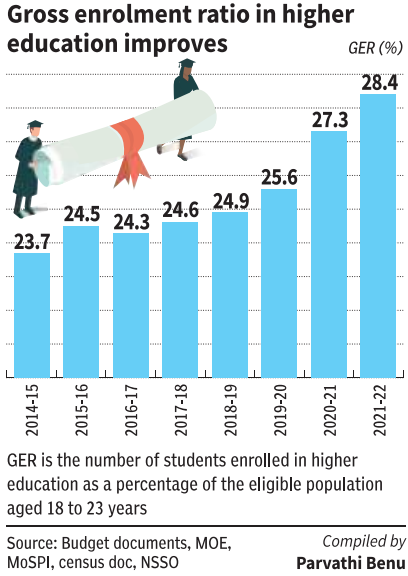
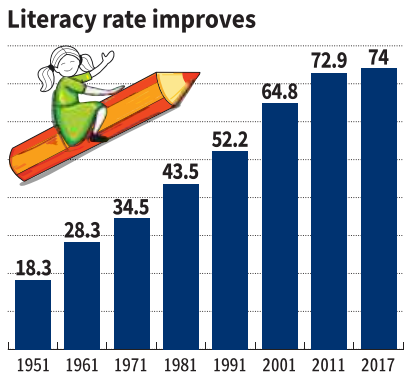
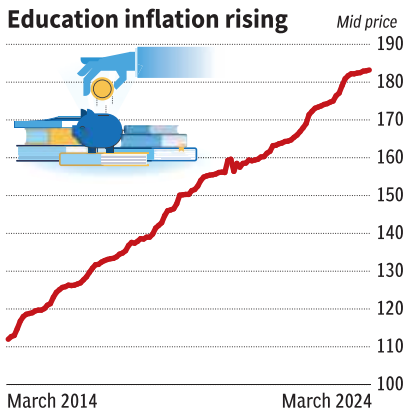
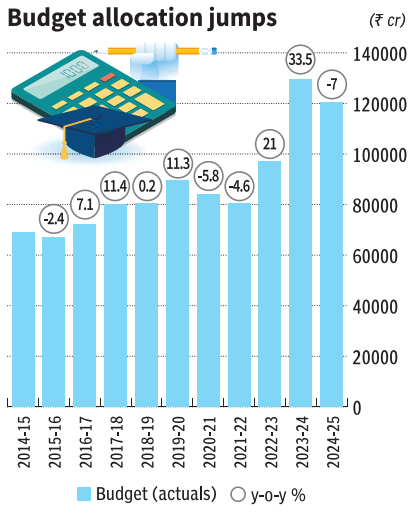
crore and an Offer-for-Sale (OFS) of 5.47 crore equity shares by promoter Go Digit Infoworks Services and existing shareholders worth ₹1,490 crore. This takes the total IPO size to ₹2,615 crore at the upper end of the price band.

At present, Go Digit Infoworks Services owns 83.3 per cent stake in the company. Proceeds from the fresh issuance have been proposed to be utilised for the augmentation of the company's capital base and maintenance of solvency levels and general corporate purposes.

The top 100												
Company	Prev	Close	Open	High	Low	Qty	52 W High	52 W Low	PE	BSE Close		
ABB India [2]	6985.10	7178.35	7040.00	7210.00	7030.00	509.59	7215.00	3809.40	122	7182.15		
ADANI ENERGY SOLUTION	980.05	990.55	980.05	999.70	970.50	745.96	1250.00	686.00	-			
Adani Ports [2]	1244.55	1266.75	1250.00	1278.70	1245.75	2022.40	1425.00	659.85	157	1266.40		
ADANI POWER	612.80	603.10	615.00	631.00	600.00	7610.88	647.00	214.00	12	603.10		
AdaniEntprse [1]	2766.65	2797.25	2794.95	2809.00	2760.45	2354.79	3349.35	1858.95	112	2799.20		
AdaniGreenFin	1712.15	1714.75	1730.05	1758.00	1700.05	2252.33	2016.00	816.00	-	1713.80		
AdaniInfra	878.55	867.05	879.60	889.00	858.55	887.02	1259.40	522.00	-			
AmbujaCement [2]	574.30	581.80	576.00	586.00	573.30	3039.66	649.00	395.95	49	581.75		
ApolloHosp [5]	5806.40	5842.45	5819.95	5881.00	5753.25	372.23	6871.30	4410.05	84	5834.10		
Asian Paints [1]	2710.10	2771.25	2699.00	2792.60	2670.10	2478.58	3566.90	2671.00	50	2772.80		
AvenueSupermkt.	4798.65	4798.80	4798.65	4852.00	4735.85	290.60	4892.20	3353.05	116	4794.70		
Axis Bank [2]	1115.65	1120.10	1123.70	1140.00	1113.35	7242.72	1182.80	889.05	14	1119.90		
Bajaj Auto	8846.85	8981.80	8950.00	9047.95	8906.50	482.80	9356.00	4450.00	34	8983.15		
Bajaj Hld	8383.55	8431.55	8401.90	8469.50	8270.00	16.63	9355.00	6259.00	32	8428.80		
BajajFin [2]	6605.15	6684.15	6638.90	6698.00	6601.20	824.91	8190.00	6190.00	33	6685.30		
BajajFinserv [1]	1564.60	1572.70	1560.00	1584.15	1556.00	768.12	1741.85	1397.15	215	1573.25		
BEL [1]	226.20	227.10	227.90	238.50	223.15	18478.58	241.50	105.75	46	227.05		
BergPattin [1]	481.25	490.25	487.00	492.40	478.00	1293.26	670.05	478.15	56	490.35		
Bharti Air [5]	1275.45	1301.15	1275.05	1308.50	1271.75	5532.51	1364.05	783.60	138	1302.60		
Bk of Bar [2]	262.65	254.85	265.70	266.70	248.35	3947.45	285.50	177.40	8	255.65		
Bosch	29881.70	30431.95	30200.00	30584.00	29753.50	30.55	31374.50	17925.40	53	30397.15		
BPCIL	592.15	618.65	615.00	621.95	601.55	22082.17	687.65	331.50	5	618.60		
Britannia [1]	5070.10	5066.80	5070.10	5118.20	4971.75	223.29	5386.25	4349.95	59	5068.60		
Canara Bk	545.50	548.15	550.00	557.20	540.70	7772.97	632.65	291.30	7	548.20		
ChennaiInfra [2]	122.20	122.65	123.45	127.90	122.65	2696.76	1352.90	985.00	31	126.80		
Cipla [2]	1358.80	1339.55	1371.35	1396.90	1317.25	5080.54	1519.00	897.70	29	1329.45		
Coal India	443.50	449.40	447.20	451.15	440.25	9190.62	487.75	223.30	18	449.40		
Colgate [1]	2765.90	2800.15	2775.00	2830.95	2767.00	361.78	2961.15	1567.65	60	2798.15		
Dabur [1]	552.80	550.80	550.95	551.95	540.35	2521.44	596.90	489.05	65	551.05		
DLF Labs [2]	3789.95	3793.50	3794.75	3831.35	3768.00	276.31	4104.00	3050.15	74	3791.95		
DLI Ltd [2]	836.90	825.85	843.00	844.40	817.40	4811.46	967.00	430.05	110	825.75		
Dr Reddy [5]	5877.35	5921.00	5875.00	5935.00	5818.10	296.18	6505.50	4383.40	23	5916.80		
Eicher Motor [1]	4568.05	4657.85	4590.00	4689.05	4556.40	471.15	4708.70	3159.20	36	4657.65		
GaII (India)	132.30	132.95	135.00	136.50	129.50	14080.31	213.70	1029.95	17	132.80		
Godrej Cons [1]	1330.90	1320.95	1335.40	1336.10	1313.55	621.71	1372.00	995.55	110	1320.95		
Grasim [2]	2353.70	2377.15	2359.95	2382.70	2322.00	890.72	2499.95	1623.65	106	2375.65		
HavellsIndia [1]	1673.55	1686.75	1675.00	1695.00	1661.20	802.84	1706.70	1231.10	83	1686.95		
HCL Tech [2]	1320.05	1316.20	1320.10	1322.90	1303.60	3357.20	1696.50	1063.01	31	1316.25		
HDFC Bank [1]	1447.50	1437.90	1439.00	1451.95	1426.80	13638.30	1757.80	1363.45	18	1437.60		
HDFCLifeIns	539.55	548.55	542.80	553.80	539.55	7524.78	710.60	538.10	75	549.10		
HeroMoto [2]	4764.90	4877.40	4788.60	4954.35	4774.80	1520.30	4979.95	2575.85	24	4877.25		
Hindalco [1]	619.40	625.60	620.10	629.55	618.00	4364.79	661.30	398.05	45	625.65		
HindustanAero [5]	3846.65	3872.90	3860.00	3907.70	3820.65	1462.53	4045.20	1474.35	42	3872.60		
HUL [1]	2325.65	2362.55	2321.00	2371.00	2310.00	2610.27	2768.50	2170.25	54	2357.10		
ICICI Bank [2]	1115.70	1117.05	1118.00	1128.90	1112.05	8573.66	1169.30	898.85	19	1116.70		
ICICILombIC	1551.55	1661.50	1664.00	1695.45	1647.05	478.77	1747.40	1066.65	43	1661.95		
INDIAN RAILWAY FIN CORPL	147.05	148.05	147.75	149.55	142.45	27205.06	192.80	31.20	-			
IndianOilCor	156.60	158.95	158.50	160.15	155.55	24021.57	196.80	83.35	6	158.95		
IndusInd Bk	1401.45	1410.15	1402.00	1424.50	1395.55	1575.17	1694.35	1169.60	12	1409.60		
INFO EDGE (I)	5952.05	6027.40	5955.00	6050.00	5865.15	280.51	6355.00	3701.25	95	6020.70		
Infosys [5]	1439.55	1424.90	1435.05	1435.95	1413.00	8777.48	1731.00	1239.00	22	1425.15		
InttGlobalAviat	4045.35	4019.20	4040.05	4045.35	3990.75	694.96	4188.15	2223.70	22	4016.75		
I-ProLifeINS	578.25	591.75	580.00	593.85	577.55	1276.60	640.80	420.10	96	591.65		
ITC [1]	986.10	995.55	988.35	1003.95	983.00	1307.76	1076.45	604.10	-			
IRTC	425.10	433.35	426.50	436.55	426.50	13985.96	499.60	399.20	36	433.20		
ISIRI S&P [1]	921.30	930.55	930.55	936.95	915.95	613.09	930.00	799.00	19	930.30		
JO FIN SERVICES	345.40	347.85	346.40	349.00	336.80	24450.32	94.70	204.25	-			
JSWSteel [1]	834.55	853.60	835.95	855.95	835.95	1947.30	913.95	681.30	21	853.80		
Kot.Mah.Bk [5]	1643.10	1627.95	1643.00	1653.10	1615.90	11769.40	2063.00	1544.15	24	1630.50		
L&T [2]	3275.45	3271.45	3281.60	3316.00	3234.90	4132.19	3859.65	2168.50	50	3271.35		
LtC of India	902.15	910.95	920.00	934.90	902.15	2853.40	1175.00	55.10	-			
L'INDEMITRELTRO	4658.00	4607.65	4649.95	4649.95	4556.60	315.82	6442.00	4490.00	-			
M&M [5]	2212.55	2193.05	2211.85	2231.65	2183.00	3045.91	2256.75	1238.00	25	2192.70		
Maruti Ltd [1]	581.35	587.15	581.00	588.50	574.20	1775.30	598.20	486.75	70	587.20		
Maruti [5]	12504.65	12675.50	12505.00	12696.95	12501.00	328.67	13066.85	8964.90	30	12676.30		
MetallurgIndia [1]	2512.45	2533.20	2514.55	2545.95	2503.45	61.42	2533.00	2477.70	77	2533.20		
NATPC	346.05	355.90	347.60	356.35	347.55	11699.10	380.40	171.90	35	355.70		
ONGC [5]	265.25	270.25	267.00	271.20	264.45	9530.74	292.95	150.70	9	270.15		
PNV	418.05	417.65	423.00	425.30	407.70	14527.46	485.30	127.44	10	417.75		
PidiliteInd [1]	2837.35	2919.95	2865.95	2937.00	2845.10	55.15	3116.00	2293.10	83	2919.60		
PowerGrid	296.15	303.75	296.25	304.45	296.25	11786.98	317.40	172.54	18	303.90		
Pun.Nat.Bk [2]	122.15	123.90	123.90	124.75	120.50	45163.17	142.90	48.07	16	123.85		
RECL	511.30	513.85	517.05	519.25	512.90	19170.56	567.05	127.40	10	513.40		
Reliance	2788.25	2814.85	2793.50	2820.00	2776.15	5252.55	3024.80	2193.12	45	2815.15		
SambaMtnInt	125.50	127.60	126.10	128.50	125.35	14351.34	133.40	75.30	-			
SBICard [1]	815.90	817.35	815.90	822.05	815.90	269.00	817.00	815.90	11	818.35		
SBICards&Pay	710.40	720.05	720.15	722.10	709.70	838.30	933.00	678.90	-			
SBIHdfcInsur	1422.40	1431.95	1425.00	1438.50	1415.75	741.29	1571.55	1142.80	76	1432.15		
ShreeCements	2550.75	2566.25	2560.00	2583.10	2537.00	24.37	3071.15	2260.10	39	2570.05		
SHRIRAM FINANCE	2360.90	2344.35	2374.00	2406.70	2331.10	2196.93	2658.00	1306.00	-			
Siemens [2]	6130.20	6118.65	6165.15	6208.30	6068.55	429.17	6330.00	2648.40	113	6170.05		
SRF	2291.35	2278.05	2280.00	2347.40	2256.00	1259.05	3297.45	2050.00	49	2276.95		
Sun Pharma [1]	1494.65	1506.55	1494.65	1526.45	1491.00	1528.49	1638.70	922.55	88	1506.25		
Tata Motors [2]	1030.30	1046.65	1037.00	1050.35	1030.40	13383.18	1065.60	504.75	58	1046.85		
TataSteel [2]	161.90	162.25	163.20	164.35	161.85	3147.42	170.70	104.10	12	162.35		
VEDL&NIPERAGES [5]	1085.05	1090.95	1085.05	1095.25	1085.05	1067.45	1550.30	543.35	104	1085.05		
Vedanta [1]	394.65	410.70	397.00	411.85	395.25	11076.42	420.00	207.85	80	410.70		
Wipro [2]	413.50	415.85	415.05	425.15	405.30	3327.36	546.10	375.00	26	415.70		
Zomato	195.25	201.30	196.35	205.00	189.90	52717.90	205.00	60.30	-			
ZydusLifeScn	968.20	982.15	970.00	990.00	968.70	1020.70	1033.00	484.95	-			

VISUALLY.

State of education



Bold promises in education, but gap in delivery needs attention

LEARNINGS. More action, increased investments vital to address the challenges facing the system

Abhishek Law
New Delhi

In February, amidst bold promises for transforming education, Education Minister, Dharmendra Pradhan, unveiled the Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. This initiative aimed to establish a unified student identification system under 'One Nation, One Student ID'.

Shortly after, the BJP's manifesto echoed this commitment, pledging to implement 'One Nation, One Student ID' alongside plans to strengthen prestigious educational institutions like IITs, IIMs and AIIMS through increased funding, capacity building and dedicated research grants.

In her 2024-25 Budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman highlighted the establishment of seven new IITs, 16 IIITs, 3,000 ITIs, 390 universities, 15 AIIMS and seven IIMs between 2014 and 2024.

However, despite these promises, critics argue that the government's investment in education remains stagnant at around 2.8-3 per cent of GDP, far below 6 per cent recommended by the Kothari Commission in 1967. The National Education Policy 2020 aims for a 10 per cent allocation within 10 years, but progress has been slow.

"Like its predecessor governments, the BJP government has not stepped up the pedal on public spending on education. It is nowhere near that 6 per cent of the GDP mark. There is a concerted push towards privatisation of education sector so that it goes out of reach of masses, and curriculum is saffronised," Bikash Bhattacharyya, CPI (M)'s Rajya Sabha MP, told *businessline*.

STATUS REPORT

The Annual Status of Education Report by Pratham Education Foundation, said over half of class V children in primary schools of rural India can't read class II texts or manage simple mathematics. Among teens in the 14-18 age group, over 25 per cent cannot read a class II level textbook fluently in their regional language.

According to India Employment Report 2024 released by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Institute of Human Development (IHD), India's youth account for almost 83 per cent of the unemployed workforce. And the share of youngsters with secondary or higher education in unemployed youth almost doubled from 35.2



A MAJOR STEP. The NEP mandates a shift from traditional learning to experiential learning and promotion of usage of new digital technologies in school education LAKSHMINARAYANAN E

per cent in 2000 to 65.7 per cent in 2022.

"There have been some gaps between promises and their delivery. But, reforms have been initiated. The introduction of NEP, the largest reform ever, is a key step," an official said.

NEP 2020

The NEP mandates a shift from traditional learning (systems) to experiential learning, compulsory vocational education, exam reforms to test children's conceptual comprehension, creativity and critical thinking capabilities rather than memory, and promotion of new digital technologies usage in school education.

The NCERT also released a National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023. It proposes school-leaving class X and class XII board exams be held twice a year (so that students have enough time and opportunity to perform well). Twice-a-year board exams will be rolled out in 2025-26.

According to Aman Singh, Co-Founder, GradRight, the NEP & Setting Up and Operation of Campuses of Foreign Higher Educational Institutions in India Regulations, 2023 offer unique and unprecedented opportunity.

"Given that education is on the 'Concurrent List', the success of these policies and regulations will depend on how closely the government at the Centre and State can work together in implementing these new ideas," he said. However, the ambitious overhaul of school education faces fierce backlash. There are controversies over textbook revisions and allegations of ideological bias in curriculum development.

HIGHER EDUCATION

In the higher education sector, measures like introduction of the four-year undergraduate programme; a national ABC (academic bank of credits) digital repository to facilitate certified multiple exit and re-entry options; and notification of regulations permitting foreign universities to establish

brick-n-mortar campuses in India show promise. "But there is a problem. Most foreign universities operate on a for-profit basis, where as in India, the pitch or policy framework is inclined towards a not-for-profit basis. This discourages foreign universities," said an educationist.

Also, other challenges such as teacher vacancies, brain drain, and the gap between Indian and global educational standards persist.

BUDGET REALITIES

Fiscal constraints too cast a long shadow. Allocation for education for FY25 is 7 per cent lower than the revised estimates for FY24. The sector is earmarked ₹1.2 lakh crore against revised estimates of ₹1.29 lakh crore, the biggest allocation ever.

The Department of School Education will receive ₹73,000 crore and the allocation is ₹47,619.77 crore for higher education. The higher education sector sees a 16 per cent cut this year, though the allocation for school education has increased.

Funding for UGC has been brought down to ₹2,500 crore. However, the grants for Central universities saw an increase of over ₹4,000 crore with ₹15,928 crore allocated for 2024-25.

Overall, while there have been initiatives and reforms, critics argue that meaningful action and increased investments are needed to address the challenges facing the education system.

This is the 22nd article in the '10 years of NDA' series

EXPERT SPEAK.

'Education is now being taken over by private sector'

Abhishek Law
New Delhi

Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya, CPI (M)'s Rajya Sabha MP, spoke to *businessline* on the NDA government's performance in the education sector. Excerpts:

How do you see the performance of this Government?

The Indian government was investing in schools, towards primary education, institutions of higher education, with a distinct focus on pushing ahead scientific temperament, and understanding. There was leash on private sector in some instances too. A network of well established publicly funded education institutions existed in several States, like West Bengal. It (education) was accessible to all irrespective of their economic background. But all that has changed with NEP 2020. Education is now being taken over by private sector.

Once the private players come in, it means you have to pay for your education. Basically, it is against the welfare principle of the State.



If a party or Government is serious about achieving social justice, freedom of thought, freedom of expression, then the basic requirement is spread of education. But that is not the case.

They are trying to create an area where your right to education is really curtailed.

Is the National Education Policy actually achieving its purpose?

The entire policy is designed to ensure that education goes beyond the reach of the common man. It becomes a commercial division. They are trying to spread unscientific attitude; completely opposite of what is the aim of education — to develop scientific temperament.

There has been a lot of discussion on the NCERT curriculum, and do you see any political agenda in it?

There is saffronisation of school curriculum. One example is the naming of Chandrayaan's landing site as 'Shiv Shakti' by the Prime Minister. Rather than naming it after the scientists, this injects religious ardour into an achievement. Scientific thought process is being categorically replaced with politico-religious symbolism.

Cipla eyes obesity segment, to bring out products on its own or via partnership

PT Jyothi Datta
Mumbai

Cipla is looking at the obesity and weight-loss drugs category, either on its own or in partnership, its top management said.

The company has a partnership with American company Eli Lilly, with whom it is culturally aligned, said Umang Vohra, Cipla Managing Director and Global Chief Executive Officer, adding that the company was "always open to a partnership" to bring in its diabetes product that has since gained popularity in the obesity and weight-loss segments, as well. Cipla has a tie-up with Lilly for its insulins.

"Obesity is a big identified area for us," Vohra said adding that the company was working on a drug launch in India.

Novo's oral semaglutide is available in India, and both multinationals are reportedly interested in bringing these products in India too. Vohra was speaking to the media, outlining plans for the year ahead, after the company announced its financial performance for the fourth quarter (Q4) and year ended, ended March 31, 2024.

BULLISH ON INDIA

As companies look beyond the national elections, and policies thereafter from the incoming Government, Vohra said, the new codes and regulations that have been



Umang Vohra, Cipla MD and Global Chief Executive Officer

brought in, were good for the market, as they created a competitive intensity that stayed uniform through the year and between companies. As the new government begins and unveils its new budget, and possibly expand the number of people who would be covered by the Government's healthcare insurance — that would have a follow through on the India formulations market, Vohra told *businessline*, adding that it "very bullish on the India story over the next 5 to 7 years."

PROFIT UP

Cipla clocked 10 per cent growth in its income from operations at ₹6,163 crore in Q4 of FY24 compared to ₹5,602 crore in the corresponding period last year. It's profit after tax was up 79 per cent in the quarter at ₹939 crore, compared to ₹524 crore in the same period last year.

For the financial year ended March 31, 2024, Cipla's revenues clocked a 14 per cent growth at ₹25,455 crore, compared to ₹22,334 crore last year.

iD Fresh Food looking at packaged spices segment; aims at ₹100-crore business

Meenakshi Verma Ambwani
New Delhi

iD Fresh Food, known for its products such as *idli* and *dosa* batter among others, is eyeing the packaged spices segment.

The company said it will leverage on its strong distribution system to deliver fresh products in the spices segment. The company aims to make spices a ₹100-crore business in the next 3-4 years.

PC Musthafa, Global CEO and Co-Founder, iD Fresh Food, told *businessline*, "Over the years, we have established our own direct retail distribution network to deliver fresh products and built a trusted brand. We want to leverage on these strengths to launch more products and grow our business further. In line with this strategy, we have been working for almost a year for our foray in the spices segments."

"We see an opportunity



PC Musthafa, Global CEO and Co-Founder, iD Fresh Food

to disrupt the spices market. When spice products are made at home, typically they are made for a month and are not stored for longer period for better

quality. So following a similar philosophy, our aim will be to offer fresh spice products to consumers rather than use preservatives or chemicals to extend the product's shelf life. We are planning our supply chain for faster replenishment cycle. So the the product reaches the stores the next day after being manufactured and gets sold within two weeks. So we plan to supply these spice products on an everyday-basis," he explained.

MANUFACTURING TECH

The company said that sourcing and manufactur-

ing will be done in line with the integrated pest management guidelines and will use processes such as steam sterilisation to ensure they are chemical-free.

FIRST PHASE

Musthafa said, in the first phase, the company will focus on launching fresh spice

powders by June. In later phases, it will look at foraying into wet masalas and curry pastes and ready-to-cook gravies. "Initially we will launch in the top metros," he added.

Talking about overall revenue growth, he said the company is looking to cross the ₹700-crore mark in

FY25 aiming to garner 25-30 per cent growth. He added that the company has seen nearly 100 x growth in the quick commerce channel in the last two years.

The company is backed by investors such as Premji Invest, Helios Venture Partners and NewQuest Capital, among others.

TATA TATA POWER
Corporate Contracts Department, 5th Floor Station B)
Tata Power, Trombay Thermal Power Station Chembur-Mahul, Mumbai 400074, Maharashtra, India.
(Board Line: 022-67175125, Mobile: 9641867439) CIN: L28920MH1919PLC000567

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Tata Power Company Limited invites tender from eligible vendors for the following package:

Providing Services for Safety Supervision at Trombay for 3 years at Chembur-Mahul Mumbai 400074

For detail NIT, please visit Tender section on website <https://www.tatapower.com>. Last date for receipt of request for issue of bid document is 27th May 2024 up to 1500 Hrs.

TATA TATA POWER
(Contracts Department)
Jojobera Generation Plant, RAHARGORAH, JAMSHEDPUR-831016, Jharkhand

NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The Tata Power Company Limited invites expression of interest from eligible vendors for the package Name

S.No.	Tender Description	Ref No
1	AMC Instrumentation Unit 1 to 3 and 4 and 5 at Jojobera for 3 years	CC25SPSJQJO-01
2	Belt procurement for CHP Maintenance for Jojobera Generation Plant and unit 4	CC25SPSJQJO-02
3	Complete overhauling of 150 MVA GT#2 Transformer.	CC24SMJQJO-06

For details of pre-qualification requirements, bid security, purchasing of tender document etc., please visit Tender section of our website (URL: <https://www.tatapower.com/tender/tenderlist.aspx>). Eligible vendors willing to participate may submit their expression of interest along with the tender fee for issue of bid document latest by 25th May 2024.

ERNAKULAM REGIONAL CO-OPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS' UNION LTD.
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E-TENDER NOTICE

No.EU/PUR/20/2024-25 10.05.2024

E-tenders are invited for Insurance coverage for various units under ERCMPU. E-tender id: 2024_KCMMF_672448_1 at <http://etenders.kerala.gov.in>. Bid submission end date 22.05.2024, 3.00 PM, (Pre bid meeting on 13.05.2024, 11.00 AM) For More details: Tel: 0484 - 2541193, Mail id: ercmpupur@milma.com

(Sd/-)
Managing Director

VENKY'S (INDIA) LIMITED				
(CIN : L01222PN1976PLC017422)				
Registered and Corporate Office: "Venkateshwara House", S. No. 114/A/2, Pune - Sinhagad Road, Pune 411 030. www.venkys.com				
EXTRACT OF STATEMENT OF AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED 31 st MARCH, 2024				
(₹ in Lacs)				
Sr. No.	Particulars	Quarter Ended	Year Ended	Corresponding 3 months ended in the Previous Year
		31/03/2024 (Audited) ₹	31/03/2024 (Audited) ₹	31/03/2023 (Audited) ₹
1.	Total income from operations (net)	89,594	3,73,815	1,04,247
2.	Net Profit for the period (before tax and exceptional items)	4,745	10,942	3,419
3.	Net Profit for the period before tax (after exceptional items)	4,745	10,942	3,419
4.	Net Profit for the period after tax (after exceptional items)	3,351	7,907	2,523
5.	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising profit for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	3,452	8,008	2,284
6.	Equity Share Capital	1,409	1,409	1,409
7.	Other equity	-	1,35,615	-
8.	Earnings Per Share (of ₹ 10/- each) (*not annualised) (for continuing and discontinued operations) -			
a) Basic:		*23.78	56.13	*17.91
b) Diluted:		23.78	56.13	17.91
Note: The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly/Annual Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly/Annual Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange websites and also on Company's website www.venkys.com				
For Venky's (India) Limited				
B. Balaji Rao Managing Director DIN : 00013551				
Place : Pune Date : May 10, 2024				

QUICKLY.

Gold at more than 2-week high on US rate-cut bets



Gold prices strengthened on Friday and were on track for their best week since early April, as weak US employment figures fuelled bets of interest rates cuts by the Federal Reserve this year. Spot gold gained 1.1 per cent to \$2,372.46 per ounce by 1203 GMT, hitting its highest in more than two weeks. Prices have risen over 3 per cent so far in the week. **REUTERS**

Palm oil closes at three-month low

Singapore: Malaysian palm oil futures fell for a third consecutive session to close at a three-month low on Friday, tracking weaker Dalian rivals, while palm oil data from the MPOB earlier in the day weighed on sentiment. The benchmark palm oil contract for July delivery on the Bursa Malaysia Derivatives Exchange closed down to 3,810 ringgit (\$804.31) a tonne, the lowest close since mid-February. **REUTERS**

NY cocoa prices extend fall



London: New York cocoa futures on ICE were lower on Friday, extending the market's retreat from last month's record peak. July New York cocoa fell 0.7 per cent to \$8,635 a tonne by 1323 GMT. The market had fallen back sharply after rising to a record high of \$11,722 on April 19. July London cocoa fell 1.2 per cent to 7,419 pounds a tonne. **REUTERS**

With prices ruling higher than MSP, growers hold back wheat from mandis

DESPITE HIGHER OUTPUT. Arrival of foodgrain is slack in markets; millers, traders scour for stocks

Subramani Ra Mancombu
Chennai

Wheat production this year is seen higher than the past two years. But farmers holding back their produce from mandis (agri terminal markets) in expectation of higher prices is affecting millers and traders. “Though the Ministry of Agriculture has pegged wheat production at 112.01 million tonnes (mt), we expect it to be 105 mt. This is 5-6 mt higher than our estimates last year,” said an international trading source.

“Though production is reported to be higher, wheat is not arriving in the markets. It is also not available for procurement,” said Pramod Kumar, President, Roller Flour Millers’ Federation of India (RFMFI).

RECORD YIELD The federation had commissioned a survey last month and said wheat production is estimated to increase 3 per cent this year to 105.79 mt. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has projected India’s



ON THE RISE. Wheat prices have tended to stay elevated despite harvest and arrivals picking up **ANI**

wheat production at 112.5 mt due to timely sowing and favourable weather. While the Ministry of Agriculture pegged the production last year at 110.55 mt, millers and trade say it is below 100 mt. “The crop this year is good across almost all States barring Madhya Pradesh and, to some extent, Gujarat,” said the trading source.

Another trader agreed that production this year is good in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar. “Punjab has never seen

such a record yield of 5 tonnes per hectare,” said the source.

ARTIFICIALLY JACKED UP? Kumar said the problem is with prices ruling higher than the minimum support price of ₹2,275 a quintal this year. “Farmers are not willing to offer it to the government for procurement and are holding back,” he said.

A source in the milling sector said wheat prices have tended to stay elevated despite harvest and arrivals picking up. “Looks like they are being held

up artificially,” the source said.

According to data from Agmarknet, an arm of the Ministry of Agriculture, the weighted average price currently is ₹2,350 compared with ₹2,164 a year ago. Arrivals at the agricultural produce marketing committee (APMC) yards have been pegged at 14.40 mt compared with 14.93 mt a year ago. On the other hand, data from the Central Foodgrains procurement portal showed that wheat procurement so far is 24.29 mt. Last year, it was 26.07 mt and

18.75 mt in 2022. Kumar said 75-80 per cent of the crop in Punjab has arrived and the remaining are being held by small traders and local agents. “The plan is to bring them to the market late to get a better price,” he said, adding that prices in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan were higher.

The Food Corporation of India has procured 12 mt from Punjab and at the most could get another 1 mt, the RFMFI President said.

MP YIELD LOWER

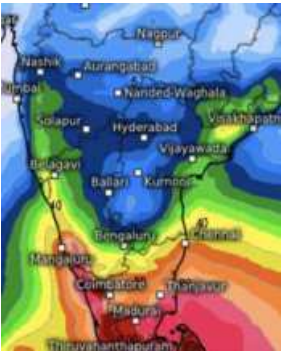
“There are a couple of reasons why wheat prices are high. The Uttar Pradesh government has informally banned sales of wheat to private trade and is also not allowing its transportation. The crop is also being held back,” said the milling sector source said.

The trading source said in Madhya Pradesh the yield is lower while there is also the problem with the quality.

Kumar said one problem of tackling the issue would be to permit imports. “That will automatically bring down the prices,” he said.

Pre-monsoon showers fan out over most parts of country

Vinson Kurian
Thiruvananthapuram



HEAVY RAINS. The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts expects the South Peninsula to receive excess rainfall (in red and yellow) during the week ending May 17

Pre-monsoon thunderstorms are blooming over almost the entire landscape of the country — nowhere as growingly virulent as over the South Peninsula during the next 4-5 days — accompanied as they are by a fusillade of sharp showers or heavy rain, high winds, hail storms or lightning at many places.

India Meteorological Department (IMD) said as many as 26 of the 36 meteorological subdivisions may witness isolated to scattered to fairly widespread to widespread showers over the next seven days under the watch of visiting western disturbances over North-West India, and troughs/lines of wind discontinuity or fleeting circulations over the rest of the country.

Troughs/lines of wind discontinuity are decidedly pre-monsoonal type, while western disturbances originating from the Mediterranean and travelling across Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan enter North-West India amplifying weather over North-West, East and North-East India.

Moisture-laden air gets lifted by these formations to get cooled and, in turn, precipitate as rain or hail.

On Friday, an East-West trough ran down from North-West Rajasthan to South Assam across Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and the plains of West Bengal.

RAIN DEFICIT

Troughs are veritable minefields with embedded cyclonic circulations that trigger the ascending motion of air. Such circulations emerged over North-West

Rajasthan, Central Madhya Pradesh and North-East Assam.

A second trough originated from a circulation over North Bihar towards North Odisha across Jharkhand and plains of West Bengal. Cyclonic circulations hung also over South Kerala and the North-East Arabian Sea off the Gujarat coast. These circulations can die out during the course of a few hours to days, depending on moisture feed and a favourable wind pattern.

Pre-monsoon has so far delivered a rain deficit of 16 per cent for the country as a whole, with South Peninsula recording the worst at -55 per cent.

East and North-East India have recorded rain deficits of -27 per cent and -2 per cent, respectively, while Central India returned a surplus of +64 per cent.

The forecast for May 9-15 indicates excess showers for Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra and East India. Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka may extend the gains into the third week (until May 23).

Akshaya Tritiya: Despite high rates, gold demand picks up...

Dharna Bafna
Suresh P Iyengar
Mumbai

Notwithstanding the rising gold price, the demand for the yellow metal was up for Akshaya Tritiya, according to jewellers.

Kumar Jain from Indian Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA) said, “Despite the high prices, people are buying gold right now because they think it will be of good use to them. The next auspicious beginning that arises is Dussehra, which is months away, and hence people are purchasing more on this occasion.”

This comes even as the gold prices have recently reached historic highs of ₹73,000 per 10 gm in India. COMEX prices have crossed \$2,300 per ounce



GLITTERING GEMS. Gold prices have recently reached historic highs of ₹73,000 per 10 gm in India **PTI**

CEO, Senco Gold and Diamonds said, “We have seen a lot of customers coming and buying wedding jewellery, for the weddings that are either in the summer months or end of the year, expecting that the prices will go up. Half gram and 1 gram Gold Beans have had very enthusiastic responses

from across ages and we have fallen short of supply, online and offline.”

But the high price for gold has given a boost to diamond jewellers as customers look for alternatives. Amit Pratihari, Vice-President, De Beers Forevermark, said “We are observing a significant increase in

customer visits. Our partner retailers are reporting positive outcome, especially in South India where Akshaya Tritiya holds great cultural significance. Furthermore, there’s a notable trend towards purchasing items that carry intrinsic value, making natural diamonds particularly desirable.” Future outlook

Gold prices have witnessed a sharp rally in the month of March 2024 with prices hitting all-time highs in domestic and international markets. Experts said that the prices are expected to rise as investors consider gold as a safe haven. “The rising prices are a great opportunity for the investors,” says Jain from IBJA. The expected rate of gold is said to be ₹80,000/10 gms by Diwali, according to the IBJA spokesperson.

Dharna is interning with *businessline*

...quick commerce firms deliver gold, silver coins

Jyoti Banthia
Bengaluru

Quick commerce platforms Bigbasket, Blinkit, Swiggy-Instamart and Zepto are delivering gold and silver coins in 10 minutes on the occasion of Akshaya Tritiya on Friday.

Unicorn start-up Zepto partnered with Nek Jewellery while Swiggy-Instamart partnered with Malabar Gold & Diamonds and Muthoot Exim (Muthoot Pappachan Group) to allow customers to purchase gold and silver coins directly through its platform.

Swiggy Instamart said in a statement that the coins come in different weights. Gold coins were available in 24 carats with 999 purity,



Platforms like Swiggy Instamart delivered silverware and puja essentials on the occasion apart from coins

and silver coins came with a purity level of 999, the statement said. It said it would also deliver silver glasses, silver spoons and pooja essentials.

Swiggy Instamart also created a surprise element for customers with chocol-

ate gold coins and a note announcing the news. This teaser sparked curiosity and anticipation among customers, setting the stage for a gold rush.

In addition to gold and silver coins in different weights, Swiggy Instamart also delivered silver spoons, silver glasses and puja essentials like the Vishnu Chalisa book, agarbatti, flowers and puja cloth.

SURGE IN SALES

Swiggy Instamart saw a surge by over 500 per cent in sales of coins as compared to its Dhanteras, tweeted Phani Kishan, CEO of Swiggy Instamart. “The success of last year’s Dhanteras coin sales highlights the rising consumer interest in quick commerce

for auspicious purchases,” said Kishan.

Fintech platform PhonePeha introduced a cashback offer of up to ₹2,000 on a minimum order value of ₹1,000 through its app.

The company said in a statement that the deal applies to the one-time purchase of 24k digital gold. Users could use various payment modes, including UPI, UPI Lite, credit and debit cards, wallets and gift cards.

The platform promised to provide gold of the highest purity, sourced from companies such as Caratlane, SafeGold and MMTC-PAMP.

Tata Digital’s Bigbasket partnered with Tanishq and MMTC-PAMP to offer gold and silver coins and bars.

American industry body says US has approved ETO treatment for spices

Meenakshi Verma Ambwani
New Delhi

The American Spice Trade Association (ASTA) has written to the Spices Board of India clarifying that ethylene oxide is approved for use on spices in the US under prescribed tolerance limits. Reacting to the recent criticism over use of ETO in spices, the industry body said any move to prohibit “this critical treatment method” could result in “unintended implications” regarding compliance of Indian spices with US food safety regulations.

This comes at a time when some spice products were recalled by food safety regulators in Hong Kong and Singapore. This led Spices Board of India to issue guidelines advising exporters against using ETO as a sterilising agent in spices consignments suggesting alternatives. It has also provided the Maximum Residue Limits (MRL) for ETO permitted in major markets, including the EU, the UK, the US in the guidelines. ASTA

Stating that ETO is an approved antimicrobial fumigant in the US, ASTA pointed out that its tolerance limit is set at 7 ppm for spices

represents over 200 companies that are involved in manufacturing and marketing of spices in the US.

RISK OF PATHOGENS

The industry body pointed out that the US imports more than 1,00,000 mt of spices from India, valued at over \$360 million annually. “All of which needs to be treated with a validated kill step such as ETO, prior to being sold in the US market. Current US regulations permit the use of ETO treatment on imported spices and spice products as long as residues adhere to the prescribed tolerances. Moreover, without the use of ETO on spices, impor-

ted products are at a higher risk of the presence of pathogens and non-compliance with FDA food safety regulations,” the ASTA letter stated.

Stating that ETO is an approved antimicrobial fumigant in the US, ASTA also pointed out that its tolerance limit or Maximum Residue Levels is set at 7 ppm for herbs and spices. “Both, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), have concluded that consumption of spices treated with ETO is safe. The US spice industry relies on ETO sterilisation as one of the primary methods to comply with the FDA regulations,” it added. ETO has been one of the key methods used by the US spice importers to comply with these requirements.

“Spices that do not undergo a ‘validated kill step’ prior to import to the US will be deemed ‘Not Ready-To-Eat’ and are required to be labelled with a ‘Not Processed to Control Microbial Hazards’ disclosure,” it added.

IG Drones in talks with Kerala govt to train, create drone workforce for Gulf nations

Subramani Ra Mancombu
Chennai

Delhi-based IG Drones, an end-to-end done solutions firm, is in discussions with the Kerala Government to train and create a drone workforce that can work in the Gulf countries, particularly the agriculture sector. “The Kerala Government is very proactive (in creating the workforce through training). We can also create inhouse workforce who will work within the country and analyse drone data. It will be like the 80 per cent satellite image analysis business outsourced to India from the US and Europe,” said IG Drones founder and CEO Bodhisattwa Sanghapriya.

Analysing drone or agricultural data could be a huge business like the satellite imagery analysis business. “With drone data analysis, we can create a large data processing workforce in the country,” Sanghapriya said, adding that IG Drones is eyeing these opportunities. Besides Kerala, Andhra Pradesh,



Just like Infosys and TCS have done in the BPO sector, the drone sector can play a role in that direction by creating a workforce to operate drones

BODHISATTWA SANGHAPRIYA
CEO, IG DRONES



Odisha and Gujarat are proactive in the upskilling of youth, students and farmers in drone technology.

TRAINING FARMERS

IG Drones, which produced its first drone within days of being launched in 2018 in view of the founders’ experience in building rockets, has trained about 10,000 farmers with the latest drone technology.

In particular, the agriculture drone industry can emerge as a key sector for India in outsourcing drone operations and for data analysis of agricultural

lands, he told *businessline* in an online interaction. “Just like Infosys and TCS have done in the BPO sector, I think the drone sector can also play a role in that direction by creating a workforce to operate drones. We can actually go to all African countries, West Asian countries and even to Europe. We can actually export our skilled workforce (in drones) there,” Sanghapriya said.

There is a huge shortage of drone pilots and the recent introduction of the Drone Didi scheme will only increase the problem. However, companies

such as IG Drones have identified the manpower shortage problem and are trying to create a workforce like the IT majors. The company has entered into partnerships with National Skill Development Corporation, FICCI and other such organisations, including skill development councils, to train people in operating drones. The drone company has emerged as one of the largest skill development firms, particularly in upskilling and reskilling in drone technology.

“We have an ambitious plan of upskilling 10 million youth with the latest drone technology. We have started experimenting with different kinds of students in drone technology,” he said. IG Drones, which has offices in Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar and Mumbai besides Delhi, has identified students of industrial training institutes (ITI) as more suitable for training in drone technology. It has trained 5,000 ITI students so far and rolled out a course for them with the results being “impressive”.

Low arrivals lift tea prices in Kochi auctions

Our Bureau
Kochi

Lower arrivals at Kochi auctions lifted tea prices with the average price realisation witnessing a ₹7 increase at ₹147 compared with the previous week. The offered quantity in CTC in sale 19, was lower at 5,68,907 kg, thanks to declining production in plantations. However, traders hope that the situation would change soon with the start of summer rains across the State. The sale of low-priced teas was also lower in the auctions. The market was strong in CTC dust, with a sales percentage of 89 with good liquoring teas was firm to dearer by ₹2 to ₹3 and sometimes more. There was an active participation of blenders and they together, absorbed 59 per cent of the total CTC quantity sold.

Orthodox dust market was lower with exporters, continued to be the main stakeholders. The quantity offered was 7,000 kg only.

In CTC leaf, best broken was lower while medium and plain gained.

QUICKLY.

15 NBFCs have surrendered registration certificates: RBI



Mumbai: RBI on Friday said 15 NBFCs, including Tata Capital Financial Services and Revolving Investments, surrendered registrations. Nine Non-Banking Financial Companies ceased to be legal entities due to amalgamation, merger, dissolution, or voluntary strike-off. Six NBFCs surrendered registrations after exiting from Non-Banking Financial Institution business. PTI

US ambassador dismisses India ‘democracy’ concern

Washington: The United States Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti dismissed concerns raised by certain quarters about democracy in India and said he “100 per cent” believes that Washington can trust its relationship with New Delhi which is going to be one of the defining relationships of the 21st century. PTI

Sudarshan appointed as ED at Mangalore Refinery



Mangaluru: B Sudarshan has been appointed the Executive Director of Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd. He previously was Group General Manager (Marketing Projects) and was head of MRPL's Bengaluru office. Sudarshan joined MRPL in 1993 as a senior engineer. He has worked in projects and maintenance. A native of Mysuru, he is an alumnus of Shri Jayachamarajendra College of Engineering. OUR BUREAU

SC grants interim bail to Kejriwal till June 1

TEMPORARY REPRIEVE. Rejects ED contention on setting wrong precedent; asks AAP leader not to visit CM’s office/Secretariat, to surrender on June 2

Krishnadas Rajagopal
New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday granted interim bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the liquor policy case till June 1, 2024 to campaign for the Lok Sabha elections. “There is no gain saying that General Elections to Lok Sabha is the most significant and an important event this year, as it should be in a national election year. Between 650-700 million voters out of an electorate of about 970 million will cast their votes to elect the government of this country for the next five years. General Elections supply the vis viva to a democracy,” a Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta observed in its order. The court barred Kejriwal from visiting the Chief Minister’s office or the Delhi Secret-

ariat. He would not sign any official files unless it was required and necessary for obtaining clearance or approval of the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi.

‘NO COMMENTS’ The order prohibited him from making any comments with regard to his role in the liquor policy case. He would not interact with witnesses or have access to official files connected with the case. He should furnish bail bonds for ₹50,000 with one surety to the satisfaction of the Jail Superintendent. Kejriwal has to surrender on June 2. The court made it clear that the grant of bail was not a comment on the merits of the case or on the pending appeal filed by Kejriwal against his arrest on March 21. On May 7, a trial court had remanded him to judicial custody till May 20. The eight-page order rejec-



CELEBRATION TIME. Delhi Minister for Food and Civil Supplies Imran Hussain with AAP workers celebrate after the Supreme Court granted bail to Arvind Kejriwal PTI

ted an argument by the prosecution agency, Directorate of Enforcement (ED), that releasing Kejriwal on interim bail to canvas votes would create an impression among the public, worse still, a judicial precedent, that politicians were a separate class, higher in status than the ordinary citizen and immune from arrest. Every criminal would vie to be a politician, the ED had

rued. During the short pronouncement of the order which lasted a little over four minutes after the lunch break, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the Central agency, said the ball has already started rolling with Amritpal Singh, who is detained under the National Security Act over Khalistani activities, approaching court for bail to contest in the elections.

“That is a different concern,” Justice Khanna said. “It is the concern of the nation,” Mehta replied. “We cannot compare that with this case... Let us not put it in such simple straitjacket terms like that,” Justice Khanna said. In its order, the Bench reasoned that interim bail was granted on the facts of each individual case. **‘PRODIGIOUS LS POLLS’** In Kejriwal’s case, to ignore the “prodigious importance” of the Lok Sabha polls would be “iniquitous and wrong”. It highlighted elections as the “barometer and lifeline of the parliamentary system and its setup”. The two-judge Bench agreed with the ED that Kejriwal avoided nine summons was a “negative factor”, but there were still other facets which had to be considered.

“Arvind Kejriwal is the Chief Minister of Delhi and a leader of one of the national parties. No doubt, serious accusations have been made, but he has not been convicted. He does not have any criminal antecedents. He is not a threat to society,” the court listed points in favour of Kejriwal. The court said ED had filed the Enforcement Case Information Report in August 2022. The case had been pending since then, but Kejriwal was arrested only on March 21, a few days after the Model Code of Conduct came into force. Justice Khanna said 22 days of liberty for Mr. Kejriwal to campaign for Aam Aadmi Party would “not make a difference now”. The order dismissed ED’s logic that if a politician could get interim bail to campaign, then a farmer or a company director was entitled to the same relief to attend his crops

or a board meeting, respectively. All vocations were equal in stature, the ED had argued. However, the court said granting a political leader interim bail to campaign for the General Elections cannot be compared to either a farmer seeking bail to tend to his harvest or a businessman wanting to attend a board meeting. Besides, Mr. Kejriwal’s petition challenging the legality and validity of his arrest on March 21 was itself pending in the court. “Once the matter is sub judice and the questions relating to legality of arrest are under consideration, a more holistic and libertarian view is justified in the background that the 18th Lok Sabha General Elections are being held,” the Bench noted. The court said it intended to wrap up arguments on Mr. Kejriwal’s plea to quash his arrest in the case next week and pronounce a judgment shortly.

ON THE WING



FLIGHTS OF FANCY. A flamboyance of flamingos at Pulicat lake near Chennai on the eve of World Migratory Bird Day. Celebrated biannually on the second Saturday in May and October; the day underscores the need to create awareness for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. © JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Dharani Sugars promoters regain control as NCLT accepts settlement

G Balachandar
Chennai

Dharani Sugars and Chemicals Ltd (DSCL), a listed company, emerged from the corporate insolvency resolution, as the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) Chennai Bench accepted the promoter’s settlement proposal, enabling the withdrawal of the resolution process (RP). Control of DSCL now returns to promoter Palani G Periasamy (PGP). This marks PGP’s second successful case before the NCLT, having regained control over Appu Hotels, which operates Le Royal Meridien Hotels in Chennai and Coimbatore. “NCLT order allowing our proposal for DSCL affirms

our commitment and consistent efforts for the revival of sugar and allied businesses,” said Periasamy, Chairman, DSCL. Chennai-headquartered Dharani Sugars aims to resume operations at its three factories in Vasudevanallur, Polur, and Kallakurichi, collaborating with over 35,000 cane growers to sustain its contribution to Tamil Nadu’s sugar economy. The company expects to restart operations in 2-3 months. **‘PROMISING PROSPECTS’** “The Indian sugar sector’s growth prospects are promising, given the rising demand for sugar and the government’s focus on producing ethanol as an alternative fuel and power from bagasse,” Periasamy added.

Dharani Sugars faced losses from 2016-19 due to consecutive rainfall failures and associated factors. The loans of the consortium of lenders could not be paid. Admitted into the CIRP by the NCLT Chennai Bench in July 2021, the company’s promoters attempted to revive it by repaying bank loans and exiting the process. Despite paying 35 per cent of the agreed amount to the consortium lenders and submitting a proposal under IBC Rules’ section 12A, the promoters couldn’t secure the remaining funds on time. Consequently, the NCLT Chennai Bench issued liquidation orders on March 18, 2023. Challenged in the Supreme Court, the liquidation order was stayed in August 2023.

Minimal impact from disbursal cap: Gold loan NBFCs

Anshika Kayastha
Mumbai

Gold loan NBFCs are of the view that the impact from the RBI directive to NBFCs to cap cash loan disbursements at ₹20,000 is going to be minimal as the bulk of their business is already digital. “Our highly popular product ‘Online Gold Loan,’ which forms 50 per cent of our gold loan book, follows a fully paperless process of application and disbursement. Even for the loans originating at branches, most of our customers prefer direct transfers,” said VP Nandakumar, MD and CEO, Manappuram Finance adding that the directive will not hamper business. Employees too are trained to convince customers to opt for online disbursements as it promotes “smooth operations”, he said, adding that

RBI’s advisory will “promote transparency and prevent potential disputes”. Recent reports suggested RBI has asked NBFCs to cap cash disbursements at ₹20,000 per transaction. The move comes after the central bank, in March 2024, put restrictions on IIFL Finance’s gold lending business. **OPERATIONAL CHANGES** The ₹20,000 cap on cash disbursements will require operational changes mainly in the gold loan business, which could have a transitory but manageable financial impact, Morgan Stanley Research said in a note, adding that Muthoot Finance is expected to be the most impacted followed by Manappuram Finance. “NBFCs were disbursing up to ₹2 lakh in cash, wherever preferred by the customer, though they would nudge such customers to-



VP Nandakumar, MD and CEO, Manappuram Finance

ward opting for bank account credit via some discount in the lending rate,” it added. Gold loans comprise 84 per cent of Muthoot Finance’s overall portfolio, of which 40 per cent are estimated to be transacted online. For Manappuram Finance, gold loans comprise 51 per cent of loans of which 56 per cent are online gold loans. Shares of the two lenders fell 8-9 per cent intraday before

recouping losses. Manappuram Finance stock ended 7.3 per cent lower on Friday at ₹1,66.80, and of Muthoot Finance 3.8 per cent lower at ₹1,597 on the NSE. **INDIA RATINGS** George Alexander Muthoot, MD, Muthoot Finance told a news channel that he does not see an impact or challenge due as most customers already opt for real time transfers to bank accounts and volumes are expected to sustain. Customers that prefer cash will need to be informed that any loan above ₹20,000 will need to be taken through the bank, he said, adding that 80 per cent interest payments are also through online channels. However, India Ratings said that reduced cash disbursements could lead to a growth slowdown for gold loan NBFCs as borrowers may prefer approaching

moneylenders or Nidhi companies for a quick disbursal and ease of operations. Furthermore, the regulatory action on IIFL Finance could escalate operational costs for all gold financing entities due to increasing regulatory compliance costs, heightened competitive intensity in the segment and rising threshold for branch profitability, the rating agency said, calling for a standardised disbursal process across gold lenders given the variability internal policies. Break-even AUM for new branches required for large-gold NBFCs will increase by 12 per cent and that for mid-to-small gold NBFCs will increase 10 per cent, largely due to the rising compliance cost, India Ratings said adding that mid-to-small gold loan NBFCs would prefer co-lending for profitable growth.

MoCA, DGCA ease handling of ‘dangerous’ air cargo

TE Raja Simhan
Chennai

It’s a double delight for the air cargo industry. The Ministry of Civil Aviation has assured to validate institutes imparting training on dangerous goods while the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has extended the validity of Dangerous Goods Regulations till June 30. It was *businessline* that reported about the issue for the first time on April 23. The notifications would allow agents to handle dangerous goods (DG) shipments and training institutes shall be allowed to provide required training to handle DG, which had stopped for want of procedures and what is going to be taught, said CK Govil, President, Air Cargo Agents Association of India (ACAAI), the national association representing the Indian

air cargo industry. In the last few days, clearance of DG and even air lifting of non-DG, was in trouble, due to issues related to Competency-Based Training and Assessment (CBTA) effective April 1, 2024.

LACK OF TRAINING There was a lack of accessible training pertinent to DG and no training institute has been “re-certified” by the DGCA. This affected IATA certified freight forwarders. ACAAI wrote to the DGCA stating its members across India had been trained hitherto through DGCA-approved institutes. However, consequent to the implementation of the CBTA from April 1, 2024, the DGCA approval of DG Training Programme has reportedly not been renewed after it expired on March 31, 2024. The association’s members have to comply with the guidelines of DGCA and



IATA. However, due to absence of DGC-approved DG Training institute from April 1, 2024, employees of the association’s members would neither be able to get trained in the ‘basic’ nor in the ‘refresher’ programme. This will put their business at severe risk, loss as well as compliance, the association had said. After a meeting between members of ACAAI and Civil Aviation Secretary, the MoCA on Thursday said that by the end of May, 2024 at

least 12 organisations (almost 70 per cent of the organisations conducting DG training) would be available to impart the training. So, there is no institutional shortage. Extension of the validity of DG certificates expired or expiring between April 1, 2024 and May 31, 2024 is being considered up to June 30, 2024. DGCA said for smooth transition from convention to CBTA Approach in Dangerous Goods Regulations Training, it has been decided to grant extension of eligibility period for recurrent training of all categories/functions of Dangerous Goods Regulations Training to meet the requirements of the CAR Section 11, Series C Part I, Issue IV dated January 25, 2023. **VALIDITY EXTENSION** Govil told *businessline*, that the extension given by MoCA is for the DG certificates, which have a validity of

24 months for the last recurrent training held. The certificates which had expired (i.e. persons trained in the month of April and May, 2022) will have the validity of the DG handling certificates post March 31, 2024 wherein the new ‘competence based training and assessment approach’ had been implemented by DGCA. “Having a valid DG certificate is crucial for handling pharmaceutical items and biological samples. Sans a valid DG certificate, an agent cannot handle these shipments,” he said. J Krishnan, of S Natesa Iyer Logistics LLP, a Chennai-based freight forwarder, said licencing of all personnel who are involved in shipping DG by air, requires mandatory training and certification by institutes approved by DGCA. This encompasses shippers, freight forwarders, terminal operators and airline staff.

ISRO looks to productionise heavy lift launcher LVM-3 under PPP framework

TE Raja Simhan
Chennai

NewSpace India Ltd (NSIL) has released a Request for Qualification (RFQ) document inviting Indian industry partners for productionising Indian Space Research Organisation’s heavy lift launcher - LVM-3 - under a PPP framework. This collaboration aims towards manufacturing LVM-3s in increased numbers and over a longer period of time. **WHAT IS LVM-3?** The LVM3 production programme under a PPP framework is proposed over a period of 14 years with the Indian industry expected to produce up to six LVM-3 annually from the sixth year of commencement of the programme. LVM-3 is the new

heavy lift launch vehicle of ISRO for achieving a 4,000 kg spacecraft launching capability to GTO (Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit) in a cost effective manner. It is a three stage launch vehicle consisting of two solid propellant S200 strap-ons and core stages comprising of L110 liquid stage, C25 cryogenic stage, the equipment bay (EB) and the Encapsulated assembly (EA). The EA has the spacecraft, Payload Adaptor (PLA) and the Payload fairing (PF). With a lift-off mass of 640 tonnes, the 43.5 m tall three-stage launch vehicle gives ISRO full self-reliance in launching heavier communication satellites that weigh up to 4,000 kg in GTO. NSIL is the commercial arm of ISRO with a mandate to enable Indian industries to scale up high-technology

manufacturing and production base in the country for meeting the emerging domestic and international space programme needs. As part of Space Sector reforms, announced by the Government of India in 2020, and the Indian Space Policy 2023, activities opened up for enhanced private sector participation.

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QUICKLY.

Sanofi inks \$1.2-b vaccine licensing deal with Novavax



Sanofi and Novavax Inc. signed a licensing agreement that includes commercialising a combined Covid-19 and flu shot. Novavax will receive \$500 million in upfront payments and \$700 million in development, regulatory and launch milestones, according to a statement. Sanofi is also taking a minority equity stake of about 5 per cent in Novavax. Now, Sanofi will have the rights to drive sales of Novavax's Covid-19 shot worldwide from next year. **BLOOMBERG**

Biden set to impose new China tariffs

Washington: US President Joe Biden is set to announce new China tariffs as soon as next week targeting strategic sectors, according to a person familiar with the matter. The announcement, which could take place as soon as Tuesday, is expected to largely maintain existing levies, according to the person. An announcement could also be pushed back, the person said. **REUTERS**

NCLAT accepts appeals on CCI's relief denial in Google Play case

LEGAL DIRECTIVE. Asks Google, CCI to file responses; fixes May 24 as final hearing date

KR Srivats
New Delhi

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) on Friday admitted the appeals of a clutch of start-ups, including Kuku FM and Shaadi.com, against CCI's recent order denying them interim relief or protection against Google's harmful conduct in the matter of User Choice Billing Policy (UCB). The Appellate Tribunal directed Google and the Competition Commission of India (CCI) to file their reply within a week and posted the case for a final hearing on May 24.

The appeals before the NCLAT were filed by Kuku FM, Shaadi.com and the Indian Broadcasting and Digital Foundation (IBDF).

Although the app developers (start-ups) on Friday requested that a mention be made in the order that no precipitative action should be taken in the interim, there was no finality on that front from the Appellate Tribunal.



COMPLIANCE CHECK. In March, Google delisted over 100 apps from domestic developers such as Matrimony, Shaadi.com, Kuku FM, and Info Edge, for not complying with its app billing policy. **REUTERS**

With an oral understanding between the parties that no precipitative action would be taken, start-ups can now breathe easy until May 24, which is the date of the final hearing.

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE On March 10, the CCI rejected the start-ups' interim relief applications for complete restraint on Google from the collection of its fees under the tech giant's updated payments policy.

This ruling came on the heels of the competition watchdog ordering an invest-

igation against Google on March 15 for excessive pricing on the Play Store. CCI had then held that the tech giant's Users Choice Billing (UCB) payments policy was "prima facie" violative of the Competition Act 2002.

The CCI prima facie found Google's UCB to be an abuse of its dominant position and directed the Director General to conduct an investigation.

The abusive conduct of Google included the service fees charged under UCB being excessive and disproportionate; the unfair pricing

model of Google with app developers potentially facing substantial costs; denial of market access; and service fees being arbitrary and discriminatory, among others.

In March 2024, Google delisted over 100 apps from domestic developers such as Matrimony, Shaadi.com, Kuku FM, and Info Edge (Naukri, 99acres, and Jeevansathi), for not complying with Google's app billing policy.

However, a week later, the tech giant temporarily reinstated them on the Play Store in the wake of government intervention. Google had, in 2023, introduced the UCB system in India as part of its efforts to comply with the CCI's October 25, 2022, anti-trust order. The UCB policy allowed developers to offer an alternative billing system for in-app purchases besides Google Play's billing system.

Transactions under UCB attracted a maximum service fee of 26 per cent, which is a 4 percentage point reduction from the earlier rate of 30 per cent.

'Vi is ready for a new chapter of growth'

Ayushi Kar
Mumbai

After achieving a complete subscription on their follow-on public offer, Vodafone Idea CEO Akshay Moondra has written to customers, saying that the company is on a new growth trajectory.

In a letter shared with Vi customers, Moondra said, "I am delighted to share some exciting news with you: Vodafone Idea (Vi) has recently achieved a significant milestone. We raised capital through a successful FPO in Apr'24, which has been the largest FPO in the country and has been subscribed ~7 times. This success is a testimony to the trust and confidence that our investors have in brand Vi."

Vodafone Idea will be using these funds to invest in their 4G and 5G networks. Moondra informed customers, "Our upcoming investments will focus on both the expansion of our 4G services and the roll-out of 5G services with the latest technology, thus ensuring



Vodafone Idea CEO Akshay Moondra

that we continue to deliver the service quality that you expect. We are ready for a new chapter of growth and innovation empowered by our state-of-the-art network, advanced technology, and unwavering commitment towards customer satisfaction."

Vi will be installing 26,000 towers over the period of two years, using the fundraise from the FPO as well as the issuance of further debt from banks. In the lead-up to the same, Vi has been meeting financial analysts in the interim period between May 2 and May 10 to further make their case.

UK recession ends with strongest growth

Bloomberg

The UK's economy bounced back strongly from a shallow recession at the end of last year, providing some relief for Prime Minister Rishi Sunak who has so far struggled to deliver on his promise to revive growth.

GDP jumped 0.6 per cent in the first quarter compared to the previous three months as customers returned to shops and investment rose again, the Office for National Statistics said on Friday. That was the best reading since late 2021 when the UK loosened Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, and higher than the 0.4 per cent expansion forecast by economists.

Besides the gains in retail sales and investment, output improved with fewer strikes in the health sector. Growth in March alone was 0.4 per cent, well above expectations due to a jump in both services and manufacturing. In the end, the downturn was the most mild for Britain in almost 70 years — representing a peak-to-trough decline of 0.4 per cent in the second half of last year.

"The worst is behind the UK economy," said Yael Selfin, chief economist at KPMG UK.

Adani Airports eyes 20 per cent growth with Navi Mumbai project poised to take off in FY25

Forum Gandhi
New Delhi

Adani Airports, the aviation arm of Adani Enterprises, is eyeing robust growth as it gears up for the launch of the Navi Mumbai airport project by the end of the fiscal year 2024-25 (FY25).

According to Deputy Chief Financial Officer Saurabh Shah, the company expects an exponential surge in its operations with the completion of the greenfield project. "This year, we grew about 20 per cent in terms of passenger movement. The trend should continue with additions coming from Navi Mumbai once we start that, which will be by the end of the coming year — at the end of FY25. So then, there will be an exponential jump in FY26 because of the new greenfield project that will be completed," Shah said.

GAME-CHANGER

The completion of the Navi

With seven airports, Adani Airports now serves 23% of India's total air passenger base

Mumbai airport project is touted to be a game-changer for Adani Airports, as it anticipates a 20 per cent growth trajectory for the current fiscal year, according to the company. Beyond FY25, the company foresees an exponential jump in operations fueled by the new greenfield project. With a robust financial performance and strategic expansions underway, Adani Airports is poised to further solidify its position in India's aviation landscape.

An aviation industry report by CAPA India predicts a surge in Indian air travel. By March next year, Indian carriers are expected to have orders for a whopping 2,000 aircraft, reflecting long-term growth in

both domestic and international travel, it said.

CRISIL, in its recent report, said that passenger traffic should ascend 18-20 per cent this fiscal year (on-year), comfortably surpassing the pre-pandemic level, with business and leisure travel soaring. This trajectory is expected to sustain next fiscal year, too, given economic growth.

Q4 PERFORMANCE

The company witnessed a 111 per cent increase in profit before tax (PBT) in the fourth quarter of FY24, amounting to ₹29 crore, marking a significant turnaround from the previous fiscal's loss of ₹275 crore in the same quarter. Revenues for the segment saw year-on-year growth of 33 per cent, totalling ₹2,156.39 crore for Q4 FY24 and ₹7,905.11 crore for the entire fiscal.

Adani Airports has also reduced its yearly losses to ₹64 crore in FY24 from ₹538 crore in the preceding fiscal, demonstrating a positive trajectory in

its financial performance. The Airports segment's contribution to the overall earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation (EBITDA) surged to 45 per cent in FY24, amounting to ₹2,437 crore.

With seven operational airports, including Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Thiruvananthapuram, Jaipur, Lucknow, Guwahati, and Mangaluru, Adani Airports currently serves 23 per cent of India's total air passenger base. Among these, Mumbai airport leads in passenger traffic, handling 13.9 million passengers in Q4 FY24, followed by Ahmedabad airport with 3.1 million passengers.

"The emerging core infrastructure businesses comprising the ANIL Ecosystem, Airports, and Roads are making significant strides in their operational performance. The contribution of these businesses to the overall EBITDA has consistently increased to 45 per cent for FY24," the company stated.

Vistara's network adjustments bring in flexibility, operational resilience

Our Bureau
New Delhi

Despite the tweaks in its network, Vistara has managed a 12-15 per cent capacity increase in April 2024 compared with April 2023.

This growth came alongside strong operational performance, with a passenger load factor (PLF) of 85 per cent for April and an on-time performance (OTP) peak of 91 per cent on April 17. However, the airline's CEO Vinod Kannan acknowledged that the network adjustments were made "to bring in more operational resilience and flexibility."

Vistara is now cutting back on flights by a significant 25-30 daily departures, or roughly 10 per cent of its total capacity.

This adjustment aims to return to pre-April flight levels and create a buffer in pilot schedules following re-



Vinod Kannan, CEO, Vistara

cent disruptions caused by pilot dissatisfaction with rosters and a new salary structure. Over 150 Vistara flights have been cancelled since April 1 due to these concerns.

Last month, a Vistara spokesperson explained the situation: "We are carefully scaling back our operations by around 25-30 flights per day, which is roughly 10 per cent of the capacity we were operating. This will take us back to the same level of flight operations as at the

end of February 2024 and provide the much-needed buffer in the rosters." The spokesperson further assured that "These cancellations have mostly been done in the airline's domestic network and 'much ahead of time' to minimise inconvenience to the customers."

Vistara has apologised for the recent disruptions and claims all affected passengers have been rebooked on other flights. The airline anticipates a full merger with Air India by mid-2025.

NEW SALARY PLAN

The root cause of the pilot discontent mirrors issues at other Tata airlines: work-life balance, fatigue, and pay. Notably, a recent amendment to pilot work-hour regulations intended to improve well-being was deferred due to airline opposition, including Vistara's.

Vistara's new salary plan

offers a fixed salary for 40 hours of flight time, with additional compensation for exceeding that threshold and a service-based bonus.

This aligns with Air India's pay structure in preparation for the merger. While partially addressing pilot concerns, the spokesperson highlighted the need to match Air India's pay for the upcoming merger.

The temporary network reduction was followed by two days of disruptions with over 100 cancellations. CEO Kannan met with pilots, acknowledging rostering issues and promising improvements for better work-life balance.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) directed Vistara to submit daily reports on cancellations and delays due to pilots going on sick leave. The regulator also mandated compensation or refunds for affected passengers.

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