ECONOMY

GOLD ₹32,870 | RUPEE ₹69.69 | OIL $69.02* | SILVER ₹37,550

*Indian basket as on May 23, 2019

SENSEX: 39,749.73 ▲ 66.44 NIFTY: 11,928.75 ▲ 4.00 NIKKEI: 21,260.14 ▲ 77.56 HANG SENG: 27,390.81 ▲ 102.72 FTSE: 7,284.51 ▲ 6.78 DAX: 12,046.75 ▼ 24.43

International market data till 1900 IST

POLICY WATCH PHARMACEUTICAL

100-day agenda: Cheaper medicines, e-pharmacy norms likely to be in focus

PRABHA RAGHAVAN
NEW DELHI, MAY 28

WITH THE Narendra Modi government back to power for another 5-year term, authorities handling pharmaceuticals and healthcare have a backlog of policies and regulations to pass and implement.

Going by the re-elected government's track record over the past five years, the health services industry may also have to gear up for more price control on medicines. In February, the country's drug pricing watchdog, the National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Authority (NPPA), capped trade margins of 42 cancer medicines at 30 per cent— a move it expected would drop maximum retail prices (MRPs) of over 100 brands by up to 85 per cent and provide over Rs 100 crore in savings for cancer patients.

EXPLAINED E.

The move is a "proof-of-concept" for the regulator to implement a system of trade margin rationalisation across medicine segments and the results of the pilot will be released to the public "soon", a senior NPPA official told *The Indian Express*. It is likely that expanding such price control may be on the 100-day agenda of the re-elected government, however this has not been communicated to NPPA, said the official.

Another area of focus might be the implementation of the Health Ministry's regulations for online pharmacy players, which had been in the works since 2016 but was stalled close to the Lok Sabha elections. Senior Health Ministry officials earlier said inter-ministerial consultations had been initiated on latest draft, leading to the delay. Some officials had also said that the government was still looking into the public feedback received on the draft, which would allow regulation of India's nascent e-pharmacy industry.

Now the government plans to take its work on the draft forward, likely in next few weeks, *The Indian Express* has learnt. As per industry estimates, online pharmacies account for around 1 per cent of India's over 1 lakh crore medicines retail industry, but was estimated in 2016 by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry to have potential to account for 5-15 per cent of total sales.

The move to recognise and regulate e-pharmacies in India had been strongly opposed by the country's brick-and-mortar chemists, which have conducted strikes and gone to court over the last three years claiming safety and legal issues with the online model.

A proposal to allow patients to seek compensation for faulty medical devices — a highly scrutinised industry following government and media investigations into the adverse impacts of certain hip implants by US giant Johnson & Johnson — is also yet to fructify. The proposal to amend the 2017 Medical Devices Rules to include a provision for compensation in the event of adverse reactions or death due to medical devices was brought up during a Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB) meeting in November 2018.

According to minutes of DTAB's meeting, a 10-member sub-committee was formed to look into the matter and provide further recommendations, but no deadline was set. Currently, there is "no provision" for compensations in such a scenario, which has led to a legal battle over a formula that a Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) committee has used to decide how much J&J has to compensate patients affected by its ASR implants.

People close to the development said that the sub-committee's work on this proposal was "in progress" and may be concluded in another three months. Considering the timeline, it is not clear whether this proposal, which would make companies financially liable for problems with their devices, is a part of the health ministry's 100-day agenda.

Queries to Health Secretary Preeti Sudan remained unanswered by press time Tuesday.

Further into the current government's tenure, industry experts also expect increased focus on reducing prices of more medical devices after the success that the Modi-government has advertised from price caps on stents and knee implants. Progress on reducing India's dependence on China for its supply of key ingredients for medicines — an ongoing concern for the industry to mitigate any medicine shortages and price rises — is also required, some feel.

FAULTY DEVICES

A proposal to allow patients to seek compensation for faulty medical devices, a scrutinised industry following government and media investigations into the adverse impacts of certain hip implants by J&J, is also yet to fructify

HIGHER PROVISIONS AGAINST EXPECTED LOAN LOSSES

PNB Q4 loss at ₹4,750 cr; asset quality improves as NPA declines

Net loss in Q4 FY18 was ₹13,417 crore, while profit in Q3 FY19 was ₹246.51 crore

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, MAY 28

PUNJAB NATIONAL Bank on Tuesday reported a net loss of Rs 4,750 crore in January-March quarter (Q4FY19) but its asset quality improved as non performing assets (NPAs) ratios fell sharply. The state-owned lender's net loss was much higher than analysts' estimates as it accelerated provisions against expected loan losses. As a result, the bank's provisioning coverage ratio (PCR) as on March 31, 2019, rose to 74.50 per cent from 58 per cent at the end of 2017-18.

PNB showed improvement in operating profitability as it recorded higher net interest income (NII) on the back of double digit growth in domestic advances. Operating profits rose 26 per cent during the fourth quarter while NII increased 37.1 per cent. Net loss in Q4FY19 was lower than the highest ever loss of Rs 13,417 crore in the corresponding January-March period of FY18, but higher than Rs 246.51 crore of profits recorded in Q3FY19. The bank's total income during March quarter of 2018-19 rose to Rs 14,725.13 crore from Rs 12,945.68 crore in year-ago period.

PNB Managing Director Sunil Mehta said the bank earned a healthy operating profit of Rs 2,861 crore during the quarter and Rs 12,995 crore for the full year indicating strong fundamentals. "We suffered a setback (Nirav Modi fraud) last year of which, 50 per cent provisioning was done last year and 50 per cent have been made this year. We have taken a conscious step to clean up the book and take provision coverage ratio to a reasonably high level which gives high degree of safety to our stakeholders. So, for almost all the net NPAs, 75 per cent provision has already been made against that," he said. The net interest margin of bank improved to 2.59 per cent from 2.42 per cent during the same period

On the assets quality front, PNB witnessed improvement as the gross non-performing assets (NPAs) which were brought down to 15.50 per cent of gross advances at the end of March 2019, as against 18.38 per cent at the end of March 2018. Net NPAs or bad loans also came down to 6.56 per cent as against 11.24 per cent in the year-ago period. NPA ratios improved as recoveries picked up pace and loan write offs also increased. In absolute value, gross NPAs stood at Rs 78,472.70 crore at the end of the financial year 2018-19, lower than Rs 86,620.05 crore reported in 2017-18. Net NPAs were at Rs 30,037.66 crore as against Rs 48,684.29 crore. Provisioning against bad loans was at Rs 9,153.55 crore in Q4 FY'19, as compared to Rs 16,202.82 crore in Q4 FY'18.

"We have factored in the entire IL&FS slippages, we have made provisions for Jet Airways although the account is standard (as on March 2019)," Mehta said. With respect to accounts covered under the provisions of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, the bank is holding total provision of Rs 11,940.15 crore as on March 31, 2019, (84.63 per cent of total outstanding) including additional provision of Rs 433.93 crore in said accounts made during FY19.

He said the bank will continue to focus on recovery of NPAs, conservation of capital, rationalising operation and sale of non-core assets, among others. "We expect roughly Rs 1,000 crore from non-core asset sale," he said. The planned stake sale in PNB Housing Finance could not take place because of some regulatory permission, and the expected inflows from that transaction could not come to the balance sheet, he said.

Higher recoveries also led to reduction in NPA levels of PNB. Recovery more than doubled to Rs 20,000 crore in 2018-19 as against Rs 9,666 crore in the previous fiscal. "If all these NCLT cases which are on the table materialise then definitely this year, recovery will be much more than 2018-19," he said. There are two major cases which are already on the table, which could bring in recovery of around Rs 5,000-6,000 crore, enabling write back of roughly Rs 4,000 crore to profits, he said.

PNB's shares closed down 3.53 per cent at Rs 86.10 at the National Stock Exchange Tuesday. When asked about reports of PNB merging with some other state-owned banks, he said there were no such plans. "Right now, we have not thought of it, neither any proposal has come to us. As the situation comes, we will take a call," he said.

₹14,725.13 CR TOTAL INCOME DURING Q4

26% RISE in operating profits during the fourth quarter while net interest income increased 37.1%

₹14,725.13 CRORE was the total income during Q4, up from Rs 12,945.68 crore in the year-ago period

₹2,861 CRORE was the operating profit during the quarter and Rs 12,995 crore for the full year

75% PROVISION has already been made against almost all the net non-performing assets

Sebi seeks bond default disclosure, spares bank loans

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, MAY 28

AFTER A series of defaults and delayed repayments by companies like IL&FS, Jet Airways and the Essel group and the liquidity crisis in the non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) sector, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has stepped in to tighten the disclosure norms for corporate bonds by directing debenture trustees (DTs) to disclose the full details, including interest/ redemptions and status of payment in a bid to bring in more transparency.

However, Sebi has remained silent on disclosure on defaults of bank loans by listed corporates. The market regulator has also imposed a 2 per cent additional interest on companies that fail to pay their debt investors either due interest or principal on the scheduled date.

In a circular issued on Monday, Sebi had said DTs should display on their website details of interest/ redemption due to the debenture holders in respect of all issues during a financial year within 5 working days of start of financial year. DTs should also update such details for any new issues handled during the financial year within 5 days of closure of the Issue.

According to the Sebi, DTs should also update the status of payment against such issuers not later than 1 day from the due date. In case the payment is made with a delay by the issuer, DTs should update the calendar specifying the date of such payment, with a remark 'delayed payment'.

DTs will also have to disclose compensation agreements with their clients. "For privately placed issues, issuers must include covenants providing for penalties in case of default on interest payment/principal redemption (2 per cent per annum over the coupon rate for the default period) and delay in listing of over 20 days post-allotment (1 per cent per annum over the coupon rate from the expiry of 30 days from the deemed date of allotment until listing)," Sebi said.

Issuers should henceforth forward the details of debenture holders to the DT at the time of allotment and thereafter by the seventh working day of every next month in order to enable DTs to keep their records updated and to communicate effectively with the debenture holders, especially in situations where events of default are triggered, Sebi said.

In the case of delay in listing of the debt securities beyond 20 days from the deemed date of allotment, the company should pay penal interest of at least one per cent per annum over the coupon rate from the expiry of 30 days from the deemed date of allotment till the listing of such debt securities to the investor.

However, the latest Sebi directive has not sought disclosures on loan defaults by listed entities. In August 2017, the Sebi had asked listed companies to disclose details on defaults of loan payment from banks and other financial intuitions to the public within one working day. The Sebi directive to disclose loan defaults ran contrary to the position of banking regulator, Reserve Bank of India, which has been refusing to name the defaulters.

The Sebi directive which was to come into force from October 1, 2017 was quietly buried following opposition from the corporate sector. The RBI was also against making the names of defaulters public.

Currently, investors and public are in the dark about defaults by companies and they realise it only when the valuations go down. Some of the top defaulters are now listed on the stock exchanges. The RBI has refused to make public the list of loan defaulters with public banks despite a Supreme Court order to make this information public.

"Corporates in India are even primarily reliant on loans from the banking sector. Many banks are presently under considerable stress on account of large loans to the corporate sector turning into stressed assets, non-performing assets (NPAs). Some firms have also been taken up for initiation of insolvency and bankruptcy proceedings," Sebi had then said.

Sebi for regulatory sandbox for fin institutions

New Delhi: Sebi Tuesday proposed a regulatory sandbox for financial institutions wherein exemptions could be provided from various regulations for developing new products and services.

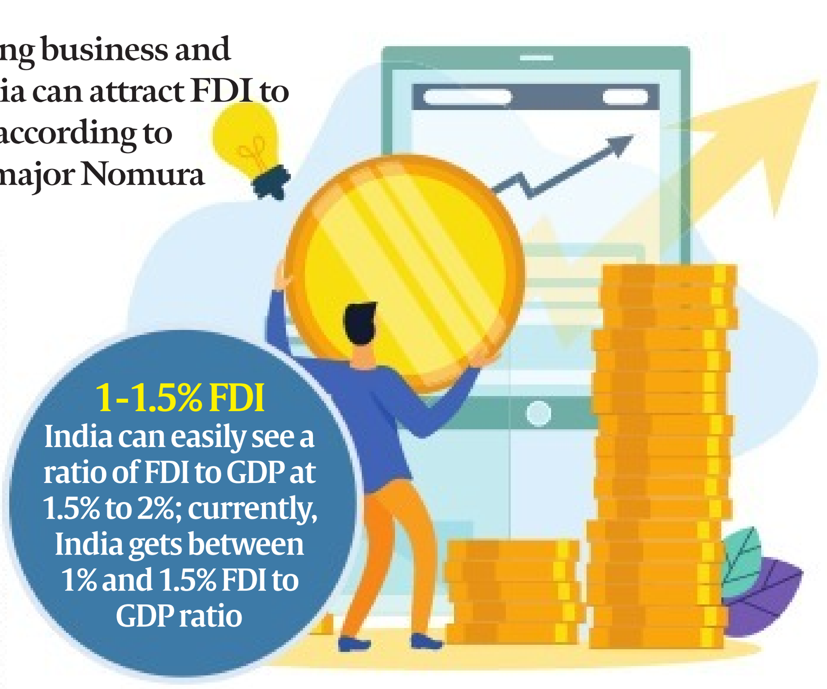
"Sebi plans to introduce a framework, to be called the 'regulatory sandbox'. Under this sandbox framework, financial institutions regulated by Sebi shall be granted certain facilities and flexibilities to experiment with FinTech solutions in a live environment and on real customers," the regulator said in a discussion paper. **PTI**

'India can attract 1.5-2% FDI to GDP ratio'

By improving on ease of doing business and building infrastructure, India can attract FDI to a ratio of 1.5-2% of its GDP, according to Japanese financial services major Nomura

FAVOURABLE POSITION

The country is in favourable position to attract foreign firms planning to relocate their manufacturing bases due to trade tension between the US and China



PULL FACTOR: Given India's big domestic market, India has the pull factor. However, the government should focus on two things: first, getting the infrastructure in place, and second improve on ease of doing business

CHINA'S FDI: China — in the initial phases of its economic take off, between 1990s and early 2000s — used to attract FDI in excess of 2% in ratio to its GDP

RELOCATION BENEFIT: At inflexion point where some companies are now deciding where to relocate, and India has the advantage of a large domestic market for these companies, the report said

DE-ESCALATED RISKS: Nomura sees the NDA govt's return with majority as a medium-term positive

5.8% GDP GROWTH
Expect the upcoming Q1 GDP growth print (on 31 May) to disappoint and forecast a slowdown to 5.8% y-o-y from 6.6% in Q4 2018 (Consensus: 6.2%)

7% In Nomura's base case, growth averages 6.2% in Q2 and picks up to 7% at end-2019, although the risks appear skewed to the downside

CPI INFLATION: Expect headline CPI inflation to remain below the Reserve Bank of India's 4% target through first quarter of 2020, said the financial services firm

FDI at $44.37 bn in FY19; inflows down in pharma, telecom

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, MAY 28

FOREIGN DIRECT investment (FDI) in the country declined for the first time in the last six years in 2018-19, falling 1 per cent to $44.37 billion as overseas fund inflows slowed down in pharma, telecom and other sectors, latest data by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) showed.

In 2017-18, FDI inflows were at a record $44.85 billion, the data showed. The last time foreign fund inflows showed a reduction was in 2012-13, when inflows registered a contraction of 36 per cent to $22.42 billion as against $35.12 billion in 2011-12.

Since FY13, the inflows kept on growing, reaching a record high in FY18. DPIIT data showed that FDI inflows in pharmaceuticals, construction development, power and telecommunication sectors declined significantly last fiscal.

FDI in pharmaceuticals fell from $1 billion in 2017-18 to $266 million in FY19; in construction development, from $540 million to $213 million; in power, from $1.62 billion to $1.1 billion; and in telecom sector, from $6.21 billion to $2.67 billion.

Sectors that witnessed a growth in FDI include service ($9.15 billion), computer software and hardware ($6.41 billion), trading ($4.46 billion), and automobile ($2.62 billion).

Meanwhile, Singapore became the top source of foreign investment into India last fiscal, accounting for $16.22 billion inflows. Mauritius, which was the top investor in India last fiscal, invested in $8 billion in FY19. Other major investors in the country include Japan, the Netherlands, the UK, the US, Germany, Cyprus, the UAE and France. **WITH PTI**

FDI LAST FELL IN 2012-13 TO $22.42 BILLION

$44.85 BN foreign direct investment inflows in 2017-18

$1 BN: Pharmaceuticals' FDI fell from $1 billion in FY18 to $266 million in FY19

$22.42 BN: Inflows showed reduction last in FY13, falling to $22.42 billion

$16.22 BN in funds, Singapore became top source of foreign investment

Q4: SpiceJet net profit jumps 22% to ₹56 crore

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, MAY 28

SPICEJET ON Tuesday reported a 22 per cent year-on-year jump in net profit to Rs 56 crore for the March quarter, cashing in on higher fares following rival Jet Airways' grounding.

SpiceJet's share price closed up 2.1 per cent on the BSE on Tuesday, having gained an impressive 51 per cent since April.

Although SpiceJet grounded 13 Boeing 737 Max aircraft over safety concerns since March 12, its operating revenues jumped 25 per cent y-o-y to Rs 2,531 crore, as it carried 13 per cent more domestic passengers during Q4FY19 from a year earlier.

SpiceJet flew 4.8 million passengers in Q4FY19 compared to 4.2 million passengers a year ago. SpiceJet said it is yet to receive any compensation from Boeing for the grounded fleet. The airline said its average fare during the March quarter was up 11 per cent y-o-y. The regular grounding of aircraft by Jet created a huge capacity shortfall in the domestic market leading to airlines commanding higher fares. SpiceJet, the third-largest domestic carrier, was allotted several of vacant Jet's slots at Delhi and Mumbai airports. It has so far added 25 aircraft earlier operated by Jet, to its fleet. **FE**

Airtel Africa plans IPO in London Stock Exchange; likely to raise over $1 billion

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, MAY 28

BHARTI AIRTEL'S African unit plans an initial public offer (IPO) in London through which it is expected to raise around $1 billion, that will be used to pare debt.

The Sunil Bharti Mittal-led company plans to sell 25 per cent of new shares of Airtel Africa in the proposed listing on the London Stock Exchange (LSE) and is looking at trading on the main market for listed securities of the exchange. The company said it is also considering a listing of its shares on the Nigeria stock exchange. Airtel Africa had a net debt of around $4 billion at the end of March 2019.

Last year in October, a group of six global investors led by Warburg Pincus, Temasek, Singtel and SoftBank Group International announced investment of $1.25 billion through a primary equity issuance in Airtel Africa. The deal pegs its post-money equity value at $4.4 billion and enterprise value at $8.15 billion.

Although, the company has not divulged details about the amount it plans to raise through the IPO, banking sources peg the amount at around $1 billion. The company had also announced appointment of global banks for its intended IPO.

"In furtherance to our previous intimations in this regard, we wish to inform you that Airtel Africa, a subsidiary of the company, has announced its potential intention to undertake an initial public offering for listing its equity shares on London Stock Exchange and the expected publication of a Registration Document that has been submitted for approval to the UK Financial Conduct Authority," Bharti Airtel said in a filing to BSE.

Airtel Africa has a presence in 14 countries in Africa. **FE**

Bharti Telecom slashes stake

New Delhi: Stake of Airtel promoter group firm Bharti Telecom has come down to 41.24 per cent following renouncement of 11.34 crore shares by the entity valued at around Rs 3,920 crore and Rs 25,000-crore rights issue, as per the updated shareholding of the company. **PTI**

GST Council sets up two sub-groups to look into aspects of e-invoice generation by businesses

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, MAY 28

IN PURSUANCE of its decision to form committee to explore introduction of electronic invoices (e-invoices) through Goods and Services Tax (GST) portal, the GST Council has set up two sub-groups to look into the policy and technical aspects, such as turnover threshold and mode of generation, for e-invoice generation by businesses.

One sub-group will examine the business process, policy and legal aspects for generation of e-invoice and the other sub-group will recommend technical aspects for its roll-out. The sub-group on policy issues would also suggest some "immediate steps" to check fake invoices in case of business-to-business (B2B) supplies with a high threshold turnover and also recommend a carve-out for sectors like banking and telecom.

The e-invoice if implemented will help streamline the indirect tax system and ensure better compliance by keeping a check on tax evasion. A 13-member committee having representatives from GST Network (GSTN), central and state governments was formed in April to examine electronic tax invoice system of South Korea, Latin America and other countries and suggest a model.

The sub-group on policy issues for e-invoice would recommend legal aspects including invoice format, threshold turnover for invoice generation from the portal and immediate steps for 'B2B' supplies with a high threshold turnover. It would also suggest optional treatment for some sectors such as banking, telecom, tentative timeline for execution and phase-wise implementation.

The sub-group on technical issues would suggest mode of generation, like app-based or mobile or SMS or offline and online, data security and system integration. Depending on the success of the project in the B2B segment, the revenue department would look at extending it to business-to-consumer (B2C) sales, especially in sectors where the probability of tax evasion is high. The sub-group on policy issues has five members including officials from Revenue Department, CBIC, GST Council, while the sub-group on technical issues includes three members from GSTN, NIC and UIDAI.

Free billing software for MSMEs

New Delhi: GST Network Tuesday said it has started offering free accounting and billing software to MSMEs with annual turnover of up to Rs 1.5 crore, which would benefit about 80 lakh businesses.

"GSTN has partnered with 8 billing and accounting software vendors for providing software to micro, small and medium enterprises, with annual turnover under Rs 1.5 crore, in a financial year without any cost to such taxpayers," it said. **PTI**

NCPCR directs J&J to withdraw baby shampoo; firm says product safe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, MAY 28

APEX CHILD rights body NCPCR has directed the American multinational company Johnson and Johnson to immediately withdraw a batch of its baby shampoo that it said allegedly contained "harmful" chemicals, a claim refuted by the company which asserted that its products are "safe".

Johnson and Johnson (J&J) said its shampoo does not contain any harmful ingredient as "erroneously" concluded in a Rajasthan government laboratory test conducted with "unknown and unspecified test methods". A Rajasthan government laboratory had found presence of "harmful" chemicals in the US-based company's baby shampoo. A complaint in the matter was filed with the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR). Taking cognisance of the complaint, the NCPCR in April had written to all the states and UTs asking them to test samples of J&J Shampoo and talcum powder.

The NCPCR has now asked the firm "to immediately withdraw the supply of the said batch, which was found to be not of standard quality." "As the alleged batches are still in circulation and may have been procured by the consumers due to non compliance of notice of Drug Control Officer (DCO) in Jaipur-(which had conducted the tests).... Therefore an advisory should be issued in vernacular dailies including in English and Hindi across print and electronic forms," it said in its letter sent last Thursday. It added that in all commercials of the alleged J&J products across India, public should also be advised to refrain from that particular batch of product.

"A compliance report of the above-mentioned directions must be sent to NCPCR by May 29 ..." the NCPCR said.

J&J's official spokesperson said, "We reiterate that Johnson's Baby Shampoo does not contain any harmful ingredient as erroneously concluded in a Rajasthan government laboratory test conducted with unknown and unspecified test methods ... We have challenged the test results and the samples have been sent for retesting at the Appellate laboratory by way of a Magistrate Court Order. As the test report itself is controverted under Section 25(3) of the D&C Act, such a report is not considered conclusive."

NCLT HEARS CASE FILED BY JM FINANCIAL ARC

Hotel Leelaventure sale: Sebi told to finish probe

Mumbai-based hotel chain seeks adjournment for 4 months

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, MAY 28

HEARING THE bankruptcy case against Hotel Leelaventure initiated by JM Financial Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC), the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) Tuesday directed the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) to wrap up its investigations into the proposed sale of Leelaventure's various undertakings to Brookfield by July 8.

At Tuesday's hearing, Hotel Leelaventure requested that the hearing be adjourned for four months, in light of Sebi's ongoing probe of the proposed sale of the company's various undertakings to Brookfield based on complaints it received from minority shareholders ITC and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).

In an interim order, a two-member Mumbai bench of NCLT directed that the Mumbai-based hotel chain also serve a copy of its order to Sebi, while granting adjournment until July 8.

In an exchange notice dated March 18, Hotel Leelaventure informed it has entered into a binding agreement with a Brookfield Asset Management (Brookfield) sponsored private real estate fund to sell — by way of slump sale — four owned Leela hotels located at Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi and Udaipur and the property that it owns in Agra, subject to approval of shareholders, lenders and other regulatory, statutory approvals.

A postal ballot notice seeking shareholder approval to this sale was also issued with voting period ending April 24. As gleaned from a Sebi letter to Hotel Leelaventure, Sebi had already sought comments from the firm on alleged violation of provisions pertaining to related party transactions.

The market regulator's directions came within hours of an ITC petition in NCLT against Hotel Leelaventure, alleging suppression and mismanagement of minority shareholders.

ITC's petition objected to the Brookfield deal, alleging it would leave Hotel Leelaventure a mere shell with only liabilities, while allowing promoters to benefit while leaving minority shareholders holding worthless shares with no underlying business or assets.

JM Financial ARC had filed the bankruptcy case against Hotel Leelaventure in January. **FE**

NCLAT gives 4 weeks to Bakshi to settle dispute

New Delhi: The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) Tuesday gave four weeks' time to Vikram Bakshi to settle his dispute with HUDCO, which is claiming dues of Rs 195 crore from the McDonald's estranged partner. **PTI**

DHFL stock falls nearly 4%, amid reports of lookout notice against promoters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, MAY 28

SHARES OF Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd fell nearly 4 per cent Tuesday, amid reports of a lookout notice against the company's promoters over shell companies.

The scrip declined 3.57 per cent to close at Rs 114.80 on the BSE. During the day, it dropped 6.88 per cent to Rs 110.85. On the National Stock Exchange (NSE), shares fell by 3.65 per cent to close at Rs 114.80 apiece. In terms of traded volume, 40.44 lakh shares were traded on the BSE and over four crore shares on the NSE during the day.

The BSE had sought clarification from Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd (DHFL) on May 28, 2019, with reference to news over lookout notice against DHFL promoters over shell companies.

Later, Dewan Housing in a clarification to the BSE said, "Please note that the company and/or its promoter-directors have not received any communication from the authorities regarding issuance of any lookout notice."

In a clarification to BSE, DHFL said, that "the company and/or its promoter-directors have not received any communication from the authorities regarding issuance of any lookout notice"

Apart from this, according to our knowledge, there is no other price-sensitive information under Regulation 30 of the Sebi listing regulations which could have bearing on the share price of the company, the filing added.

"The company is currently focused in getting a strategic partner, fulfilling all its obligations on time and in building strategy for the company's back-to-business growth. As reiterated in the past, we deny all allegations of existence of any alleged shell companies. We have fully co-operated with all authorities and we have not received any communication from any authorities in support of any of these allegations," it said.

BRIEFLY

RBI extends RTGS timing

Mumbai: Timings for fund transfer through the Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) system have been extended by one-and-a-half hours to 1800 hrs for the general public from June 1, the Reserve Bank of India said Tuesday. **PTI**

Amul turnover up 13% y-o-y

Vadodara: Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd (GCMMF) which markets the popular Amul brand of milk and dairy products has registered a turnover of Rs 33,150 crore for the financial year 2018-19. The sales turnover is 13 per cent higher than the previous financial year. **ENS**

Money to share: Bezos' ex-wife

New York: MacKenzie Bezos, the former wife of Amazon.com Inc CEO Jeff Bezos, pledged on Tuesday to give half of her $36 billion fortune to charity, following a movement founded by billionaires Warren Buffett and Bill and Melinda Gates. "In addition to whatever assets life has nurtured in me, I have a disproportionate amount of money to share," MacKenzie Bezos said in a statement dated Saturday. MacKenzie Bezos recently became the world's third-richest woman. **REUTERS**

'Likely to list GAIL Gas, invest in CGD'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, MAY 28

GAIL INDIA plans to list its subsidiary GAIL Gas and is aggressively investing in city gas distribution (CGD) to create volumes before it takes the company to the market, a top company official said.

Out of a planned capital expenditure of Rs 54,000 crore, GAIL plans to invest Rs 12,000 crore in CGD networks to retail CNG to automobiles and PNG to households in towns like Varanasi and Patna.

"Listing GAIL Gas is in my mind and we had earlier thought about it. As of now, the subsidiary has reported a topline of Rs 5,300 crore and Rs 120-130 crore of profit," B C Tripathi, GAIL India CMD told reporters here.

Competitiveness index: India moves up to 43rd place

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, MAY 28

INDIA MOVED up a place to rank as the world's 43rd most competitive economy on the back of its robust economic growth, a large labour force and its huge market size, while Singapore toppled the US to grab the top position, a global study showed Tuesday.

Singapore attained the top position, from third last year, while the United States slipped to the third in the 2019 edition of the IMD World Competitiveness Rankings. Hong Kong SAR has held onto its second place, helped by a benign tax and business policy environment and access to business finance.

Economists regard competitiveness as vital for the long-term health of a country's economy as it empowers businesses to achieve sustainable growth, generates jobs and, ultimately, enhance the welfare of citizens.

Established in 1989, the IMD World Competitiveness Rankings, incorporate 235 indicators from each of the 63 ranked economies to evaluate their ability to foster an environment where enterprises can achieve sustainable growth, generate jobs and increase welfare for its citizens.

The IMD Business School said it takes into account a wide range of statistics such as unemployment, GDP and government spending on health and education, as well as data from an executive opinion survey covering topics such as social cohesion, globalisation and corruption.

The study said the Asia-Pacific region has emerged as a global beacon with 11 out of 14 economies either improving or holding their ground. India's ranking has improved by one place in past one year to 43rd, driven by a robust rate of growth in real GDP, improvements in business legislation and an increase in public expenditure on education.

Walmart appoints ex-Google executive Suresh Kumar as chief technology officer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, MAY 28

US-BASED RETAIL chain Walmart Tuesday said it has appointed Suresh Kumar, an IIT Madras graduate and former Google executive, as chief technology officer and chief development officer.

He will directly report to president and chief executive officer Doug McMillon, Walmart said in a statement. The appointment comes at a time when Walmart is transforming its customer and associate experiences.

He brings over 25 years of technology leadership experience coming from Google, Microsoft, Amazon and IBM, it said.

"The technology of today and tomorrow enables us to serve our customers and associates in ways that weren't previously possible. We want to take full advantage of those opportunities. Suresh has a unique understanding of the intersection of technology and retail, including supply chain, and has deep experience in advertising, cloud and machine learning," McMillon added.