

## 'Asia/Pacific enterprises behind global counterparts in digital maturity'

**Mumbai, May 11** : Asia/Pacific enterprises are slightly behind global counterparts in terms of digital business maturity, with 20 per cent of Asia/Pacific CEOs describing their enterprise as "digital to the core," compared with 22 per cent globally, market research firm Gartner said on Thursday. According to the Gartner, 45 per cent of Asia/Pacific CEOs think of digital transformation as a way to optimise their current business versus 42 per cent globally. "CIOs need to take on an evangelizing role with the CEO and other business leaders about the transformative possibilities of digital business using real examples," said Partha Iyengar, Vice President and Gartner Fellow, in a statement.

Asia/Pacific CEOs expect productivity in their organisations to increase by 24 per cent by the end of 2018, with revenue and profitability as the top two metrics of success. To achieve such aggressive productivity gains, Asia/Pacific CEOs believe that conventional technologies (cloud, ERP, analytics and CRM) will help them, rather than technologies that support digital transformation (digital environments, blockchain, the Internet of Things, robotics, artificial intelligence and 3D printing).

Digital business offers a way for Asia/Pacific firms to lower their cost structure drastically and thereby increase margins, but these firms are not pursuing digital business as aggressively as they could.

## '70% Indian automotive sales to be digitally influenced by 2020'

**New Delhi, May 11** : Almost 70 per cent of automobile sales -- translating into transactions worth about USD 40 billion -- in India would be "digitally influenced" by 2020 from the current USD 18 billion, a report today said.

The report by Facebook and Bain & Company sought to examine the impact of digital technologies like social media and Internet of Things (IoT) on the automotive industry. Social media is expected to become a major influencer, driving sales of about USD 23 billion by 2020.

Also, most people do a significant part of their research before purchasing a car online now, which makes it important that auto makers make digital media an important part of their marketing strategy.

Also, many post-purchase activities are now happening online.

By 2020, up to 40 per cent of consumers are expected to book repair and maintenance services online, while about 30 per cent will go online to purchase vehicle accessories, up from 14 per cent and 8 per cent respectively today. However, most Indian auto makers are behind the curve in digital investments, spending just 10-11 per cent of their total marketing budgets on digital media in 2016.

"Automotive OEMs should redefine their marketing and customer

engagement efforts to reflect the current behaviour and usage patterns of automobile buyers," Bain & Company Partner Yaquta Mandviwala said.

Facebook India Managing Director Umang Bedi said companies will need to step up efforts to create deeper and personalised relationships with customers.

**Thiruvananthapuram, May 11** : Amid a public outcry over the State Bank of India (SBI) announcement to levy charges on ATM cash withdrawals from June, Kerala Finance Minister Thomas Issac on Thursday accused the bank of bringing down its losses with the move.

Addressing reporters here, in the Kerala Assembly Issac said the only reason he can see for this "mad" new rule is that the SBI is faced with mounting non-performing assets that have touched Rs 1.67 lakh crore.

"This is the height of madness and irresponsibility. It would be interesting to find out the list of NPAs of the SBI. One wouldn't be surprised if the majority are found to be corporates. Just take a look at their profits, it has dramatically come down. The charges have been levied to bring down their losses. This is something that even private sector banks would not dare think of doing," said Issac. The bank's new

# Foreign funds' inflows lift Indian equities to new highs

**Mumbai, May 11** : The key Indian indices again surged to new highs on Thursday as substantial inflow of foreign funds, coupled with an appreciating rupee and global cues, kept investors' sentiments buoyed.

The wider 51-scrip Nifty of the National Stock Exchange (NSE) recorded a new closing high of 9,422.40 points -- up 15.10 points or 0.16 per cent.

Similarly, the barometer 30-scrip Sensitive Index (Sensex) of the BSE closed at a new high of 30,250.98 points -- up 2.81 points or 0.01 per cent from its previous close at 29,933.25 points.

The benchmark indices had scaled new closing highs on Wednesday -- the NSE Nifty at 9,407.30 points and the Sensex at 30,248.17 points.

On Thursday, the benchmark indices also touched record intraday highs, as well as new 52-week highs. The Nifty scaled a new intra-day high of 9,450.65 points and the BSE Sensex of 30,366.43 points. In terms of the broader markets, the S&P BSE mid-cap index was up a tad by 0.05 per cent whereas the small-cap index inched down by 0.05 per cent.

"The Nifty opened with upside gap of around 41 points and made an attempt to move up during early part of the session. It later shifted into sideways range for better part of the day and slipped into decline towards the end," Deepak Jasani, Head (Retail Research), HDFC Securities, told



IANS.

"Major Asian markets have all ended on a mixed note. European indices like FTSE 100 and DAX currently traded in the positive trend and CAC 40 traded lower."

"Weak market breadth showed that investors were looking for fresh cues to chase prices higher," said Anand James, Chief Market Strategist of Geojit Financial Services.

"Index heavyweights helped Nifty positive, while rate sensitives also edged higher on the back of upbeat monsoon forecast. But a restraint was visible, especially with inflation and production figures expected tomorrow."

According to the Ministry of

Commerce and Industry, the new series of 'Wholesale Price Index' (WPI) and 'Index of Industrial Production' (IIP) data with revised base year of 2011-12 is slated for release on Friday, May 12.

Dhruv Desai, Director and Chief Operating Officer of Tradebulls, said the equity benchmark Index CNX Nifty (futures) traded with firm sentiments and continued bull run, tracking positive Asian cues and appreciation of the rupee against the US dollar.

The Indian rupee strengthened by 24-25 paise to 64.38 per US dollar from its previous close of 64.62-63.

"Banking sector stocks traded with mixed sentiments throughout

the session due to profit booking, whereas auto stocks extended last session's gain on strong buying support," Desai told IANS.

"Cement and media-entertainment stocks complemented the firmness of the equity markets."

In investments, provisional data with the exchanges showed that foreign institutional investors (FIIs) purchased stocks worth Rs 1,306.71 crore, while domestic institutional investors (DIIs) divested scrip worth Rs 1,037.18 crore.

Sectorwise, the S&P BSE consumer durables index augmented by 262.06 points, followed by the automobile index by 225.04 points and the healthcare index by 81.56 points.

On the other hand, the S&P BSE oil and gas index fell by 134.37 points, the capital goods index by 91.37 points and the power index by 28.84 points.

Major Sensex gainers on Thursday were: Hero MotoCorp, up 4.26 per cent at Rs 3,463.80; Bajaj Auto, up 3.41 per cent at Rs 2,998.25; Adani Ports, up 2.28 per cent at Rs 358.95; State Bank of India, up 1.15 per cent at Rs 298, and ITC, up 1 per cent at Rs 276.65.

Major Sensex losers were: Gail, down 2.14 per cent at Rs 408.70; ONGC, down 1.94 per cent at Rs 184.20; Hindustan Unilever, down 1.78 per cent at Rs 978.15; Bharti Airtel, down 1.77 per cent at Rs 366.10; and Axis Bank, down 1.69 per cent at Rs 517.10.

## Bengal less affected by temporary ban on H1-B visas

**Kolkata, May 11** : West Bengal Information Minister Bratya Basu on Thursday claimed that the temporary suspension of premium H1-B visa processing by the US administration would have a lesser impact on his state compared to other Indian states.

"I think West Bengal would have far lesser impact after the H1-B visa ban compared to some other Indian states which have a larger number of IT professionals working in the United States under various organisations," Basu said at an event on information technology in the city. Stating that the state government does not have much knowledge about the Trump administration's executive order on banning the visa, the minister said it would stand by its people who are working abroad. "The state government cannot do much about the foreign immigration rules. However the state administration, would do the needful for our people working abroad in various IT companies," he said. Basu also said they haven't received any information about lay-offs in the IT giants operating in the state after the visa ban decision in April.

## Kerala FM Issac slams SBI's new charges on ATM withdrawals



order states that every time a SBI customer withdraws cash from an ATM a charge of Rs 25 would be levied. Charges would also be levied for exchange of old and soiled notes above Rs 5,000. "This is outrageous and the central government is cheating the people. Ever since the demonetisation began, the Centre has been bullying people. This is going to be taken up, both within and out of Parliament very strongly," said CPI-M Lok Sabha member M.B. Rajesh.

Popular film personality Shobi Thilakan called it an "anti-people policy of the Centre". "The SBI has turned out to be worse than the local money lenders and is out to fleece the common man. There has to be a public outcry against this new policy," said Thilakan. Customers spotted in front of an SBI ATM here also expressed anger. "The Centre has cheated people and it has to be seen from the perspective that they did this very tactfully because

Kerala's own bank (State Bank of Travancore) has been merged with the SBI. The people who banked with SBT have now become SBI customers and now they are at the receiving end," said a retired teacher, after withdrawing money from the ATM.

Another angry SBI customer from Kottayam said barring the lone Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislator in the 141-member Kerala Assembly, all others had strongly opposed the merger and passed a resolution to this effect.

"This was bound to happen and these are measures to pick the pockets poor people.

We wish to know what the state BJP leaders have to say on this. There should be mass protest in Kerala against the SBI," said the angry SBI account holder.

Of the 880 SBT branches in Kerala, more than 400 were closed after the merger. At present there are over 800 SBI branches in the state.

## India explores clean energy collaboration with Austria

**New Delhi, May 11** : Highlighting the need for India-Austria collaboration in clean energy, Union Power Minister Piyush Goyal said a policy directive on quality of modules will soon be in place, according to a statement New Delhi on Thursday.

Goyal was speaking at the India-Austria Business Forum organised by the FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) in collaboration with the Embassy of India in Vienna and Austrian Economic Chambers (Wirtschaftskammer A-streiech WKO).

"India needs to put entire solar value chain under quality direction... The government will have a policy directive in place on quality of modules (by end of May)," the minister said, according to the industry lobby statement.

The other policies to follow it would be on solar cells, which would be in the next six-seven months and on wafers and polysilicon in the next two years, it added.

Goyal said the two nations could leverage each other's strengths to benefit both economies. India can offer better pricing

for Austrian products while providing low-cost manufacturing base.

He underlined affordability was a paramount imperative to be able to change India's energy mix. He also said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave a new dimension to renewable energy.

The latest solar tariff of four cents was a case in point for Modi's vision of scaling up rapidly giving good returns in more ways than one.

Highlighting that within six months of his visit to Finland, there have been multiple exchanges facilitated by FICCI, Goyal said that India could fast track with Austria what it has done with Finland.

A high-level business delegation accompanied the minister, who went to Vienna for the two-day business forum.

Noting that an estimated \$160 billion is required to meet India's ambitious clean energy goals between now and 2022, FICCI President Pankaj Patel highlighted the immense potential of green bonds for channelling debt capital funds towards clean energy financing in both the countries.

## HCL net up 21% in Q4; projects flat growth in FY18

**New Delhi, May 11** : Global software major HCL Technologies Ltd, which posted double-digit net profit and revenue growth for the fourth quarter (Q4) and fiscal 2016-17, on Thursday projected flat revenue growth for fiscal 2017-18 in dollar terms.

"Revenue for fiscal 2017-18 (FY 2018) is expected to grow 9.9-11.9 per cent year-on-year (YoY) as compared to 11.9 per cent YoY growth posted in fiscal 2016-17 (FY 2017) in dollar terms," said the Noida-based company in a statement here.

In constant currency, revenue is expected to grow 10.5-12.5 per cent YoY in dollar terms.

"The revenue guidance is based on average exchange rate of US dollar (Rs 65.50) and other currencies in FY 2017," noted the statement.

Operating Margin is expected to be 19.5-20.5 per cent for FY 2018.

In a regulatory filing on the BSE earlier in the day, the company said it posted Rs 2,325 crore consolidated net profit for Q4 registering 21 per cent YoY growth from Rs 1,926 crore in the same period year ago (2015-16).

Sequentially, the net profit in Q4 (Rs 2,325 crore) increased from Rs 2,070 crore in the third quarter (Q3), posting 12.3 per cent Quarter-on-Quarter (QoQ) growth.

Consolidated revenue for the quarter (Q4) under review grew 12.7 per cent YoY to Rs 12,053 crore

from Rs 10,698 crore in like period year ago and two per cent QoQ from Rs 11,814 crore quarter ago (Q3). For FY 2017 under review, net profit grew 15 per cent YoY to Rs 8,457 crore from Rs 7,354 crore year ago (FY 2016) and revenue 14.2 per cent YoY to Rs 46,723 crore from Rs 40,913 crore year ago (FY 2016).

Under the International Financial Regulatory Standards (IFRS), net income for Q4 grew 22.7 per cent YoY to \$350 million from \$285 million in like period year ago and 14.3 per cent QoQ from \$306 million quarter ago (Q3). Gross revenue under IFRS for Q4 grew 14.5 per cent YoY to \$1,817 million from \$1,587 million in the same period year ago and 4.1 per cent QoQ from \$1,745 million quarter ago (Q3). Net income for FY 2017 under IFRS grew 12.9 per cent YoY to \$1,262 million from \$1,118 million in FY 2016 and gross revenue 11.9 per cent YoY to \$6,975 million from \$6,235 million in FY 2016. "We are pleased with our industry-leading financial results for the fourth quarter and the full year. In Q4, we had a healthy 3.8 per cent sequential revenue growth in constant currency," said HCL Technologies Chief Executive Officer C. Vijayakumar in the statement later. For the fiscal under review, the IT major delivered a double-digit constant currency revenue growth of 13.7 per cent, which is at the higher end

of its guided range.

"Our differentiated services, which focus on new growth areas like digital, Cloud, security and IoT (Internet of Things) as well as products and platforms registered an impressive 30.9 per cent YoY growth in the fiscal under review," noted Vijayakumar.

Commenting on the results, HCL Chairman Shiv Nadar said the company remained at the forefront of the changing market paradigm with leadership, value-driven business model and focus on sustainability, diversity and inclusion. "With the advent of the fourth industrial revolution, we are seeing a convergence of physical and digital worlds. This convergence is creating an interplay of business models and redefining the way value is created and delivered," Nadar said in the statement. HCL Chief Financial Officer Anil Chanana said that cash flow generation during the fiscal was robust, with net income to operating cash flow conversion at 112 per cent. "Our focus on rewarding shareholders continues, with Rs 3,500-crore buy-back of shares (Rs 2 face value) programme. Return on equity continues to be healthy at 27 per cent for the fiscal," added Chanana.

With a net addition of 11,077 employees in FY 2017, the headcount increased to 115,973 from 104,896 in FY 2016, while annual attrition declined marginally to 16.9 per cent from 17.3 per cent year ago.

## Xiaomi unveils its first offline store 'Mi Home' in India

**Bengaluru, May 11** : In a bid to reach out to its customers directly, Chinese smartphone maker Xiaomi on Thursday unveiled its first offline store in India named "Mi Home". Located at Phoenix Market City in Whitefield here, the store that showcases some of the flagship products including Mi 5 and Redmi Note 4 will be open for the public from May 20. India, where Xiaomi has emerged as the second largest smartphone seller and recorded a turnover of \$1 billion in 2016, is the fourth country after Hong Kong, China and Singapore to have an exclusive offline store. "More stores will soon come up in Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad and Chennai. The company has a target of opening 100 such stores across the country in the next two years," Manu Jain, Vice President and Managing Director, Xiaomi India, told reporters here. "At the store, the products could be purchased or pre-booked against a small token amount if the product is out of stock," Jain said, adding that on re-booking an out-of-stock product, a customer specific code would be generated to prioritise the shipment.

The offline store would help establish a direct connect with the customer and help cope up with the huge demand as the company, that sells over a million smartphones every month, at times goes out of stock.

"Mi Home is the offline avatar of the online mi.com. There's a special reason for calling it Mi Home because we want you to feel very comfortable. At Mi store, you will feel like home. You can try our products and play games," Jain added while showing a photograph of a Mi fan at one of the stores in China.

China has 72 Mi stores housing various products including smart scooter, smart cooker, laptops and the latest flagship phones Mi 6 and Redmi Pro.

"Over 24,000 Mi fans visited the store on day one in China," Jain told reporters here.

According to media reports, Xiaomi has become the most preferred smartphone upgrade choice for the Indian consumers. The company now aspires to double its turnover from \$1 billion in 2016 to \$2 billion this year.

When asked if the company plans to introduce other smart products in the Indian market, Jain told IANS: "We are working towards that. However, some of the products like smart cookers don't have their usage here."

## 60.5 lakh taxpayers enrolled under GST so far: Hasmukh Adhia

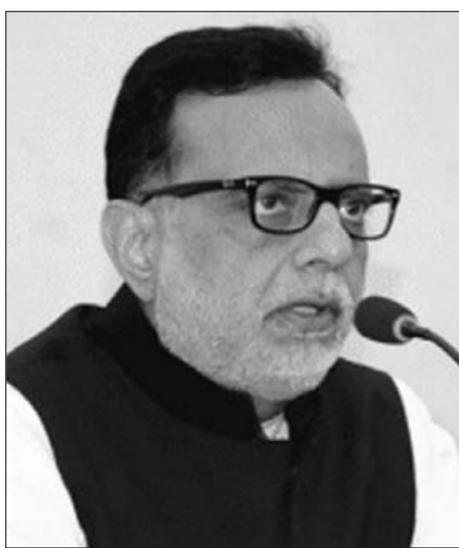
**New Delhi, May 11** : As many as 60.5 lakh taxpayers have been enrolled under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in the first phase out of a total of 84 lakh taxpayers who will come under the new indirect tax net, Revenue Secretary Hasmukh Adhia said.

"As on April 30, when Phase-1 of enrolment was closed, 60.5 lakh taxpayers out of 84 lakh had enrolled," Adhia said here on Wednesday after holding detailed review of the IT-preparedness for GST system at the Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) office.

The enrolment window will be re-opened for 15 days from June 1 to give another opportunity to taxpayers to enrol, he said.

Expressing satisfaction with the preparation for the roll-out of GST from July 1, Adhia said that out of 62,937 tax officials, nearly 24,668 have been given hands-on training on the application software on live system while the remaining officials will be trained by June 15 this year.

GSTN, which is creating the information tech-



nology (IT) backbone for the new indirect tax regime, is also conducting a pilot on GST system software from May 2-16, where 3,200 taxpayers drawn from each state, union territory and Centre will be participating.

"This pilot will also give an opportunity to test all the modules by a large set of users in real life environment so that all possible scenarios get

tested. All stakeholders involved in the GST system from taxpayer to bank to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to accounting authorities are participating in this exercise, which is like a rehearsal for the real rollout," the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

The feedback from the pilot will be used to further improve the GST Software, it said.