



Top Conviction Ideas: Chemicals & Midcaps

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Chemicals Sector: Q1FY26 Review

✓ A Quarter Marked by Macro Uncertainties; Hopes of Recovery from H2FY26

- **Global Challenges Persist in Q1FY26:** The chemicals sector reported a mixed performance in Q1FY26, with most companies missing both our and consensus estimates, particularly on the profitability front. Intense competition from Chinese suppliers, order deferments, and uncertainty surrounding U.S. tariffs weighed on profitability. The demand-supply imbalance persisted, as subdued domestic demand coincided with excess Chinese capacity, resulting in subdued volumes or volume growth at the cost of margins in some cases. The operating environment remained highly volatile, marked by sharp corrections in raw material prices, geopolitical tensions, and continued global trade disruptions. Nevertheless, companies were able to sustain operational continuity and stable volumes. Domestically, the agrochemical sector demonstrated resilience, supported by healthy reservoir levels and adequate groundwater availability. With Rabi sowing expected to progress well, demand prospects remain encouraging, positioning the sector for recovery in H2FY26.
- **Chemistry Plays:** Companies focusing on diversification and innovation demonstrated relative resilience amid overall market volatility. Management commentary highlighted a proactive approach, with firms aligning to evolving end-market needs and adapting swiftly to shifts in the demand landscape, rather than relying solely on demand or pricing recovery. On the demand side, discretionary categories such as dyes, pigments, and polymers held steady. Fluorochemicals and refrigerants continued to deliver strong performance, aided by healthy R32 volumes and improved pricing in R22. Internationally, the agrochemical sector remained under pressure, weighed down by persistent oversupply. Domestically, the delayed and uneven onset of the southwest monsoon disrupted kharif sowing, dampening demand for agri-inputs, particularly herbicides. Farmer sentiment also remained cautious, reflecting rainfall uncertainties and weaker price realisations from the previous harvest.
- **Outlook and Guidance:** Demand prospects remain cautiously optimistic, with pricing still subdued though showing improvement compared to recent quarters. A sustained recovery in prices will depend on factors such as (a) potential product dumping by international players and associated protective measures, (b) tariff-related developments, and (c) volatility in raw material costs. Region-specific tariff structures are expected to alter cost dynamics and could drive a realignment of global supply chains. While Indian exporters may face near-term challenges, they may see a robust recovery once clarity around global tariffs emerges and major customers realign their supply chains. Looking ahead, the financial performance of chemical companies will be shaped by their ability to differentiate product offerings and maintain cost efficiency.

✓ Financial Performance: Chemicals

- **Dhanuka Agritech** reported revenue of Rs 528 Cr, up 7% YoY and 20% QoQ, missing our estimate of Rs 553 Cr. EBITDA came in at Rs 83 Cr, up 16% YoY but down 24% QoQ, missing our estimate of Rs 91 Cr. The company achieved EBITDA margins of 15.7%, elevated YoY due to better operating performance, compared to 14.5% in Q1FY25 and 24.8% in Q4FY25. PAT stood at Rs 56 Cr, up 14% YoY but down 26% QoQ, missing our estimates by 11%. The performance was impacted by slightly inconsistent rains, leading to weaker demand.
- **PI Industries'** consolidated revenue stood at Rs 1,901 Cr, down 8% YoY but up 6% QoQ, missing the estimate of Rs 2,255 Cr as pressure in agchem exports persisted, while domestic biologics business was impacted by regulatory changes. EBITDA came in at Rs 519 Cr, marking an 11% YoY decline but increased by 14% QoQ, 19% below estimates. EBITDA margin stood at 27.3%, compared to 28.2% in Q1FY25 and 25.5% in Q4FY25. PAT was reported at Rs 400 Cr, down 11% YoY but up 21% QoQ, falling short of the Rs 466 Cr estimate
- **Navin Fluorine International Ltd (NFIL)** delivered a robust performance in Q1FY26. Revenue came in at Rs 725 Cr, registering a 39% increase YoY and 3% QoQ, in line with our estimate. EBITDA rose sharply to Rs 207 Cr, marking a robust 106% YoY and 16% QoQ growth, surpassing the estimate of Rs 184 Cr. EBITDA margins expanded significantly to 28.5% vs 19.2% in Q1FY25 and 25.5% in Q4FY25, led by operating leverage and improved product mix. PAT stood at Rs 117 Cr, up 129% YoY and 23% QoQ, beating our estimate of Rs 99 Cr.
- **Aarti Industries Ltd.'s** performance was weaker than expected, mainly due to uncontrollable external factors. Revenue came in at Rs 1,675 Cr, down 10% YoY and 14% QoQ, missing our estimates. EBITDA stood at Rs 212 Cr, down 30% YoY and 21% QoQ, missing our estimates by 25%. EBITDA margin stood at 12.7%, compared to 16.4% in Q1FY25 and 13.7% in Q4FY25. The company's PAT was Rs 43 Cr, down 69% YoY and 55% QoQ, missing our estimates of Rs 97 Cr due to higher interest cost and depreciation, while the revenue declined.
- **Apcotex Industries** registered a robust volume growth leading to revenue of Rs 376 Cr, up 12% YoY and 8% QoQ, in line with our estimates. However, the company missed our estimates on the EBITDA front (Rs 39 Cr, up 22% YoY). EBITDA margins stood at 10.3%, improving 84 bps YoY but declining 73 bps QoQ. PAT came in at Rs 19 Cr, marking an increase of 29% YoY and 14% QoQ, in line with our estimates.
- **Archean Chemical Industries'** consolidated revenue stood at Rs 292 Cr, up 37% YoY and down 15% QoQ. The performance missed our estimate by 26%, as bromine volumes continued declining, signalling a delay in full recovery. EBITDA was Rs 78 Cr, up 10% YoY but down 12% QoQ, falling short of our estimates by 36%. The EBITDA margin stood at 26.7%, down 676 bps YoY but up 116 bps QoQ. The company's PAT was Rs 40 Cr, a drop of 10% YoY, majorly missing our estimate by 51%.
- **Camlin Fine Sciences'** Q1FY26 revenue grew 7% YoY but declined 3% QoQ to Rs 424 Cr, missing our estimate of Rs 475 Cr. While the company observed an improvement in Vanillin prices, a full impact is expected in the coming quarters as the customer inventories liquidate. EBITDA came in at Rs 19 Cr, up 5% YoY but down 68% QoQ, as EBITDA margins declined by 9 bps YoY and 909 bps QoQ to 4.5%. The company reported a net loss after discontinued operations of Rs 11 Cr, after posting a positive PAT number in the previous quarter.
- **NOCIL's** reported revenue of Rs 336 Cr, down 10% YoY and 1% QoQ, missing estimates by 15%. EBITDA came in at Rs 31 Cr, down 26% YoY and 11% QoQ, falling short of estimates by 25%. EBITDA margin declined to 9.1% from 11% in Q1FY25. PAT stood at Rs 17 Cr, down 36% YoY and 17% QoQ, compared to the estimated Rs 27 Cr.

Chemicals Sector: Outlook

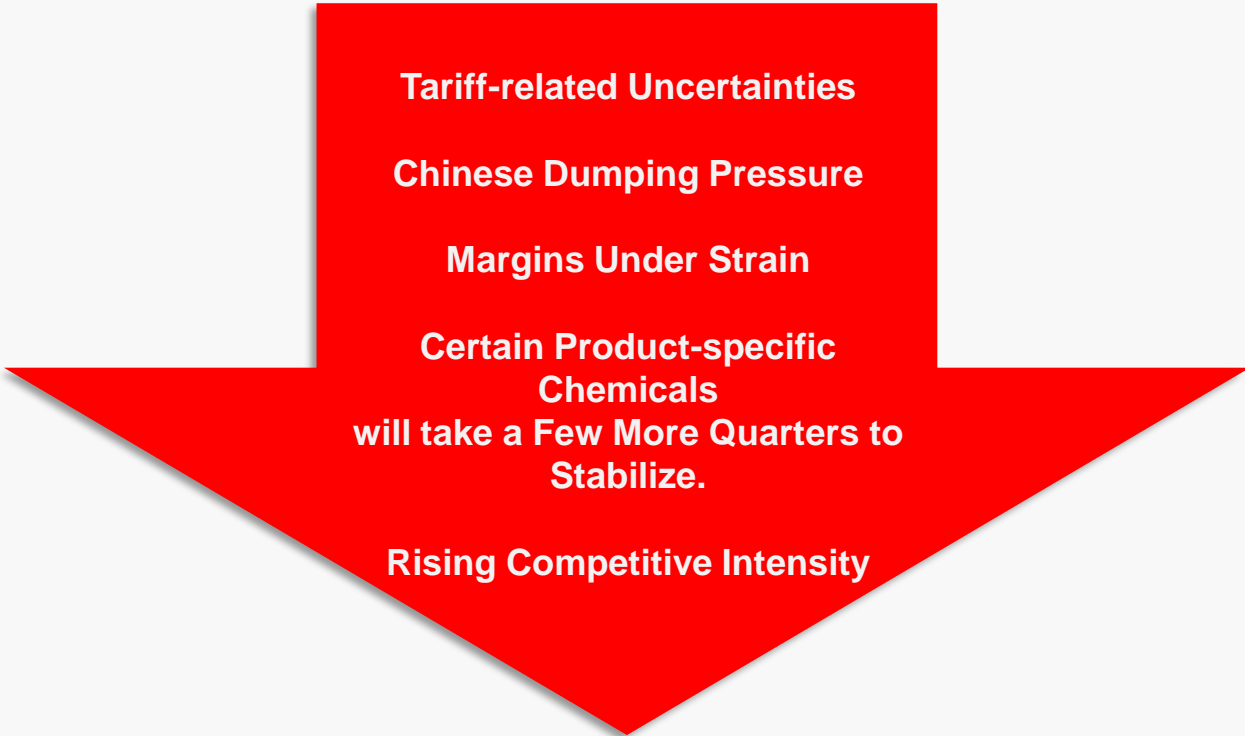
✓ Focus on Cost Optimisation, Utilisation Gains, and Growth Drivers

FY25 proved to be a challenging year for the chemical industry, and the pain seems to be persisting in Q1FY26. The key adverse factors were subdued global demand, economic weakness in key markets, inventory destocking, surplus supply from China, and lingering concerns over further deterioration in global consumption. Nonetheless, most of these challenges are expected to be resolved over the next few quarters, and the sector's long-term growth potential remains intact, supported by rising export opportunities and resilient domestic demand.

- **Chemicals:** Chemical companies under our coverage continue to focus on operational efficiencies and innovation to navigate the transitory phase where global supply chains are looking to realign. Most of the players are forced to balance between pricing with volumes to protect margins, selectively participating in businesses with sustainable profitability, and intensifying cost optimisation initiatives. Although management commentary points to nascent signs of price recovery, uncertainty around U.S. tariff developments continues to pose a risk. We believe that the long-term structural story is intact, and companies maintaining cost discipline and enhancing operational efficiency are well placed to capitalise on recovery when it materialises. We remain cautiously optimistic about a recovery during H2FY26.
- **Agrochemicals:** Domestic agrochemical players are expected to sustain growth momentum, aided by product innovation and a healthy pipeline of launches. While the rainfall in Q1 was a bit irregular, more encouraging trends were observed in Q2, leading to improved demand prospects. Product pricing appears to have stabilised, and upcoming product introductions should drive revenue growth. While global agrochemical markets may remain under pressure for the next few quarters, the medium-term outlook remains positive. We maintain the view that companies investing in R&D, bringing differentiated offerings, and forging strategic collaborations are better positioned to capture growth opportunities and deliver margin improvement over time.

Chemicals - Short and Medium-term Drivers

Negatives



Tariff-related Uncertainties
Chinese Dumping Pressure
Margins Under Strain
Certain Product-specific Chemicals will take a Few More Quarters to Stabilize.
Rising Competitive Intensity

Positives



Launch of New Products with Better Integration Across Product Lines
Strong Domestic Demand
Strategic Capex Into New Chemistries
Better Inventory Management and Cost Control
Destocking Cycle Ending

Key Monitorables- Changes in Chinese capacities/pricing and potential anti-dumping duties, Progress on capex plans and their execution, Demand trends across key end-user industries, Implications of US tariffs and possible retaliatory measures on global supply chains

Financial Performance & Outlook

Praj Industries Ltd.

- **Financial Performance:** The company reported revenue of Rs 640 Cr, down 8% YoY and 26% QoQ, missing our estimate by 6%. Lack of clarity on ethanol blending policy changes impacted domestic orders, while tariff uncertainties led to deferment of capex decisions in the US. EBITDA stood at Rs 36 Cr, down 59% YoY and 53% QoQ, significantly below our estimate of Rs 59 Cr. EBITDA margins declined to 5.56% from 12.4% in Q1FY25. PAT stood at Rs 5 Cr, reflecting a 94% YoY and an 87% QoQ decline, with overall performance missing our estimate. Order intake during the quarter was Rs 795 Cr, compared to Rs 1,032 Cr in the previous quarter.
- **Outlook:** The company asserts that its long-term growth drivers remain strong, supported by robust interest in its newer products. Nonetheless, execution delays may continue impacting revenue growth and margin improvement for a quarter or two. In H2FY26, management anticipates progress on delayed projects, with execution activity picking up as pending orders enter the implementation phase. Praj aims to achieve high single-digit EBITDA margins in FY26.

Mold-tek Packaging Ltd.

- **Financial Performance:** The company's performance surpassed our estimates on all fronts, supported by a recovery in key end markets and growth in the Pharma business. During Q1FY26, the company posted a YoY revenue growth of 22% to Rs 241 Cr, as volume increased by 15% YoY. The company reported an EBITDA of Rs 47 Cr (up 31% YoY and 22% QoQ), surpassing our estimates of Rs 42 Cr. EBITDA per kg in Q4FY25 improved to Rs 41.6 per kg. PAT stood at Rs 22 Cr, up 35% YoY and 38% QoQ.
- **Outlook:** The company anticipates an acceleration in volume growth over the next few quarters, supported by commissioning of new capacities and product launches in the F&F, Paints, and Pharma Packaging divisions. For FY26, a volume growth rate of 12–15% is expected, largely driven by increased contribution from the Pharma and F&F segments. With a focus on capacity optimisation and an improved product mix, Mold-tek remains on track to achieve its target EBITDA per kg of Rs 42 by FY26.

Welspun Living Ltd.

- **Financial Performance:** WLL's performance was impacted by tariff-related uncertainties, leading to a revenue decline of 11% YoY and 15% QoQ. EBITDA stood at Rs 225 Cr, declining 34% YoY and 29% QoQ, missing our estimate of Rs 312 Cr. EBITDA margins stood at 10% (from 13.46% in Q1FY25 and 11.94% in Q4FY25). Consequently, PAT stood at Rs 89 Cr, down 52% YoY and 33% QoQ, missing our estimate of Rs 147 Cr by 14%.
- **Outlook:** Amidst a volatile external environment, the company has a conservative stance for Q2, anticipating continued pressure on both revenues and margins. With tariff and trade uncertainties persisting, WLL remains focused on disciplined cost control, agile operations, and deeper customer engagement to navigate ongoing headwinds.

Kirloskar Brothers Ltd.

- **Financial Performance:** Q1FY26 performance was weaker than our expectations as the early monsoon impacted demand for small pumps and elections led to order deferrals in the US and Thailand. It reported revenue of Rs 979 Cr for Q1FY26, registering a 5% YoY and 24% QoQ decline, falling short of our estimate by 20%. EBITDA stood at Rs 112 Cr, flat YoY but down 41% QoQ, missing our estimate of Rs 137 Cr. EBITDA margins came in at 11.4%, up 57 bps YoY but down 338 bps QoQ due to seasonality.
- **Outlook:** The management mentioned that the slowdown in domestic business is a seasonal phenomenon and the demand trends in key end markets remain strong. In the US, the orders that were deferred due to elections are expected to contribute to growth in the second quarter, and overall international demand trends remain positive, as seen in the 9% order book growth during the quarter.

Midcap Opportunities: Review

Financial Performance & Outlook

Pitti Engineering Ltd.

- **Financial Performance:** PEL reported Q1FY26 revenue of Rs 457 Cr, up 17% YoY and down 3% QoQ, broadly in line with estimates. EBITDA came in at Rs 75 Cr, rising 30% YoY but down 6% QoQ, also in line with expectations. EBITDA margins stood at 16.5%, an improvement of 168 bps YoY. PAT was Rs 23 Cr, up 18% YoY but down 37% QoQ, with the prior-year quarter benefiting from a higher share of other income.
- **Outlook:** The management indicated that demand from end-user industries remains robust, supported by healthy order enquiries and bookings. Domestic demand trends are strong, while exports continue to grow at a steady pace. The company expects to achieve its FY26 revenue growth target of 15% despite ongoing macro uncertainties. Based on the current run rate, optimum utilisation of existing capacities is anticipated by Q4FY26. Consequently, it has announced brownfield capacity expansions ahead of schedule, with the phased addition to be executed over 18 months and the first commissioning targeted for Q1FY27.

Va Tech Wabag Ltd.

- **Financial Performance:** The company delivered a stronger-than-expected performance, surpassing profitability estimates. Consolidated revenues rose 17% YoY but declined 37% QoQ to Rs 734 Cr, in line with expectations. Gross margins improved to 28.7% from 26.6% in Q1FY25. EBITDA came in at Rs 96 Cr, up 18% YoY and down 32% QoQ, exceeding estimates by 9%, with margins at 13% compared to 12.2% in Q4FY25. PAT stood at Rs 66 Cr, up 20% YoY but down 34% QoQ, against the estimate of Rs 60 Cr. Order intake for Q1FY26 was Rs 260 Cr, taking the order book to Rs 15,800 Cr.
- **Outlook:** The company aims to maintain an order book at three times its revenue and projects revenue growth at a CAGR of 15–20% over the next 3–5 years. Its targeted revenue mix—over 50% from international projects, 30% from industrial clients, 20% from O&M, and one-third of EPC from EP projects—is expected to support margin expansion. The healthy order intake during the quarter and robust revenue growth indicate that the company is on track to achieve its medium-term targets.

Gravita India Ltd.

- **Financial Performance:** Gravita's Q1FY26 revenue came in at Rs 1,040 Cr, up 15% YoY but flat QoQ, broadly aligning with the estimate of Rs 1,020 Cr. Adjusted EBITDA beat estimates at Rs 112 Cr, marking a growth of 22% YoY and 3% QoQ. EBITDA margins stood at 10.7%, slightly above the estimated 10.3%, improving by 69 bps YoY and 28 bps QoQ. PAT stood at Rs 93 Cr, registering a growth of 37% YoY, surpassing expectations by 23%, aided by higher other income. The other income has been higher temporarily for the last two quarters due to increased contributions from treasury income.
- **Outlook:** The outlook remains strong, driven by higher scrap availability, growing non-lead contributions, and an increasing mix of value-added products. Capacity is projected to scale from 3.3 Lc MTPA to over 7 Lc MTPA by FY28. To support this, a capex plan of Rs 1,500 Cr has been laid out till FY28—comprising Rs 1,000 Cr for capacity enhancement in existing verticals and Rs 500 Cr for diversification into lithium-ion batteries, paper, rubber, and steel recycling. Geographic expansion is also a key focus under this strategy, with meaningful progress expected by FY26. The effective tax rate is expected to remain at 15–16% in FY26.

Top Conviction Ideas: Midcaps

Stock
Reco.
TP*
Recommendation Rationale

Pitti Engineering Ltd
BUY
Rs. 1,350*

- **Volumes to be Driven by Improving Capacity Utilisation:** PEL reported a 17% YoY revenue increase despite relatively modest volume growth. For the quarter, capacity utilisation stood at 82% for machined hours, 70% for sheet metals, and 69% for casting, indicating substantial headroom for volume expansion. The company expects steady improvement in utilisation levels, supported by strong demand from key end markets, enabling it to achieve its targeted 10% volume growth for FY26 and revenue of Rs 2,000 Cr.
- **Improving Margins:** PEL delivered 30% YoY EBITDA growth during the quarter, with a 168 bps improvement in margins. Gains were driven by better operating leverage from increasing volumes and ongoing cost optimisation measures. Management expects further margin expansion, aided by synergies from business integration and higher utilisation levels, with a guided improvement of 75–100 bps by FY27.
- **New Capex to Fuel Volume Growth Beyond FY27:** The board has approved a capex of Rs 150 Cr to expand manufacturing capacities at PEL and its wholly owned subsidiaries, Pitti Industries Pvt. Ltd. and Dakshin Foundry Pvt. Ltd. The expansion, funded through internal accruals and debt, will be executed in phases over 18 months. With existing capacities nearing peak utilisation, this investment is aimed at meeting rising demand and supporting long-term growth opportunities.
- **Valuation & Recommendation:** We value the stock at 25x its FY27E EPS with target price to Rs 1,350/share. We believe that the current valuations appear attractive and have a **BUY** rating on the stock.

* Note: Target Price is based on our Q1FY26 Result Update Report

Top Conviction Ideas: Midcaps

Stock
Reco.
TP*
Recommendation Rationale

VA Tech Wabag Ltd
BUY
Rs. 1,920*

- **Strong Revenue Growth Indicating Execution Abilities:** Wabag reported a 17% YoY revenue growth while maintaining EBITDA margins at around 13%. This performance, following a strong previous quarter, underscores the company's ability to effectively convert its order book into tangible revenue growth.
- **Order Wins Support Future Growth Plans:** The company recorded order inflows of ~Rs 2,600 Cr during the quarter, closing with a robust and well-diversified order book of around Rs 15,800 Cr (including framework agreements), representing more than four times its annual revenue. This includes the Yanbu 300 MLD Desalination Project in Saudi Arabia, which was previously cancelled, and the BWSSB DBO Project in Bengaluru.
- **Maintains Medium-Term Growth Outlook:** The company is well-positioned to capitalise on the increasing focus on water infrastructure in both domestic and key international markets. It has reiterated its medium-term guidance of delivering 15–20% revenue CAGR, supported by targeted EBITDA margins in the 13–15% range
- **Valuation & Recommendation:** We believe the order book remains healthy and have a positive long-term view on the stock. Accordingly, we continue to value the stock at 21x FY27E with a target price of Rs 1,920/share, recommending a **BUY** rating on the stock.

* Note: Target Price is based on our Q1FY26 Result Update Report

Top Conviction Ideas: Midcaps


Stock
Reco.
TP*
Recommendation Rationale

Kirloskar Brothers Ltd
BUY
Rs. 2,330*

- **Strong Order Pipeline Maintaining Revenue Visibility:** KBL reported a 5% YoY revenue degrowth for the quarter, with overseas business growing by a notable 43% YoY. This international growth was mainly driven by strong performance at SPP UK, while the US and Thailand businesses were impacted by order deferrals. Domestic revenues were impacted by a temporary slowdown in small pumps due to the early onset of the monsoon. KBL continues to hold a healthy order book of Rs 3,345 Cr (up from Rs 3,118 Cr in Q4FY25), providing clear revenue visibility going forward.
- **Operational Efficiencies and Product Mix to Aid Profitability:** While the EBIDTA margins declined sequentially due to seasonality, the company witnessed improvement in EBITDA margins on a YoY basis (11.4% vs 10.8%), driven by a decline in raw material prices, coupled with cost optimisation initiatives. KBL continues to take efforts to improve operational efficiencies and initiatives, and remains optimistic about continued margin improvement.
- **Valuation & Recommendation:** We value the stock at 25x Sep'27E EPS, with a target price of Rs 2,330/share. We expect the company to register a strong growth in the coming quarters, supported by a recovery in the international markets and potentially benefiting from proposed GST reforms in the domestic market. Accordingly, we recommend a **BUY** rating on the stock.

* Note: Target Price is based on our Q1FY26 Result Update Report

Top Conviction Ideas: Midcaps

Stock	Reco.	TP*	Recommendation Rationale
 <p>Gravita India Ltd</p>	BUY	Rs. 2,600*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volume Growth in Lead and Aluminium: The company delivered a strong operational performance, with overall volumes rising 12% YoY and revenue increasing by 15% YoY. This was primarily led by a substantial 96% YoY jump in aluminium volumes and a 10% YoY increase in lead volumes. Value-added products contributed 47% of the revenue mix for the quarter. EBITDA (including hedging gains) stood at Rs 112 Cr, supported by a higher contribution from value-added products (~47% of total revenue). • Capacity Ramp-up is on Track: The current operational capacity of 3.4 Lc MTPA is set to increase by 1 Lc MTPA by year-end, with a roadmap to reach 7 Lc MTPA by FY28. The lithium-ion battery recycling pilot facility in Mundra is progressing well and is likely to become operational in Q2FY26. Similarly, the new rubber recycling plant in Mundra is on schedule and is expected to contribute from the end of FY26. The recently acquired rubber recycling unit in Romania is currently delivering an EBITDA of Rs 7–8 per kg, with expectations of improved performance in H2. • Growth to Accelerate from H2FY26: In line with its long-term growth roadmap, the company is targeting a 25% CAGR in volumes and a 35% CAGR in profitability, while maintaining ROIC above 25%. Management has guided similar volume growth for FY26, the majority (~15–16%) of which would be coming from existing capacities and the remaining (8–10%) expected from upcoming capacity additions. The contribution from new capacities is expected to pick up from Q3 onwards as new capacities start being commercialised. • Valuation & Recommendation: We continue to value the stock at 32x FY27E EPS, with a target price of Rs 2,600/share. Accordingly, we recommend a BUY rating on the stock.

* Note: Target Price is based on our Q1FY26 Result Update Report

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