### **RESULT UPDATE**



#### **KEY DATA**

Rating	BUY
Sector relative	Outperformer
Price (INR)	294
12 month price target (INR)	400
52 Week High/Low	428/272
Market cap (INR bn/USD bn)	44/0.5
Free float (%)	36.4
Avg. daily value traded (INR mn)	108.7

### SHAREHOLDING PATTERN

	Jun-25	Mar-25	Dec-24
Promoter	56.98%	56.99%	56.56%
FII	14.58%	14.82%	15.24%
DII	8.74%	9.77%	10.45%
Pledge	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

FINANCIALS (INR mr				
Year to March	FY25A	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
Revenue	149,672	155,589	171,062	195,491
EBITDA	2,623	2,890	3,271	3,690
Adjusted profit	2,101	2,282	2,726	3,190
Diluted EPS (INR)	14.1	15.3	18.3	21.4
EPS growth (%)	(83.5)	398.3	19.4	17.0
RoAE (%)	2.4	20.4	22.9	25.0
P/E (x)	20.9	19.2	16.1	13.7
EV/EBITDA (x)	15.7	14.0	12.2	10.6
Dividend yield (%)	0.7	3.7	4.4	5.1

### **CHANGE IN ESTIMATES**

	Revised 6	stimates	% Revision	
Year to March	FY26E	FY27E	FY26E	FY27E
Revenue	155,589	171,062	(1.2)	(2.5)
EBITDA	2,890	3,271	3.9	3.6
Adjusted profit	2,282	2,726	3.5	3.4
Diluted EPS (INR)	15.3	18.3	3.5	3.4

#### PRICE PERFORMANCE



# **Growth to rebound; margins surprise**

Quess Corp reported in-line Q1FY26 results with continued focus on margin improvement. Revenue stood at INR36.5bn, matching our estimate. EBITDA margin at 1.9% too is in line with our expectation. PAT adjusted for the demerger-related fees and employee benefit expenses stood at INR528mn, in line with our estimate of INR517mn.

General staffing headwinds seems to have bottomed out with the June month witnessing positive net headcount addition. Professional staffing is likely to sustain healthy growth and margins momentum aided by new services offered in the GCC segment. We are tweaking FY26E/27E EPS by ~+3.5% largely driven by a steady margin improvement. Maintain 'BUY with a DCF-based TP of INR400.

### **Decoding segmental performance**

Revenue came in at INR36.5bn, -0.1% QoQ/+1.8% YoY. General staffing revenue stood at INR31.2bn, -0.8% QoQ/+0.2% YoY. Headcount addition grew healthy at ~2k despite uncertain macros. Growth in BFSI and M&I verticals was partially offset by a slowdown in the CRT vertical. Professional staffing revenue grew +11.5% QoQ/+31.1% YoY to INR2.4bn driven by deepening relations with GCCs and targeting of niche and high-value roles. GCCs now contribute ~73% to revenue (~70% in Q4FY25). Overseas business revenue came in at INR2.8bn, -0.9% QoQ/+0.4% YoY. Singapore continues to face visa-related headwinds and headcount declined by 7% QoQ while the Middle East, Malaysia and the Philippines witnessed headcount growth, particularly in the IT and ITeS sectors. Digital platforms' revenue slid -57% QoQ to INR9mn. Headcount stood at ~462k (+0.4% QoQ/-7.1% YoY).

### Margin improvement across key businesses

EBITDA margin came in at 1.9% (+7bp QoQ/+15bp YoY) led by operational efficiencies. General staffing and overseas business margins expanded to 1.46%/6.21% from 1.37%/6.10% in Q4FY25 while professional staffing margins inched up to 10.20% from 9.20% in Q4FY25. Digital platforms' EBITDA loss stood at INR-23.21mn (EBITDA profit of INR13.15mn in Q4FY25). Management indicated that growth and elevated margins in professional staffing will remain sustainable. Levers for overall margin improvement remain a change in contract mix and cost optimisation initiatives. Finance cost during the quarter inched up due to an increase in average debt; however, management indicated finance cost shall trend down.

General staffing witnessed early signs of demand revival while professional staffing growth remains promising led by penetration into new GCCs. Margins shall improve gradually as demerger-related cost normalises. Maintain 'BUY' with a TP of INR400.

## **Financials**

Year to March	Q1FY26	Q1FY25	% Change	Q4FY25	% Change
Net Revenue	36,514	35,869	1.8	36,564	(0.1)
EBITDA	697	632	10.3	674	3.5
Adjusted Profit	528	490	7.6	625	(15.6)
Diluted EPS (INR)	3.5	3.3	7.9	4.2	(15.9)

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# **Financial Statements**

### Income Statement (INR mn)

Year to March	FY25A	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
Total operating income	149,672	155,589	171,062	195,491
Cost of revenues	140,516	145,512	159,887	183,106
Gross profit	9,156	10,076	11,176	12,385
Other expenses	6,533	7,186	7,905	8,695
EBITDA	2,623	2,890	3,271	3,690
Depreciation	412	368	318	283
Less: Interest expense	386	302	302	302
Add: Other income	236	262	314	364
Profit before tax	2,061	2,482	2,964	3,469
Prov for tax	(41)	199	237	277
Less: Other adjustment	(1,644)	(1)	(1)	(1)
Reported profit	458	2,282	2,726	3,190
Less: Excp.item (net)	1,643	0	0	0
Group adjusted profit	2,101	2,282	2,726	3,190
Diluted shares o/s	149	149	149	149
Adjusted diluted EPS	14	15	18	21
DPS (INR)	2.2	11.0	13.0	15.0
Tax rate (%)	2.0	8.0	8.0	8.0

## **Balance Sheet (INR mn)**

Dalance oncer (mm m	Dalatice Greek (intra min)					
Year to March	FY25A	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E		
Share capital	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489		
Reserves	9,359	10,006	10,799	11,758		
Shareholders funds	10,849	11,495	12,288	13,247		
Minority interest	11	12	13	14		
Borrowings	121	0	0	0		
Trade payables	586	609	670	766		
Other liabs & prov	15,199	15,718	17,077	19,221		
Total liabilities	26,766	27,835	30,048	33,249		
Net block	1,009	841	722	639		
Intangible assets	2,362	2,362	2,362	2,362		
Capital WIP	36	36	36	36		
Total fixed assets	3,407	3,239	3,120	3,037		
Non current inv	0	0	0	0		
Cash/cash equivalent	2,669	3,264	3,912	4,539		
Sundry debtors	8,498	8,834	9,712	11,099		
Loans & advances	4,410	4,410	4,410	4,410		
Other assets	7,782	8,089	8,894	10,164		
Total assets	26,766	27,835	30,048	33,249		

# **Important Ratios (%)**

Year to March	FY25A	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
EBITDA margin (%)	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.9
EBIT margin (%)	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.7
Net profit margin (%)	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.6
Revenue growth (% YoY)	9.3	4.0	9.9	14.3
EBITDA growth (% YoY)	11.9	10.2	13.2	12.8
PBT growth (% YoY)	53.9	20.4	19.4	17.0
Adj. profit growth (%)	56.9	8.6	19.4	17.0
Asset turnover (X)	6.3	12.7	13.3	14.2

# Free Cash Flow (INR mn)

Tree dash from (mar.	,			
Year to March	FY25A	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
Reported profit	458	2,282	2,726	3,190
Add: Depreciation	412	368	318	283
Interest (net of tax)	259	203	203	203
Others	3,404	(161)	(213)	(263)
Changes in WC	(728)	(101)	(264)	(417)
Operating cash flow	3,805	2,591	2,770	2,996
Less: Capex	(17)	(200)	(200)	(200)
Free cash flow	3,788	2,391	2,570	2,796

### Assumptions (%)

Year to March	FY25A	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
GDP (YoY %)	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Repo rate (%)	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
USD/INR (average)	72.0	72.0	72.0	72.0
Staffing growth (%)	14.2	14.2	14.2	0
Staffing margin(%)	1.6	1.6	1.6	0
Collect & Pay (%)	70.0	70.0	70.0	70.0
FM growth (%)	13.3	13.3	13.3	0
Capex	17	200	200	200
Net borr. (INR mn)	(2,549)	(3,264)	(3,912)	(4,539)

### **Key Ratios**

ncy natios				
Year to March	FY25A	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
RoE (%)	2.4	20.4	22.9	25.0
RoCE (%)	11.0	24.8	27.4	29.5
Receivable days	29	20	20	19
Payable days	2	1	1	1
Cash conversion cycle	27	19	18	18
Working cap (% sales)	4.6	4.5	4.2	3.9
Gross debt/equity (x)	0	0	0	0
Net debt/equity (x)	(0.2)	(0.3)	(0.3)	(0.3)
Interest coverage (x)	5.7	8.3	9.8	11.3

## **Valuation Metrics**

Year to March	FY25A	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
Diluted P/E (x)	20.9	19.2	16.1	13.7
Price/BV (x)	4.0	3.8	3.6	3.3
EV/EBITDA (x)	15.7	14.0	12.2	10.6
Dividend yield (%)	0.7	3.7	4.4	5.1

# Source: Company and Nuvama estimates

#### **Valuation Drivers**

Year to March	FY25A	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
EPS growth (%)	(83.5)	398.3	19.4	17.0
RoE (%)	2.4	20.4	22.9	25.0
EBITDA growth (%)	11.9	10.2	13.2	12.8
Payout ratio (%)	70.8	71.7	70.9	69.9

# Q1FY26 earnings call highlights

- Revenue growth was modest due to muted headcount growth.
- General staffing witnessed signs of recovery despite a challenging operating environment. Majority of net additions were in the manufacturing and BFSI verticals.
- April month witnessed headcount decline of ~4k while saw a recovery in June month with net-adds turning positive to ~6.5k.
- While headcount remained steady in professional staffing, revenue growth was led by targeted focus on niche skills in the GCC space.
- Margin expansion in professional staffing was driven by the ability to shift a large tech workforce from shared services to emerging technology with GCC.
- In professional staffing, Quess works with 157 GCCs while India alone has 1,800 GCCs, indicating more room for growth.
- BFSI continues to drive growth followed by the telecom vertical while auto, pharma and retail segment faced headwinds due to tariff-related uncertainties.
- In the Overseas business, Singapore continues to face visa-related headwinds while a strategic shift to general staffing in Singapore offset the revenue decline. Headcount strength in general staffing in Singapore stood at ~300 employees.
- Have partnered with ONDC for digital commerce. Hamara Jobs will continue to contribute ~0.5mn+ verified job listings annually to ONDC network, significantly boosting access to trusted, transparent and scalable job opportunities.
- Focus on margin expansion has started yielding results led by operational efficiency measures and a greater mix of high-margin business.
- During the quarter, average debt was higher, leading to increased finance cost.
- PAPM ranges from INR600–650 in general staffing. With the increase in headcount, PAPM is expected to improve as well.
- PAPM in professional staffing ranges from INR2,300–2,500.

### Management guidance

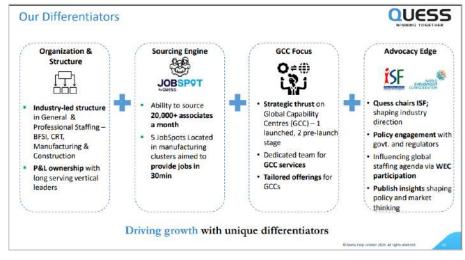
- Growth and margins in professional staffing are sustainable and shall remain elevated, largely driven by new services—Origint (GCC-as-a-service).
- In general staffing, levers for margin improvement remains a shift to variable pay models and operational efficiencies.
- Core-to-Associate ratio has slightly declined, but this is expected to bounce back as new associates join.
- Collect and Pay ratio to remain in a range of 75–80%.

Exhibit 1: Financial snapshot (INR mn)

Year to March	Q1FY26	Q1FY25	YoY	Q4FY25	QoQ	FY25	FY26E	FY27E
Revenues	36,514	35,869	1.8	36,564	(0.1)	1,49,672	1,55,589	1,71,062
Gross Profit	2,171	2,193	(1.0)	2,023	7.3	9,156	10,076	11,176
Total expenditure	35,817	35,236	1.6	35,891	(0.2)	1,47,049	1,52,698	1,67,791
EBITDA	697	632	10.3	674	3.5	2,623	2,890	3,271
Depreciation	105	106	(1.2)	102	3.1	412	368	318
EBIT	592	526	12.6	572	3.6	2,211	2,522	2,953
Interest	99	106	(6.8)	91	9.2	386	302	302
Other income	47	64	(25.7)	109	(56.9)	236	262	314
Add: Exceptional items	-19	1		-1,580		-1,643	0	0
Profit Before Tax	522	484	7.9	-989	(152.8)	418	2,482	2,964
Less: Provision for Tax	12	-6	(298.7)	-35	(136.0)	-41	199	237
Less: Minority Interest	1	-0	NA	0	71.1	1	1	1
Add: Share of profit from associates	0	0		0		0	0	0
Reported profit	509	491	3.8	-955	(153.3)	458	2,282	2,726
Adjusted Profit (for non cash + others)	528	490	7.6	625	(15.6)	2,101	2,282	2,726
No. of Diluted shares outstanding (mn)	149	150		149		149	149	149
As % of net revenues								
	10	1.0		1.0		1.0	1.0	1.0
EBITDA margin (%)	1.9	1.8		1.8		1.8	1.9	1.9
Adjusted net profit	1.4	1.4		1.7		1.4	1.5	1.6

Source: Company, Nuvama Research

Exhibit 2: What makes Quess stand out in a crowd?



Source: Company, Nuvama Research

### **Company Description**

Quess Corp (Quess), India's leading integrated business services provider, was established in 2007. Headquartered in Bengaluru, the company has pan-India presence with overseas footprint in North America, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. The company serves over 2,600 plus customers. Quess employs over 384,000 personnel (including Terrier Security Services) across its three platforms namely, Workforce Management, Operating Asset Management and Global Technology Solutions.

#### **Investment Theme**

The company enjoys huge advantage of scale in general staffing in India (largest in India) as we believe that the larger players benefit from both market share gains and higher margins. Further, Quess's presence in specialised staffing should lead to improved margin profile going forward. Facility management is a high growth sector and the company is focusing on ramping this up sharply. We believe Quess has an eclectic portfolio of services that offers an attractive growth mix. The company's three areas of exposure, viz., general staffing, specialised staffing and facility management are expected to almost triple by FY30, in our view, led by strong domestic structural drivers. Ergo, Quess is an exciting integrated play on the burgeoning growth opportunity in business services in India.

#### **Key Risks**

We expect sector headcount for flexi-staffing to grow by at least 11-12% annually. Quess, being a market leader, should be able to deliver at least this level of growth, which is also our base case headcount assumption. Any shortfall in this will pose downside risk to our estimates and target price. Inability of the company to consistently improve margins will pose a downside risk to our investment thesis. Higher than expected competitive pressure leading to lower headcount growth or loss of market share is a downside risk. Any unreasonable acquisition or failure to efficiently manage any acquired business could pose downside risks.

# **Additional Data**

## Management

CEO	Guruprasad Srinivasan
CFO	Sushant Pai
Non-Exe - Non-Independent Director	Chandran Ratnaswami
Chairperson	Ajit Issac
Auditor	Deloitte Haskins & Sells LLP

## **Recent Company Research**

Date	Title	Price	Reco
20-May-25	Growth hurt by NBFC headwind; Result Update	338	Buy
30-Jan-25	Margins under pressure; BFSI headwind; Result Update	638	Buy
29-Oct-24	Growth to pick up in H2FY25; <i>Result Update</i>	664	Buy

# Holdings – Top 10\*

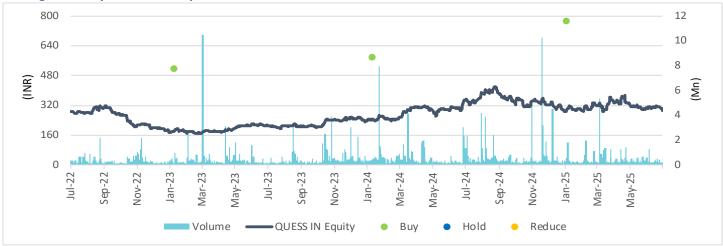
	% Holding		% Holding
Fairfax Financi	34.14	Ellipsis Partne	2.78
Issac Ajit	12.02	Vanguard Group	1.65
ISAAC Enterpris	10.32	ICICI Prudentia	1.39
Dhawan Ashish	4.09	IDFC Mutual Fun	1.19
Tata AMC	2.82	Blackrock Inc	0.96

<sup>\*</sup>Latest public data

#### **Recent Sector Research**

Date	Name of Co./Sector	Title
21-May-25	Teamlease Services	Regulatory headwind constrains growth; <i>Result Update</i>
01-May-25	SIS India	Focus remains on margin expansion; <i>Result Update</i>
29-Jan-25	Teamlease Services	Quarter broadly in-line; BFSI headwind; <i>Result Update</i>

# **Rating and Daily Volume Interpretation**



Source: Bloomberg, Nuvama research

# **Rating Rationale & Distribution: Nuvama Research**

Rating	Expected absolute returns over 12 months	Rating Distribution
Buy	15%	202
Hold	<15% and >-5%	66
Reduce	<-5%	36

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