Operator: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the Equitas Small Finance Bank Ltd. conference call. As a reminder, all participant lines will be in listen-only mode, and there will be an opportunity to ask questions after the initial remarks from the Board conclude. Should you need assistance during the conference call, please signal the operator by pressing star then zero on your touchtone phone.

I would like to introduce the participants in today's conference call. We have with us today Mr. Anil Kumar Sharma, Part-time Chairman and Independent Director; Mr. Ram Kumar Krishnaswamy, Chairman of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee and Independent Director; Mr. Balaji Nuthalapadi, Whole-time Director and Interim MD and CEO; Mr. Mukund Barsagade, CFO; Mr. Pallab Mukherjee, CPO; Mr. Jagdish, Head Assets; and Mr. Suresh G, Head Strategy and Investor Relations. I would now like to request Mr. Anil Kumar Sharma to share his opening comments. Over to you, sir.

Anil Kumar Sharma - Part-time Chairman and Independent Director: Thank you. Good afternoon to everyone. Thank you for taking the time to dial into this conference call. I would like to address the developments subsequent to the resignation of the bank's MD and CEO, Mr. Vasudevan, on October 29, 2026, and my address to the investors that day.

As part of the initiation of the formal transition process, the Board met on November 3, 2026. Keeping in view the best governance practices and the best interests of all stakeholders, upon the recommendation of the NRC, it decided to appoint Mr. Balaji Nuthalapadi, ED of the bank, as the interim CEO, subject to approval from the Reserve Bank of India. The RBI approved the appointment of Mr. Balaji as the interim MD and CEO on November 6, and Mr. Vasudevan was relieved as MD and CEO on the same day, as per his request. The Board placed on record its appreciation and sincere thanks to Mr. Vasudevan for his contribution, leadership, and dedicated service to the bank during his tenure as MD and CEO.

As regards why it was considered necessary to appoint an interim CEO when Mr. Vasudevan was still available, let me say that Mr. Vasudevan's resignation was unexpected, and the Board decided what it thought was appropriate at that moment. However, when the Board met again to deliberate on the matter, it was felt that appointing an interim CEO would be in line with the best governance practices and would protect the interests of all stakeholders.

The formal process of shortlisting candidates for the role of MD and CEO of the bank has been initiated. The Board has formulated a set of attributes for the new MD and CEO and has set up a committee of four independent directors to take the selection process forward and shortlist the candidate for the Board to consider and recommend. I understand that it has already met a few agencies.

We would be evaluating both internal and external candidates. Now that an interim MD and CEO is in place, we hope to complete the process and obtain the necessary regulatory approvals as early as possible, but in any case within the timeline available to us under the regulations.

The Board would ensure that the bank continues to pursue the long-term vision it had set out earlier and does not expect this transition to have any impact on it. This is what I wanted to share at

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this point in time. If there are any questions, I now hand it back to the conference coordinator.

Suresh G – Head Strategy and Investor Relations: Mr. Balaji will address the conference and share his comments before we get into the Q&A session. Thank you.

Balaji Nuthalapadi – Whole-time Director and Interim MD & CEO: Thank you, Suresh. Good afternoon, everyone. I am thankful to the Board of Directors of Equitas Small Finance Bank Ltd. for the trust they have placed in me to lead the bank during the interim period. I am privileged to step in at this point to lead the bank during this transition.

For those of you who do not know me, very briefly about myself: I come with 30 decades of banking experience, including 15 years in the liability business and wealth management in 5 countries around the globe, running a P&L at that point with one of the world's largest banks, and another 15 years in technology, operations, and digital. I have been with Equitas since March 2025, serving as the Executive Director in charge of technology, operations, digital, and service, and also looking at the bank's regulatory compliance and governance.

During this period, I have seen the embedded strengths of this bank. I have seen the experienced leadership team and been a part of it. I have seen and appreciate the well-established governance practices that the company has put in place over the years, the strong and rewarding digital capabilities, and the good asset quality and strong liabilities franchise driving the overall growth momentum.

In the interim period, I will be focusing on a few top priorities. First is to maintain stability and continuity during this phase. Second, to continue the growth momentum that has been built up. All of you would have seen our Q2 results: the asset business has grown at 30% per annum, the liability business has grown at 19%, the growth momentum remains strong, the drivers are robust, and we intend to continue this growth momentum.

Third, to deliver our Q3 and Q4 plan and, more importantly, stay in line with the strategic roadmap for the 2030 roadmap approved by the Board and meet our yearly milestones towards it. Fourth, to position ourselves strongly for the next financial year, 27-28, by making the right investments and setting up the right preparatory work for expansion. Fifth, to continue the drive on cost reduction, which has already been ongoing.

In short, the emphasis during this transition period would be to drive high-quality execution as one united leadership team. Thank you, and I shall hand it back to the moderator to open the Q&A session.

Operator: Thank you very much. We will now begin the question-and-answer session. Anyone who wishes to ask a question may press star and one on the touchtone telephone. If you wish to remove yourself from the question queue, you may press star and two. Participants are requested to use handsets while asking a question. Ladies and gentlemen, we will wait for a moment while the question queue assembles.

The first question comes from the line of Archiishma from Network 18. Please go ahead.

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Archiishma – Network 18: Hello, sir. Good afternoon. This is Archiishma from Network 18. First of all, Mr. Balaji, congratulations on your appointment. I have some questions regarding the future business prospects for Equitas.

One of the questions is: what would you say was probably one of the reasons for Mr. Vasudevan's sudden departure? In his resignation letter, he had reportedly claimed that the Board was already aware that his daughter was a promoter at Unicorp Housing Finance. So, if the Board was already aware of that at that point in time, I wanted to understand what led to the very sudden departure of Mr. Vasudevan. This is my first question. I will come back to my next few questions later.

Anil Kumar Sharma – Part-time Chairman and Independent Director: Who is this question for? [pause]

Archiishma – Network 18: Mr. Balaji? Yes, Mr. Balaji, please go ahead if you want to. Otherwise, I can ask another question.

Management: [pause]

Balaji Nuthalapadi – Whole-time Director and Interim MD & CEO: Mr. Sharma, why don't you go ahead, please? I can add to it afterward if required.

Anil Kumar Sharma – Part-time Chairman and Independent Director: Okay. As you would have noticed, Mr. Vasudevan submitted his resignation, and his resignation letter was available. I think you must have read it. He has clearly stated that it was primarily the perceived conflict of interest, as he put it, which was the reason why he resigned.

Archiishma – Network 18: But the question here is that when it was already known that this relationship existed, it was a very sudden departure from what was expected. He was also supposed to have taken a 3-year term; he had also been appointed for another period of 3 years back in 2023. So, I wanted to understand why there was a very sudden departure from the company, even after the clarifications had been provided to the Board about Unicorp Finance and Unicorp Housing Finance.

Anil Kumar Sharma – Part-time Chairman and Independent Director: [pause] If there was any reason other than what he has stated in his letter, then I think he is the best person to answer that. Insofar as we are concerned, we were aware of his interest, as we have already indicated earlier, and the regulator was also aware. There were no concerns from the Board's perspective or from the regulator's perspective with regard to that. [trails off] [cut off]

Mr. Sharma: The reason why he quit, as I said earlier, has been stated by him in his resignation letter. Any reason other than that, I think he is the best person to answer.

Archiishma – Network 18: Right, sir. Understood. My second question is: at the end of the day, this is largely a collections-driven business, and a significant part of the business and the company's relationship- and business-building efforts may have been driven by the founder. At this point, how does the company plan to ensure continuity? How does it plan to retain the relationships that were built, and what does this departure mean for the business going forward?

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Mr. Sharma: Balaji, can you come in?

Balaji: [pause] Yes, I can take that. Thank you. I think I will go back to one of the comments I made in my opening remarks about the experienced leadership team we have and the well-established institutional practices that have been built in the bank over the years.

Yes, the departure of any CEO is always a moment of transition. The departure of a founder CEO is even more significant. But in Equitas, as I alluded to in my remarks, I have personally experienced this during my time at Equitas. The leadership team here is very experienced, very talented, and knows this market, our product suite, and our customers inside out.

The practices, whether on the sales side, the control side, or the governance side, are very strong, well embedded, and institutionalized. So, while the departure constitutes a significant event at an overall level, our day-to-day business and our day-to-day work on the assets, liabilities, and collections side remain absolutely intact. Our momentum is unimpaired at this point, and our execution continues without any change whatsoever.

I hope that answers your question. I can request Jagdish, who is with me on the asset side of the business, to also address this question.

Jagdish: [pause] As Balaji mentioned, our asset-side business is unique in some of the sectors because almost all the senior management people have been with us for such a long time. I have been here for almost 17 years, and the next level, including all the business heads and collection heads, have almost completed around 5-10 years with us. So, it is just a normal day of operations as well. There is nothing to [cut off]

Archiishma – Network 18: Sorry, sir, I did not catch the last part.

Jagdish: It is just a normal course of operations as well. There is nothing... [trails off]

Archiishma – Network 18: Right. Okay, understood. I have a couple more questions. I wanted to understand whether there is a non-poaching clause in place, because I wanted to understand how the company is ensuring that employees are not being poached, especially given the competitive nature of the broader banking industry and also because Mr. Vasudevan has now moved on from Equitas. Is there any sort of non-poaching clause in place at this point?

Balaji: [pause] Let me address that, and let me start by pointing out that these two institutions that have been discussed in this context—one is our bank here, and the second is a relatively small, in fact a very small, NBFC—are at very different stages of evolution, of very different sizes, with very different areas of focus and very different product suites.

It is not an apples-to-apples comparison. They are not analogous by any stretch of the imagination, and hence the question of any significant risk to be mitigated through a non-compete or non-poaching arrangement simply does not arise in our view.

Now, of course, one or two individuals may always choose to pursue different career paths or better opportunities in the market. But as an overall leadership team and as an overall bank, we do not see this as a significant risk for us.

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We expect to continue our execution of the strategy unimpaired by this development, as I pointed out earlier. Hence, the concept of the two agreements you mentioned does not seem relevant in our view.

Archiishma – Network 18: I understand. I have a couple more questions... [cut off]

Operator: I am sorry to interrupt you, ma'am. We would request that you return to the question queue for follow-up questions. The next question comes from the line of Darshal Jhaveri from Crown Capital. Please go ahead.

Darshal Jhaveri – Crown Capital: Hello. Thank you very much for taking my question. Firstly, congratulations, Balaji, on your appointment.

When you said that so many of our business heads and current Board members have served for a long time at Equitas, are we more inclined towards an internal hire who knows the structure and the fabric of our bank? Or do we also want to look outside, given that a new culture and a new setup can make the transition more difficult? What are your thoughts on that?

Management: [pause] I will take that, and I will ask Mr. Sharma to address the question. Thank you.

Mr. Sharma: [pause] I will handle that. As I said in my statement, we will be evaluating both internal and external candidates. We will go by what we have decided we are looking for in the new MD and CEO, and whoever meets that criterion will be selected. Whether the candidate is internal or external is not important.

Darshal Jhaveri – Crown Capital: Okay, sir. Within what timeline would you say this process can be completed?

Mr. Sharma: [pause] The regulator permits a particular timeline. If I am not mistaken, it is 4 months. Within 4 months, we must go back and have the new MD and CEO in place because the interim MD and CEO is for a limited period. We are confident that we will meet that regulatory deadline. We do not expect to breach it.

Darshal Jhaveri – Crown Capital: Meanwhile, as you said, day-to-day operations are continuing. I think we had also revised our guidance upward in our Q2 call. That remains on track, correct?

Management: Balaji?

Balaji: [pause] I will take that question. Yes, you are right; we had revised the guidance earlier. If you look at the execution of our priorities and our sales momentum, that continues unimpaired, and there has been no fundamental change in our internal business environment since then.

We are, however, quite conscious that certain macroeconomic factors have changed. One is the drought situation in districts of Maharashtra and Karnataka, as we are all aware. At this point, we have not seen any material impact or deterioration in our collections for the portfolios in those 2 states, but that situation is evolving for us and for the entire market, and we will monitor it closely.

Once the current collection cycle is completed, we will be in a better position to assess the impact on the portfolios in those 2 states. There are also movements on the interest-rate front. Again, as all

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of us are aware, that is a macroeconomic factor beyond the direct control of the bank, and it can have an impact on our funding cost as well as on our NIM.

These 2 factors need to be watched over the next couple of months. Internally, however, our sales drivers continue to operate well, our targets on disbursements are being met, and our deposits continue to grow. We do hope to achieve a good result, but the final ROA will depend on the 2 macroeconomic factors I referred to.

Darshal Jhaveri – Crown Capital: Okay, that is really helpful. That is all from my side. Thank you very much, and all the best.

Operator: Thank you. The next question comes from the line of Pawan Kumar from Edelweiss Public Alternatives. Please go ahead.

Pawan Kumar – Edelweiss Public Alternatives: [pause] Sir, you are not audible. Hi, am I audible?

Operator: Yes, sir.

Pawan Kumar – Edelweiss Public Alternatives: Thank you for the opportunity. Balaji sir, I have a couple of questions for you.

First, you mentioned that day-to-day businesses and collections continue to be unimpaired. Can you give us any data points that would provide us comfort on this point?

Second, you have been part of the bank for quite some time, and you have these 4 months to implement any changes that you see as immediate. What are the key things that you are working on during these 4 months? Those are my 2 questions. Thank you.

Balaji: [pause] On the first question, at this stage I cannot disclose intra-quarter business updates with specific numbers. We publish a quarterly business update very shortly after the end of the quarter, and we will be doing that.

What I can tell you, without getting into the specifics of the numbers for October-November, is that our asset disbursements continue to be on track as per our annual plan. On the liability side as well, we are continuing to see deposit growth and growth in CASA. We do not expect any impact or change in our asset disbursements. In fact, we might overachieve those disbursements in this quarter.

On the second question, in terms of the next few months, over the next 3-4 months of the interim period, what we will drive, as I said earlier, is execution. At this stage, the products... [trails off]

Balaji: ...remain adequate to meet our annual plan. We intend to focus on productivity, execution, and reducing our cost-to-income ratio. All of these drivers will remain in focus, but at this stage, major changes to the business plan or strategy have not happened during the interim period, nor are they warranted, because we believe we can meet our business targets with the current execution plan itself.

We also intend to keep our organizational structure and leadership team stable during this period. Of course, all of these matters may be revisited as part of a strategic reset in due course. But at this

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stage, the focus is stability and execution.

Pawan Kumar – Edelweiss Public Alternatives: Understood, sir. On the operations or technology side, are you seeing any increased activity now that you have a background in that area? That is my last question. Thank you.

Balaji: To be clear, what would you define as increased activity? I want to make sure I understand the question correctly.

Pawan Kumar – Edelweiss Public Alternatives: You have been in the bank for some time, so you know the various processes and how they move. Similarly, the technology investments that would have been progressing at a particular pace, or perhaps not up to the mark, according to you—you have an opportunity to take them forward right now, correct? That is the point.

Balaji: That is a very interesting question. I would say that this has not been a constraint. We have funded our technology initiatives, our hardware upgrades, and our digital app upgrade. The constraint has been more in terms of how quickly we can execute rather than the funding for the execution itself.

I do not anticipate that changing significantly now. What will possibly improve further is that we have pivoted away from a vendor-driven model in technology to a more insourced model, and that has been playing out for more than a year. More and more of the results will start becoming visible in the next few months.

Many of our key projects—for example, digital current-account opening, our new corporate internet-banking website, and our new loan-origination system—will all go live in the next 3-4 months. So, I would describe the increased activity more as increased new launches and increased benefits from these processes. All of these will start becoming visible in the next 2 quarters.

Pawan Kumar – Edelweiss Public Alternatives: Understood, Balaji. Thank you, and I wish you all the very best.

Balaji: Thank you very much.

Operator: Thank you. The next question comes from the line of Ashlesh Sonje from Kotak Securities. Please go ahead.

Ashlesh Sonje – Kotak Securities: Hi, team. Good afternoon. I have 2 questions from my side.

Firstly, to the Chairman: how confident is the Board today about the timeline for appointing the successor? I believe you had given some tentative timelines during the last earnings call, that you would be able to finalize the list of potential successors within a month and then eventually complete the entire process over the next 3-4 months.

Mr. Sharma – Chairman: I remember that I had indicated a broad timeline of 1 month, but I had also said that it could be a week less or a couple of weeks more. Essentially, we would like to complete it within 1 month. That is what I had said.

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We have lost some time on account of the appointment of the new interim CEO and the approval from the RBI, but we are hopeful of completing the entire process within 4 months. I had indicated that earlier. At that time, I had indicated 4 months overall and 1 month, plus perhaps a week here and a week there, for the finalization of the candidate.

The overall 4-month period does not change even now. As I said, the committee of independent directors, which is tasked with selecting the candidate, shortlisting the candidates, and recommending one to the Board, has already started its process. It has met a few agencies, and we are confident that we will meet the overall deadline of 4 months.

Ashlesh Sonje – Kotak Securities: Understood, sir. Thank you, that helps. My second question is to Balaji. You have spoken about continuing the drive on cost reduction. Do you have any objective or aspiration in mind for the cost-to-income ratio or cost-to-asset ratio in the near or medium term?

Balaji: [pause] I would say that we have identified the areas where we can save costs. I would not want to share a specific target number for the cost-to-income ratio at this stage, but we have identified 3 major areas where we will focus on reducing costs.

I can give you a sense of one such area. If we can pivot all of our origination and servicing processes to 100% paperless and digital straight-through processing, that is within reach. It is not a utopian goal because all of the drivers for that are already in place, and our technology blocks are in place to a very large extent.

If we can move to a completely paperless and digital environment, we will have a large number of cascading beneficial effects at the branches, at the central head office, in operations, and in support functions. We have started to quantify those benefits. We are driving at full speed towards that objective, and we have a rough idea of how much that will increase—or decrease—our costs.

Similarly, we have identified other strategic areas for cost reductions. All of this will take some time to play out. What I can say is that we are in the phase where we are putting the building blocks in place. Once those start taking effect, we do believe our cost-to-income ratio will start moving downward, and all of this should be visible between now and the next 6-9 quarters.

Ashlesh Sonje – Kotak Securities: Perfect, sir. Thank you.

Operator: Thank you. The next question comes from the line of Mohit Surana from HDFC AMC. Please go ahead.

Mohit Surana – HDFC AMC: Hi. I have 2 questions.

The first is on the recent rainfall data. While the southwest monsoon was below expectations, the ongoing monsoon season in Tamil Nadu is also lagging in terms of its progress. Do you foresee any impact on asset quality or collections because of the weaker monsoon?

Secondly, has the Board or management had any conversation with the regulator regarding the status of applying for a bank license? The last update we heard from Mr. Vasudevan was regarding the status of applying for a bank license, but since he has exited, has there been any conversation regarding bank conversion or any dialogue with the regulator? If you could throw some light on that.

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Mr. Sharma – Chairman: I will take the regulator conversation first, and then I will pass it on to Mr. Balaji.

To answer in one word, no. There has not been any recent dialogue between the Board and the regulator. We have been aware for some time that we are qualified to apply for a universal bank license, but we have a strategy in this regard, and we will continue to follow that strategy for now.

Balaji: Thank you, Mr. Sharma. With regard to the second part of the question, just to be clear on the Tamil Nadu monsoon, it is in fact performing as expected at this point. The forecast is for 103% of average monsoon rainfall during the season, which stretches from October to December. So, we do expect this monsoon to be favorable, as forecast by experts.

I will ask Jaggi to confirm the position on collections in Tamil Nadu. Jaggi?

Jaggi: As you are aware, Tamil Nadu accounts for close to 42% of the book. If you look at our collections, they are almost normal. Even in October, our collections were in line with our expectations, whether in the main bucket or in all the other buckets.

Mohit Surana – HDFC AMC: Just a follow-up on the banking-license part. Is the understanding correct that the company will apply for, or plan to apply for, the banking license only once a full-time CEO has been appointed?

Mr. Sharma – Chairman: In fact, I do not think we have taken that view as of now. We did not have any plan to apply for the license immediately. The resignation has come in incidentally to the entire process. I think the new MD and CEO would be in place in any case by the time we apply for the license. As per our earlier plan, there is no change in our plan.

Mohit Surana – HDFC AMC: That helps. Thanks a lot for your time.

Mr. Sharma – Chairman: Thank you very much.

Operator: Thank you. The next question comes from the line of Raj Kumar from RK Invest. Please go ahead.

Raj Kumar – RK Invest: Can you hear me?

Raj Kumar – RK Invest: Yes, sir, you are audible. Balaji sir just wanted to see: Vasudevan sir leaving has created a void. I want to know what gaps you can address immediately and what gaps can be addressed over the medium to long term.

Management: As I mentioned earlier, both in the opening remarks and in response to one of the earlier questions, while the departure of a founder CEO is always a significant event, here the leadership team as well as our embedded practices have meant that it has not created a void, if I may use that term.

What we are seeing, in fact, is what Jaggi alluded to earlier: it is another day at the office. All of our work continues unimpeded, the business momentum is strong and continues exactly as it was.

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At the leadership-team level, we are a very well-knit, well-embedded, and highly experienced leadership team. Hence, while the events of a couple of weeks ago did come as a shock, I think the team recovered very quickly, and it has literally been business as usual from the very next day for us.

Raj Kumar – RK Invest: Okay, sir. Thank you.

Operator: Thank you. The next question comes from the line of Archiishma from Network 18. Please go ahead.

Archiishma – Network 18: Hi, sir. This is me following up on the conversation. I had one more question.

I wanted to understand how the company is planning to guard itself against a possibility where the large NBFC could acquire the bank, or where Unico could acquire it. I wanted to understand what safeguards are in place to prevent such a transaction, especially given Mr. Vasudevan's association with Unico in his previous role at the bank.

Management: Sorry, are you talking about a scenario where Unico would acquire the bank?

Archiishma – Network 18: Yes. Because of Mr. Vasudevan's association and because he was also previously associated with Equitas, I wanted to understand how you are safeguarding against such a possibility.

Management: I think I alluded to this earlier on the call: these 2 institutions are very, very different. One is a well-embedded and leading small finance bank with a large portfolio and a large pan-India presence. Unico, on the other hand, is a small, very small, NBFC at this stage, with a very small book. Of course, I wish them all the best.

These 2 institutions are in no way comparable, and I do not think the question of Unico taking over the bank has ever arisen in anyone's mind. So, it is certainly not a contingency we need to prepare for.

Archiishma – Network 18: Okay, understood. I also wanted to clarify that there was apparently a hacking incident, and the bank had reportedly filed an FIR with the Chennai police and reported the incident to the RBI. The issue appears to involve an amount of around 10 crore. I wanted to get a confirmation or response on the matter and understand what the bank has done to address it.

Mr. Balaji: Cyberattacks do happen. They happen in the ongoing course of business as well, and the entire industry is exposed to enhanced cyber risk right now. This has been playing out across the market over a number of weeks.

In our case, we had some accounts that were compromised. The money was outside the system. We acted immediately within a very short period of time. All these customers' accounts have been made whole. We have also taken the right steps to strengthen our systems.

No repetition has been observed. No {? impact ?} has been observed after a very small number of accounts were compromised. We have also made sure that this incident cannot occur again by

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applying the latest technologies and adopting all the RBI advisories on this matter.

We are confident that we are in a good position in terms of remedying the few accounts that were compromised and protecting our entire... Our cyber defenses remain strong and shall continue to be a matter of high and constant vigilance for us, given the current environment. I think what I am saying is true for the entire market as well.

Archiishma – Network 18: Okay, understood, sir. Thank you.

Operator: Thank you. The next question comes from the line of Rajiv Mehta from Yes Securities. Please go ahead.

Rajiv Mehta – Yes Securities: Good afternoon. I have a couple of questions.

Have we changed deposit pricing for retail term deposits or perhaps even savings accounts in the past 2 weeks?

Second, I think you spoke about having good clarity regarding the attributes or areas of experience that the new incoming CEO should have, particularly if the person comes from outside. Could you throw some light on what kind of person the Board is looking for?

Third, regarding the equity-raise plan: we had a plan to raise equity as a bank. Does the current development alter the timeline for the equity raise that we were planning?

Management: I will take the second part first and then pass it on to Balaji.

With regard to the attributes, as I said earlier, the Board has finalized the set of attributes that we will be looking for, and the committee of independent directors will take the process forward. The attributes pertain primarily to background, experience, achievements, leadership qualities, the ability to function as a team, and a few other attributes.

That is what the Board has decided. Mr. Ram, would you like to add anything?

Mr. Ram: Thank you, Mr. Sharma. Basically, given the growth momentum in the bank, we would want the incoming CEO to be able to take it forward and make Equitas a pan-India bank with scale-up taking place.

In doing so, we are quite conscious that the person should first be capable of aligning with the existing organization and be able to initiate whatever strategies and changes are required in terms of the opportunities and threats presented by the market.

In simple terms, we are looking for somebody who is adaptable. Greater weightage will be given to the person's leadership abilities, the ability to build a strong leadership pipeline within the organization, and experience in financial services, especially in the banking domain.

Rajiv Mehta – Yes Securities: And, sorry, if I can add to this: regarding the overall remuneration package that Mr. Vasudevan was drawing, is that the budget, or is that approximately the kind of potential payout you would be looking to provide?

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Management: I think the budget or pay package is something we will discuss with the candidate as we move forward. Mr. Balaji, with regard to the deposit part, please answer that.

Mr. Balaji: I will briefly answer that. Our deposit rates are already among the best in the market. They are very attractive rates, and customers have shown interest in continuing and growing their deposits with us.

However, in line with some of the recent interest-rate movements in the market, including at peer banks, we will be raising our rates on the savings side by about 10 bps from next week, which is... [hesitates]... sorry, on the TD side by 10 bps. So, we will move from 8% on the Maxima proposition to 8.1%.

Maxima has in fact been a phenomenally successful product. It has been well marketed across the country and has received a strong response from customers. With the further increase from 8% to 8.1%, we expect to garner further funds as well.

That is the position on deposits. Your third question was on capital raising, which I should invite our CFO, Mr. Mukul, who is also with me here today, to answer.

Mukul – CFO: Thanks, Balaji. Good evening, everyone. We recognize that the current market environment and the management transition may influence the timing of the Tier 1 raise.

Our capital planning is therefore not based on the assumption that equity needs to be raised immediately or at any cost. The bank has adequate capital, and as you are aware, we raised 500 crore of Tier 2 capital during Q2, which has further strengthened our overall capital position.

Our capital planning is being evaluated under both base and downside scenarios, considering growth, risk-weighted assets, internal accrual, asset quality, and capital buffers. We intend to maintain capital well above the regulatory requirements at each point in time. We also have the flexibility to undertake appropriate financial... [cut off]

Management: ...therefore, we have flexibility on both the timing and the size of any Tier 1 raise. Any equity raise will be undertaken at an appropriate time, considering the bank's capital requirements and market conditions. Thank you.

Rajiv Mehta – Yes Securities: Thank you for answering. Best wishes.

Operator: Thank you. The next question comes from the line of Akshat Agarwal from Nirmal Bang Institutional Equities. Please go ahead.

Akshat Agarwal – Nirmal Bang Institutional Equities: Good evening, team. Thank you for the opportunity, and many congratulations to Balaji on his new position.

If the bank brings in an external candidate as the next CEO, how important would strategic continuity be from the Board's perspective? If the incoming CEO has a different vision and wants to revisit or change the bank's existing medium-term strategy, would the Board be open to that, or would it prefer continuity with the current strategic direction?

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Management: [pause] The Board has a 5-year strategic plan in place. That plan has been further detailed into the short-term plans, and the current business plan in operation is part of that overall strategic plan.

When the new candidate comes in, if an external candidate does come into such a situation, I do not think the 5-year plan will undergo any change.

Akshat Agarwal – Nirmal Bang Institutional Equities: So, as a condition of hiring, would the Board consider it part of the hiring process that the medium-term strategy should remain aligned with what we already have, or would it depend on the new CEO's vision?

Management: I think the new CEO will bring experience and a background that may be slightly different. So, there might be a few adjustments here and there, but that is something we will decide when we get there.

As of today, we have no preconceived notion that if somebody comes from outside, the plan will change. That is a presupposition, and I do not think we can take that into account.

Akshat Agarwal – Nirmal Bang Institutional Equities: Thank you. In terms of deployment of the liquidity that was on the balance sheet, has it already been deployed during Q3, or will it remain available over the next few months or in Q4?

Management: Balaji, will you take this, or will Mukund take it? I think Mukund would be best placed to take it.

Mukund: I will take this question. As I guided earlier, we expect to invest the excess liquidity in high-yielding assets over a period covering Q3 and Q4. We are in that process and have already initiated it.

Akshat Agarwal – Nirmal Bang Institutional Equities: The guidance of an 18-20 bps recovery from the {? Q2 FY27 ?} level remains due to this, as well as a little bit from the rate hike. Is that correct?

Mukund: If you recollect what Balaji said, we are monitoring the situation very closely with respect to certain events, such as rainfall deficiency in districts of Maharashtra and Karnataka. We are also monitoring the impact of the recent increase in interest rates on funding costs and, therefore, the impact on our business.

We expect that guidance to hold, but we will be in a position to provide more clarity as we complete our assessment over the next month or so.

Akshat Agarwal – Nirmal Bang Institutional Equities: Thank you very much, team. All the best.

Operator: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, that was the last question for today. On behalf of Equitas Small Finance Bank Ltd., this concludes the conference. Thank you for joining us, and you may now disconnect your lines.

Management: Thank you.

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Equitas Small Fin.

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Note: {? ... ?} indicates a figure or name where audio clarity was insufficient for confident transcription. Verify against the source audio or the company's published filings.

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