

PAPER – 2 : CORPORATE & OTHER LAW

Question No. 1 is compulsory.

Attempt any **four** questions from the remaining **five** questions.

Question 1

- (a) MNP Private Ltd. is a company registered under the Companies Act, 2013 with a, Paid Up Share Capital of ₹ 45 lakh and turnover of ₹ 3 crores. Explain the meaning of the "Small Company" and examine the following in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013:

- (i) Whether the MNP Private Ltd. can avail the status of small company?
- (ii) What will be your answer if the turnover of the company is ₹ 1.50 crore? **(6 Marks)**

- (b) Rera Ltd., a company incorporated under the Companies Act, 2013 having turnover of ₹ 100 crore, net profit ₹ 3 crore, accumulated loss of ₹ 50 crore and securities premium ₹ 300 crore as per the audited accounts of the company for the Financial Year 2016-17.

The CFO of the company informed the directors of the company that the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) committee is required to be constituted as per the Companies Act, 2013. The directors seek your advice as a professional regarding the criteria required to constitute CSR committee and whether it is applicable to Rera Ltd. or not. **(6 Marks)**

- (c) ABC Ltd. sells its products through some agents and it is not the custom in their business to sell the products on credit. Mr. Pintu, one of the agents sold goods of ABC Ltd. to M/s. Parul Pvt. Ltd. (on credit) which was insolvent at the time of such sale. ABC Ltd. sued Mr. Pintu for compensation towards the loss caused due to sale of products to M/s. Parul Pvt. Ltd. Will ABC Ltd. succeed in its claim? **(4 Marks)**

- (d) X owned a land with fifty tamarind trees. He sold his land and the (obtained after cutting the fifty trees) to Y. X wants to know whether the sale of timber tantamounts to sale of immovable property. Advise him with reference to provisions of "General Clauses Act, 1897". **(4 Marks)**

Answer

- (a) **Small Company:** According to Section 2(85) of the Companies Act, 2013, Small Company means a company, other than a public company,—
- (1) paid-up share capital of which does not exceed fifty lakh rupees or such higher amount as may be prescribed which shall not be more than five crore rupees; and
 - (2) turnover of which as per its last profit and loss account does not exceed two crore rupees or such higher amount as may be prescribed which shall not be more than twenty crore rupees.

Nothing in this clause shall apply to—

- (A) a holding company or a subsidiary company;
 - (B) a company registered under section 8; or
 - (C) a company or body corporate governed by any special Act.
- (i) In the present case, MNP Private Ltd., a company registered under the Companies Act, 2013 with a paid up share capital of ₹ 45 lakh and having turnover of ₹ 3 crore. Since only one criteria of share capital of ₹ 50 Lakhs is met, but the second criteria of turnover of ₹ 2 crores is not met and the provisions require both the criteria to be met in order to avail the status of a small company, MNP Ltd. cannot avail the status of small company.
- (ii) If the turnover of the company is ₹ 1.50 crore, then both the criteria will be fulfilled and MNP Ltd. can avail the status of small company.

(b) Corporate Social Responsibility Committee: According to Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with the Companies (Corporate Social Responsibility) Rules, 2014, every company including its holding or subsidiary, and a foreign company defined under section 2(42) of the Companies Act, 2013, having its branch office or project office in India, having -

- (1) net worth of rupees 500 crore or more, or
- (2) turnover of rupees 1000 crore or more or
- (3) a net profit of rupees 5 crore or more

during any financial year shall constitute a Corporate Social Responsibility Committee of the Board.

"Net worth" [Section 2(57)] means the aggregate value of the paid-up share capital and all reserves created out of the profits and securities premium account, after deducting the aggregate value of the accumulated losses, deferred expenditure and miscellaneous expenditure not written off, as per the audited balance sheet, but does not include reserves created out of revaluation of assets, write-back of depreciation and amalgamation.

In the present case,

-turnover of Rera Ltd. is ₹ 100 crore,

-net profit of ₹ 3 crore and

-net worth of ₹ 253 crore (Net profit + securities premium -accumulated loss= 3 + 300 – 50=253 crore).

Hence, RERA Ltd. is not fulfilling any criteria prescribed for constitution of CSR committee. So, it is not obligatory for Rera Ltd. to constitute CSR Committee.

[Note 1: - It can also be presumed that net profit of the current year has already been considered while calculating accumulated losses.]

[Note 2: Since paid-up share capital value is not given in the question, it has been presumed that accumulated losses as stated in the question is given after taking into consideration the paid-up share capital, i.e. net of accumulated losses less paid-up share capital].

- (c) **To conduct the business of agency according to the principal's directions** (Section 211 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872): An agent is bound to conduct the business of his principal according to the direction given by the principal, or, in the absence of any such directions, according to the custom which prevails in doing business of the same kind at the place where the agent conducts such business. When the agent acts otherwise, if any loss be sustained, he must make it good to his principal, and, if any profit accrues, he must account for it.

In the present case, Mr. Pintu, one of the agents, sold goods of ABC Ltd. to M/s Parul Pvt. Ltd. (on credit) which was insolvent at the time of such sale. Also, it is not the custom in ABC Ltd. to sell the products on credit.

Hence, Mr. Pintu must make good the loss to ABC Ltd.

- (d) **“Immovable Property” [Section 3(26) of the General Clauses Act, 1897]:** ‘Immovable Property’ shall include:
- (i) Land,
 - (ii) Benefits to arise out of land, and
 - (iii) Things attached to the earth, or
 - (iv) Permanently fastened to anything attached to the earth.

It is an inclusive definition. It contains four elements: land, benefits to arise out of land, things attached to the earth and things permanently fastened to anything attached to the earth. Where, in any enactment, the definition of immovable property is in the negative and not exhaustive, the definition as given in the General Clauses Act will apply to the expression given in that enactment.

In the instant case, X sold Land along with timber (obtained after cutting trees) of fifty tamarind trees of his land. According to the above definition, Land is immovable property; however, timber cannot be immovable property since the same are not attached to the earth.

Question 2

- (a) (i) *PET Ltd., incurred loss in business upto current quarter of financial year 2017-18. The company has declared dividend at the rate of 12%, 15% and 18% respectively in the immediate preceding three years. In spite of the loss, the Board of Directors of*

the company have decided to declare interim dividend @ 15% for the current financial year. Examine the decision of PET Ltd. stating the provisions of declaration of interim dividend under the Companies Act, 2013. (4 Marks)

- (ii) *Alpha Ltd., A Section 8 company is planning to declare dividend in the Annual General Meeting for the Financial Year ended 31-03-2018. Mr. Chopra is holding 800 equity shares as on date. State whether the act of the company is according to the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013. (2 Marks)*
- (b) *As per the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013, every company is required to file with the Registrar of Companies, the Annual Return as prescribed in section 92, in Form MGT -7. Explain the particulars required to be contained in it. (6 Marks)*
- (c) *Mr. V draws a cheque of ₹ 11,000 and gives to Mr. B by way of gift. State with reason whether -*
- (1) *Mr.B is a holder in due course as per the Negotiable Instrument Act, 1881?*
- (2) *Mr.B is entitled to receive the amount of ₹ 11,000 from the bank? (4 Marks)*
- (d) *Bholenath drew a cheque in favour of Surendar. After having issued the cheque; Bholenath requested Surendar not to present the cheque for payment and gave a stop payment request to the bank in respect of the cheque issued to Surendar. Decide, under the provisions of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881 whether the said acts of Bholenath constitute an offence? (4 Marks)*

Answer

- (a) (i) **Interim Dividend:** According to section 123(3) of the Companies Act, 2013, the Board of Directors of a company may declare interim dividend during any financial year out of the surplus in the profit and loss account and out of profits of the financial year in which such interim dividend is sought to be declared.
- However, in case the company has incurred loss during the current financial year up to the end of the quarter immediately preceding the date of declaration of interim dividend, such interim dividend shall not be declared at a rate higher than the average dividends declared by the company during the immediately preceding three financial years.
- In the instant case, Interim dividend by PET Ltd. shall not be declared at a rate higher than the average dividends declared by the company during the immediately preceding three financial years [i.e. $(12+15+18)/3 = 45/3 = 15\%$]. Therefore, decision of Board of Directors to declare 15% of the interim dividend for the current financial year is tenable.
- (ii) **Prohibition on section 8 companies:** According to Section 8(1) of the Companies Act, 2013, the companies having licence under Section 8 (Formation of companies with Charitable Objects, etc.) of the Act are prohibited from paying any dividend to its members. Their profits are intended to be applied only in promoting the objects

of the company.

Hence, in the instant case, the proposed act of Alpha Ltd., a company registered under the provisions of Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013, which is planning to declare dividend, is not according to the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013.

- (b) Every company is required to file with the Registrar of Companies, the annual return as prescribed in section 92, in Form MGT – 7 as per Rule 11(1) of the Companies (Management & Administration) Rules, 2014.

The particulars contained in an annual return, to be filed by every company are as follows–

1. Its registered office, principal business activities, particulars of its holding, subsidiary and associate companies;
2. Its shares, debentures and other securities and shareholding pattern
3. Its indebtedness;
4. Its members and debenture-holders along with the changes therein since the close of the previous financial year;
5. Its promoters, directors, key managerial personnel along with changes therein since the close of the previous financial year;
6. Meetings of members or a class thereof, Board and its various committees along with attendance details;
7. Remuneration of directors and key managerial personnel;
8. Penalty or punishment imposed on the company, its directors or officers and details of compounding of offences and appeals made against such penalty or punishment;
9. Matters relating to certification of compliances, disclosures;
10. Details in respect of shares held by or on behalf of the Foreign Institutional Investors including their names, addresses, countries of incorporation, registration and percentage of shareholding held by them;
11. Such other matters as may be prescribed.

- (c) According to section 9 of the Negotiable Instrument Act, 1881, "Holder in due course" means–

- any person
- who for consideration
- becomes the possessor of a promissory note, bill of exchange or cheque (if payable to bearer), or the payee or endorsee thereof, (if payable to order),
- before the amount mentioned in it became payable, and

- without having sufficient cause to believe that any defect existed in the title of the person from whom he derived his title.

In the instant case, Mr. V draws a cheque of ₹ 11,000 and gives to Mr. B by way of gift.

- (i) Mr. B is holder but not a holder in due course since he did not get the cheque for value and consideration.
 - (ii) Mr. B's title is good and bonafide. As a holder he is entitled to receive ₹ 11,000 from the bank on whom the cheque is drawn.
- (d) As per the facts stated in the question, Bholenath (drawer) after having issued the cheque, informs Surender (drawee) not to present the cheque for payment and as well gave a stop payment request to the bank in respect of the cheque issued to Surender.

Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881, is a penal provision in the sense that once a cheque is drawn on an account maintained by the drawer with his banker for payment of any amount of money to another person out of that account for the discharge in whole or in part of any debt or liability, is informed by the bank unpaid either because of insufficiency of funds to honour the cheques or the amount exceeding the arrangement made with the bank, such a person shall be deemed to have committed an offence.

Once a cheque is issued by the drawer, a presumption under Section 139 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881 follows and merely because the drawer issues a notice thereafter to the drawee or to the bank for stoppage of payment, it will not preclude an action under Section 138.

Also, Section 140 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881, specifies absolute liability of the drawer of the cheque for commission of an offence under the section 138 of the Act. Section 140 states that it shall not be a defence in a prosecution for an offence under section 138 that the drawer had no reason to believe when he issued the cheque that the cheque may be dishonoured on presentment for the reasons stated in that section.

Accordingly, the act of Bholenath, i.e., his request of stop payment constitutes an offence under the provisions of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881.

Question 3

- (a) *TDL Ltd., a public company is planning to bring a public issue of equity shares in June, 2018. The company has appointed underwriters for getting its shares subscribed. As a Chartered Accountant of the company appraise the Board of TDL Ltd. about the provisions of payment of underwriter's commission as per Companies Act, 2013.* **(6 Marks)**
- (b)
 - (i) *Rupa Limited, a listed company appointed M/s. VG & ASSOCIATES an audit firm as Company's auditor in the Annual General Meeting held on 30-09-2017. Explain the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 relating to the appointment or reappointment of an auditor in relation to the tenure of an auditor.* **(3 Marks)**
 - (ii) *PKC Ltd., wants to appoint Mr. Praveen Kumar, a practicing Chartered Accountant*

as the statutory auditor of the company and asked the proposed auditor to give a certificate in this regard. What are the contents of the certificate to be issued in accordance with the Companies (Audit & Auditors Rules, 2014)? **(3 Marks)**

(c) *Explain briefly any four effects by repeal of an existing Act by central legislation enumerated in Section-6 of The General Clauses Act, 1897.* **(4 Marks)**

(d) *Differentiate Mandatory Provision from a Directory Provision. What factors decide whether a provision is directory or mandatory?* **(4 Marks)**

Answer

(a) The provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 regarding the payment of underwriter's commission are as follows:

Payment of commission: A company may pay commission to any person in connection with the subscription to its securities, whether absolute or conditional, subject to such conditions as given in Rule 13 of the Companies (Prospectus and Allotment of Securities) Rules, 2014.

Conditions for the payment of commission:

1. the payment of such commission shall be authorized in the company's articles of association;
2. the commission may be paid out of proceeds of the issue or the profit of the company or both;
3. Rate of commission: The rate of commission paid or agreed to be paid shall not exceed, in case of shares, five percent of the price at which the shares are issued or a rate authorised by the articles, whichever is less, and in case of debentures, shall not exceed two and a half per cent of the price at which the debentures are issued, or as specified in the company's articles, whichever is less.
4. Disclosure of particulars: the prospectus of the company shall disclose the following particulars -
 - a. the name of the underwriters;
 - b. the rate and amount of the commission payable to the underwriter; and
 - c. the number of securities which is to be underwritten or subscribed by the underwriter absolutely or conditionally.
5. No commission to be paid: There shall not be paid commission to any underwriter on securities which are not offered to the public for subscription;
6. Copy of contract of payment of commission to be delivered to registrar: a copy of the contract for the payment of commission is delivered to the Registrar at the time of delivery of the prospectus for registration.

- (b) (i) **Tenure of Auditor:** Section 139(2) of the Companies Act, 2013, provides that listed companies and other prescribed class or classes of companies (except one person companies and small companies) shall not appoint or re-appoint-

- (1) an individual as auditor for more than one term of five consecutive years; and
- (2) an audit firm as auditor for more than two terms of five consecutive years.

Cooling off Period:

- (1) An individual auditor who has completed his term (i.e. one term of five consecutive years) shall not be eligible for re-appointment as auditor in the same company for five years from the completion of his term;
- (2) An audit firm which has completed its term (i.e. two terms of five consecutive years) shall not be eligible for re- appointment as auditor in the same company for five years from the completion of such term.

In terms of the above provisions, Rupa Limited, which is a listed company, can appoint M/S VG & ASSOCIATES an audit firm, for a term of 5 years, i.e. from the conclusion of the AGM held on 30.09.2017 to the conclusion of the AGM to be held in the year 2022. Now, in terms of Section 139(2), since M/S VG & ASSOCIATES is an audit firm, it can be re-appointed as auditor for one more term of five years, i.e., upto the conclusion of the AGM to be held in 2027.

- (ii) As per proviso to section 139(1) of the Companies Act, 2013, before the appointment is made, a written consent of the auditor to such appointment, and a certificate from him or it that the appointment, if made, shall be in accordance with the conditions as may be prescribed, shall be obtained.

Certificate by Auditor: The Companies (Audit and Auditors) Rules, 2014 provides the content of the Certificate. According to this, the auditor appointed shall submit a certificate that –

- (A) the individual or the firm, as the case may be, is eligible for appointment and is not disqualified for appointment under the Act, the Chartered Accountants Act, 1949 and the rules or regulations made thereunder;
- (B) the proposed appointment is as per the term provided under the Act;
- (C) the proposed appointment is within the limits laid down by or under the authority of the Act;
- (D) the list of proceedings against the auditor or audit firm or any partner of the audit firm pending with respect to professional matters of conduct, as disclosed in the certificate, is true and correct.

The certificate shall also indicate whether the auditor satisfies the criteria provided in section 141.

Mr. Praveen Kumar, the proposed auditor has to give the above certificate to the

company before accepting the appointment as the auditor of PKC Ltd.

- (c) According to Section 6 of the General Clauses Act, 1897, where any Central legislation or any regulation made after the commencement of this Act repeals any Act made or yet to be made, unless another purpose exists, the repeal shall not:
- Revive anything not enforced or prevailed during the period at which repeal is effected or;
 - Affect the prior management of any legislation that is repealed or anything performed or undergone or;
 - Affect any claim, privilege, responsibility or debt obtained, ensued or sustained under any legislation so repealed or;
 - Affect any punishment, forfeiture or penalty sustained with regard to any offence committed as opposed to any legislation or
 - Affect any inquiry, litigation or remedy with regard to such claim, privilege, debt or responsibility or any inquiry, litigation or remedy may be initiated, continued or insisted.
- (d) Practically speaking, the distinction between a provision which is 'mandatory' and one which is 'directory' is that when it is mandatory, it must be strictly observed; when it is 'directory' it would be sufficient that it is substantially complied with. However, we have to look to the substance and not merely the form, an enactment in mandatory form might substantially be directory and, conversely, a statute in directory form may in substance be mandatory. Hence, it is the substance that counts and must take precedence over mere form. If a provision gives a power coupled with a duty, it is mandatory: whether it is or is not so would depend on such consideration as:
- the nature of the thing empowered to be done,
 - the object for which it is done, and
 - the person for whose benefit the power is to be exercised.

Question 4

- (a) *Bazaar Limited called its AGM in order to lay down the financial statements for Shareholders' approval. Due to want of Quorum, the meeting was cancelled. The directors did not file the annual returns with the Registrar. The directors were of the idea that the time for filing of returns within 60 days from the date of AGM would not apply, as AGM was cancelled. Has the company contravened the provisions of Companies Act, 2013? If the company has contravened the provisions of the Act, how will it be penalized?* **(4 Marks)**
- (b) *Benson Limited issued a notice with the agenda for nine businesses to be transacted in the Annual General Meeting (two businesses were regarding appointment of Mr. Sahu*

and Mr. Pranav as directors). The chairman decided to move the resolutions for all the nine businesses together to save the time of the members present. Examine the validity of the resolutions. **(4 Marks)**

- (c) *State any four contents of a Directors Responsibility Statement as required under Section 134 of the Companies Act, 2013.* **(4 Marks)**
- (d) (i) *Define Grammatical Interpretation. What are the exceptions to grammatical interpretation?* **(4 Marks)**
- (ii) *What is a Document as per the Indian Evidence Act, 1872?* **(2 Marks)**
- (e) *What is the meaning of service by post as per provisions of The General Clauses Act, 1897?* **(2 Marks)**

Answer

- (a) According to section 92(4) of the Companies Act, 2013, every company shall file with the Registrar a copy of the annual return, within sixty days from the date on which the annual general meeting is held or where no annual general meeting is held in any year within sixty days from the date on which the annual general meeting should have been held together with the statement specifying the reasons for not holding the annual general meeting, within the time specified under section 403.

Sub-section (5) of Section 92 also states that if a company fails to file its annual return under sub-section (4), before the expiry of the period specified under section 403 with additional fees, the company shall be punishable with fine which shall not be less than fifty thousand rupees but which may extend to five lakhs rupees and every officer of the company who is in default shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months or with fine which shall not be less than fifty thousand rupees but which may extend to five lakh rupees, or with both.

In the instant case, the idea of the directors that since the AGM was cancelled, the provisions requiring the company to file annual returns within 60 days from the date of AGM would not apply is incorrect.

In the above case, the annual general meeting of Bazaar Limited should have been held within a period of six months, from the date of closing of the financial year but it did not take place. Thus, the company has contravened the provisions of section 92 of the Companies Act, 2013 for not filing the annual returns and shall attract the penal provisions along with every officer of the company who is in default as specified in Section 92(5) of the Act.

- (b) For the sake of avoiding confusion and mixing up, the resolutions are generally moved separately in the annual general meeting. However, there is nothing illegal if the Chairman of the meeting desires that two or more resolutions should be moved together, unless any member requires that each resolution should be put to vote separately or unless a poll is demanded in respect of any.

Where notice has been given of several resolutions, each resolution must be put separately. However, if the meeting unanimously adopts all the resolutions, this would not be illegal barring a few occasions.

One resolution which should be moved separately is relating to appointment of directors at a general meeting of a public or private company, where two or more directors cannot be appointed as directors by a single resolution.

Hence, in the instant case, all the nine businesses cannot be moved together as two businesses were regarding appointment of Mr. Sahu and Mr. Pranav as directors. Besides these two resolutions, other seven resolutions can be moved together if the members unanimously agree.

(c) Contents of Directors Responsibility Statement [Section 134(5) of the Companies Act, 2013]: The Directors' Responsibility Statement referred to in 134(3) (c) shall state that—

- (1) in the preparation of the annual accounts, the applicable accounting standards had been followed along with proper explanation relating to material departures;
- (2) the directors had selected such accounting policies and applied them consistently and made judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent so as to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company at the end of the financial year and of the profit and loss of the company for that period;
- (3) the directors had taken proper and sufficient care for the maintenance of adequate accounting records in accordance with the provisions of this Act for safeguarding the assets of the company and for preventing and detecting fraud and other irregularities;
- (4) the directors had prepared the annual accounts on a going concern basis;
- (5) the directors, in the case of a listed company, had laid down internal financial controls to be followed by the company and that such internal financial controls are adequate and were operating effectively.

Here, the term "internal financial controls" means the policies and procedures adopted by the company for ensuring the orderly and efficient conduct of its business, including adherence to company's policies, the safeguarding of its assets, the prevention and detection of frauds and errors, the accuracy and completeness of the accounting records, and the timely preparation of reliable financial information; and

- (6) the directors had devised proper systems to ensure compliance with the provisions of all applicable laws and that such systems were adequate and operating effectively.
- (d) (i) Grammatical Interpretation and its exceptions:** 'Grammatical interpretation' concerns itself exclusively with the verbal expression of the law, it does not go beyond the letter of the law. In all ordinary cases, 'grammatical interpretation' is the

sole form allowable. The Court cannot take from or add to modify the letter of the law.

This rule, however, is subject to some exceptions:

- (1) Where the letter of the law is logically defective on account of ambiguity, inconsistency or incompleteness. As regard the defect to ambiguity, the Court is under a duty to travel beyond the letter of the law so as to determine from the other sources the true intention of the legislature. In the case of the statutory expression being defective on account of inconsistency, the court must ascertain the spirit of the law.
 - (2) If the text leads to a result which is so unreasonable that it is self-evident that the legislature could not mean what it says, the court may resolve such impasse by inferring logically the intention of the legislature.
- (ii) **As per Indian the Evidence Act, 1872:** 'Document': Generally understood, a document is a paper or other material thing giving information, proof or evidence of anything. The Law defines 'document' in a more technical form. As per Section 3 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, 'document' means any matter expressed or described upon any substance by means of letters, figures or marks or by more than one of those means, intended to be used, or which may be used, for the purpose of recording that matter.

For Example: A writing is a document, any words printed, photographed are documents.

- (e) **"Meaning of Service by post"** [Section 27 of the General Clauses Act, 1897]: Where any legislation or regulation requires any document to be served by post, then unless a different intention appears, the service shall be deemed to be effected by:
- (i) properly addressing
 - (ii) pre-paying, and
 - (iii) posting by registered post.

A letter containing the document to have been effected at the time at which the letter would be delivered in the ordinary course of post.

Question 5

- (a) (i) *Harsh purchased 1000 shares of Singhania Ltd. from Pratik and sent those shares to the company for transfer in his name. The company neither transferred the shares nor sent any notice of refusal of transfer to any party within the period stipulated in the Companies Act, 2013. What is the time frame in which the company is supposed to reply to transferee? Does Harsh, the transferee have any remedies against the company for not sending any intimation in relation to transfer of shares to him?* **(4 Marks)**

- (ii) Xgen Limited has a paid-up equity capital and free reserves to the extent of ₹ 50,00,000. The company is planning to buy-back shares to the extent of ₹ 4,50,000. The company approaches you for advice with regard to the following
- (i) Is special resolution required to be passed?
 - (ii) What is the time limit for completion of buy-back?
 - (iii) What should be ratio of aggregate debts to the paid-up capital-and free reserves after buy-back? **(3 Marks)**
- (b) M/s. Techno Ltd. maintains its Register of Members at its registered office in Mumbai. A group of members residing in Kolkata want to keep the register of members at Kolkata.
- (i) Explain with provisions of Companies Act, 2013, whether the company can keep the Registers and Returns at Kolkata.
 - (ii) Does Mr. Ranjit, Director (but not a shareholder) of the company have the right to inspect the Register of Members? **(5 Marks)**
- (c) Give four differences between Bailment and Pledge. **(4 Marks)**
- (d) Mr. D was in urgent need of money amounting ₹ 5,00,000. He asked Mr. K for the money. Mr. K lent the money on the sureties of A, B and N without any contract between them in case of default in repayment of money by D to K. D makes default in payment. B refused to contribute, examine whether B can escape liability? **(4 Marks)**

Answer

- (a) (i) **Refusal for Registration of transferred/transmitted securities:** According to Section 58 (4) of the Companies Act, 2013, if a public company without sufficient cause refuses to register the transfer of securities within a period of thirty days from the date on which the instrument of transfer is delivered to the company, the transferee may, within a period of sixty days of such refusal or where no intimation has been received from the company within ninety days of the delivery of the instrument of transfer, appeal to the Tribunal.

Remedies available to the Transferee against the company: Section 58 (5) of the Companies Act, 2013, provides that the Tribunal, while dealing with an appeal may, after hearing the parties, either dismiss the appeal, or by order—

- (a) direct that the transfer or transmission shall be registered by the company and the company shall comply with such order within a period of ten days of the receipt of the order; or
- (b) direct rectification of the register and also direct the company to pay damages, if any, sustained by any party aggrieved;

In the instant case, Harsh, can make an appeal before the tribunal for remedies that the company shall be ordered to register transfer /transmission of securities within

10 days of the receipt of order, or rectify register and pay damages.

- (ii) Section 68(2) of the Companies Act, 2013 deals with the Conditions required for buy-back of shares.

As per the Act, the company shall not purchase its own shares or other specified securities unless-

- (a) The buy-back is authorized by its articles;
- (b) A special resolution has been passed at a general meeting of the company authorizing the buy-back: except where—
 - (1) the buy-back is, ten per cent or less of the total paid-up equity capital and free reserves of the company; and
 - (2) such buy-back has been authorised by the Board by means of a resolution passed at its meeting;

Time limit for Completion of Buy Back: As per section 68(4), every buy-back shall be completed within a period of one year from the date of passing of the special resolution, or as the case may be, the resolution passed by the Board under sub-section (2).

Ratio of aggregate debts: Provision also specifies that ratio of the aggregate debts (secured and unsecured) owed by the company after buy back is not more than twice the paid up capital and its free reserves. However, Central Government may prescribe higher ratio of the debt for a class or classes of companies.

As per the stated facts, Xgen Ltd. has a paid up equity capital and free reserves to the extent of ₹ 50,00,000. The company planned to buy back shares to the extent of ₹ 4,50,000.

Referring to the above provisions, the answers will be as follows:

1. No, special resolution will not be required as the buyback is less than 10% of the total paid-up equity capital and free reserves ($50,00,000 \times 10/100 = 5,00,000$) of the company, but such buy back must be authorized by the Board by means of a resolution passed at its meeting.
2. Time limit for completion of buy back will be- within a period of one year from the date of passing of the resolution by the Board.
3. The ratio of the aggregate debts (secured and unsecured) owed by the company after buy back should not be more than twice the paid up capital and its free reserves.

The above buy-back is possible when backed by the authorization by the articles of the company.

- (b) (i) **Maintenance of the Register of Members etc.:** As per section 94(1) of the Companies Act, 2013, the registers required to be kept and maintained by a company under section 88 and copies of the annual return filed under section 92 shall be kept at the registered office of the company:

Provided that such registers or copies of return may also be kept at any other place in India in which more than one-tenth of the total number of members entered in the register of members reside, if approved by a special resolution passed at a general meeting of the company.

So, Techno Ltd. can also keep the registers and returns at Kolkata after compliance with the above provisions, provided more than one-tenth of the total number of members entered in the register of members reside in Kolkata.

- (ii) As per section 94(2) of the Companies Act, the inspection of the records, i.e. registers and indices, and annual return can be done by members, debenture-holders, other security holders or beneficial owners of the company.

Accordingly, a director Mr. Ranjit, who is not a shareholder of the company, has no right to inspect the Register of Members of company, as per the provisions of this section.

[**Note:** A presumption may be taken with respect to payment of fees. In such a case, any other person (other than specified above) may also inspect the Register of members of company]

- (c) **Distinction between bailment and pledge:** The following are the distinction between bailment and pledge:

- (a) **As to purpose:** Pledge is a variety of bailment. Under pledge goods are bailed as a security for a loan or a performance of a promise. In regular bailment the goods are bailed for other purpose than the two referred above. The bailee takes them for repairs, safe custody etc.
- (b) **As to right of sale:** The pledgee enjoys the right to sell only on default by the pledgor to repay the debt or perform his promise, that too only after giving due notice. In bailment the bailee, generally, cannot sell the goods. He can either retain or sue for non-payment of dues.
- (c) **As to right of using goods:** Pledgee has no right to use goods. A bailee can, if the terms so provide, use the goods.
- (d) **Consideration:** In pledge there is always a consideration whereas in a bailment there may or may not be consideration.
- (e) **Discharge of contract:** Pledge is discharged on the payment of debt or performance of promise whereas bailment is discharged as the purpose is accomplished or after specified time.

- (d) **Co-sureties liable to contribute equally** (Section 146 of the Indian Contract act, 1872): Equality of burden is the basis of Co-suretyship. This is contained in section 146 which states that “when two or more persons are co-sureties for the same debt, or duty, either jointly, or severally and whether under the same or different contracts and whether with or without the knowledge of each other, the co-sureties in the absence of any contract to the contrary, are liable, as between themselves, to pay each an equal share of the whole debt, or of that part of it which remains unpaid by the principal debtor”.

Accordingly, on the default of D in payment, B cannot escape from his liability. All the three sureties A, B and N are liable to pay equally, in absence of any contract between them.

Question 6

- (a) *Can equity share with differential voting rights be issued? If yes, state the conditions under which such shares may be issued.* **(6 Marks)**
- (b) *Explain the term 'charge'. State the circumstances under which necessity to create a charge arises. What is the time limit for registration of charge with the registrar?*

OR

Explain provisions for 'Appointment of Trustee for Depositors' under the Companies Act, 2013. **(6 Marks)**

- (c) *Rahul, a transporter was entrusted with the duty of transporting tomatoes from a rural farm to a city by Aswin. Due to heavy rains, Rahul was stranded for more than two days. Rahul sold the tomatoes below the market rate in the nearby market where he was stranded fearing that the tomatoes may perish. Can Aswin recover the loss from Rahul on the ground that Rahul had acted beyond his authority?* **(3 Marks)**
- (d) *State the rules laid down by the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881 for ascertaining the date of maturity of a bill of exchange.* **(5 Marks)**

Answer

- (a) **Conditions for the issue of equity shares with differential rights** (Rule 4 of the Companies (Share capital and Debenture) Rules, 2014): No company limited by shares shall issue equity shares with differential rights as to dividend, voting or otherwise, unless it complies with the following conditions, namely: -
- (1) the articles of association of the company authorizes the issue of shares with differential rights;
 - (2) the issue of shares is authorized by an ordinary resolution passed at a general meeting of the shareholders.

- (3) However, where the equity shares of a company are listed on a recognized stock exchange, the issue of such shares shall be approved by the shareholders through postal ballot;
 - (4) the shares with differential rights shall not exceed twenty-six percent of the total post-issue paid up equity share capital including equity shares with differential rights issued at any point of time;
 - (5) the company is having consistent track record of distributable profits for the last three years;
 - (6) the company has not defaulted in filing financial statements and annual returns for three financial years immediately preceding the financial year in which it is decided to issue such shares;
 - (7) the company has no subsisting default in the payment of a declared dividend to its shareholders or repayment of its matured deposits or redemption of its preference shares or debentures that have become due for redemption or payment of interest on such deposits or debentures or payment of dividend;
 - (8) the company has not defaulted in payment of the dividend on preference shares or repayment of any term loan from a public financial institution or State level financial institution or Scheduled Bank that has become repayable or interest payable thereon or dues with respect to statutory payments relating to its employees to any authority or default in crediting the amount in Investor Education and Protection Fund to the Central Government;
 - (9) However, a company may issue equity shares with differential rights upon expiry of five years from the end of the financial Year in which such default was made good.
 - (10) the company has not been penalized by Court or Tribunal during the last three years of any offence under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992, the Securities Contracts Regulation Act, 1956, the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 or any other special Act, under which such companies being regulated by sectoral regulators.
- (b) **Charge:** According to section 2(16) of the Companies Act, 2013 “charge” has been defined as an interest or lien created on the property or assets of a company or any of its undertakings or both as security and includes a mortgage.

Why creating a charge is a necessity for companies? The answer to this lies in the setup of raising capital by the companies. Generally, companies depend on share capital and borrowed capital for funding their projects. When the company raises money through borrowings, they may issue debentures or by obtaining loans from banks/ financial institutions. These banks/ financial institutions need a surety regarding the repayment of their funds. Thus, they create a mortgage or hypothecation on the assets of the company

for safe and secured lending of the funds. This creation of right on the assets and properties of the borrower companies, is known as a charge on assets.

Once charge is registered and filed, it becomes an information in public domain as to how much company has borrowed against its assets and from whom.

Time limit for registration of charge with the registrar: It shall be duty of the company creating a charge within or outside India, on its property or assets or any of its undertakings, whether tangible or otherwise and situated in or outside India, to register the particulars of the charge signed by the company and the charge holder together with the instruments, if any, creating such charge in such form, on payment of such fees and in such manner as may be prescribed, with the registrar within 30 days of creation.

Provided that the Registrar may, on an application by the company, allow such registration to be made within a period of three hundred days of such creation on payment of such additional fees as may be prescribed.

Provided further that if registration is not made within a period of three hundred days of such creation, the company shall seek extension of time from the Central Government in accordance with section 87.

OR

Appointment of Trustee for Depositors [Rule 7 of the Companies (Acceptance of Deposits) Rules, 2014]:

- (1) No company referred to in sub-section (2) of section 73 or any eligible company shall issue a circular or advertisement inviting secured deposits unless the company has appointed one or more trustees for depositors for creating security for the deposits.

However, a written consent shall be obtained from the trustee for depositors before their appointment and a statement shall appear in the circular or circular in the form of advertisement with reasonable prominence to the effect that the trustees for depositors have given their consent to the company to be so appointed.

- (2) The company shall execute a deposit trust deed in DPT-2 at least seven days before issuing the circular or circular in the form of advertisement.
- (3) No person including a company that is in the business of providing trusteeship services shall be appointed as a trustee for the depositors, if the proposed trustee -
- (a) is a director, key managerial personnel or any other officer or an employee of the company or of its holding, subsidiary or associate company or a depositor in the company;
 - (b) is indebted to the company, or its subsidiary or its holding or associate company or a subsidiary of such holding company;
 - (c) has any material pecuniary relationship with the company;

- (d) has entered into any guarantee arrangement in respect of principal debts secured by the deposits or interest thereon;
 - (e) is related to any person specified in clause (a) above.
- (4) No trustee for depositors shall be removed from office after the issue of circular or advertisement and before the expiry of his term except with the consent of all the directors present at a meeting of the board.

However, in case the company is required to have independent directors, at least one independent director shall be present in such meeting of the Board.

- (c) **Agent's authority in an emergency** (Section 189 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872): An agent has authority, in an emergency, to do all such acts for the purpose of protecting his principal from loss as would be done by a person of ordinary prudence, in his own case, under similar circumstances.

In the instant case, Rahul, the agent, was handling perishable goods like 'tomatoes' and can decide the time, date and place of sale, not necessarily as per instructions of the Aswin, the principal, with the intention of protecting Aswin from losses.

Here, Rahul acts in an emergency as a man of ordinary prudence, so Aswin will not succeed against him for recovering the loss.

- (d) **Ascertaining the date of maturity of a Bill of Exchange:** The maturity of a bill, not payable on demand, at sight, or on presentment, is at maturity on the third day after the day on which it is expressed to be payable (Section 22 of Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881). Three days are allowed as days of grace. No days of grace are allowed in the case of bill payable on demand, at sight, or presentment.

When a bill is made payable at stated number of months after date, the period stated terminates on the day of the month which corresponds with the day on which the instrument is dated. When it is made payable after a stated number of months after sight the period terminates on the day of the month which corresponds with the day on which it is presented for acceptance or sight or noted for non-acceptance or protested for non-acceptance. When it is payable a stated number of months after a certain event, the period terminates on the day of the month which corresponds with the day on which the event happens (Section 23).

When a bill is made payable a stated number of months after sight and has been accepted for honour, the period terminates with the day of the month which corresponds with the day on which it was so accepted.

If the month in which the period would terminate has no corresponding day, the period terminates on the last day of such month (Section 23).

In calculating the date a bill made payable a certain number of days after date or after sight or after a certain event is at maturity, the day of the date, or the day of presentment for acceptance or sight or the day of protest for non-accordance, or the day on which the event happens shall be excluded (Section 24).

Three days of grace are allowed to these instruments after the day on which they are expressed to be payable (Section 22).

When the last day of grace falls on a day which is public holiday, the instrument is due and payable on the next preceding business day (Section 25).