

MARKET WATCH

	04-03-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	38409	-0.55
US Dollar	73.19	0.05
Gold	44,383	2.67
Brent oil	52.88	0.97

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	345.95	-1.35
Asian Paints	1847.95	47.40
Axis Bank	682.20	-4.95
Bajaj Auto	2711.50	19.25
Bajaj Finserv	8799.70	-163.95
Bajaj Finance	4286.40	-167.70
Bharti Airtel	516.75	-4.05
BPL	418.70	-6.30
Britannia Ind.	3063.05	36.55
Cipla	447.65	22.35
Coal India	178.10	-0.10
Dr Reddys Lab	3171.35	127.65
Eicher Motors	17254.20	-634.25
GAIL (India)	106.05	2.85
Grasim Ind.	689.50	-10.55
HCL Tech	563.10	-1.95
HDFC	2206.05	14.65
HDFC Bank	1148.85	-32.95
Hero MotoCorp	2046.35	-8.50
Hindalco	160.60	1.30
Hind Unilever	2175.85	9.20
ICICI Bank	508.35	-6.40
IndusInd Bank	1065.95	-42.10
Bharti Infratel	221.05	1.70
Infosys	758.75	11.75
Indian Oil Corp.	106.60	-0.05
ITC	187.50	-6.35
JSW Steel	245.60	-0.85
Kotak Bank	1607.95	-18.35
L&T	1176.65	-4.65
M&M	474.65	8.40
Maruti Suzuki	6384.35	-1.70
Nestle India Ltd.	16541.50	182.10
NTPC	107.95	-0.95
ONGC	92.80	-0.55
PowerGrid Corp	197.05	5.35
Reliance Ind.	1339.70	-3.15
State Bank	285.30	-4.55
Sun Pharma	405.45	11.90
Tata Motors	126.20	-4.15
Tata Steel	377.15	-10.40
TCS	2083.20	47.00
Tech Mahindra	771.30	19.00
Titan	1250.95	3.95
UltraTech Cement	4172.80	-127.10
UPL	511.60	-9.95
Vedanta	119.35	-0.20
Wipro	228.85	5.15
YES Bank	29.30	-1.90
Zee Entertainment	251.75	0.65

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on March 04

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.02	73.34
Euro	81.23	81.59
British Pound	93.54	93.95
Japanese Yen (100)	67.93	68.23
Chinese Yuan	10.55	10.60
Swiss Franc	76.30	76.64
Singapore Dollar	52.74	52.98
Canadian Dollar	54.64	54.89
Malaysian Ringgit	17.46	17.55

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI

March 04 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses

Retail Silver (1g)	50	(48.5)
22 ct gold (1g)	4128	(4025)

IN BRIEF



Karnad in HDFC Bank's MD search panel

MUMBAI The search panel to find a successor for HDFC Bank's MD Aditya Puri has been reconstituted with Renu Sud Karnad replacing Keki Mistry as the representative of the bank's parent Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC) Ltd. Ms. Karnad is the MD of HDFC while Mr. Mistry is the vice-chairman and CEO. "Aditya Puri shall continue to act as adviser to the search committee," HDFC Bank said in a notification to the stock exchanges.

HDFC cuts home loan rate by 5 basis points

MUMBAI Mortgage lender Housing Finance Development Corporation has reduced the home loan rate for salaried borrowers by 5 basis points (bps). The new rate for loans up to ₹30 lakh will be 8.05%, for above ₹30 lakh and up to 75 lakh, it will be 8.3% and for above ₹75 lakh, the rate will be 8.4%. The rate for women borrowers will be 5 bps lower. While RBI has kept interest rates on hold since December, it has announced measures that have led to lower cost of funds for banks.

Equitas SFB gears up for initial public offering

CHENNAI Having received the nod from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for its initial public offering (IPO), Equitas Small Finance Bank is gearing up to go public as soon as possible, said a top executive. "As of now, we don't have any deadline for the IPO. We are working on going public as quickly as possible," said P.N. Vasudevan, MD and CEO of the bank. The IPO comprises fresh issue of ₹550 crore and an offer-for-sale of eight crore equity shares.

Nod for changes to Companies Act for decriminalising offences

Priority is to axe sections that criminalise offences having no malafide intent: FM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Centre proposes to amend the Companies Act again, in a bid to decriminalise a number of offences and ease corporate social responsibility (CSR) requirements, especially for smaller companies.

The amendment bill will also enable the listing of Indian companies on stock exchanges in foreign jurisdictions. This is expected to give Indian firms greater access to capital, a broader investor base and better valuations.

On Wednesday, the Union Cabinet approved the proposal to amend 65 sections of the Act. "The priority is to remove sections which criminalise offences which may not have been intended to be malafide," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told journalists after a Cabinet meeting.

She outlined proposed changes to 52 out of 66 com-



All smiles: Union Ministers Nirmala Sitharaman and Prakash Javadekar at a press meet in New Delhi. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

poundable offences under the Act, either removing them entirely, downgrading penalties from jail sentences to fines or suggesting alternative adjudication mechanisms.

Recategorise offences

The Centre proposes to recategorise 23 offences so that they can be dealt with through an in-house adjudication framework, while five types of offences will be

dealt with under different alternative frameworks.

Another seven will be omitted altogether. Most of these are procedural or technical defaults, according to an official statement.

For 11 kinds of offences, the provision of imprisonment will be removed, limiting punishment to fines only. Six offences that had already been decriminalised earlier will see a further reduction in the quantum of penalties.

Cabinet allows NRIs to take 100% in Air India

'Move aimed at liberalising FDI policy'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday decided to allow Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) who are Indian nationals to own up to 100% stake of Air India, which is bound for disinvestment.

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said at a press conference that the Cabinet, at a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had decided to increase the maximum stake for NRIs from 49% to 100%.

The government is in the process of selling the national carrier, having invited preliminary bids recently.

The FDI (foreign direct investment) policy would be amended to allow NRIs who are Indian nationals to own up to 100% of Air India 'under automatic route', a government statement said.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The merger of public sector banks (PSBs) will become effective from April 1, 2020, with the Cabinet giving nod to the proposal on Wednesday.

The consolidation of 10 PSBs into four includes the merger of Oriental Bank of Commerce and United Bank of India into Punjab National Bank, the amalgamation of Syndicate Bank into Canara Bank, the merger of Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank into Union Bank of India, and the amalgamation of Allahabad Bank into Indian Bank. "The banks have submitted their scheme of amalgamation to Cabinet, which has been approved. They are on course to complete the amalgamation without affecting any of their core banking functions," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

The amendment was meant to 'liberalise and simplify the FDI policy to provide ease of doing business in the country', the statement said. Mr. Javadekar said FDI had increased in the tenure of the NDA government.

While FDI inflows stood at \$45.15 billion in 2014-2015, the provisional figures for FDI had increased to \$62 billion in the last financial year 2018-2019.

Public sector bank mergers get approval

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SC order on cryptocurrency will offer only temporary relief

Government's draft law proposes to ban private currencies

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA MANOJIT SAHA NEW DELHI/MUMBAI

Even as virtual currency investors and businesses welcomed the Supreme Court's order on cryptocurrency, the relief for such players may be only temporary given that the Centre, in a draft law, has proposed to ban all private cryptocurrencies.

"... Our main objective is to create a dialogue with policymakers and develop a comprehensive framework for crypto assets in India paving the way for innovation," said, Sohail Merchant, CEO, Pocketbits.in, and member of IAMA's Blockchain and Cryptocurrency Committee. "As an industry body, we look forward to a more open dialogue with the government." IAMA was among entities that had approached the Supreme

Bond yields decline on expectation of rate cut

After Fed action, market sees RBI following suit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

After the U.S. Federal Reserve reduced interest rates on Tuesday to fight the economic slowdown due to the spread of COVID-19, there is growing expectation in the domestic market that the Reserve Bank will follow suit.

Bond yields softened on Wednesday amid rate cut hopes, with the yield on the 10-year government bond dropping 12 bps to close the day at 6.23%.

"We note other Asian central banks have already been easing on account of expected supply-led growth disruptions, while the RBI has been stealth easing via [long-term repo operation], partly as high inflation inhibited conventional easing," Madhavi Arora, lead economist, Edelweiss Securities, said.

"However, as we argued post another sluggish GDP print last week, RBI could now front-load its impending rate cuts and could furth-



er the LTROs by as early as end March," Ms. Arora said.

After cutting interest rates by 135 bps between February and October 2019, the central bank has hit the pause button. At the same time, it introduced long-term repo operations through which it lends to banks at rates cheaper than prevailing market rates. "Coordinated easing measures taken by central banks open up an opportunity for RBI to look at easing. The correction in crude oil prices would help push inflation down, allowing RBI to look through the transient infla-

tionary forces which had forced it to 'pause' last time. Interest rate sensitive sectors viz., banking, auto, real estate and housing finance would [benefit]," said Pankaj Bobade, head - Fundamental Research, Axis Securities.

Bank of America Merrill Lynch said Tuesday's Fed cut supported the call of a 50 bps RBI rate cut in 2020.

"We see 50 bps risk to [first half of 2020] growth if the COVID infection worsens. As it is, we see FY20 growth at 4.9% and FY21 at 5.6%," BofAML said in a note, adding that rate cut could happen during the June-August and Oct.-Dec. periods.

"We expect the RBI to inject \$45 billion of durable liquidity in FY21, to pull down lending rates," it added.

The rupee, which weakened in the last three sessions, ended 4 paise higher on Wednesday amid a volatile trading as it hit the day's low of 73.63 a dollar, closing at 73.19.

SBI Cards IPO subscribed 15.49 times

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

The initial public offer of SBI Cards and Payment Services, which closed for bidding for institutional investors on Wednesday, was subscribed 15.49 times, with bids received for nearly 155.4 crore equity shares as against 10.03 crore shares on offer in the price band of ₹750 to ₹755.

The segment reserved for institutional investors was subscribed nearly 57 times, with bids received for nearly 139 crore equity shares. While the retail segment has been subscribed 1.77 times, the portion reserved for employees was subscribed 3.29 times till Wednesday. Further, the portion reserved for high net worth individuals was subscribed 2.19 times.

Non-institutional investors have one extra day to put in bids for shares of the card company.

SEBI says gauging virus impact

Taking necessary steps, says whole-time member Mohanty

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is assessing the possible impact of COVID-19 on the markets and taking steps to tackle the same, said S. K. Mohanty, whole-time member, SEBI.

"SEBI is aware of the coronavirus and the possible impact that it can have on the market. We are taking necessary steps," he said.

"We've seen the RBI statement. Whatever has to be done, has to be done. We are internally assessing the situation," he added.

The SEBI statement comes a day after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

The last few trading sessions have seen Sensex shedding more than 3,000 points

said it was monitoring the financial markets closely on account of the virus scare.

Asked if the issue had been discussed at the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC), the SEBI member said, 'not yet.' The impact of COVID-19 in India has been visible in most segments of the markets, including equities, currency and bonds.

Incidentally, the last few trading sessions had seen

the benchmark Sensex shedding more than 3,000 points while the rupee went past the 73-mark on Tuesday and bond yields dropped 11 bps on Wednesday.

Tax on REIT, InvITs On a different note, the capital markets regulator has taken up with the government the issue of taxation with respect to dividends from real estate investment trusts (REITs) and infrastructure investment trusts (InvITs).

A Budget proposal has made dividends from such structures taxable, which, market participants believe, would be a huge dampener for the segment.

GAIL, PSUs detached from AGR case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Gas utility GAIL India, explorer Oil India and other PSUs have been detached from a Supreme Court order that had led to ₹1.47 lakh crore being sought from telecom firms such as Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea in past dues, the Lok Sabha was informed on Wednesday.

"Supreme Court has detached the public sector undertakings from the AGR judgment and directed them to seek relief from an appropriate forum," Minister of State for Communications Sanjay Dhotre said.

Telcos still owe Centre ₹1.30 lakh cr. in AGR dues

This is 11% of the total estimated dues

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Centre on Wednesday said it had till now received only ₹15,896.51 crore from telecom firms as payment towards their adjusted gross revenue-related dues.

This is about 11% of the total estimated dues of ₹1,46,336.98 crore, leaving ₹1,30,440.47 crore still to be paid ahead of the next Supreme Court hearing on the issue on March 17.

"As per the licence agreement, the government takes action against licensees, including telecom service pro-

viders, over non-compliance of the Supreme Court order dated October 24, 2019, on payment of dues to the DoT," Minister of State for Communications Sanjay Dhotre said in a written reply to Lok Sabha.

Asked if the government intended to propose a plan for future developments in the telecom sector, he said there was no such plan at present. On a query over speculation about Vodafone Idea shutting down, he said, "No such information is available with the government."

Sensex falls 2% intraday as virus cases increase

About 1,800 stocks lose ground on BSE

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Equities witnessed extreme volatility on Wednesday with the benchmark Sensex shedding more than 2% during intraday trading as the number of COVID-19 cases in India jumped to 28, leading to increased concerns that the economy might take a larger hit than previously expected.

The 30-share Sensex lost nearly 780 points during the afternoon session to touch a low of 37,846.10 before closing at 38,409.48, down 214.22 points, or 0.55%.

The broader Nifty settled the day at 11,251.00, shedding 52.30 points or 0.46%.

The market breadth was extremely weak with nearly 1,800 stocks losing ground on BSE, as against only 639 gainers.

Sharp decline

"The rise in coronavirus cases denied sentiment and triggered a sharp decline in the middle," said Ajit Mishra, vice-president - Research, Religare Broking. "However, it rebounded in the latter half, considerably trimming losses," he said.



MINISTRY OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS
Government of India

PUBLIC NOTICE

Introducing A New and Comprehensive Portal for New Companies

INTRODUCING

SPICe+
(Replacing the existing SPICe)

As part of Government of India's Ease of Doing Business (EODB) initiatives, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs has notified and deployed a new Web Form christened 'SPICe+' (pronounced 'SPICe Plus') replacing the existing SPICe form.

SPICe+ would offer 10 services by 3 Central Govt. Ministries & Departments. (Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Ministry of Labour & Department of Revenue in the Ministry of Finance) and One State Govt. (Maharashtra), thereby saving as many procedures, time and cost for Starting a Business in India and would be applicable for all new company incorporations w.e.f 23rd February 2020.

As an integrated Web Form, SPICe+ has two parts -

PART A FOR NAME RESERVATION FOR NEW COMPANIES

PART B OFFERING A BOUQUET OF SERVICES: (i) Incorporation (ii) DIN allotment (iii) Mandatory issue of PAN (iv) Mandatory issue of TAN (v) Mandatory issue of EPFO registration (vi) Mandatory issue of ESIC registration (vii) Mandatory issue of Profession Tax registration (Maharashtra) (viii) Mandatory Opening of Bank Account for the Company and (ix) Allotment of GSTIN (if so applied for)

- A new and user friendly Dashboard on the Front Office has been created for company incorporation application (SPICe+ and linked forms as applicable).
- The new web form would Facilitate On-screen filing and real time data validation for seamless incorporation of companies.
- Registration for EPFO and ESIC shall be mandatory for all new companies incorporated **w.e.f 23rd February 2020** and no EPFO & ESIC registration nos. shall be separately issued by the respective agencies.
- Registration for Profession Tax shall also be mandatory for all new companies incorporated in the State of Maharashtra **w.e.f 23rd February 2020**.
- All new companies incorporated through SPICe+ (w.e.f 23rd February 2020) would also be mandatorily required to apply for opening the company's Bank account through the **AGILE-PRO** linked web form.