Seven of top 10 valued cos add Rs 73,872cr in m-cap

NEW DELHI, JUNE 17 /--/ Seven of 10 most valued companies added Rs 73,871.79 crore to their total market valuation last week, led by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) that became the first bluechip to hit a market capitalisation of Rs 7 lakh crore.

While TCS, Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), HUL, Infosys, Maruti Suzuki India, Kotak Mahindra Bank and SBI were on the gainers side, HDFC Bank, ITC and HDFC suffered losses in their market capitalisation (m-cap) during the week to June 15. TCS' market valuation surged Rs 35,701.47 crore to Rs 7,05,012.98 crore -- becoming the first company to close the trading session with a market valuation of over Rs 7 lakh crore. The m-cap of RIL soared Rs 19,292.76 crore to Rs 6,42,363.07 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) gained Rs 5,671.31 crore to Rs 3,50,929 crore. Infosys valuation jumped Rs 4,521.14 crore to Rs 2,79,666.55 crore and that of State Bank of India (SBI) advanced by Rs 4,328.43 crore to Rs 2,47,701.93 crore. The m-cap of Kotak Mahindra Bank rose by Rs 4,151.27 crore to Rs 2,55,495.82 crore and that of Maruti went up by Rs 205.41 crore to Rs 2,70,437.17 crore. HDFC Bank's valuation plunged Rs 5,050.4 crore to Rs 5,28,652.06 crore. The m-cap of ITC slumped Rs 4,088.44 crore to Rs 3,22,803.60 crore and that of HDFC went down by Rs 1,352.88 crore to Rs 3,07,755.97 crore. In the ranking of top-10 firms, TCS stood at number one position followed by RIL, HDFC Bank, HUL, ITC, HDFC, Infosys, Maruti, Kotak Mahindra Bank and SBI. Over the last week, the BSE Sensex advanced 178.47 points, or 0.50 per cent to end at 35,622.14. (PTI)

Trade war fears, crude oil price to dictate mkt sentiments: Experts

NEW DELHI, JUNE 17 /--/ Domestic stock markets this week will be driven by a range of factors including renewed concerns over global trade war, movement in crude oil prices, progress of monsoon, according to experts. Trading sentiments are likely to take a hit in the wake of fresh tariffs imposed by the US on Chinese imports.

"Going ahead the markets would weigh the concerns coming from possible trade war between the US and China," Teena Virmani, vice president (Research) at Kotak Securities Ltd, said. Also, the experts are of the view that Indian stocks are now entering a dull phase since most key events like earnings season, macroeconomic data and RBI policy announcements are over. "Domestic fundamentals will take a backseat for now since we have seen earnings season, monsoon projections and recent GDP and RBI policy. We believe all eyes will be on global developments, the return of trade war with US signing another USD 50 billion tariffs, crude oil and USD/INR," Epic Research CEO Mustafa Nadeem said. Investors will continue to track fluctuations in crude oil prices as well as developments on progress of the monsoon, Hem Securities director Gaurav Jain said.

"... escalation of trade tensions is likely to impact the near term market sentiments. Market will closely follow OPEC and Russia meeting this week, to decide on relaxation of supply cuts," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. Over the last week, the BSE Sensex advanced 178.47 points, or 0.50 per cent, to close at 35,622.14.

Depositories share info on activation of red flag, breach of FDI limit with bourses

NEW DELHI, JUNE 17 /--/ Depositories have shared information about activation of red flag and FDI limit breach related to 12 companies, including HDFC Bank, with the BSE and the NSE, according to notices.

As per the separate notices issued by the two bourses, a red flag has been activated in HDFC Bank, Wonderla Holidays, IndusInd Bank, Ashapura Minechem, Cyient Ltd and S H Kelkar and Company. Among the companies in which the foreign investment has reached its permissible limit are Abbott India, Delta Corp, Shanti Educational Initiatives, Sai Baba Investment and Commercial Enterprises, Trent Ltd and JVL Agro Industries. Based on information received from the depositories NSDL and CDSL -- regarding red flag activation and limit breach, institutional trading series (6 lakh series) for the 12 companies will be available for trading from June 18, the BSE said in a notice dated June 16. In Institutional trading series (6 lakh series), which is going to be discontinued by the BSE from July 1in equity segment, only foreign institutional investors are permitted to trade among themselves. In a circular, the NSE noted that in relation to Sebi framework regarding monitoring of foreign investment limits in listed Indian companies, the information relating to red flag and breaches have been furnished by the depositories for dissemination. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), in April, had put in place a framework for the depositories -- NSDL and CDSL -- to monitor the foreign investment limits in listed Indian companies. Under the framework, the depositories have to provide information to the exchanges regarding activation of red flag in a company whenever the foreign investment is within 3 per cent or less than 3 per cent of the aggregate NRI/ FPI limits or the sectoral cap is reached.

Also, the details of breach of foreign investment limits in a company need to be furnished to the bourses. In the event of a breach of the sectoral cap or the aggregate FPI/NRI limit, the foreign investor has to divest its excess holding within five trading days from the date of settlement of the trades, by selling shares only to domestic investor. (PTI)

RBI eases norms for FPIs to invest in debt; to help RE, Corp bonds

MUMBAI, JUNE 17 /--/ The Reserve Bank has eased investment norms for foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) in debt, especially into individual large corporates, a move that can help attract more overseas flows and thereby help arrest the recent fall in the rupee on one hand and also lift the recent fall in demand for corporate bonds.

FPIs are allowed to invest in various debt market instruments such as government bonds, treasury bills, state development loans and corporate bonds, but with certain limits and restrictions. The RBI increased the FPIs cap on investment in government security to 30 per cent of the outstanding stock of that security, from 20 per cent earlier. FPIs were allowed to invest in government bonds with a minimum residual maturity of three years. "Henceforth, FPIs are permitted to invest in Government securities (G-secs), including treasury bills, and SDLs without any minimum residual maturity requirement, subject to the condition that short-term investments by an FPI under either category shall

not exceed 20 per cent of the total investment of that FPI in that category," RBI said in a notification. Short-term investments are defined as investments with residual maturity up to one year. In the corporate bond segment, FPIs are permitted to invest with a minimum maturity of three years. The central bank has now allowed FPIs to invest in corporate bonds with minimum residual maturity of above one year. However, it has kept a condition that short-term investments in corporate bonds by an FPI shall not exceed 20 per cent of the total investment of that FPI in corporate bonds. The requirement that short-term investments shall not exceed 20 per cent of total investment by an FPI in any category applies on an end-of-day basis.

"At the end of any day, all investments with residual maturity of up to one year will be reckoned for the 20 per cent limit," RBI said. RBI said short-term investments by an FPI may exceed 20 per cent of total investments, only if the short-term investments consist entirely of investments made on or before April 27, 2018, and not made after April 27, 2018. Following the RBI notification, market regulator, Sebi, withdrew last evening the minimum three-year residual maturity restriction on investments made by them in government securities, corporate bonds and SDLs. FPIs were permitted to invest in government securities till the limit utilisation reaches 90 per cent, after which the auction mechanism was triggered for allocation of the remaining limit.

FPIs withdraw Rs 5,500cr from mkts in June so far

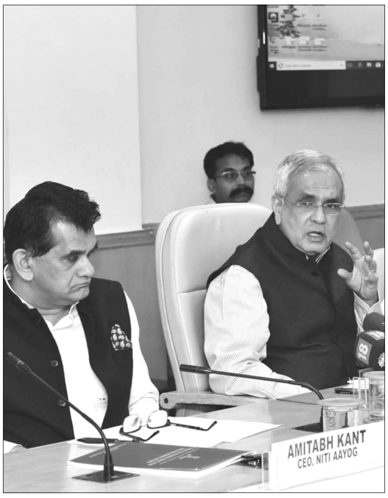
NEW DELHI, JUNE 17 /--/ Foreign investors have pulled out more than Rs 5,500 crore from capital markets this month so far due to global trade war worries coupled with hawkish commentary by the US Federal Reserve. This comes following a net outflow of over Rs 45,000 crore from capital markets (equity and debt) in the last two months. Prior to that, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) had pumped in Rs 2,600 crore in March. According to latest data available with depositories, FPIs withdrew a net sum of Rs 831 crore from equities and a net amount of Rs 4,683 crore from debt markets during June 1-15, resulting in a total outflow of Rs 5,514 crore. "Investors were concerned as it was reported that the US President Donald Trump approved tariffs on about USD 50 billion of Chinese goods," said Abhijeet Dey, Senior Fund Manager Equities at BNP Paribas Mutual Fund. "Further, the sentiments were dampened due to rate hike and the hawkish commentary by the US Federal Reserve," said Jayant Manglik President at Religare Broking Ltd. "We believe one should remain cautious in the market due to global sentiments, movement of Indian Rupee against the US dollar and crude oil prices," he added. However, Indian equities had seen some buying from FPIs in the first week of June 2018 on the back of easing of global oil prices from their recent highs.

Almost 1n people 'testing' WhatsApp payments service in India

NEW DELHI, JUNE 17 /--/ Almost one million people in India are "testing" WhatsApp's payments service, and the company is working with the Indian government, NPCI and multiple banks to further expand the feature to more users, a company official said. WhatsApp payment service, which rivals the likes of Paytm, has been in beta testing over the last few months. The Facebook-owned company hasn't yet announced a launch date but industry watchers expect it to happen in the next few weeks.

"Today, almost one million people are testing WhatsApp payments in India. The feedback has been very positive, and people enjoy the convenience of sending money as simple and securely as sending messages," a WhatsApp spokesperson told PTI. The spokesperson added that WhatsApp is working closely with the Indian government, National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and multiple banks, including payment service providers, to expand the feature to more people and support India's digital economy. WhatsApp had received permission from NPCI to tie up with banks to facilitate financial transactions via Unified Payments Interface (UPI). Paytm founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma had earlier this year alleged that WhatsApp's UPI payment platform has security risks for consumers and is not in compliance with the guidelines. The Reserve Bank of India has mandated all payment system operators to ensure that data related to payments is stored only in India giving firms six months to comply with it.

According to sources, the ministry of electronics and IT has asked NPCI to check if WhatsApp's payments service conforms with the RBI rules and data security of customers. They added that NPCI has been asked to check that all compliances are in place before the US-based messaging app is allowed to scale up its services. WhatsApp had stated that sensitive user data such as the last 6 digits of a debit card and UPI PIN is not stored at all. While it admitted to using the infrastructure of Facebook for the service, it asserted that the parent firm does not use payment information for commercial purpose.



Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog Rajiv Kumar addressing media after the 4th meeting of Governing Council of NITI Aayog, in New Delhi. CEO, NITI Aayog, Shri Amitabh Kant and other dignitaries are also seen
---PIB

Sebi set to amend buyback regulations

NEW DELHI, JUNE 17 /--/ Markets regulator Sebi plans to revise the regulations for share buybacks wherein more clarity would be provided on various aspects, including on the requirement to make public announcements, according to a senior official.

The watchdog has carried out a review of the current buyback norms in order to simplify the language, remove inconsistencies and update the references to the new Companies Act that came into force in April 2014. The official said definition of buyback period and clarity on the requirement to make public announcement for buyback offer after declaration of postal ballot results would be provided in the amended regulations. Besides, explanation for 'free reserves' in line with Companies Act, 2013 would be part of the new framework. The revised framework for share buybacks is likely to be discussed during the Sebi's board meeting on June 21, the official said.

According to the official, said 'buyback period' would be defined as the time between date of authorisation for buyback by a company's board of directors and the date on which the payment is made to shareholders who have accepted the offer. Another proposed change is with regard to filing requirements and time for public announcements. The official said that a company, that has been authorised to do the buyback of shares, should make a public announcement within two working days of its declaration. Two days would be from the "date of declaration of results of the postal ballot for special resolution/ board of directors", the official added. A company can undertake buyback of shares out of its free reserves and securities premium account, among others.

However, buybacks cannot be made out of the proceeds of an earlier issue of the same kind of shares or same kind of other specified securities. Free reserves include securities premium account. The official also said that clarity would be provided on timelines with respect to various requirements under buyback regulations. Earlier this year, a discussion paper on new buyback regulations was issued in March this year.

More than 150 comments were received from various entities on the discussion paper and after taking them into consideration, the revised buyback regulations have been prepared, as per the official. (PTI)

North-east beckons tourists; footfalls to grow 12% in 2019

MUMBAI, JUNE 17 /--/ Improved infrastructure and air connectivity are drawing a large number of tourists to India's North-east and looking at the current traction, footfalls in the picturesque region are expected to grow by 10-12 per cent in 2019, industry experts said.

"The bookings for North-east have gone up by 18 per cent as compared to the same period (April-June) last year. Tourism in the North-east region is expected to grow by at least 10-12 per cent even in the next year," Cox & Kings head, relationships, Karan Anand, told PTI here. He said improved infrastructure and air connectivity have played a major role in driving tourism growth in the vast region which consists of eight states. "Air connectivity has tremendously improved with new routes opening in the region last year. New flights have been introduced using Shillong as a hub to travel to other prominent tourist destinations of Meghalaya like Cherrapunji and Mawlynnong. "The new airport at

Pakyong (Sikkim) will further make reaching the northern part of the state, especially to tourist attractions such as Nathu La Pass, easier," Anand added. The region is mostly preferred by holiday-makers aged between 25-50 years and hailing from metros such as Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, besides Guwahati and nearby areas who flock there to explore its wildlife, rivers and culture, he said. However, the second or third-time travellers, who are now discovering the attractions of the North-east, embark on their journey to understand the lifestyle and also the culture and the cuisine of the region, he added. Echoing a similar view, a MakeMyTrip spokesperson said high growth of travellers opting for the North-east sector can be attributed to not only to better road infrastructure and rail connectivity but also to direct flight connectivity from New Delhi and Mumbai. "Apart from this, more number of hotels are opening up in this region, making it easier for travellers to find accommodations in places which were earlier not very connected. "At MakeMyTrip, we have seen over 100 per cent growth in the number of travellers opting for North-east destinations such as Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalya since the time we started offering holiday packages in the region," he added.

He said overall, the sector, including Darjeeling (a hill station which falls in West Bengal), is growing by 35 per cent for summer travel. The MMT platform has witnessed 30 per cent growth in travel bookings to Gangtok, 120 per cent each to Shillong and Meghalaya. The Assam, Meghalaya sector is increasingly becoming popular among the top metro markets, the MMT spokesman said. Manmeet Ahluwalia, marketing head of Brand Expedia in India, said for a very long period, the north-eastern part of the country had been largely unexplored due to poor connectivity and infrastructure. However, tourism in the region is now witnessing a substantial growth thanks to a slew of government initiatives, better connectivity, infrastructure development and a variety of experiences on offer for voyagers, he added. "We have seen a year-on-year growth of 25-30 per cent over the past five years. We are expecting the growth to continue with new government policies focusing on better infrastructure and connectivity," he added. Ahluwalia said besides young adults, including college pass outs and first-time earners to families, there has been a rise in queries from all segments.

"People who like exploring nature and its serenity are attracted by most of the destinations to the North-east. We have also seen an increase in women solo travellers who feel comparatively safer in the environment. "Adventure seekers enjoy the place for its challenging treks, kayaking, angling and rafting," he added.

Mohandeep Singh, Senior Vice President, Samsung India during launched of exciting new Galaxy J&A Smartphones with Infinity Display, in Mumbai