Stock markets open higher as crude oil prices drop

MUMBAI, AUG 26: Market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty were trading higher in early trade on Wednesday, in tandem with a positive trend in global equities, amid a sharp decline in crude oil prices.

Foreign fund inflows also added to the positive trend in the domestic markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 285 points to 77,944.02 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty was up 23.25 points to 24,356.10.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Eternal, Bajaj Finserv and Asian Paints were among the major winners.

Infosys, Bharti Airtel, Larsen & Toubro and Bharat Electronics were among the laggards.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 2.66 per cent lower at USD 86.22 per barrel.

"Crude oil has emerged as the key positive catalyst. WTI has fallen more than 6 per cent over the past two sessions to trade in the USD 80â€"81-per-barrel range. For domestic markets, the retreat in oil prices provides a meaningful near-term tailwind after crude-driven inflation worries dominated sentiment over the past several weeks," Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth-tech firm, said.

While tensions between the US and Iran remain elevated, recent developments surrounding discussions involving Iran and Oman over the Strait of Hormuz have raised cautious optimism that supply-disruption risks could ease, he added.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index quoted higher.

US markets ended in positive territory on Tuesday.

"The most significant development for domestic markets is the continued decline in crude oil prices. Brent crude has eased to around USD 85.5 per barrel, extending its retreat from last week's peak near USD 94, as concerns over supply disruptions continue to recede," Hariselvan Radhakrishnan, Founder & CEO of HST Wealth, a Research Analyst firm, said.

Wall Street ended higher overnight as lower energy prices and easing treasury yields lifted risk appetite, he added.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,593.53 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

On Tuesday, the Sensex bounced back during the fag-end of trading and was up 286.98 points, or 0.37 per cent, to settle at 77,656.09. Similarly, the Nifty ended higher by 115.50 points, or 0.48 per cent, at 24,334.55 on fag-end buying.

Adani Energy Solutions bags Rs 4,700 cr transmission project in Maharashtra

MUMBAI, AUG 26: Adani Energy Solutions Ltd. (AESL) on Wednesday said it has secured a transmission project worth Rs 4,700 crore in Maharashtra for the evacuation of 4,500 MW of renewable energy and storage power.

The project "Network Expansion Scheme in Western Region to Cater to Pumped Storage Potential near Satara (up to 4500 MW) - Part A", was awarded to AESL through the Tariff Based Competitive Bidding (TBCB) process, a company statement said.

AESL, a private transmission and distribution company and part of the globally diversified Adani portfolio, has won a key transmission project for the evacuation of renewable energy generated in Karnataka to major load centres in Maharashtra, according to the statement.

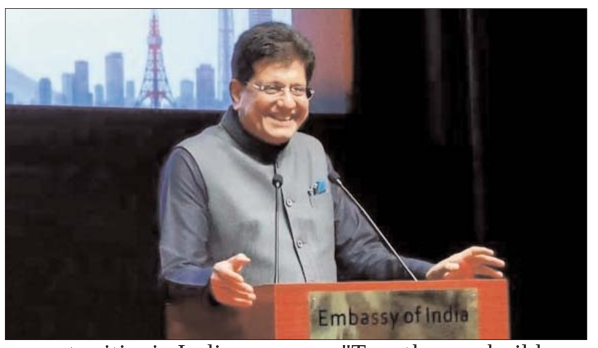
The project, which entails an estimated capital expenditure of Rs 4,700 crore, will also support the growing pumped storage ecosystem in the Satara, Pune and Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), it stated.

Housed under the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) Satara Power Transmission Ltd., the project is scheduled to be completed within 36 months. It will add 562 circuit kilometres (ckm) of transmission lines and 9,000 MVA of transformation capacity to AESL's portfolio, taking its cumulative transmission network to 29,739 ckm and its transformation capacity to 1,43,425 MVA.

"The Satara transmission project will create a vital transmission backbone to support both renewable energy evacuation and energy storage deployment, strengthening power flows between Southern and Western India," said Kandarp Patel, CEO, AESL in the statement.

The project includes establishment of a 765/400 kV substation at Satara, Kolhapur-Satara 765 kV double-circuit transmission line, and augmentation of the Kolhapur pooling station along with associated transmission infrastructure.

Goyal proposes India-Japan 'Shark Tank' style startup series to boost investments, business ties



MUMBAI, AUG 26: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday proposed an India-Japan startup pitching series, on the lines of the popular 'Shark Tank' format, to connect young startups from the two countries with investors and potential business partners.

Addressing a roundtable on startups, Goyal said such pitching sessions could be organised virtually, leveraging digital connectivity, to facilitate greater interaction between Indian and Japanese startups.

"India and Japan can develop a pitching series, something like the Shark Tank initiative, that can help young startups pitch," Goyal said.

He said Indian startups could pitch their ideas to Japanese investors, while Japanese startups could seek partners and business opportunities in India.

"In this world of global connectivity through Zoom calls and the internet, I think we can have more and more pitching sessions where Indian startups pitch for Japanese investments and Japanese startups pitch for partners in India," he said.

Goyal said the initiative could help deepen commercial ties between the two countries by moving beyond initial pitches towards actual business collaboration.

"Together we build more business connects, and move from pitches to pilots, to investment, and to scale," he said.

The minister also extended an invitation to Japanese businesses and startups to work with India, saying stronger economic cooperation between the two countries would create broader opportunities for prosperity.

"Warm invitation to all of you to India and to work together because together Japan and India become a force multiplier for good, for prosperity and for a better future," Goyal said.

The minister also invited Japan's "patient" capital and precision engineering to partner with Indian firms.

"I suggest the Japan-India deeptech capital corridor, where larger pools of patient capital, not only for mature unicorns but particularly early-stage funding, can help catalyse these startups' ideas and Innovations into success stories," he said.

He added that India offers a complete bouquet from design to large-scale deployment, and the country has a market not only for testing products, but to sell and deploy products also.

He suggested increasing cooperation between universities, incubators, and venture funds.

Home loan portfolio set to cross Rs 10 lakh cr milestone this quarter: SBI Chairman

MUMBAI, AUG 26: Highlighting the leadership position of SBI in the housing finance segment, its Chairman CS Setty said the mortgage portfolio is set to cross an important milestone of Rs 10 lakh crore in the current quarter on the back of robust demand.

The country's largest lender had surpassed Rs 9 lakh crore home loan portfolio during the last financial year.

"We should be reaching the 10 trillion mark, hopefully in this quarter itself," Setty told PTI in an interview.

SBI has a market share of nearly 28 per cent in the home loan segment, he said, adding that the bank has focused on making home loans accessible across the country.

The lender has more than 460 home loan processing centres across India, increasing accessibility of its housing finance products.

Setty said transparency in pricing and customer trust in the bank's processes, including documentation and due diligence of builders, are among the key factors driving customers to the lender for home loans.

"People trust SBI the most when it comes to taking a home loan...that paperwork is properly done, including the due diligence on the builder," he said.

He also emphasised that home loans should not be viewed merely as a standalone banking product, given their wider contribution to economic activity and multiplier effect on many allied industries.

"Home loan as a segment is very important for the economy," he said, noting that more than 200 industries depend on commercial and residential real estate.

"In a way, home loan should not be seen as a standalone product. It is to be seen as an integral part of India's economic growth," he said.

About securitisation of home loans, Setty said the outstanding pool at the industry level is more than Rs 30 lakh crore, but the assets remain relatively illiquid, limiting banks' ability to recycle capital and expand lending.

Globally, he said, the mortgage book is more liquid, while in India, it is mostly illiquid, with a few securitisation here and there happening but not in a big way.

"We are also looking at how we can bring securitisation structures into the market. However, for these structures to work effectively, there has to be adequate participation from the non-bank sector. We are, therefore, consciously working to develop and enable such structures, with the objective of strengthening funding capabilities and deepening the overall ecosystem," he said.

"We are working with the investors with regard to the structure and tenure of paper. We are working out the nitty-gritty. This year, we are keen to do one transaction in the space," he said.Opinion Section Access

This would help the bank further expand its lending capacity, he added.

As RBI's concessional swap window draws to a close this month-end, Setty expressed confidence that the bank would garner about USD 10 billion from non-resident Indians and foreign investors.

Earlier this month, the Reserve Bank of India advanced the closure of the Foreign Currency Non-Resident Bank (FCNR-B) deposits swap window by a month to August 31 from the earlier cut-off date of September 30.

However, the special US Dollar-Rupee forex swap window to give cheap currency hedging support to public sector undertakings (PSUs) raising External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs) is available till December 31, 2026.

India to be among top 5 Nestle markets in coming years, a major export hub : Global CEO

MUMBAI, AUG 26: India's emergence among the top five global markets for Nestle SA is now "on the horizon", the Swiss food and beverage giant's CEO Philipp Navratil said on Wednesday.

The India market is "very attractive" for Nestle and the company expects a volume-led growth there with support of investments, said Navratil, who is on a visit to India.

Nestle sees "plenty of growth opportunities" in India, which is among its top ten markets and already the highest-performing for the group in terms of growth, he added.

"India, in terms of growth, is one of the highest performers of the group and was the highest-performing market in the first half of 2026. It is among the top 10 markets and there continues to be further opportunity here to drive. Top five (in terms of topline contribution) is definitely on the horizon," Navratil said in a select media roundtable.

When asked about the timeframe for India entering the top five list, he said the ambition was very much within near-term rather than a distant goal.

"Top five is definitely... it is on the horizon. It is not something that will happen 20 years down the road. It is on the horizon. And the team is working towards that," he said.

India is among the strongest growth drivers for Nestle across emerging markets, supported by its extensive reach and ability to cater effectively to consumer needs, Navratil said.

"I believe it is due to a few things here, including being able to serve the consumers in a meaningful way by being deeply distributed. If you look at where the opportunities are â€" the amount of people, the number of consumers that will move into the middle class, and urbanisation â€" all those trends exist in India," said Navratil.

Moreover, Nestle, the maker of popular brands as Maggi, Kit Kat, Nescafe etc is also looking to increase its export from India and making it an export hub for its other global markets.

"I think that we should do even more to see India as a production hub to export. We're doing that already," he said, adding Nestle India currently exports to 30-odd countries, which "can be more and better".

"So this is definitely something we should look more to be a hub going forward. And again, the scale of India is, you know, makes sure that we invest in those factories are at capacity very fast. So it's a good place to invest for us," he said.

In the June quarter, Nestle, in its global earnings, had recognised the high double-digit growth in the June quarter, terming it "very, very strong" and said it led the growth of the Asia, Oceania and Africa (AOA) zone.

Navratil further said, "There is plenty of opportunity on both the value and premium ends and so I think it is one of the largest priorities that we have in the group."

Though Navratil did not share any specific number over the investment in India, he said it will be higher than other markets.

"So there is nothing to announce, but you should expect investment in India to be consistent, and as India grows above the group average, the investment will also be above the group average in this country. And we see, we are investing for the long term, so this is, we are really excited about the long-term potential of India, and the investment that is necessary to capture that, we will not hesitate to put that in," he said.

Nestle, which operates nine active manufacturing facilities, with a tenth plant currently under development in Odisha, had in 2022 announced Rs 5,000 crore investment for India.

Navratil, who became CEO of Swiss MNC Nestle SA on September 1, 2025, on Monday also met Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with his India head Manish Tiwary, where he discussed its continued commitment to India and its contribution to the country's growth and development agenda, the company said.

The company has identified five priorities to work on in the country, which include having the right portfolio, which makes the foundation of driving growth; driving efficiencies; driving a performance culture; and a focus on RIG (real internal growth) led growth.

"We are a food company. For us, the quality of the product, we will always move slowly, keeping the consumer at the heart of what we do... And consumers come along, which is important. You need to take consumers along," Navratil said.

Global economy in tug-of-war between oil shock and AI boom: IMF chief

MUMBAI, AUG 26: The global economy has weathered the oil shock caused by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz "better than feared" due to various factors, including an investment boom in artificial intelligence, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva has said.

"What started out as a US phenomenon with AI is now becoming a growth engine for the global economy, with other countries ramping up construction of data centres and other infrastructure," Georgieva told journalists on Tuesday.

She said the global economy had "weathered the energy shock caused by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz better than we feared" due to a combination of factors, including drawdowns of oil and gas reserves and increases in non-Gulf supply.

"And it is enjoying the tailwinds from an AI investment boom, most notably in the US, where both corporate earnings and consumer demand remain strong," Georgieva said ahead of the G-20 finance ministerial meeting in Asheville, North Carolina, next week.

She said the global economy was witnessing a tug-of-war between the negative supply shock from West Asia and the positive demand shock from AI.

"The net impact of these two forces is asymmetric across countries and depends on their exposure to energy disruptions, macroeconomic vulnerabilities, and their position in the AI chain," Georgieva said.

Georgieva said risks to the outlook were more balanced than around the Spring Meetings but remained tilted to the downside, while uncertainty remained high.

"Mounting fiscal pressures, as evidenced by rising bond yields, and a stalled disinflation process are sources of worry for both markets and policymakers," she said.

The IMF chief said oil and gas reserves were shrinking and the northern hemisphere winter would arrive before long.

"This means the energy shock is not over: a renewed rise in oil prices could fuel inflation, forcing central banks to retain a restrictive policy stance, with knock-on implications for debt service and economic activity," she said.

Georgieva said the future impact of AI remained subject to significant uncertainties, including possible risks to financial stability.

"Should the outlook deteriorate, it will further widen the dispersion of growth prospects around the world. Some countries, especially low-income countries that depend on fuel imports, are already in a tough spot," she said.

For low-income countries, disruptions in the supply of oil, gas and other key commodities such as fertiliser could translate into food insecurity, a problem potentially exacerbated by extreme weather, Georgieva said.

"The risk of falling behind on AI is also more prominent in the developing world," she said.

In July, the IMF lowered its 2026 global growth forecast to 3 per cent, warning of downside risks from the West Asia conflict, trade fragmentation and uncertainties surrounding artificial intelligence.

The institution's next revision of its growth outlook is due in mid-October during the IMF and World Bank annual meetings in Bangkok.

Avaada Electro files updated draft papers with Sebi for Rs 7,600-cr IPO

MUMBAI, AUG 26: \Avaada Electro Ltd, a solar manufacturing arm of the Brookfield-backed Avaada Group, has filed updated draft papers with markets regulator Sebi for its proposed Rs 7,600-crore initial public offering (IPO).

The IPO comprises a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 1,600 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of Rs 6,000 crore by promoter Avaada Ventures Pvt Ltd, according to the updated draft red herring prospectus (UDRHP) made public on Wednesday.

Of the proceeds from the fresh issue, Rs 1,200 crore will be used to repay or prepay certain loans and meet obligations under letters of credit.

Avaada Electro had filed its draft IPO papers through the confidential filing route in October 2025 and received regulatory approval in April 2026 to float the public issue.

Incorporated in 2021, Avaada Electro, which is backed by the Avaada Group, manufactures solar cells and modules, which are marketed under the Enlume and Integlow brands.