

Sensex rises 151 points to end above 16,000

Buoyed by the government's decision to offload at least 10 percent stake in all profit-making state-run firms, a key index of Indian equities markets Thursday climbed up in the last minutes of trading to shut shop above the 16,000-mark.

The 30-scrip sensitive index (Sensex) of the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), which opened higher at 15,926.13 points, closed at 16,063.90 points, 0.95 percent or 151.77 points above Wednesday's close at 15,912.13 points.

The S and amp;P CNX Nifty of the National Stock Exchange (NSE), too, was in positive terrain at 4,765.55 points, up 1.16 percent from its last close.

Mid-to-smaller capitalised scrips ended up as gainers as well, with the BSE midcap index closing 2.02 percent up and the BSE small cap index ending 1.82 percent higher.

The government announced its decision to divest stake in state-run firms Thursday afternoon, following which the buying interest returned in the bourses.

'All profitable central public sector undertakings should meet the mandatory listing of 10 percent public ownership,' Home Minister P. Chidambaram told reporters in New Delhi, after a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs.

The market breadth was positive, with 1,827 stocks advancing, 841 declining and 77 remaining unchanged.

Among the top gainers on the Sensex were Reliance Infrastructure, up 5.59 percent; Reliance Communications 5.34 percent; Hindalco, up 5.08 percent and Bharti Airtel 4.50 percent.

The leading losers were State Bank of India, down 1.14 percent; ITC, down 0.90 and ACC 0.78 percent.

Other leading Asian markets were trading mixed.

The primary index of the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, Hang Seng, closed 135.69 points or 0.63 percent down at 21479.08 points.

The Nikkei, a key index of the Tokyo Stock Exchange, closed 126.87 points lower at 9,717.44 points.

The Shanghai Stock Exchange composite index shut shop 0.85 higher at 3155.05 points.

European markets were trading in red with Britain's FTSE 100 index ruling 28.17 points lower at 5,079.72 points and its German peer, DAX, similarly ruling at 5,422.32 points, down 21.91 points.

The French index, CAC 40, was also ruling in the red 3,657.11 points, down 13.22 points.

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