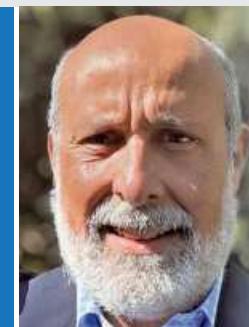


# the hindu businessline.

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Trump 2.0 aftermath.  
Wall Street veteran  
Andy Constan  
decodes the chaos  
in the US markets

BIG STORY P2



Index Outlook.  
**Benchmarks Nifty 50,  
Sensex remain stable  
while the Dow Jones  
gets beaten down**

CHART-GAZING P7

Regd. TN/ARD/14/2012-2014, RNI No. 55320/94

## Arbitrage funds shine in a weak market

**RISING ASSETS.** 1 of the 3 categories along with equity savings and multi-allocation schemes to see a surge in AUM

**Venkatasubramanian K**  
bl. research bureau

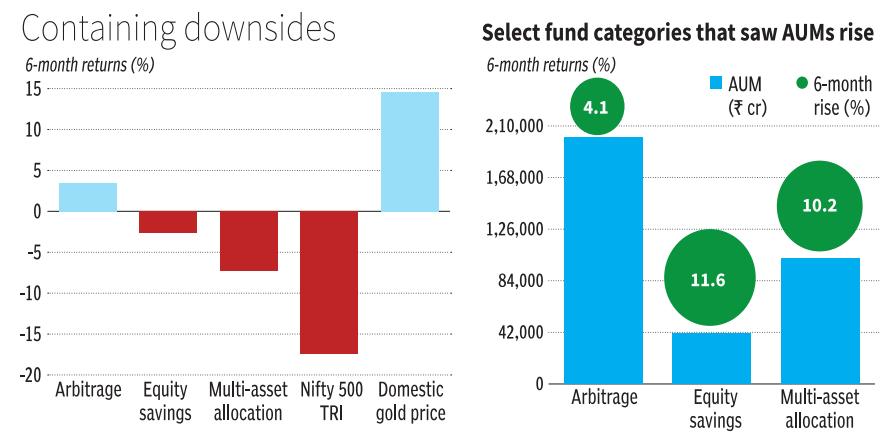
As with direct stock investors, mutual fund holders, too, would have faced significant erosion in their portfolio values over the past six months, from late September onwards.

Equity-oriented schemes across all categories saw a decline in their assets under management (AUM) between September 2024 and February 2025, despite receiving positive monthly inflows during the same period, as the market fall caused significant value erosion.

However, three hybrid categories have defied the trend and their AUMs have risen.

Interestingly, of the three categories, arbitrage funds have recorded positive returns over the September-March period, while equity savings and multi-asset allocation funds have fallen much lower than the Nifty 500 TRI.

**RECEIVING THE FLOWS**  
From the market highs made in September 2024, the Nifty 500 TRI has corrected 17.4



Source: ACE MF; Fund category average, index and gold price returns data from September 26, 2024 to March 15, 2025

per cent. The arbitrage funds category delivered a positive 3.5 per cent returns over the above period.

These funds, which com-

manded an AUM of over ₹2-lakh crore as of February, per AMFI data, saw inflows in-

crease by 4.1 per cent in the past six months.

Arbitrage funds invest predominantly in derivatives and use cash-futures and covered call option strategies.

These are applied to indi-

vidual stocks as well indices.

Equity savings funds,

which invest in stocks and ar-

bite opportunities, saw a fall of only 2.6 per cent in the September-March period. But AUMs increased 11.6 per cent.

Riding on rising gold prices, multi-asset allocation funds that invest in equities, bonds and commodities (gold, silver) were able to re-

strict their fall as a category to only 7.3 per cent in the six-month period.

Gold prices rallied 14.6 per cent in this timeframe and these funds invest 10-20 per cent of their portfolio in their yellow metal.

Managing over ₹1-lakh

crore, multi-asset allocation funds saw a 10.2 per cent rise in AUM over the past six months.

All categories of equity-oriented funds and even hybrid schemes saw a fall in AUM in September-February.

### HYBRIDS PREFERRED

Arbitrage and equity savings funds mostly try to generate returns via the derivatives route.

They usually employ relatively safe strategies that have been mentioned earlier.

The idea is to earn debt-

like returns from these funds. These arbitrage funds gave around 6 per cent on an average on 1-year rolling returns over 2020-25.

The sweetener is that arbitrage and equity savings funds enjoy equity taxation. So, gains above ₹1.25 lakh are taxed at 12.5 per cent on holding periods of more than one year.

The combination of the above two factors explains the heightened investor interest in these two categories, though lucrative arbitrage opportunities may not always be readily available.

For multi-asset allocation funds, the added glitter of exposure to a rallying gold has drawn investors.

These funds also mostly enjoy equity taxation as the overall exposure to stocks (and derivatives) is kept at or more than 65 per cent of the overall portfolio.

Multi-asset allocation funds may better serve the interests of investors with a moderate risk appetite as they provide access to multiple asset classes via a single product and ensure robust portfolio diversification via investments in uncorrelated assets.

Despite the market volatility, inflows into MFs beat bank FDs

**Suresh P. Iyengar**  
Mumbai

Despite volatility in the equity market, mutual fund inflows over the past 11 months have far exceeded bank deposits.

In the last 11 months of the current fiscal, growth in banks' time (fixed) deposits slowed to 9.2 per cent (or up by ₹17.29-lakh crore) against 11.2 per cent (₹18.69-lakh crore) in the year ago period, per RBI data.

In the same period, inflows into mutual funds were up 90 per cent at ₹9.79-lakh crore (₹5.14-lakh crore), according to the Association of Mutual Funds in India data. In fact, the growth in overall bank deposit slowed compared to that of mutual funds.

Bank deposits, including savings bank and time de-

posits, have grown 8 per cent year-on-year to ₹231-lakh crore against ₹213-lakh crore as at February-end 2024.

In the same period, MF industry recorded a 24 per cent rise in AUM at ₹68-lakh crore (₹55 lakh crore).

**YOUNG INVESTORS**  
Sunil Subramanian, CEO of an independent think-tank Sense and Simplicity, said mutual funds will continue to attr-

act more money than bank deposit as young investors are willing to take the additional risk for creating long-term wealth. Even after all the noise and the recent fall in equity markets, the three-year MF equity returns are positive and investors are confident of beating market volatility through SIPs, he said.

### NEW TAX REGIME

Also, the new tax regime has some what eased investor concern on tax implications and made young investors bet big on mutual funds.

The new tax regime has taken away the 80C tax benefit and made 5-year bank FDs unattractive. While Equity Linked Savings Scheme (ELSS) has also become less attractive under the new tax regime, people are no longer considering MFs from a tax savings perspective alone, said Subramanian.

Despite having the same taxation rate, debt MFs are better than savings and FDs because tax is payable only on redemption. Whereas in the case of FDs, the accrued income is taxed and TDS deducted every year, he added.

### NEW PRODUCTS

The emergence of low risk equity taxation products such as arbitrage, equity savings schemes and balanced advantage have also eaten into bank deposits.

Ankit Shah, an individual financial advisor, said that unlike one-size-fits-all strategy of bank FDs, the MF industry has products that suit every investors risk appetite, and technology has played a major role in taking MFs to even smaller towns.

Distributors have done a commendable job in making investors understand MF investments are subject to market risks, he added.

**INVESTMENT FOCUS**  
Godrej Properties — Buy

**Venkatasubramanian K**  
bl. research bureau

For real-estate developers operating in the ₹1-crore-plus property price space, the demand environment has been robust over the past 3-4 years and continues to be reasonably healthy.

Godrej Properties is a strong national player in the premium and luxury markets with presence in 11 large cities/regions.



After rising strongly over the past few years, the stock is down over 40 per cent from the peak it touched in mid-2024, thanks to the selling across the broader markets.

**HEALTHY METRICS**  
At ₹1,960, the stock trades at 26 times its per share earnings for FY26, making it an attractive bet for investors with a 3-year perspective. The valuations are at comfortable levels. In FY25, the company is well on its way to achieve its plan of achieving 21.9 million sq ft launch, with expected value of ₹30,000 crore.

Over the FY22-24 period, Godrej Properties' revenue from operations grew at nearly 29 per cent compounded annually to ₹3,036 crore, while net profits rose at the rate of 45.9 per cent to ₹747 crore in FY24.

FY25 has been exceptionally strong for the company. In the nine months of the fiscal, revenues increased 74 per cent YoY to ₹2,801.1 crore, while the net profit rose by a whopping 274 per cent to ₹1,010 crore.

A strong balance-sheet with a low net-debt to equity of 0.23 is another positive for the company.

Middle-Income Group driving home loan growth: NHB

**KR Srivats**  
New Delhi

The middle-income group (MIG) has solidified its position as the backbone of the country's home loan market, accounting for 44 per cent of outstanding individual housing loans as of September 2024, according to the National Housing Bank's (NHB) latest report, 'Trend and Progress of Housing in India 2024'.

While housing finance companies (HFCs) recorded a 13.93 per cent year-on-year growth in loan disbursements as of September 2024, public sector banks led with a 17.42 per cent rise, followed by private banks at 10.42 per cent.

Details p12

## COLD WAVE RETURNS



**MORE TO COME.** Tourists play in snow after a fresh spell of snowfall and rains hit Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, on Saturday. Due to heavy snowfall in the higher reaches, the government closed schools and educational institutions in the northern part of Kashmir. Several highways, including Srinagar-Leh, Mughal Road, and Sinthan Top, were closed for vehicular movement. The Met Department has predicted more snowfall and rains in the Valley till March 17. PTI

## GST-ITC fraud cases detected up 41% in April-January

**Shishir Sinha**  
New Delhi

The total number of input tax credit (ITC) fraud cases and amount detected in the first 10 months of FY25 exceeds the full year number of last fiscal by 41 per cent and 28 per cent, respectively.

However, the voluntary deposit is still lower than last fiscal.

Data sourced from the GST Intelligence Wing for a written response in the Lok Sabha showed that over 13,000 ITC fraud cases came to light during April-January period of the current fiscal year.

For 2023-24, the number was over 9,000. Similarly, the amount detected in ITC fraud cases during the first 10 months of FY25, was over ₹46,000 crore against over ₹36,000 crore for the whole of last fiscal year.

Data also revealed just over ₹2,000 crore was deposited voluntarily during the

### On the rise

Period	Number of cases	Detection (in ₹ cr)	Voluntary deposit (in ₹ cr)
2020-21	7,268	31,233	2,232
2021-22	5,966	28,022	2,027
2022-23	7,231	24,140	2,484
2023-24	9,190	36,374	3,413
2024-25 (Up to Jan, 2025)	13,018	46,472	2,211
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,673</b>	<b>1,66,241</b>	<b>12,367</b>

Source: GST Investigation Wing

### FAKE INVOICING

ITC fraud happens mainly through fake invoicing. There is no real supply of goods or services but simply an invoice is issued, which is used fraudulently to get the ITC.

Unscrupulous elements misuse the identity of other persons to obtain fake/bogus registration under the GST through e-invoicing, GST analytics such as automated risk assessment based on compliance attributes of taxpayer, etc.

Data also revealed just over ₹2,000 crore was deposited voluntarily during the

**Data showed that over 13,000 ITC fraud cases came into light during April-Jan period this fiscal**

There are systems that help identify anomalies in taxpayer behaviour (such as potential tax evasion, fraudulent registration, and suspicious e-way bill activity) and selection of returns for scrutiny and selection of taxpayers for audit based on various risk parameters.

### SAFEGUARDING REVENUES

"These measures are helpful in safeguarding the revenue and nabbing the evaders. Certain projects such as 'Project Anveshan' (Analytics, Verification, Shortlisting of Anomalies) were also undertaken whereby new techniques like facial recognition system, and e-way bill data, were used for early identification of GSTINs with propensity for fake/fraudulent activity to generate intelligence reports," the Minister said.

Earlier, Chaudhary had highlighted 12 steps taken by the government

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## DECODING THE US MARKET SELL-OFF

**BL INTERVIEW.** Trump 2.0 and the aftermath – the fiery correction in the US stock markets and the ripple effect on global markets have left investors puzzled. Andy Constan, a veteran of Wall Street, helps us make sense of the chaos

Hari Viswanath  
bl. research bureau

In an exclusive interview to bl.portfolio, Andy Constan—CEO/CIO, Damped Spring Advisors connects the dots and decodes the puzzle amid turmoil in the US markets. Excerpts:

**Markets seem to be caught in the grip of fear with Dow Jones, S&P 500 and the Nasdaq Composite down in the range of 8-12 per cent in three weeks. Volatility is very high in equities and bonds. Can you help us make sense of the chaos?**

We have to rewind the clock back to the Covid period and understand first as to why the US economy and stocks have outperformed global economy and stocks over the last four years. The fiscal and monetary response of the US was, by far, the largest. The economy was supported by money printing. The fiscal spending that was monetised by bond purchases by the Federal Reserve (Fed). This spending became savings of others who looked for assets to buy, but the Fed had already bought those assets. This provided a very strong growth impulse and inflation impulse as well obviously (transitory elements notwithstanding), as this money chased other avenues for investing.

The big impact of all this was in nominal GDP growth (real GDP growth plus inflation). Despite recession predictions since mid-2022, the economy has kept moving along. This is because income growth, jobs and wealth have supported the economy in this cycle unlike past cycles where private sector credit growth supported growth and inflation. So, this is a very unique set of circumstances and requires a different set of response from fiscal and monetary policy makers to unwind an economy with the above trend growth and inflation. And both botched the response somewhat by easing financial conditions significantly in 2023 and 2024.

When the Fed cut interest rates last year, the US long-term bond yield started increasing significantly on fears that Fed was cutting too early. This increase in bond yields caused, what you can say, a tightening of financial conditions despite the Fed easing.

So, here we are. To cut demand to slow growth which will cause inflation to decline, the Fed needs to stay on pause, which they likely will.

So, we already have these tightening of financial conditions via the long-term bond yields, a pause by the Fed. Now add to this, the Trump administration agenda – the Reconciliation Bill, immigration, DOGE and tariffs. These combined are causing concerns on economic growth and impacting markets.

**You have referred to tightening financial conditions. But over the last two months, the US 10-year bond yield premium to the two-year yield has declined. Doesn't it reflect the easing of financial conditions since January?**

Ten-year bond yields rose to recent highs in January and have come back a little bit. But this has happened at the expense of equity prices correcting. Equity price levels are also a measure of financial conditions. In aggregate, financial conditions have tightened meaningfully.

**Can you decode this Trump administration agenda? You were among the first in the fin-twits universe to point out that Trump administration wants lower stock prices. What is the idea here?**

First, they also are attempting through the Reconciliation Bill (primary spending and taxation action of the administration) to cut Medicaid, food stamps and income assistance which are all programmes that aid the least fortunate ones, in order to pass the corporate and



Andy Constan  
CEO/CIO, Damped Spring Advisors

other tax cuts that were implemented in 2017, but sun sets this year.

Now if done, this is not stimulative since it does not change the tax flows associated with the wealthy or corporates, but is very anti-growth where the bill consists of \$1.5-2 trillion in reduced spending over the next 10 years.

Second is immigration. Part of the ability in the economy to grow in the last few years has been the very rapid increase in labour supply due to immigration. This allowed for a disinflationary pro-growth outcome. This is now reversing.

Third comes DOGE, which is focused on cutting expenditure. This policy is anti-growth.

The last comes tariffs which is complicated. There is a lot of volatility around implementation of this, who they are targeting and how, the legalities of some of it given existing treaties etc. It's a mess. In some cases, it has been like shooting first and aiming later! But if you look beyond these, it appears Trump is interested in reshaping global trade with the goal of more free trade (not less) and have it advantageous to US manufacturing. There is transition when that happens. The tariffs are designed to increase the share of domestic production at the direct cost of domestic consumption within the US GDP. Now given consumption (government and private) has been big driver of GDP, tariffs are anti-growth and pro-inflationary.

Now if you take all four components of the Trump agenda and add these up, it's overall bad for stocks and the market has finally begun to move in that direction.

**Why are they in a hurry to get things done? In his first term, Trump started implementing tariffs almost a year after taking over.**

**Similarly, why can they wait for Fed to do its job, inflation to settle down and implement their agenda when economy will be better positioned to withstand it?**

In my view, the Fed and Trump administration are together when it comes to policy to slay inflation. The Biden administration was not necessarily working well with Fed a number of times, like issuing a tonne of short-term bills instead of long-term bonds which eased financial conditions.

To the question as to why now, on implementing all the agenda, who knows, but if I were in Trump's shoes, I would rather take the pain early in my term rather than later.

**The way these are being implemented, can the equity markets take it?**

We must put some perspective with regard to markets. They are down around 10 per cent. That's nothing relative to where we have come from. Markets are still in spectacular shape relative to where they were pre-Covid. Corporate earnings growth remains good. It's better

### The Logician of Wall Street

**T**hink of Wall Street, the October 19 1987 'Black Monday Crash' will come to mind for many. The 23 per cent single-day crash in the Dow Jones that day stunned everyone and rocked global markets. This fall was on top of a cumulative 10 per cent crash in the previous three trading days. It looked like the 'end of the world' to some in Wall Street. But, in hindsight, the crash looked more like an aberration rather than any structural change in market trend. Within two days, the Dow Jones recovered 57 per cent of what was lost on Black Monday, although it took more than a year to recover the entire loss. Despite the hit it took, the Dow Jones actually closed up 2.3 per cent for the year.

However, the consequences and learnings from the crash were profound and long lasting. One among those was the destiny of a then 23-year-old Andy Constan who was working as corporate finance analyst at Salomon Brothers. He was chosen as Salomon Brothers' representative in the 'Presidential Task Force on Market Mechanisms' or what is known as the Brady Commission, formed by the US President Ronald Reagan to investigate the causes of the 'Black Monday Crash.' The circuit-breaker mechanism in place in stock exchanges across the world, including in India, is an outcome of recommendations in the report by the Brady Commission.

Constan, who graduated with a degree in Bio-engineering from the University of Pennsylvania in 1986, has since spent 35 years investing and trading global equities, spending 17 years at Salomon Brothers including heading its global derivatives business. Following this, he started honing his macroeconomic knowledge in 2010 working at Bridgewater Associates and Brevan Howard. Since then, he has worked on growing Damped Spring Advisors – a macroeconomic research firm specialising in Hedge Fund Strategy.

to implement your agenda in a strong economy, and you don't want to cause pain when the economy is on its heels. When the economy is gangbusters, that's when policy-makers should respond and so they are.

**While you say earnings growth is good, is there a possibility that due to deficit reduction earnings growth can be hit significantly and disappoint investors? There are theories from fund managers, John Hussman and GMO, explaining the correlation between government deficits and corporate earnings.**

I agree with that relationship between corporate profits and deficits. What we are seeing is not necessarily going to cut the deficits much. Going by items in the Reconciliation Bill, the current and proposed tax reliefs are likely to offset the benefits to government budget from DOGE, tariff revenue and others. The important factor is the expenditure cut, not the deficit. Even if conservative DOGE estimates are taken, you are looking at around \$500 billion in cuts. That's a 14 per cent cut in government expenditure of around \$7 trillion. A 14 per cent hit on government spending, which is roughly 20 per cent of the economy will be major drag on GDP and also on stock prices. That is, if these cuts happen.

### WISE WORDS.

**“Investors are not somehow rewarded for accepting higher levels of what Ben Graham described as ‘unintelligent’ risk.”**

JOHN P. HUSSMAN,  
President, Hussman Investment Trust



Expenditure cuts impacting demand which, in turn, impact earnings and stocks. The markets are beginning to factor this now.

#### How should investors approach markets in these circumstances?

I can't predict future growth or inflation. Generally, I look for an all-weather portfolio. One that does well whether growth does well or disappoints, or whichever way inflation trends. What are the conditions required for this type of portfolio to do well — you want your country to have lower asset prices than the rest of the world, a central bank that is either accommodative or likely to become accommodative and a fiscal policy that is expansionary. This may not be great for bonds, but they will still do well because of the monetary easing. The US has none of these conditions now and hence is not an attractive place to own assets.

On the other hand, Europe has just recently decided to embark on debt-financed expenditures on defence and infrastructure. That's very bad for bonds initially, but provides an opportunity once the repricing is complete. This higher spending is excellent for their economy and assets in the region.

In China, equities are very cheap and there is fair amount of fiscal and monetary easing being implemented.

And in Japan, while fiscal policy is neutral, monetary authority is slowly getting less easy, but the economy is very strong. Bond prices, too, have corrected.

So, asset prices in Europe, China and Japan look much more attractive than they have and certainly more relative to the US. Hence, what you will see is global flows out of the US into rest of the world.

With regard to the US, the way things stand now with anti-growth policies for the time being amid very high expectations, I favour short equities and I think everybody should be sold.

Investors can take their cues here.

#### So, does this imply the USD will weaken relative to other major global currencies?

Yes, and it has been happening recently.

#### With the outlook for US assets not positive, is there a Trump or Fed put for the markets? After what kind of correction do you think the government or Fed could panic and intervene to support markets?

I am not a believer in this concept. If there is a financial crisis, yes, the central bank and the fiscal side will act, like in 2023 during the banking crisis. I would expect that to happen again if there is another crisis like that. But the price level does not matter at all. It could be right here if a bunch of banks blow up or 40 per cent lower if not a single bank blows up. Who knows! Such a put doesn't exist is my point.

#### Do you think the slowdown in the US economy can end in a recession this year?

I don't set targets. I don't look for destinations, I look for paths. The current pressures indicate weaker nominal GDP relative to expectations. The economy is in a slowdown with an unknown destination.

There's lots of people who would tell you the world is going to end! I am not one of them. I am telling you the world is going to slow down. You don't need a destination. In fact, the destination is one of the worst things to have stuck in your head.

#### Given your long and storied career in Wall Street, would you like to share any words of advice with our readers who are interested in trading or investing?

My highest level of advice generally for people is, if you are trying to manage your own personal money, you can't beat the market. Hence, you invest in a broadly diversified way.

### MARKET ACTION.

#### SENSEX



#### NIFTY



#### How sectoral indices moved

	Mar 7	Mar 13	Movement	% change
POWER	6,153	6,150	-	0.0
FMCG	18,837	18,820	-	-0.1
BANKEX	55,501	55,313	-	-0.3
HC	39,557	39,295	-	-0.7
OIL&GAS	23,834	23,654	-	-0.8
PSU	16,984	16,794	-	-1.1
METALS	30,224	29,744	-	-1.6
REALTY	6,333	6,227	-	-1.7
AUTO	47,096	46,246	-	-1.8
CAPITAL GOODS	58,912	57,757	-	-2.0
CONSUMER DURABLES	53,975	52,894	-	-2.0
TECK	17,437	16,831	-	-3.5
IT	37,197	35,395	-	-4.8

#### How other indices moved

NIFTY 100	23,028	22,838	-	-0.8
BANK NIFTY	48,498	48,060	-	-0.9
NIFTY 200	12,416	12,287	-	-1.0
NIFTY 500	20,443	20,176	-	-1.3
NIFTY NEXT 50	59,853	58,976	-	-1.5

#### Sensex ups & downs

	Price ₹	Mar 7	Mar 13	Movement	% change
Sun Pharma	1,610	1,684	▲	4.6	
ICICI Bank	1,214	1,250	▲	3.0	
Kotak Mahindra Bank	1,934	1,985	▲	2.6	
ITC	404	412	▲	2.0	
Power Grid	263	268	▲	1.7	
Tata Motors	648	656	▲	1.1	
HDFC Bank	1,689	1,706	▲	1.0	
NTPC	329	332	▲	0.7	
Bajaj Finance	8,405	8,419	▲	0.2	
Bharti Airtel	1,631	1,633	▲	0.1	
Reliance Industries	1,249	1,247	-	-0.1	
Tata Steel	152	151	-	-0.5	
SBI	733	728	-	-0.7	
JSW Steel	1,011	1,001	-	-1.0	
UltraTech					

Arati Krishnan

With the stock markets falling from recent peaks, investors have two questions. Is it time to buy yet, or will markets correct further? If I decide to buy, what should I be buying? We attempt to answer this.

**WHERE THEY STAND**

Stock market moves are decided by an interplay of many factors — expected economic growth, earnings growth of companies, interest rates, money flows from retail investors, domestic institutions and foreign investors and so on. Given that all of these factors are hard to predict, no one can tell you in advance if stock markets will fall further or rebound from here.

While the above factors drive stock prices in the short run, in the long run there is only one driver of stock prices. That is the earnings growth of the underlying companies. Therefore, you can gauge 'good' levels to buy stocks based on valuation.

On valuations, large-caps today offer more attractive opportunities than small-caps or mid-caps. From the market peak in September 2024, the large-cap Nifty100 has corrected 14 per cent, leading to its PE (price earnings ratio) dipping from 25 to 20 times. This is in line with its 10-year average. The Nifty Midcap 150 has declined 20 per cent, with its PE moderating from 40 to 34 times. The Nifty Smallcap 250 has fallen 24 per cent, with its PE shrinking from 32 to 27 times. (Data as of March 14). These indices trade well above their long-term averages in terms of valuation.

Broadly, the mid-cap and small-cap segments of the market still factor in earnings growth of 25-35 per cent, while large-caps are building in 12-15 per cent. Therefore, there seem to be more buying opportunities among large-caps than in mid-caps or small-caps, though there are exceptions.

Past cycles have also shown us that large-caps are the first to bottom out and rebound from a bear market when growth picks up or liquidity returns. Mid- and small-cap stocks begin their up-move only after a bull run in large-caps is well-established. Therefore, investors should do their bottom-fishing in large-caps first and wait for the correction to play out in mid- and small-caps.

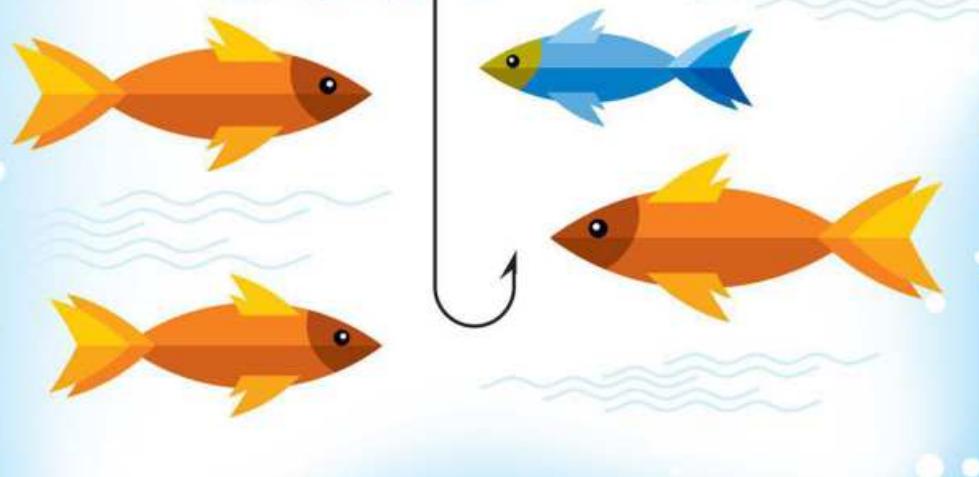
**MF CATEGORIES TO BUY**

For amateur investors looking to buy into the correction, taking the mutual fund route is easier than ferreting out individual stocks.

One with Trump announcements coming thick and fast, it can be tough to figure out sectors/companies which can weather global uncertainties. Two, volatile markets do not give you a lot of time to research businesses and a professional fund manager is better-placed to

# Buy into the correction, but take less risk

**REAL RETURNS.** Investors should do their bottom-fishing in large-caps first and wait for the correction to play out in mid- and small-caps



GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO

do it. Three, a good fund manager will keep altering his portfolio to navigate global events and changing prospects without your having to constantly keep an eye on events or markets.

However, given that further market declines cannot be ruled out, you need to be selective with your fund choices. Some types of funds contain losses better than others.

You can invest a lumpsum in the following types but deploy it in phases.

**Large-cap funds:** Funds investing only in the top 100 stocks may weather both earnings and market risks better than others. Today, the large weightage of reasonably-valued financial stocks in large-caps strengthens the case for owning this basket. You can take this exposure through Nifty 100 index funds or active large-cap funds that figure on our recommendation list (Invesco Large-cap, ICICI Pru Bluechip).

**Value style funds:** When markets rebound after a painful correction, the value style of investing outperforms other styles. This is because investors, battered by severe wealth destruction, become very wary of overpaying. Value style funds, even if they invest in small-/mid-caps, are good at containing downside, as they own portfolios that are cheaper than markets. Here, don't just look for funds labelled as "value" but

look for candidates across the value, contra, dividend yield and flexi-cap categories. The fund's portfolio PE being lower than the market, is a good test of whether the fund truly follows the value style. ICICI Pru Value Discovery (portfolio PE of 19), Parag Parikh Flexicap (18.7) are two funds that meet this description.

**Quality style funds:** If focusing on reasonably-valued stocks is one way to play it safe, the other is to focus on high-quality businesses with strong cash flows, high shareholder returns and profit growth. Quality companies have underperformed markets in the last five years.

While active funds following the quality style are hard to identify, index funds mirroring the Nifty 200 Quality 30 and Nifty Midcap 150 Quality 50 indices are a good option.

**FILTERS FOR STOCKS**

If you have the time and skills to pick stocks on your own, keep the following factors in mind while choosing them.

**Frugal on valuations:** Trending bull markets like the one post-Covid convince investors that valuations don't matter as long as they can find companies with exciting prospects. But in bear phases, markets become skeptical about growth and focus more on what they are paying for it. This has

**WHAT TO DO**

- Deploy lumpsums in value, quality and large-cap funds in a phased manner
- Choose fundamentals over narratives
- Go slow with buying pure momentum picks on dips

been very evident in recent weeks, where high-PE stocks failing to meet expectations have been ruthlessly battered. This calls for sticking with stocks at moderate valuations. A good measure of moderate valuations is how the stock compares with the Nifty50 on PE, price to book value and dividend yield. Currently, the Nifty50 is at a PE of 20, P/B of 3.4 and dividend yield of 1.4 per cent.

**Numbers over narratives:** In bull markets, narratives about a business having a large addressable market is enough to propel it towards the stratosphere.

Current numbers don't matter in such idea-driven stocks. But when a bear phase arrives, the pendulum swings to skepticism and markets focus entirely on a company's ability to deliver growth with sound metrics.

This makes it necessary for you to ignore narratives and fo-

cus on earnings. This is time to switch from exciting businesses and go back to boring ones that have been around for a few decades.

**Avoid recent favourites:** When markets tumble after a raging bull run, newbie investors make the mistake of buying the dip on stocks that were the darlings of the bull market. But market cycles tell us that when there's a market reset like the one we're going through, new sectors take the lead while the old favourites fall by the wayside.

This argues for staying away from the popular themes of the post-Covid bull run such as renewable energy, green energy, defense, government capex, digital businesses and so on.

**Focus on quality:** In the last legs of a big bull market, investors ignore essentials such as a company's ROE/ROCE (return on equity and capital employed), balance sheet metrics on debt and receivables, free cash flows, good governance and management quality, and so on. But when the tide of liquidity recedes, companies that fail these tests get exposed. This prompts a return to quality checks.

If buying stocks today, stick to companies that meet a high bar on ROE, ROCE, management quality and cash flows.

Prefer companies with a history of regular dividend payouts and a yield of 2 per cent plus.

# Tackling the bumps en route your treasure hunt

**READER ENGAGEMENT.** Answers to queries and feedback on the reclaiming process of their unclaimed assets

**bl. research bureau**

In response to our Big Story, 'Unlock your unclaimed assets', in *bl. portfolio* edition dated March 2, explaining about the process of claiming ownership of unclaimed equity shares of listed companies, typically purchased in physical form, in the pre-dematerialisation era, we received many queries and feedback pertaining to the process.

Here are key feedback and queries addressed:

**DELAYS AT THE IEPF END**

Many readers complained about the undue delays observed in processing by the Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF).

While one reader has been waiting for around 22 months, another has received no response for around 36 months. Mails sent to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs and the Finance Ministry were also noted to be unanswered, while a personal visit by a reader to the IEPF Authority in New Delhi also yielded no results.

*bl. portfolio* says:

For now, there are specific timelines within which the RTA and the respective company must complete their side of processing, in this case of transmission of shares.

But unfortunately, IEPF is not subject to any such timelines within which the claim needs to be processed by them. As explained in our Big Story, claiming



the next set of processes start with the RTA and you have to submit the required documents to claim your unclaimed shares.

**Tax implications on sale of shares by the inheritor or nominee**

An account holder having an active demat account with nomination passed away a couple of years ago. Shares in demat account were transferred to the nominee's demat account. A reader wanted to understand the tax implications in such a scenario.

*bl. portfolio* says:

Post-transmission, the rules for holding period and the cost of acquisition gets tweaked as follows:

**Holding period:** The period for which the deceased held the shares will also be considered as 'Period of holding' when the shares are being sold by the inheritor/ nominee to whom the shares were transferred by way of transmission.

Hence, if the listed shares were held by the original holder for more than one year, even if the shares are immediately sold by the inheritor/ nominee, the gains/ losses will be considered as long-term capital gains or long-term capital losses, as the case maybe.

**Cost of acquisition:** The cost of acquisition (which gets subtracted from the selling price to compute the gains or losses) of such shares being sold will also be the cost at which the original holder of the shares purchased it.

it back from the IEPF could be time-consuming and the average time taken for IEPF to approve or reject a claim is typically in the range of six months to three years.

As readers suggested, a timeline set for IEPF to process these claims would be ideal. In a future edition, we will write on how such delays can be addressed after speaking to experts in the field.

**How to assess the current status of a company whose physical shares are held**

We also received questions from few readers who had purchased

shares in the 1990s and unable to assess current position of the company.

*bl. portfolio* says:

To check if the respective companies exist now, you can try out the BSE and NSE websites to locate them, if they continue to be listed.

Sometimes, the company could have changed its name or could have even been delisted. So, some preliminary research will also help you find the current status of the company.

If it is still a listed company, you will have to find the Registrar and Transfer Agent (RTA) of the company.

As discussed in the Big Story,

**TAX QUERY.**

SUDHAKAR SETHURAMAN

I have holdings in two debt funds. All units are purchased before March 2023. Kindly let me know about capital gains tax treatment on sale of these units.

V Vijaykumar

If the holdings in the debt funds are sold within 24 months of purchase, the gain shall be taxed as short-term capital gain and taxed at applicable income-tax slab rates.

Whereas if the holdings are sold after 24 months of purchase, the gain shall be classified as long-term capital gain and taxed at 12.5 per cent. There shall be no benefit of indexation.

Tax rate of 20 per cent, the benefit of indexation and holding period of 36 months are available only if sale is before July 23, 2024.

The writer is Partner, Deloitte India. Send your queries to [taxtalk@thehindu.co.in](mailto:taxtalk@thehindu.co.in)

**Interest rates on home loans (%)**

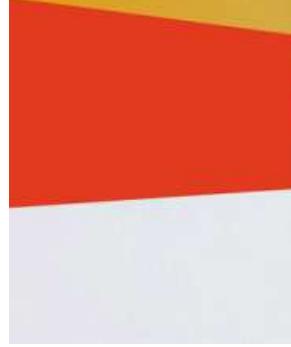
Institution	Loan amount		
	Under ₹30 lakh	₹30 to 75 lakh	Over ₹75 lakh
<b>BANKS (Floating rates)</b>			
UCO Bank	8.0-9.75	8.0-9.75	8.0-9.75
Bank of Maharashtra	8.10-10.65	8.10-10.65	8.10-10.65
Central Bank	8.10-9.40	8.10-9.40	8.10-9.40
Union Bank of India	8.10-10.50	8.10-10.50	8.10-10.50
Bank of Baroda	8.15-10.35	8.15-10.35	8.15-10.35
Bank of India	8.15-10.60	8.15-10.60	8.15-10.60
Indian Bank	8.15-9.55	8.15-9.55	8.15-9.55
Indian Overseas Bank	8.15-8.75	8.15-8.75	8.15-8.75
Punjab National Bank	8.20-9.85	8.15-9.85	8.15-9.85
Canara Bank	8.25-11.0	8.20-11.0	8.15-10.90
State Bank of India	8.25-9.20	8.25-9.20	8.25-9.20
Punjab & Sind Bank	8.35-9.85	8.35-9.85	8.35-9.85
IDBI Bank	8.40-12.65	8.40-12.65	8.40-12.65
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	8.60-9.80	8.60-9.80	8.60-9.80
Kotak Mahindra Bank	>=8.65	>=8.65	>=8.65
HDFC Bank	8.70-9.95	8.70-9.95	8.70-9.95
South Indian Bank	8.70-11.70	8.70-11.70	8.70-11.70
Axis Bank	8.75-9.65	8.75-9.65	8.75-9.65
ICICI Bank	8.75-9.80	8.75-9.95	8.75-10.05
<b>BANKS (Fixed rates)</b>			
IDBI bank	10.90-12.0	10.90-12.0	10.90-12.0
Union Bank of India	11.4	11.4-12.4	12.4-12.65
Axis Bank	14.00	14.00	14.00
<b>HOUSING FINANCE COMPANIES (Floating rates)</b>			
Bajaj Finserv	8.25-17.00	8.25-17.00	8.25-17.00
PNB Housing	8.50-11.25	8.50-11.45	8.50-11.45
Aditya Birla Housing Fin	>=8.60	>=8.60	>=8.60
Tata Capital	>=8.75	>=8.75	>=8.75
IIFL Home Finance	>=8.75	>=8.75	>=8.75
Samman Capital	>=8.75	>=8.75	>=8.75
GIC Housing Finance	>=8.80	>=8.80	>=8.80
Piramal Cap & Housing Fin	>=9.49	>=9.49	>=9.49
Sundaram Home Finance*	>=10	>=10	>=10
<b>HOUSING FINANCE COMPANIES (Fixed rates)</b>			
LIC Housing Finance	10-10.25	10-10.25	10-10.25

Data as on respective banks' website on

# A guide to better returns

## bl.portfolio STAR TRACK MF RATINGS.

Historical ratings data reveal that more than one-third of rateable schemes achieved 3 stars and above, across timeframes



**Dhuravel Gunasekaran**  
bl. research bureau

The *bl.portfolio* Star Track Mutual Fund Ratings serves as a valuable tool for investors navigating the complex and vast mutual fund landscape.

By assigning star ratings from 1 to 5 (5 being the best), this framework helps identify funds that consistently perform well over time, rather than those that perform better only in short periods.

The ratings are based on a thorough analysis of a fund's historical performance, considering both returns and risk.

Returns are measured using rolling returns, while risk is assessed using the Sortino ratio.

This dual approach ensures a balanced assessment, helping investors identify schemes that not only deliver better returns but also manage risk effectively.

No mutual fund can remain a top performer indefinitely. Therefore, investors are better off looking for funds that have consistently earned high ratings.

Here, we identify such funds which have consistently aced our ratings.

### HISTORICAL RATINGS

The *bl.portfolio* Star Track Mutual Fund Ratings was introduced in October 2018. It is updated twice a year, using data from the end of June and December months.

As a result, 13 sets of historical ratings have been compiled so far.

Analysing this historical ratings data tells us which funds are consistent in maintaining their performance versus peers.

## Top equity funds with consistently high ratings over time

3-star and above as per *bl.portfolio* Star Track Mutual Fund Ratings in the last 7-years

Scheme Name	Category	Sep 2018	Jul 2019	Jan 2020	Jul 2020	Jan 2021	Jul 2021	Jan 2022	Jul 2022	Jan 2023	Jul 2023	Jan 2024	Jul 2024	Jan 2025
ICICI Pru Bluechip	Large Cap Fund	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5
Canara Rob Bluechip Equity	Large Cap Fund	4	3	4	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5
Nippon India Large Cap	Large Cap Fund	5	4	4	3	3	3	4	3	4	5	4	4	5
SBI BlueChip	Large Cap Fund	4	5	4	4	5	5	5	3	3	3	3	3	3
Edelweiss Large Cap	Large Cap Fund	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	3
Mirae Asset Large & Midcap	Large & Mid Cap	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5
Kotak Equity Opp	Large & Mid Cap	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	4
Canara Rob Emerg Equities	Large & Mid Cap	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	3
DSP Equity Opportunities	Large & Mid Cap	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
Axis Midcap	Mid Cap Fund	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	3	3
Edelweiss Mid Cap	Mid Cap Fund	4	3	4	3	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	5
Kotak Emerging Equity	Mid Cap Fund	3	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	3	4	3
Invesco India Midcap	Mid Cap Fund	5	3	3	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	4
HDFC Mid-Cap Opportunities	Mid Cap Fund	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4
Canara Rob Flexi Cap	Flexi Cap Fund	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	3	3
Nippon India Small Cap	Small cap Fund	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	5	5	5	5
SBI Small Cap	Small cap Fund	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	3	3	3	3
Kotak Small Cap	Small cap Fund	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	4

Source: ACEMF

As of December 2024, 450 funds were considered for the rating process, an increase from 254 in September 2018. Here, the audit has been done for 254 funds with 13 sets of historical data.

### RISK & REWARD

• The ratings are based on a thorough analysis of a fund's historical performance, considering both returns and risk

ently earned four or five stars across all periods, highlighting their ability to deliver strong, consistent returns over time. In the hybrid category, ICICI Pru Equity & Debt and ICICI Pru Regular Savings achieved similar ratings.

In the debt funds category, there were many such candidates. 10 funds — Aditya Birla SL Money Manager, ICICI Pru All Seasons Bond, SBI Magnum Gilt, SBI Magnum Income, HDFC Short Term Debt, ICICI Pru Credit Risk, Aditya Birla SL Corp Bond, Kotak Banking and PSU Debt, Axis Treasury Advantage and ICICI Pru Bond Fund — consistently secured either a five-star or four-star rating across all evaluated periods.

Expanding the analysis to include funds with three stars or higher, 96 funds (38 per cent of the 254 funds) managed to earn either a three-star, four-star, or

five-star rating. Many of these funds fluctuated between three and five stars, such as Mirae Asset Large & Mid Cap, SBI Small Cap, and Kotak Emerging Equity.

About two-thirds of the funds were rated two stars or lower in most periods.

### HOW TO GET THE BEST

For investors who often find it hard to time the market, consistency is crucial.

The ratings system highlights funds that have delivered steady outperformance over time, helping investors focus on building long-term wealth instead of chasing short-term performers.

The aforementioned findings confirm that no mutual fund can stay at the top forever. Funds naturally go through ups and downs, as a result of their styles or security selection.

This makes it important to review your portfolio regularly, ideally once a year, to ensure you can retain performers and weed out consistent underperformers.

When choosing funds, go for those with five-star or four-star rating. The fund selection should be in line with your asset allocation strategy based on your risk profile, time horizon and goals.

If a fund you have invested in sees a temporary dip but maintains above-average ratings, it's better to stay invested rather than selling.

However, if a fund's rating drops to two stars or below, it may be time to reconsider your investment. This balanced approach helps investors weed out poor performers while staying focused on long-term success.

## 'Dash for trash' is hottest trade in EU junk bond market

**GLOBAL VIEW.** The trend seeks to profit from bets on recently restructured companies

Bloomberg

At first glance, Atos SE's bonds aren't the most obvious buy. The company has recently emerged from a grueling restructuring — the result of a long-running debt crisis that saw its shares lose almost all of their value.

But the French IT firm's debt has been some of the best performing in Europe's high-yield market this year. Three bonds that were issued as part of Atos's restructuring — two of which sit in the lowest bracket of junk ratings — have rallied strongly. Other low-rated junk bonds issued by troubled companies, including Altice France SA and car parts supplier Standard Profil Automotive GmbH, have also done well.

Dubbed a "dash for trash" by investors and traders, the trend seeks to profit from bets on recently-restructured companies with high coupons, given spreads on high-yield bonds are near the tightest in years and there's little in the way of fresh debt.

"It's no surprise in this environment that investors are willing to turn the pages again on spicier names — and even those which restructured in recent history," said Simon Matthews, a senior portfolio manager at Neuberger Berman. "The opportunity set with credit spreads back at tights has become sparse."

Other big gainers in Europe's



**NFO REVIEW.** Sector seeing strong correction; long-term drivers intact

**Sai Prabhakar Yadavalli**  
bl. research bureau

Motilal Oswal launched Nifty Capital Market ETF on March 13, 2025. This fund tracks the Nifty Capital Market Index. The index has undergone a sharp correction in its very early stages and to call a bottom at this stage may be premature. The assumptions underlying the industry tailwinds can also be reassessed at this juncture.

But a fractional exposure, similar to a foot in the door, can be considered by investors with a high-risk appetite especially considering the correction and growth drivers. Though both factors can be contested, certainty and opportunity are rarely together.

We look at the index and other funds that are available in the sector.

**CAPITAL MARKET INDEX** The index was launched in September 2024, which incidentally was the month when indices reached their peaks and started a downward journey since then. Beyond the ominous timing, the index itself served a purpose. Indians' savings are increasingly approaching financialisation route, beyond the traditional gold, real estate and FDs. The capital markets ecosystem was bound to benefit, and has done so.

The fund invests in 20 of the largest Nifty-500 companies that are engaged in asset management, stock broking, exchanges and data platforms, rat-

ings agencies, depositories, distributors and other capital market services. The index currently consists of BSE (22 per cent), HDFC AMC (15 per cent), MCEX (10 per cent), and others.

The index has a 5-year return (notional as the fund was launched in September 24) of 27 per cent CAGR which beats Nifty-50's 16 per cent CAGR. Financialisation of savings, a big surge in demat accounts, SIPs, MF folios and launches have supported the industry growth in this phase. But the index is in the midst of a correction and year to date has corrected by 23 per cent compared to Nifty-50's 6 per cent correction till February 28, 2025.

The focus will be on return of investing volumes to support profitability from here. The industry relies on volumes and the sector cost structure is tied to certain amount of volumes above which the companies enjoy profitability. In the upswing of last five years, the cost structure may have been anchored to

erstwhile trading and investing volumes. If the market participants are slow to catch up or a section temporarily avoids investing, then the companies' profitability will be impacted till a turnaround occurs.

### OTHER FUNDS

There are two other mutual funds covering the index, Tata Nifty Capital Markets Index Fund and Motilal Oswal Nifty Capital Market Index Fund. The Tata Fund was launched in October 2024 and has declined by 21 per cent till now and MOSL fund launched in December 2024 has declined by 30 per cent till now.

The sector is clearly in correction territory and in such situations to call a bottom would most likely be premature.

But investors with a long-term view and high risk appetite should consider a small exposure to the sector in the current environment.

In the longer term, financialisation of savings will be the continuing theme.

Powered by rising middle class and new entrants to the middle class the basic industry driver has not been dented. The rate of growth may be monitored, but the direction should be positive.

The recent disruption is also an opportunity for the industry (which has only seen a bull run in the past five years) to realign its cost structures for volatility. While further decline in capital markets sector cannot be ruled out, the current contraction can be a cautious entry point to ride the long-term drivers.



## ALERTS

### Edelweiss MF introduces Low Duration Fund

Edelweiss Mutual Fund has launched Edelweiss Low Duration Fund, an open-ended low duration debt scheme investing in debt and money market instruments such that the Macaulay duration of the portfolio is between 6-12 months with relatively high interest rate risk and moderate credit risk. The NFO opens for subscription on March 11, 2025 and closes on March 18, 2025. No Entry Load is charged and the Exit Load is nil for the scheme. The minimum subscription amount is ₹100 and in multiples of ₹1 thereafter. The performance of the scheme will be benchmarked against CRISIL Low Duration Debt A+1 Index and its fund managers are Pranavi Kulkarni and Rahul Dedhia.

### 360 ONE MF launches 360 ONE Silver ETF

360 ONE Mutual Fund has launched 360 ONE Silver ETF, an open-ended exchange traded fund replicating/tracking domestic prices of Silver. The NFO opens for subscription on March 10, 2025 and closes on March 20, 2025. No Entry Load is charged and the Exit Load is nil for the scheme.

The minimum subscription amount is ₹1,000 and in multiples of ₹1 thereafter. The performance of the scheme will be benchmarked against domestic prices of Silver and its fund manager is Rahul Khetawat. The investment objective of the scheme is to generate returns that are in line with the performance of physical Silver in domestic prices, subject to tracking error.

## ETF movers

Top ETFs (Exchange Traded Funds) traded on NSE based on weekly change in price

ETF	NAV (₹)	Price (₹)	Weekly change in price (%)	Volume traded in the last week (in '000s)		
				as on Mar 13	1-year	3-year
LIC MF Nifty 10						

# Value in premium home developer

**REAL ESTATE.** Godrej Properties has a presence in key large markets and operates in the high-margin premium and luxury segments



**Venkatasubramanian K**  
bl. research bureau

Across segments in the real estate space and more so in the up-market category, residential developers have found excellent traction in the last three-four years.

The post-Covid phenomenon of demand for larger houses (especially for hybrid working) and increasing affordability have resulted in big developers operating in large markets experiencing robust growth in bookings and collections.

The demand continues to be especially strong in the premium and luxury residential segments.

In this regard, Godrej Properties, one of the country's leading developers with strong presence in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), Pune, Bengaluru and the National Capital Region (NCR), among a few other cities, has been a key beneficiary as it operates mainly in the above-mentioned lucrative spaces.

After rising strongly over the past few years, the stock is down over 40 per cent from its peak in mid-2024, thanks to the selling across the broader markets.

At ₹1,960, the stock trades at 26 times its per share earnings for FY26, making it an attractive bet for investors with a three-year perspective.

The company's own forward PE multiples have generally been north of 40 times. The BSE Realty index trades at a PE multiple of over 45 times. Hence, the valuations are at comfortable levels.

Investors can buy a good portion of their intended quantities now, while accumulating further on any declines linked to the broader markets, especially in the current volatile environment.

Over FY22-24, Godrej Properties' revenue from operations grew at nearly 29 per cent compounded annually to ₹3,036 crore, while net profits rose at a rate of 45.9 per cent to ₹747 crore in FY24.

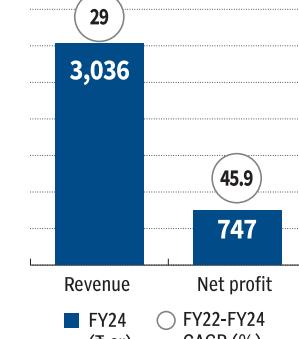
FY25 has been exceptionally strong for the company. In 9MFY25, revenues increased 74 per cent year on year to ₹2,801.1 crore, while net profits rose by a whopping 274 per cent to ₹1,010 crore in the same period.

Other key metrics from 9MFY25 suggest continuing strong traction. The booking value for the period was ₹19,281 crore, a rise of 71 per cent year on year. Collections during the same period came in at ₹10,086 crore, representing a 67 per cent increase.

#### UPMARKET SEGMENTS

Godrej Properties has a track record as a developer for close to 40 years. While the MMR, Pune, Bengaluru and the NCR are cit-

#### Healthy financials



#### ● BUY

#### Godrej Properties ₹1,960

#### WHY

- Track record of on-time execution
- Strong housing traction in top cities of operation
- Healthy balance sheet and valuation at comfortable levels

ies where it has deep presence, the company is also expanding footprint in Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Kolkata. In all, Godrej Properties has a presence in 11 cities.

In FY25, the company is well on its way to achieve its targeted 21.9-million-sq-ft launch, with

expected value of ₹30,000 crore. It has already achieved 79 per cent of that value by 9MFY25.

Although the company has presence across segments in the residential realty space, it caters primarily to the upmarket and luxury categories.

It is focused on houses that are priced well over ₹1 crore, going up to ₹5 crore.

A report from Anarock for CY24 states that the high-end segment (₹80 lakh-₹1.5 crore) in Hyderabad and Bengaluru accounts for 39 per cent each of the overall launches in those cities.

The luxury segment (₹1.5-2.5 crore) has considerable traction in Bengaluru at 24 per cent and Hyderabad at 17 per cent. NCR leads the pack with a whopping 59 per cent launches in the ultra-luxury segment (greater than ₹2.5 crore).

The company enjoys premium pricing power in the markets it operates in due to the strong brand presence and timely execution.

As of the third quarter of FY25, the blended realisation for Godrej Properties is fairly high, at over ₹13,000 per sq ft.

The company follows a mix of outright execution of projects and joint development for higher revenue share.

Godrej Properties has a large land bank as well, with the legacy of its parent company. It has a development management

agreement with Godrej & Boyce for its largest landholding in Vikhroli.

The company is also increasing its commercial real estate portfolio with presence in the key cities of its operations. A large portion of these properties is already leased or in the process of being leased.

Its Taj Trees project in Mumbai, managed in partnership with the Tata Group, has high occupancy of 75 per cent and an average room rent of ₹12,660, among the best in the industry.

**ROBUST FINANCIALS**  
Godrej Properties' balance sheet is fairly strong. The company raised ₹6,000 crore via the QIP (qualified institutional placement) route. Consequently, the net debt-to-equity ratio has dropped to 0.23 as of December 2024, from over 0.7 levels earlier.

Despite the relatively elevated interest rate environment, the company's cost of debt has always remained sub-8 per cent (7.8-7.9 per cent), which is quite moderate.

In 9MFY25, Godrej Properties added 12 new projects with an estimated saleable area of 16.9 million sq ft. The booking value potential of ₹23,450 crore is already higher than the full-year FY25's guidance.

Thus, there is considerable revenue visibility for the company.

businessline's editorial policy prohibits analysts from taking positions in the stocks they recommend —Editor

#### REALITY CHECK.

#### Gensol Engineering: From supernova to stardust?

**Arun K Shanmugam**  
bl. research bureau

It might not be always possible for every lender to comprehensively evaluate the creditworthiness of a borrower. This is where credit rating agencies come in, employed to assign a credit rating. Though not a substitute for the lender's own credit assessment, it is a credible document offering insights into the borrower's financial strength. This is typically an annual exercise for companies with external borrowings, per the covenants agreed upon by the borrower and the lender.

And it is this credit rating exercise that has sent the stock of Gensol Engineering (GEL) crashing by nearly 50 per cent in just 10 days!

#### THE DREADED CREDIT REPORT

A solar EPC player turned EV lessor and manufacturer, GEL had a stellar story, coming up with its SME IPO in 2019 and later migrating to the mainboard in 2023.

The company's revenue, EBITDA and PAT in FY24 were up 6x, 12x and 5x from that of FY22. And with an orderbook of ₹7,000 crore and 8,300+ EVs leased as of December 2024, up 3x and 1.4x since March 2024 respectively, GEL seemed set for strong growth.

On March 4, 2025, GEL filed, with the stock exchanges, credit rating reports of the company as assessed by CARE Ratings and ICRA, both downgrading the credit rating of the company to D from BB and BBB respectively. For better comprehension, a BB and BBB rating, per definition, means a moderate risk of default and a moderate degree of safety respectively, regarding timely servicing of financial obligations, while a D rating is assigned to securities in default or expected to be in default soon.

The company's stock understandably crashed 20 per cent the same day. The stock has corrected 49 per cent since March 4 and the week gone by saw it hit lower circuit every day. It is fair to say that the correction is still underway.

A key claim by ICRA in its credit report on the company is that certain documents shared by GEL with ICRA, on its debt servicing track record, were apparently falsified. Apart from concerns on its liquidity position, such a claim raises serious questions on the company's corporate governance.

The company has been firefighting for the past week with a series of damage limitation measures including equity infusion by the promoters.

#### SOFT SIGNALS

While such deterioration in liquidity is not sudden, let's do a post-mortem of key soft signals, which now clearly seem like red flags with the benefit of hindsight.

One, the company has been generating negative free cash flows for the past three FYS and operating cashflow has been negative in two out of the three. This coupled with a debt-equity ratio of 2.1 times as of September 2024 (down from 4.6 as of March 2024) is very often dangerous.

Two, promoter share pledge kept inching up and was at 85.5 per cent as of February 2025, up from 81.7 per cent in December 2024, which is quite risky and increases the probability of margin call. And simultaneously, the promoter holdings have also been dropping consistently from 71.2 per cent in March 2022 to 62.1 per cent as of February 19, 2025.

Three, the resignation of the CFO on March 6, just after the credit rating fiasco, citing the typical 'personal reasons' defence doesn't help GEL's case either. And the resignation of an independent director also followed, on March 13.

GEL has hit a trough, with both its liquidity position and investor confidence in tatters.

Incidents such as these teach one to stay grounded with basic checks on the state of leverage, free cashflow generated and corporate governance, and not be carried away with the growth reported and projected. So, as always investors beware.

#### WHO AM I?

#### Are you an avid investor? How well do you know corporate India?

Here's a challenge. Using the five clues below, identify the company that is being talked about here.

- I am completing 70 years of being a listed company, pursuing the same business that I pioneered.
- My founder was awarded Padma Bhushan for his services to the industry one year before he passed away. He began his career in an enterprise for a monthly salary of ₹50, that he eventually acquired ownership of.
- I still carry my founder's surname as my brand that is recognised in over seven countries.
- Though I delivered negative returns to shareholders for over 10 years till 2020, my share price has grown over five times since Covid-19.
- As my competitor took a significantly large stake, I invited one of the largest industrial group as a white knight. Both continue to retain their respective equity ownership and my promoter family owns just about one-third.

Send your answers by Wednesday 6 p.m. to [who-am-i@thehindu.co.in](mailto:who-am-i@thehindu.co.in), with your full name, postal address and phone number. A lucky winner in each week will get a book sponsored by UNIFI Capital as a reward.

Contributed by  
**UNIFI CAPITAL**

Last week's stock: **Bajaj Consumer Care**  
Last week's winner: **Jandoria Singh**

# Not on discount, but can stay put

**FASHION RETAIL.** For Trent, the pace of growth will continue to command the direction in which the valuation band moves

**Arun K Shanmugam**  
bl. research bureau

Apparel retail has been one of the toughest industries to be in, in the recent past.

E-commerce disrupted the space, and the traditional brick-and-mortar players have been fighting it out to stay relevant, alongside a macro trend of formalisation of the economy, with organised players winning over the unorganised. Amidst all this noise, one entity managed to thrive and gain, particularly in the last five years — Trent, a Tata Enterprise.

Trent's revenue/EBITDA/PAT grew at a strong CAGR of 37 per cent/ 25 per cent/ 105 per cent during FY20-24 and ignoring the Covid blip, growth during FY22-24 has been at a much faster 66 per cent/ 53 per cent/ 342 per cent respectively.

Operating predominantly in the fashion retail space, the stock returned a staggering 1,850 per cent from its Covid-lows to its peak in October 2024. But what followed since was a 40 per cent correction, thanks to the slowing growth and hence, an inexplicably high three-digit PE multiple.

Trading at 77.5 times its FY26 earnings, though below the five-year average one-year forward PE multiple of 164.5 times, the stock looks priced to perfection here. For 9M FY25, revenue/EBITDA/PAT have grown year on year at a reasonably strong 42 per cent / 58 per cent / 57 per cent respectively. For comparison, Reliance Retail saw its revenue/EBITDA/PAT grow at a nominal 3 per cent / 7 per cent / 7 per cent during the same period. But considering the drop in like-for-like (LFL) growth in Q3 for fashion concepts, the scale looks balanced here.

Existing investors can consider holding on to the stock while not making fresh buys. The pull and push factors making the risk-reward balanced, for now, are explained below.

#### HOUSE OF CONCEPTS

Trent houses a good bunch of 'concepts', as the company terms its segments. While Westside and Zudio are its mainstay profit centres now, other fashion concepts include Utsa, Misbu and Samoh. Notably, all



#### ● HOLD

#### Trent ₹5,021

#### WHY

- Continuing industry-leading metrics
- Valuation and growth balance out
- Concerns of competition and slowing growth

merchandise sold through the above concepts are private labels (own brands).

With a significant presence across the value chain — from sourcing raw materials and collaborating with contract manufacturers to design, inventory management and B2C retail — Trent, by retaining significant operations in-house, protects its profit margins.

Star, a JV with British retail major Tesco plc, is another concept of Trent which recently hit profitability at the operating level (while still making losses at net level as of FY24). Operating hypermarkets, the share of private label products sold by Star has been consistently increasing and stood at 74 per cent for Q3 FY25 against 69 per cent in Q3 FY24.

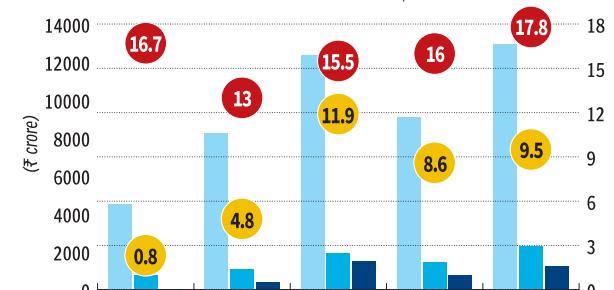
Online presence for the company is only through Westside.com, Tata Cliq and Tata Neu, contributing just around 5 per cent of the sales. The management cited deteriorating logistics costs for a minimum online presence and notably, Zudio has no online presence and its sales are entirely from its offline stores.

#### THE ZUDIO FACTOR

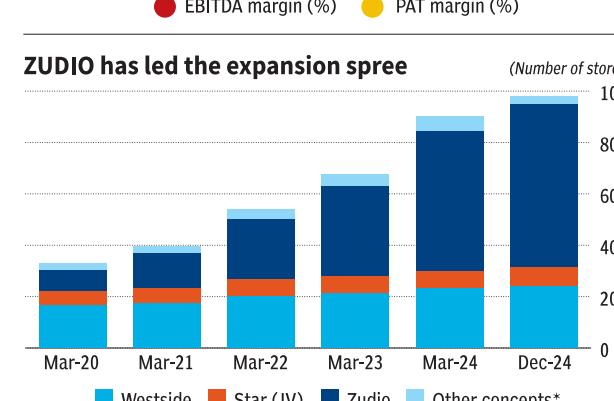
Trent, typically, incubates new concepts. And once the concepts have been tuned, it goes on to expand the retail presence of such concepts, kicking off a new growth engine. And Zudio, a concept conceived in 2016, went through a similar cycle.

While the total store count of all concepts operated by Trent almost tripled, growing at a CAGR of around 29 per cent during FY20-24, Zudio's store count multiplied at a much faster CAGR of 62 per cent dur-

#### How the numbers stack up



#### ZUDIO has led the expansion spree



Akhil Nallamuthu  
bl. research bureau

Nifty 50 (22,397) and Nifty Bank (48,060) lost 0.7 per cent and 0.9 per cent respectively last week. The futures and options (F&O) data hints at a bearish bias.

#### NIFTY 50

Nifty futures (March) (22,444) was down 0.9 per cent over the past week. During this period, the cumulative Open Interest (OI) of Nifty futures across expiries saw a marginal increase of 1 per cent to 203 lakh contracts. This shows mild short build-up.

The Put Call Ratio (PCR) of weekly options stood at 0.70 last week. A ratio less than 1 is due to selling of a higher number of call options when compared to puts. Traders sell calls when they are bearish. So, the F&O positioning indicates that traders expect a fall.

In line with this, the chart, too, gives a bearish indication. Nifty futures was unable to surpass the barrier at 22,750. The price also continues to remain below the 20-day moving average (DMA).

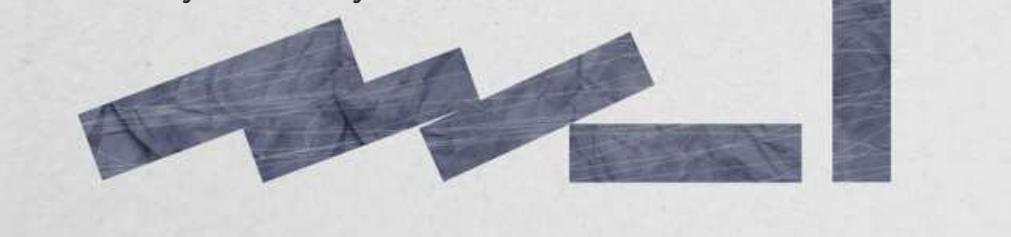
In addition, the broader trend being bearish, the probability of a fall from the current level is high. The nearest notable support is at 21,830 with a subsequent one at 21,150.

In case Nifty futures gathers positive momentum and rallies, it will face barriers at 22,750 and 22,850. For the contract to turn the outlook positive, it should break out of 23,200. At this price level, a falling trendline and the 50-DMA coincides, making it a strong resistance.

But as it stands, the odds are favourable for the bears and there is a good chance for another leg of downtrend from the

# Weak trends in futures

**F&O TRACKER.** Short build-up seen on both Nifty 50 and Nifty Bank



GETTY IMAGES

current level.

**Strategy:** Hold on to the Nifty futures (March) short position initiated at 22,600. Retain the stop-loss at 22,950. Going ahead, when the contract drops to 22,200, revise the stop-loss down to 22,500. Book profits at 21,830.

As an alternative, we suggested buying March 22600-put at ₹280. The premium closed at ₹287.45 last week. Since the expiry is approaching, we suggest rolling over the put.

Exit the March 22600-put on Monday at the session open and consider buying 22400-put of April monthly expiry. This contract closed at ₹313.85 last week.

Target and stop-loss for this trade can be at ₹600 and ₹180 respectively.

#### NIFTY BANK

Nifty Bank futures (March) (48,160) lost 1.1 per cent last week. It dropped to mark an in-

#### BRIEF POINTERS

- Retain Nifty futures short position
- Rollover put longs in Nifty options
- Nifty Bank futures likely to decline

tra-week low of 47,751.60 early last week before reclaiming 48,000-mark.

Even though the contract managed to close the week above a key support, the price action shows a clear bearish bias. Another drop below 48,000 can trigger a fresh leg downtrend.

Supporting the bearish inclination, as Nifty Bank futures posted a loss last week, the cumulative OI increased 16 per cent to 45.5 lakh contracts, showing short build-up. Also, the PCR of

March options stood at 0.90, showing slightly greater call option selling.

Hence, the chances for a decline looks high. Below 48,000, there is a support band between 46,200 and 46,000. Subsequent support is at 45,000.

That said, if Nifty Bank futures moved up from the current level of 48,160, it will face stiff resistance at 48,500 and 49,000. The 20-DMA coincides at 49,000, making it an important level.

A breach of 49,000 can turn the tide in bulls' favour. In such a case, Nifty Bank futures can rise to 49,600 and 50,000.

However, the prevailing price action gives the contract a bearish bias and the likelihood of a fall is high.

**Strategy:** Traders can short Nifty Bank futures if it slips below 48,000. Target and stop-loss can be 46,000 and 49,000 respectively.

# How much to cover?

**MASTERING DERIVATIVES.** Be mindful of options' delta and margin to short calls in covered call

Venkatesh Bangarawamy



at-the-money (ATM) option, even though you would be shorting an out-of-the-money (OTM) option. The rationale is that you are likely to close the short option position when it gathers losses. This will be most likely when the strike is close to becoming ITM. And two, short calls attract margins. NSE will allow cross margin benefit only if the pre-defined quantity of the ETF on the Nifty Index. In the case of Nifty BeES, you should hold 7500 units. Cross margins reduce the trading capital required to initiate a covered call.

#### OPTIONAL READING

At the minimum, you must hold the delta-adjusted quantity of the Nifty ETF to initiate a covered call. It is best to hold ETF units required to avail NSE's cross-margin benefits. The optimal way is to set up a systematic investment plan on a Nifty ETF, accumulate the quantity required to avail the cross-margin benefits and then initiate a short call against the ETF on a continual basis.

The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments

#### OPTIMAL WAY

To set up a systematic investment plan on a Nifty ETF, accumulate the quantity required to avail the cross-margin benefits, initiate a short call against the ETF on a continual basis

the quantity. One, an option's delta changes as the underlying changes, captured by the option gamma. So, you may have to continually delta-adjust the quantity. But that has associated costs. So, we suggested that you assume a delta of 0.50, delta of an

#### DELTA VS MARGINS

Typically, the number of shares to hold in your demat account should be in multiples of the permitted lot size. The argument is that you must hold the covered call till option expiry to derive the maximum benefit; if the short call expires worthless, you keep the option premium as your gains. If the short call expires in-the-money (ITM), you will be required to deliver the underlying shares, which you will have in your demat account. Your net gain then will be the strike price

of the call less the cost of the shares plus the option premium.

When you set up a covered call on the Nifty, you do not have to deliver the underlying shares constituting the index; the contract is cash-settled. So, we suggested that you could hold the permitted lot size times option delta times 100 if you are using, say, Nifty BeES to initiate a covered call on the index. The rationale for delta-adjusting the quantity is simple. The long position in the Nifty ETF is to protect (hedge) the short call from gathering losses should the Nifty Index move up sharply.

You must be mindful of two issues regarding delta-adjusting

# Bulls in control

**BULLION CUES.** Retain gold longs, buy silver

Akhil Nallamuthu  
bl. research bureau

Gold (\$2,985/ounce) and silver (\$33.8/ounce) appreciated 2.6 per cent and 4 per cent respectively last week.

In the domestic market, gold futures (₹87,991/10 gm) was up 2.5 per cent and silver futures (₹1,00,738/kg) gained 3.6 per cent.

**MCX-GOLD (₹87,991)** Gold futures (April) extended the upswing and broke out of the resistance at ₹86,500 last week. This has opened the door for another leg of rally.

Gold futures is expected to touch ₹90,000 soon. A breach of this can lift it to ₹95,000.

On the other hand, if there is a decline from the current level, the contract can find support at ₹86,500. Below this, the nearest notable support is at ₹84,200.

As it stands, the sentiment for gold futures appears positive.

**Trade strategy:** Last week, we recommended going long on gold futures if it breaks out of ₹86,500. Retain this trade. But alter the stop-loss from ₹84,800 to ₹85,300. Book profits at ₹90,000.

**MCX-SILVER (₹1,00,738)** Silver futures (May) surpassed the psychological level of ₹1,00,000 and closed comfortably above it. The contract marked a high of ₹1,01,999 on Thursday before moderating to ₹1,00,738.

The immediate resistance for silver futures can be spotted at ₹1,04,000. Above this, ₹1,10,000 is a potential barrier.

In case the contract drops from the current level, it can find support at ₹1,00,000 and ₹98,000. So long as silver futures remain above ₹98,000 the near-term view will be bullish.

If there is a recovery from the current level, Brent crude futures will face hurdles at ₹72.50 and ₹75. In case there is a fall below ₹69, it can extend the downswing to ₹62.

**MCX-CRUISE OIL (₹5,841)** The chart of April crude oil futures shows that it is now consolidating between ₹5,750 and ₹5,930.

# Bears linger

**CRUDE CHECK.** Traders can short on a rise

Akhil Nallamuthu  
bl. research bureau

Crude oil prices did not see much action last week. The Brent crude oil futures on the Intercontinental Exchange (ICE) (\$70.60/barrel) was up by a marginal 0.3 per cent; whereas the crude oil futures on the MCX (₹5,841/barrel) posted a minor loss of 0.2 per cent.

**BRENT FUTURES (\$70.60)** Brent crude oil futures which hit a low of \$68.63 early last week, saw a mid-week recovery.

While it marked an intra-week high of \$71.25 on Wednesday, it moderated and closed the week below the resistance at \$70.70.

The price action shows that the contract is stuck within the price band of \$69 and \$70.70.

If there is a recovery from the current level, it can find support at ₹1,00,000 and ₹98,000. So long as silver futures remain above ₹98,000 the near-term view will be bullish.

**Trade strategy:** Short crude oil futures if the price inches up to ₹6,100. Place initial stop-loss at ₹6,350.

When the price drops to ₹5,800, revise the stop-loss down to ₹6,100. Liquidate the shorts at ₹5,500.



Nevertheless, the downturn has not been negated although the support at ₹5,750 is a good base.

From the current level, crude oil futures can see an uptick in price, possibly to ₹6,000-6,100 price band.

But then, it is likely to resume the downturn. In such a case, crude oil futures can slip below ₹5,750 and touch ₹5,500 in the near term.

However, if the contract surpasses ₹6,100, it can recover to ₹6,300. But at the moment, bearish bias prevails.

**Trade strategy:** Short crude oil futures if the price inches up to ₹6,100. Place initial stop-loss at ₹6,350.

When the price drops to ₹5,800, revise the stop-loss down to ₹6,100. Liquidate the shorts at ₹5,500.

## F & O QUERY

AKHIL NALLAMUTHU  
bl. research bureau

I'm holding 4800-call option on Indigo. The purchase price is ₹65. What can be the target for this trade? Do you recommend holding till expiry?

**Yugesh, Thane**

**InterGlobe Aviation (₹4,700.85):** The stock has been in an uptrend since January after finding support at ₹4,000.

The chart shows that the uptrend is intact and it will remain so in the short term until the price is above ₹4,420. On the upside, there is a possibility for the stock to rally to ₹4,900 before the end of the current expiry.

Given the aforesaid factors, we suggest holding the 4800-strike call, which closed at ₹57.05 last week.

Target can be ₹130.

That said, the recent price action hints that there is a resistance in formation at ₹4,780. So, in case the stock does not surpass this level before the end of this week, you can consider exiting the trade. Because, as the expiry nears, time decay of the option can intensify, leading to potential losses.

I'm considering buying a put option on Torrent Power. Is the outlook bearish? Which contract would you recommend?

**Sai Adhitya, Bengaluru**

**Torrent Power (₹1,291.20):** The stock has been in a steady downtrend since October last year. While there was some recovery in March, the price has moderated over the past couple of sessions.

The fall occurred on the back of the resistance at ₹1,360 where the 50-day moving average (DMA) lies. The stock has fallen off the price region between 20- and 50-DMA several times in past few months.

Hence, the probability of the fall appears high.

However, the price action also hints at a loss in downward momentum. So, it is advisable to buy put options only for the short-term.

Buy March 1280-put, whose premium closed at ₹30.30 last week. Target can be ₹90. If the target is not hit until the end of this week, exit the trade.

Send your queries to derivatives@thehindu.co.in.

## Change in Open Interest (OI)

Scrip	FII		Retail	
	As on Mar 13	Weekly change %	As on Mar 13	Weekly change %
Future Index Long	55534	8	254107	5
Future Index Short	239568	5	114733	14
Net Futures	-184034	4	139374	-1
Index Call options Long	628016	-5	1935052	-5
Index Call options Short	482139	2	2088672	-10
Net Call options	145877	-20	-153620	-47
Index Put options Long	741833	-11	179864	-14
Index Put options Short	447640	-14	2147574	-12
Net Put Options	294193	-7	-348890	3

FIs have marginally increased net short on index futures. They have also cut down net long on index call options. Broadly, the bias is bearish.

## Stocks that witnessed major change in OI

Company	Price (₹

**Gurumurthy K**  
bl. research bureau

The Dow Jones Industrial Average in the US tumbled last week. But the Indian benchmark indices managed to stay afloat and were down marginally.

The Dow Jones tumbled 5 per cent intra-week. The Indian benchmark indices were down in the range of 0.7 to 0.9 per cent for the week. Increased uncertainty over Trump's tariff policies and the fear of the trade war intensifying knocked down the US markets badly.

For now, the Indian equities are showing some signs of resilience. It could be because of the fact that the Indian benchmark indices have already fallen so much. It is important now to see if the Sensex and Nifty can continue to avoid sharp fall from current levels. It would be very difficult to completely stay insulated from the impact of the sell-off in the US. So, there are chances that the Indian indices may fall at a much slower pace than the US or stay in a sideways range for some time.

All sectoral indices ended in red last week. The BSE IT index, down 4.84 per cent fell the most.

**FPIS SELL**

The Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) continue to sell Indian equities. However, the quantum of selling slowed down last week. The equity segment saw an outflow of about \$603 million last week.

The first half of March has seen a net outflow of about \$3.44 billion so far. As we have been mentioning over the last few weeks, unless the FPIs start to buy, the Sensex and Nifty are likely to remain subdued.

**NIFTY 50 (22,397.20)**

Nifty was broadly range-bound and stable all through the week. The index failed in its attempts to breach the resistance at 22,650. It oscillated between 22,315 and 22,677 and closed the week at 22,397.20, down 0.69 per cent.

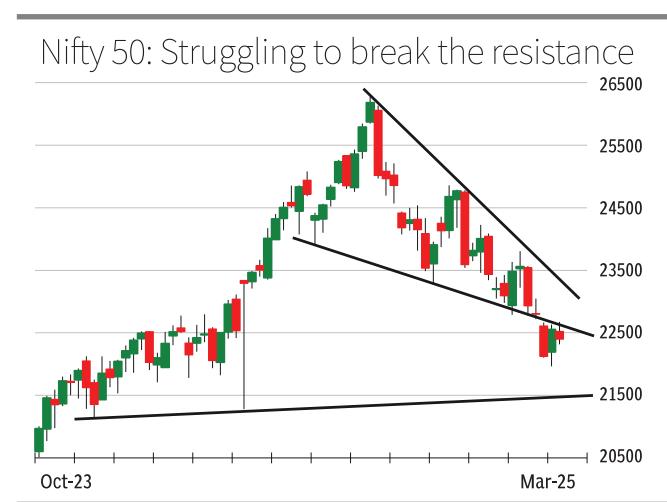
**Short-term view:** The immediate outlook is mixed. Considering the weakness in the global equities, the bias is likely to remain negative. The region between 22,600 and 22,650 will continue to remain as a strong resistance.

As long as the Nifty stays below 22,650, the chances of it falling back to 22,000-21,950 cannot be ruled out. A break below 22,300 will trigger this fall. If the Nifty declines below 21,950, then there can be an extended



# Stayin' alive

**INDEX OUTLOOK.** Nifty 50, Sensex remain stable as Dow Jones beaten down

**TRADING RANGE**

- Nifty 50: 21,950 - 22,650
- Sensex: 72,600-75,100
- Nifty Bank: 47,700 - 49,000

then completely negate our bullish view.

**NIFTY BANK (48,060.40)**

Nifty Bank traded lower and was stuck in between 47,700 and 48,600. It has closed the week at 48,060.40, down 0.9 per cent.

**Short-term view:** The immediate outlook is unclear. Support is in the 47,800-47,700. Resistance is at 49,000. A breakout on either side of 47,700-49,000 will decide the next leg of move.

A break below 47,700 will be bearish. Such a break can take the index down to 47,300 initially. A further break below 47,300 can drag it down to 46,600.

On the other hand, Nifty Bank index will get a breather if it breaks above 49,000. In that case, a rise to 50,000-50,200 is possible.

**Medium-term view:** There is no change in the medium-term outlook. We see 46,600 as a crucial support which is expected to limit the downside. As

long as the index remains above 46,600, the bias is positive to breach 50,200 and rise to 53,000-54,000 over the medium term. It will also keep the doors open to see 58,000 on the upside from a long-term perspective.

The view will go wrong only if the index declines below 46,600. If that happens, we can see a fall to 46,000-45,700.

**SENSEX (73,829.91)**

Sensex oscillated around 74,000 most part of the week. It has closed the week at 73,829.91, down 0.68 per cent.

**Short-term view:** The outlook is unclear. Support is at 72,700-72,600. Resistance is at 74,900 and 75,100. So broadly, 72,600-75,100 can be the trading range for the short term. A breakout on either side of 72,600 or 75,100 will determine the next leg of move.

A break above 75,100 will be bullish for a rise to 76,000-76,500. On the other hand, a break below 72,600 can drag the index down to 71,800 first. A further break below 71,800 will take it down to 71,000.

**Medium-term view:** We repeat that 71,000-70,700 is a strong support which we expect to hold. Resistance is in the 75,000-76,000 region.

As long as the index stays above 70,700 the bias will remain positive to breach 76,000 and rise to 80,000 over the medium term.

This view will go wrong if Sensex declines below 70,700. That will bring in the danger of seeing 66,000 on the downside.

**DOW JONES (41,488.20)**

The Dow Jones Industrial Average broke below 41,600 and tumbled about 5 per cent intra-week to a low of 40,661.77. On Friday, it has bounced and recovered to close the week at 41,488.20, down 3 per cent.

**Outlook:** The fall last week confirms a double-top pattern on the chart. Resistance is in the 42,000-42,100 region.

A corrective rise to 42,000-42,100 in the near term is a possibility. But the broader view remains bearish. Dow Jones can fall to 40,000, and even 39,000-38,500, in the coming weeks.

## bl.portfolio video

Watch bl. Guru share the Nifty and Bank Nifty technical outlook for this week

# Chart-Gazing • bl • 7

**TECH QUERY**

**GURUMURTHY K**  
bl. research bureau

I have purchased Federal Bank shares at ₹215. What is the outlook?

Mukesh, Patna

**Federal Bank (₹177):** The long-term trend is up and that is intact. The stock peaked at ₹217 in December last year and has been coming down since then.

Immediate support is at ₹170. A bounce from this support will have the potential to take the share price up to ₹240-250 again. You can buy more at current levels. Keep a stop-loss at ₹158. Move the stop-loss up to ₹190 when the stock goes up to ₹210. Revise the stop-loss higher to ₹220 when the price touches ₹230. Exit at ₹245. If the stock breaks below ₹170, it will be bearish. In that case, a fall to ₹140-135 can be seen. So, if this fall happens, then make sure to adhere to the stop-loss and exit at ₹158.

I have bought Swan Energy at ₹545. Can I continue to hold? What is the outlook?

Manikandan, Chennai

**Swan Energy (₹398):** After oscillating in a very wide range in 2024, the stock broke the range on the downside earlier this year. The outlook is bearish now.

Strong resistance is at ₹480-490. The stock can fall to ₹360 from here. Failure to bounce from around ₹360 can drag the price down to ₹325 as well. The stock has to rise and sustain above ₹500 to turn the

outlook bullish. Only then the chances of rising back to ₹800-850 will come back into the picture. But such a convincing rise above ₹500 will need some strong positive trigger. As such, the rise above ₹500 looks unlikely immediately. Also, there are chances for the stock to get into a consolidation mode between ₹360-₹500 or ₹325-500 for a prolonged period of time. So, you may have to accept the loss and exit the stock immediately.

**Can I buy Ujjivan Small Finance Bank?**

Sheetal, Mumbai

**Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (₹35.30):** The trend is down and strong since February last year. The price action since the beginning of this year indicates that the stock is getting support around ₹30. There is also a possibility of a double-bottom formation.

However, the stock has to breach ₹41 and get a strong follow-through rise after that to indicate a trend reversal. If that happens, we can get a rise to ₹50-55 in the coming months. On the other hand, if the stock declines below ₹30, the price can tumble to ₹26-23. So, for now it is better to stay out of this stock. You can consider buying this stock only after a breakout above ₹41 happens. In that case, you can keep the stop-loss at ₹36 and play for the target of ₹54.

I am holding shares of ITI bought at ₹430. What is the long-term outlook for this stock?

Samarth PM

**ITI (₹255):** The stock has made some wild swings since October last year. There is room for a fall to ₹230-220.

There is support in the ₹225-₹215 region which can be tested now. A bounce from there can take the stock up to ₹300-330. But if the stock breaks the support at ₹215, it will come under more pressure. Such a break can see the share price tumbling

towards ₹185 going forward. If you have a high-risk appetite, then you can keep a stop-loss at ₹205 and exit the stock on a rise at ₹330. If a fall below ₹215 happens, then you have to have a strict discipline of adhering to the stop-loss and exit at ₹205. However, considering the fact that this stock is under surveillance, it is better to accept the loss and exit it immediately.

Send your queries to [techtrail@thehindu.co.in](mailto:techtrail@thehindu.co.in)

## BANDU'S BLOCKBUSTERS.

On April 1, four years back, piqued by the incessant jokes in the village at his expense, Bandu Barve decided he'd had enough. It was time for him to turn 'smart'. His dead granny's voice rang in his ears — "Read the papers, Bandya, they tell you all." So, off went Bandu to the stash of newspapers on his father's desk. As luck would have it, the first paper Bandu got his hands on was The Hindu businessline. The stock recos, in particular, had him in thrall. Soon Bandu metamorphosed into an ace investor and trader.

These days, Bandu picks five stocks each Sunday, which he believes will be blockbusters over the next week

BANDU'S PICKS	
<b>1 KIMS</b>	
<b>2 Godfrey Phillips India</b>	
<b>3 Reliance Industries</b>	
<b>4 UNO Minda</b>	
<b>5 Coromandel International</b>	

Last week's prize winner  
**Jessy Joseph**

Last week's winning stock  
**Amber Enterprises India**

Closing price (Mar 7)  
₹6,336.25

Closing price (Mar 13)  
₹6,361.80

Return:  
0.4 per cent

Here's your chance to match step with Bandu. Guess the stock that will give the best return by next Friday (BSE prices). By Wednesday noon, mail us your pick and its expected price rise to [bandublockbuster@gmail.com](mailto:bandublockbuster@gmail.com) with your name, mobile number and address. One lucky winner will get a prize of ₹2,000.



## MOVERS & SHAKERS

AKHIL NALLAMUTHU bl. research bureau

**Birlasoft (₹386.15)**

At a long-term support



Birlasoft's stock has been falling since February last year. Over the past few weeks, the price action shows that the selling has been strong resulting in the breach of support at ₹520 and ₹480. However, there is a crucial long-term support ahead at ₹380 where a rising trendline lies. While this may not help in reversing the trend upwards, the stock can see a short-term rally from the current level. The price might go up to ₹480. So, traders can go long at ₹380 and place a stop-loss at ₹340. When the price rises to ₹450, revise the stop-loss to ₹420. Liquidate the longs at ₹480.

Note that this is a high risk trade and so, risk-averse traders can refrain from initiating this position.

**PI Industries (₹3,290.20)**

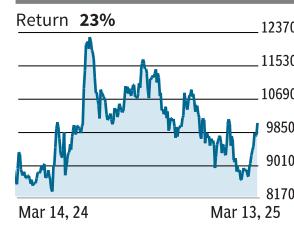
Set to resume downtrend



The stock of PI Industries has been in a downtrend since September last year. After hitting a 52-week low of ₹2,952.05 a fortnight ago, the price has now risen to ₹3,290. However, the broader trend remains bearish and there is a strong barrier at ₹3,400. The recent upswing is likely to be a corrective rally and the stock can start depreciating again. While ₹2,950 is a potential support, we expect the leg of potential downturn from the current level to extend to ₹2,800. Traders can short PI Industries at ₹3,290 with a stop-loss at ₹3,475. When the price rises to ₹3,050, revise the stop-loss to ₹3,250. Tighten the stop-loss further to ₹3,050 when the stock drops to ₹2,900. Exit at ₹2,800.

**Solar Industries India (₹10,063.80)**

Outlook turns positive



The stock of Solar Industries India has been gradually depreciating since July last year. But since early February the price has seen a steady rise. The chart shows that the stock has found support at ₹8,500. The price is now above both 20- and 50-day moving averages and the prevailing chart set up shows that the stock possesses the momentum to overcome the nearest hurdle at ₹10,300. It can rally towards ₹12,400 over the next few weeks. So, participants can buy the stock at ₹10,000 and ₹9,350. Place a stop-loss at ₹8,450. When the stock rises to ₹11,250, alter the stop-loss to ₹9,800. Move the stop-loss further up to ₹10,800 when the stock touches ₹11,800. Book profits at ₹12,400.

## Dollar can rise before a fall

**CURRENCY OUTLOOK.** Resistance can cap the upside and keep the greenback under pressure



GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO

**Gurumurthy K**

## Valuation Radar: The Good, The Bad, The Ugly

The Benchmark indices, Sensex and Nifty 50 were down 0.7 per cent each respectively last week. All sectoral indices ended in the red, except BSE Power which was unchanged. BSE FMCG and BSE Bankex lost the least by 0.1 per cent and 0.3 per cent respectively. BSE IT and BSE Teck declined by 4.8 and 3.5 per cent respectively last week.

	Nifty 50	Sensex	Auto	Bankex	Capital Goods	Consumer Durables	FMCG	Healthcare	IT	Metal	Oil & Gas	Power	PSU	Realty	Teck
P/E	19.9	20.6	20.3	12.6	38.3	74.3	39.1	37.6	27.0	15.3	11.4	24.8	10.3	43.4	28.6
P/BV	3.3	3.8	5.3	2.3	7.2	14.1	8.3	5.8	7.4	2.4	1.4	3.6	1.8	5.1	7.7
Dividend Yield	1.4	1.2	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.4	1.9	0.6	2.1	3.0	3.9	1.5	3.0	0.3	1.7
Weekly Return (%)	-0.7 ▼	-0.7 ▼	-1.8 ▼	-0.3 ▼	-2.0 ▼	-2.0 ▼	-0.1 ▼	-0.7 ▼	-4.8 ▼	-1.6 ▼	-0.8 ▼	0.0 ▼	-1.1 ▼	-1.7 ▼	-3.5 ▼
Monthly Return (%)	-2.8 ▼	-3.0 ▼	-7.5 ▼	-1.4 ▼	-2.1 ▼	-5.6 ▼	-2.6 ▼	-4.2 ▼	-12.8 ▼	6.0 ▲	-0.4 ▼	2.8 ▲	-0.5 ▼	-5.9 ▼	-10.9 ▼
Annual Return (%)	1.8 ▲	1.5 ▲	-0.8 ▼	3.7 ▲	2.4 ▲	5.4 ▲	-1.9 ▼	16.5 ▲	-5.1 ▼	12.9 ▲	-11.3 ▲	-1.4 ▼	-4.0 ▼	-4.6 ▼	0.9 ▲

The sector indices are disseminated by S&P BSE.

Company CMP EPS PE PB Year End Sales Profit Sales Profit Wkly ROCE DER Yr.High Yr.Low

360 ONE [1]	864.0	27.2	31.7	5.3	202412	20.7	43.9	46.1	49.2	-11.2	14.5	2.5	1317.3	642.4	
3M India	27997.0	542.7	51.6	14.7	202406	-0.3	21.6	3.0	23.3	0.8	39.8	0.0	41000.0	25714.4	
A															
A B B [2]	5120.0	88.5	57.9	15.3	202412	21.9	54.1	16.6	50.2	-3.9	30.4	0.0	9200.0	4893.1	
A B B Real Estate	17747.4	12.4	142.8	4.9	202412	-3.6	-13.2	28.8	-38.4	-10.1	7.8	0.5	3142.0	1520.8	
Aadhar Hsg. Fin.	414.3	20.1	20.6	3.0	202412	18.5	27.2	22.8	-3.2	11.4	5.6	217	29.4	364.3	
Aarti Industries [5]	382.5	10.1	38.0	2.6	202412	6.2	-62.9	13.4	-15.9	-5.9	7.3	0.6	769.5	364.3	
AAVAS Financiers	1871.1	62.0	30.2	3.9	202403	21.4	12.3	25.4	14.2	10.1	9.9	3.2	1978.3	1307.1	
Abdul Bhatia India	2965.0	13.4	14.5	2.0	202412	2.3	13.8	1.9	1.5	-1.5	18.6	0.0	2943.0	1778.8	
Acc [1]	16551.1	33.1	4.9	2.1	202412	10.1	30.1	9.1	1.5	-1.5	18.6	0.0	2943.0	1778.8	
Action Consol.Eq.	1151.4	32.7	35.2	9.9	202412	16.2	26.5	19.0	40.3	4.2	16.2	0.0	1693.1	917.1	
Adani Enterprises	872.7	17.8	43.9	4.5	202412	27.8	44.8	38.8	4.7	9.2	2.9	1347.9	588.3		
Adani Enterp. [1]	2220.0	33.9	56.5	5.6	202412	-8.8	-6.7	4.1	3.1	-1.1	16	0.0	3743.0	2026.9	
Adani Green	874.0	9.8	84.1	13.1	202412	3.1	57.1	2.8	-5.9	4.3	10.0	7.0	2137.0	758.0	
Adani Ports [2]	1119.0	49.2	22.7	4.2	202412	15.1	52.2	27.0	-2.2	12.0	1.0	1608.0	993.9		
Adani Power	5120.0	33.8	15.1	3.5	202412	5.2	11.7	17.1	-4.4	1.1	30.1	0.0	896.6	373.7	
Adani Total Gas [1]	661.1	99.3	17.0	202412	12.0	-19.4	1.1	-1.1	-0.2	21	0.5	1188.5	530.0		
Adani Wilms [2]	246.9	1.6	14.5	2.0	202412	3.1	30.4	1.1	1.5	-0.1	10.1	0.0	2012.0	1262.0	
Aditya Aroma [5]	591.0	31.6	18.7	5.2	202412	0.0	7.2	26.2	-28.7	-4.5	34.9	0.0	912.0	450.0	
Aditya Birla Bus. [5]	124.0	-5.3	32.7	9.5	202412	1.1	2.1	-0.8	0.2	36.5	4.4	0.0	198.5	198.5	
Aditya Birla Cap	162.1	14.1	11.1	1.5	202412	6.6	-3.8	2.4	1.1	-0.1	47.0	0.0	148.8	148.8	
Aegis Logistics [1]	177.9	16.5	44.2	6.3	202412	-8.9	-4.5	-6.3	1.6	10.6	103.5	35.2	358.2	188.5	
Aether Industri.	891.0	8.7	102.4	5.4	202412	41.4	105.0	7.8	-2.2	-2.2	1.5	0.6	1063.5	373.7	
Affle India [2]	1403.8	26.1	54.9	7.3	202412	20.6	30.5	28.2	34.6	-3.4	15.8	0.0	1883.4	998.0	
Afcons Engineering [2]	3124.0	29.3	12.7	2.0	202412	-17.6	-19.2	-13.1	-13.0	-1.1	12.0	0.0	1203.0	620.0	
Ajanta Pharma [2]	2541.2	17.9	35.4	8.6	202412	3.7	10.9	2.2	-0.9	3.6	0.0	3485.0	2036.0		
Akzo Nobel [2]	3129.1	94.4	33.2	10.0	202412	19.2	4.6	2.6	4.0	3.9	0.1	4649.0	2265.1		
Alembic Pharma [2]	828.0	30.3	27.4	3.3	202412	3.8	-23.3	4.9	-0.8	-21	12.9	0.0	1296.2	630.0	
Alkem Lab [2]	4704.1	18.0	26.4	4.9	202412	1.5	-1.8	1.0	27.8	-0.4	18.3	0.0	6440.0	4409.9	
Alkyl Amines [2]	1624.5	29.4	46.6	6.3	202412	15.3	30.9	3.1	12.2	-4.5	16.2	0.0	2498.0	1562.0	
Alok Industries [1]	15.9	-1.9	-0.4	-0.2	202412	-31.1	-21.8	-24.7	-3.2	-3.3	-0.3	0.0	30.0	14.5	
Amara Raya Ene [1]	96.0	5.2	51.8	2.7	202412	-1.1	-1.1	-1.1	-1.1	-1.1	0.0	17.0	17.0		
Amara Raya Ene [1]	6361.8	56.7	96.9	2.7	202412	64.8	1.1	30.3	56.2	0.4	9.8	0.0	8167.1	1830.9	
Amplus Comms [2]	462.6	16.9	21.8	2.4	202412	14.8	15.6	5.6	36.0	-2.6	15.5	0.0	7069.5	452.9	
Anant Raj [2]	490.1	11.3	43.5	4.4	202412	36.3	5.3	4.8	202412	66.1	-2.2	-8.2	0.0	943.3	281.2
Anupam Rasayan	781.9	7.2	107.3	3.1	202412	19.2	8.1	48.1	27.1	-6.9	38.7	0.0	1174.0	157.7	
Apars India	104.0	21.7	27.2	5.4	202412	17.8	-19.6	-2.3	-10.4	-0.1	30.3	0.0	1117.0	182.0	
Appico Tubes [2]	1370.0	25.0	10.1	2.0	202412	-3.1	-32.3	-0.1	30.3	33.6	0.0	1336.0	934.7		
Apollo Hospitals [5]	6102.2	11.1	67.0	7.7	202412	13.9	5.1	6.8	66.2	-1.1	30.7	0.0	7545.0	1875.0	
Apollo Tyres [3]	400.8	24.3	18.9	1.8	202412	50.0	-32.9	2.3	-24.5	-2.6	15.4	0.0	5847.0	370.9	
Appus Value Hts [2]	2966.0	14.2	20.9	3.7	202412	28.1	20.9	27.3	21.4	-2.6					

# Should you invest in State Development Loans?

**BOND WISE.** SDLs are most suitable for conservative, long-term investors who prioritise capital safety and buy-and-hold strategy

**Dhuraivel Gunasekaran**  
bl. research bureau

State Development Loans (SDLs), which are bonds issued by State governments in India, present a secure investment avenue for fixed-income investors who prioritise capital protection.

These bonds typically offer yields that are 25-50 basis points higher than Central government securities and come with an implicit sovereign guarantee.

Retail investors can now access SDLs via the RBI Retail Direct platform, which was launched in November 2021. During this period, retail investors purchased government bonds worth ₹6,208 crore through primary market subscriptions and traded ₹1,723 crore in the secondary market. They acquired SDL bonds worth approximately ₹430 crore.

Given the availability of other government-backed investment options offering higher yields, it is essential to evaluate how SDL bonds compare.

Let's explore their key features, investment avenues, and the strategic role they can play.

**RISK-FREE INVESTMENTS**  
SDL issuance has surged post-Covid, reaching ₹10 lakh crore in 2024, with most States actively participating.

As of March 2025, SDLs con-

stituted one-third of the government securities market, with bonds worth ₹62 lakh crore outstanding.

Commercial banks, insurance firms, and provident funds hold 85 per cent of these bonds, while mutual funds account for about 2 per cent, investing ₹1 lakh crore.

SDLs work similarly to Central government securities but are designed to meet State-level financing needs. They're issued through RBI-conducted auctions with maturities ranging from two to 40 years, with interest paid semi-annually. The interest income is taxable as per the investors' tax slab.

These investments are considered risk-free, as the RBI has an escrow mechanism to ensure timely payments. In the event of default, the sums will be paid and adjusted against funds owed to the respective State by the Central government. But there is no known case of SDL default by a State government so far.

**HOW TO INVEST**

The RBI Retail Direct platform allows investors to participate in G-secs, including SDLs, with a minimum investment of ₹10,000 in the non-competitive segment of primary auctions.

Additionally, it facilitates buying and selling SDLs in the secondary market.

Other investment channels include banks, primary dealers,

## INVESTMENT CHANNELS

- MFs, RBI Retail Direct platform, banks, primary dealers, BSE Direct, NSE goBID, brokerage firms, and online bond platforms

BSE Direct, NSE goBID, brokerage firms, and online bond platforms.

The RBI Retail Direct platform offers a seamless and cost-effective investment process. Retail investors can open a Retail Direct Gilt Account by submitting their PAN and Aadhaar details and completing KYC verification through the official website.

Registered users gain access to the primary issuance portal and NDS-OM for secondary market transactions. The platform charges no fees for account opening, maintenance, or bid submission.

**RBI** conducts SDL auctions every Tuesday, with the list of available bonds announced quarterly on its website.

However, retail investors may face challenges in the secondary market due to limited liquidity. Hence, it is advisable to buy SDLs only with a buy-and-hold approach until maturity.

Investing through mutual funds (MFs) offers a convenient pathway for investors.

MFs periodically introduce Target Maturity Funds (TMFs) to capitalise on opportunities in the government securities market. They invest either in SDLs or a mix of SDL, G-Secs, and PSU bonds.

TMFs are passive funds with predefined maturities, typically ranging from three to five years. Returns generally align with Yield to Maturity (YTM) if investors remain invested for the entire duration.

TMFs are structured as either index funds or exchange-traded funds (ETFs), allowing investors the flexibility to buy or sell units throughout the fund's tenure.

The expense ratio associated with TMFs can impact returns. As of February 2025, the average expense ratio for regular plans of TMFs stood at 0.4 per cent, whereas direct plans had a lower expense ratio of 0.2 per cent.

## SHOULD YOU INVEST?

The fiscal health of State governments is a crucial factor to consider when investing in SDLs. Inter-State spreads have emerged due to fiscal concerns in certain States, leading to slightly higher yields for their bond issuances.

Large investors typically favour SDLs from States with stronger fiscal positions such as Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu.

SDLs have historically offered

yields ranging from 6.5 to 7.5 per cent, which are 25-50 basis points higher than those of Central government securities. Over the last six months, SDLs were issued with yields ranging from 6.75 to 7.34 per cent.

For instance, within bonds issued with a tenure close to 10 years, States such as Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu issued SDLs with lower yields close to seven per cent, while Assam, Chhattisgarh, and Nagaland issued bonds with higher yields close to 7.3 per cent. Meanwhile, the India 10-year G-sec yields traded between 6.6 per cent and 6.9 per cent during the period.

When comparing SDL to other government-backed investments, RBI Floating Rate Savings Bonds offer a higher annual return of 8.05 per cent. Small savings instruments such as the National Savings Certificate (7.7 per cent) and Senior Citizen Savings Scheme (8.2 per cent) provide even more competitive rates. Additionally, bank fixed deposits with insurance coverage up to ₹5 lakh often give higher returns than SDLs. Given these factors, SDLs are most suitable for conservative, long-term investors who prioritise capital safety and prefer a buy-and-hold strategy. Their implicit sovereign guarantee and relatively stable yields make them a reliable option for risk-averse investors.

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## Bank FD interest rates (%)

Bank	<1 year	1 to 2 years	2 to 3 years	3 to 5 years	w.e.f
	7	8	8	7.5	Jun 10
Deutsche Bank	7	8	8	7.5	Jun 10
Standard Chartered	7	7.5	7.2	7.1	Oct 05
DBS Bank	6	7.5	7	6.5	Dec 11
HSBC	4.5	7.5	7	7	Oct 03
Scotia Bank	3.7	3.9	4	4	Feb 01

## INDIAN: PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS

Bank	<1 year	1 to 2 years	2 to 3 years	3 to 5 years	w.e.f
UCO Bank	7.3	7.3	6.3	6.2	Feb 19
Punjab & Sind Bank	7.2	7.5	7.4	6.75	Jan 01
Indian Bank	7.05	7.25	6.7	6.25	Jun 12
Punjab National Bank	7.05	7.25	7	6.5	Jan 01
Bank of Maharashtra	6.9	7.45	6.5	6.5	Feb 26
Bank of Baroda	6.5	7.3	7.15	6.8	Oct 14
State Bank of India	6.5	7.25*	7	6.75	Jun 15
Union Bank	6.35	7.3	6.7	6.5	Jan 01
Canara Bank	6.25	7.3	7.4	7.4	Dec 01
Central Bank of India	6.25	7.45	7.25	7	Feb 10
Bank of India	6	7.3	6.75	6.5	Sep 27
Indian Overseas Bank	5.75	7.3	6.8	6.5	Jul 15

## INDIAN: PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS

Bank	<1 year	1 to 2 years	2 to 3 years	3 to 5 years	w.e.f
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	7.6	7.5	6.75	6.5	Oct 17
City Union Bank	7.5	7	6.5	6.25	Sep 01
Karur Vysya Bank	7.4	7.5	7.6	7	Nov 22
CSB Bank	7.25	8	5.75	7.1	Jan 02
Dhanlaxmi Bank	7.25	7.25	6.5	7.25	Mar 01
DCB Bank	7.05	8	7.5	7.85	Mar 05
IDBI Bank	7.05	7.4	7	6.5	Dec 23
J & K Bank	7	7.25	7.3	6.75	Mar 11
Kotak Bank	7	7.4	7.15	7	Jun 14
TNSC Bank	6.75	7.75	6.75	6.5	NA
South Indian Bank	6.55	7.4	7	7.2	Feb 20
Federal Bank	6.5	7.5	7.4	7.4	Jan 10
IndusInd Bank	6.5	7.75	7.25	7.5	Feb 24
Yes Bank	6.5	8	7.25	7.25	Jan 31
Karnataka Bank	6.25	7.5	6.5	6.5	Feb 18
RBL Bank	6.05	8	7.5	7.1	Dec 15
Axis Bank	6	7.25	7.1	7.1	Feb 24
HDFC Bank	6	7.25	7.35	7.4	Jul 24
ICICI Bank	6	7.25	7	7	Mar 14
IDFC First Bank	5.75	7.9	6.8	6.75	Nov 26
Bandhan Bank	4.5	8.05	7.25	7.25	Sep 13

Data as on respective banks' website on March 14, 2025; For each year range, the maximum offered interest rate is considered; Interest rate is for a normal fixed deposit amount below ₹1 crore. Compiled by BankBazaar.com; \*w.e.f. July 15, 2024

## ALERTS

### Federal Bank's NRE savings account

For non-resident Indians, Federal Bank, in February, has come out with its new NRE savings account, Prospera. It offers a range of benefits from complimentary insurance benefits to complimentary airport lounge access, and rewards for debit card spends. As an introductory offer, Federal Bank has announced a discount of up to 24 per cent on flight and hotel bookings on select travel platforms using Prospera Debit Card.

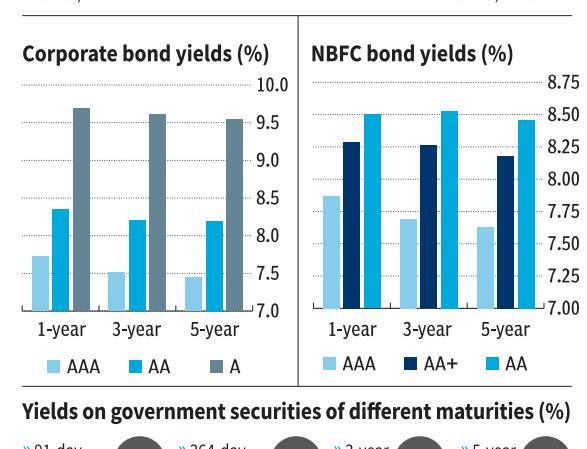
### Small Savings Schemes - Interest rates

Small Savings Scheme	Interest rate (%)		Compounding frequency
	Oct 1 - Dec 31, 2024	Jan 1 - Mar 31, 2025	
Post Office Savings Deposit	4.0	4.0	Annually
1 year	6.9	6.9	Quarterly
2 year	7.0	7.0	Quarterly
3 year	7.1	7.1	Quarterly
5 year	7.5	7.5	Quarterly
Post Office Recurring Deposit (5 year)	6.7	6.7	Quarterly
Senior Citizen Savings Scheme	8.2	8.2	Quarterly and paid
Post Office Monthly Income Scheme	7.4	7.4	Monthly and paid
National Savings Certificate	7.7	7.7	Annually
Public Provident Fund	7.1	7.1	Annually
Kisan Vikas Patra	7.5*	7.5*	Annually
Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana	8.2	8.2	Annually

Note: Small savings rate as on the latest quarterly reset on Dec 31, 2024  
\*Will mature in 115 months Source: Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, GoI

## Bond yields

### 10-year benchmark G-Sec yield (%)





bl rating	Scheme Name	Latest NAV (₹)	Latest Corpus (₹ Cr)	Expense Ratio (%)	Regular	Direct	1 Year CAGR	3 Year CAGR	5 Year CAGR	10 Year CAGR	Sortino Ratio (%)
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## EQUITY - LARGE CAP FUNDS

★★★★★ Canara Robeco Bluechip Equity	56.1	13848	1.7	0.5	6.6	12.8	18.2	12.0	0.35	
★★★★★ ICICI Pru Bluechip	97.6	60177	1.5	0.9	4.3	15.8	21.7	12.5	0.39	
★★★★★ JM Large Cap	136.0	458	2.3	0.7	-2.6	13.2	16.5	9.1	0.45	
★★★★★ Baroda BNP Paribas Large Cap	197.4	2263	2.0	0.8	3.1	14.2	18.4	11.0	0.34	
★★★★★ Edelweiss Large Cap	74.8	1059	2.2	0.6	3.0	13.2	18.3	11.0	0.32	
★★★★★ Kotak Bluechip	504.5	8718	1.8	0.6	5.2	12.9	19.0	11.1	0.33	
★★★★★ Nippon Ind Large Cap	79.2	34212	1.6	0.7	4.6	18.2	22.5	12.4	0.37	
★★★★★ Aditya Birla SL Frontline Equity	464.8	26286	1.7	1.0	5.3	12.8	19.0	10.9	0.33	
★★★★★ Bandhan Large Cap	67.2	1634	2.1	0.9	4.2	12.3	17.9	10.3	0.31	
★★★★★ HDFC Large Cap	1024.6	33913	1.6	1.0	1.4	15.4	21.1	11.4	0.36	
★★★★★ HSBC Large Cap	418.7	1686	2.2	1.2	1.8	12.1	17.1	10.5	0.30	
★★★★★ Invesco India Largecap	59.9	1229	2.1	0.8	5.3	12.5	18.1	10.8	0.30	
★★★★★ Mirae Asset Large Cap	99.1	35533	1.5	0.6	4.8	10.1	17.0	11.6	0.29	
★★★★★ SBI Blue Chip	82.4	46140	1.5	0.9	6.8	12.7	19.0	11.2	0.33	
★★★★★ Tata Large Cap	448.8	2267	2.1	1.1	3.8	12.4	18.2	10.3	0.31	
★★★★★ UTI Large Cap	244.5	11720	1.8	1.0	3.8	9.9	17.1	10.1	0.30	
★★★★★ Axis Bluechip	54.5	30517	1.6	0.7	3.6	8.2	13.1	10.7	0.24	
★★★★★ Franklin Ind Bluechip	900.6	6937	1.9	1.2	4.6	11.0	18.0	9.7	0.31	
★★★★★ LIC MF Large Cap	49.2	1284	2.1	0.8	2.8	13.5	18.7	12.3	0.23	
★★★★★ Union Largecap	21.0	401	2.5	1.4	-0.2	10.5	17.2	-	0.29	
★★★★★ DSP Top 100 Equity	426.6	4519	1.9	1.1	11.7	16.9	17.9	10.0	0.28	
★★★★★ Groww Largecap	37.4	112	2.4	1.0	-0.7	11.4	14.7	9.6	0.23	
★★★★★ PGM India Large Cap	301.1	531	2.4	0.9	1.0	10.5	14.8	8.9	0.25	
★★★★★ Mahi Manu Large Cap	20.5	561	2.4	0.7	3.4	11.5	18.0	-	0.32	
★★★★★ Taurus Large Cap	139.6	44	2.6	2.4	0.9	12.8	16.4	8.0	0.28	

## EQUITY - LARGE & MID CAP FUNDS

★★★★★ HDFC Large and Mid Cap	291.5	21527	1.7	0.9	4.5	18.2	25.5	12.3	0.43	
★★★★★ Quant Large & Mid Cap	102.6	3242	1.9	0.7	-3.0	17.4	25.7	15.5	0.48	
★★★★★ Bandhan Core Equity	115.0	7234	1.8	0.6	11.0	20.7	24.0	13.4	0.39	
★★★★★ ICICI Pru Large & Mid Cap	879.2	17818	1.7	0.9	10.0	20.1	25.9	13.6	0.46	
★★★★★ Kotak Equity Opport	292.9	22853	1.6	0.6	6.2	16.4	21.3	13.3	0.36	
★★★★★ Mirae Asset Large & Midcap	128.0	33678	1.6	0.6	2.2	11.8	20.9	15.6	0.36	
★★★★★ Canara Robeco Emerging Equities	222.3	21405	1.6	0.6	10.1	13.4	20.2	14.2	0.35	
★★★★★ DSP Equity Opport	545.6	12598	1.7	0.7	10.8	18.3	22.0	13.9	0.38	
★★★★★ Edelweiss Large & Mid Cap	74.8	3334	1.9	0.5	7.4	14.6	20.7	12.3	0.37	
★★★★★ Invesco India Large & Mid Cap	81.4	5930	1.8	0.7	12.8	18.5	20.8	13.0	0.36	
★★★★★ LIC MF Large & Midcap	34.0	2598	1.9	0.6	12.7	13.6	18.5	13.0	0.37	
★★★★★ SBI Large & Midcap	543.0	27385	1.6	0.8	8.7	15.7	21.9	13.2	0.37	
★★★★★ Tata Large & Mid Cap	466.5	7420	1.8	0.7	3.8	15.2	19.8	11.8	0.35	
★★★★★ UTI Large & Mid Cap	155.8	3789	1.9	0.1	10.1	19.0	25.4	11.9	0.43	
★★★★★ BOI Large & Mid Cap Equity	75.6	328	2.3	1.1	0.6	13.8	18.6	10.2	0.32	
★★★★★ Navi Large & Midcap	30.8	276	2.3	0.4	5.5	9.9	17.6	-	0.28	
★★★★★ Nippon Ind Vision	1264.1	4969	2.0	1.4	9.0	17.3	22.3	10.7	0.38	
★★★★★ Sundaram Large and Mid Cap	74.0	5861	1.9	0.9	5.5	12.4	18.2	12.4	0.29	
★★★★★ Aditya Birla SL Equity Advantage	776.1	5007	1.9	1.2	3.9	7.7	15.9	10.0	0.23	
★★★★★ Franklin Ind Equity Advantage	163.5	3121	2.1	1.4	8.2	12.6	19.8	10.1	0.31	
★★★★★ Axis Growth Opport	28.2	12596	1.7	0.6	7.0	13.0	21.6	-	0.39	
★★★★★ HSBC Large & Mid Cap	22.0	3472	2.0	0.9	7.0	13.9	19.1	-	0.30	

## EQUITY - FLEXI CAP FUNDS

★★★★★ JM Flexicap	87.2	4899	1.7	0.6	6.6	21.5	22.9	14.6	0.42	
★★★★★ Parag Parikh Flexi Cap	76.4	88005	1.3	0.6	12.0	17.4	26.9	16.6	0.54	
★★★★★ Franklin Ind Flexi Cap	1441.4	16139	1.7	0.9	6.0	16.5	23.7	12.5	0.41	
★★★★★ HDFC Flexi Cap	1750.1	64124	1.4	0.8	10.9	21.7	27.1	13.9	0.46	
★★★★★ PGIM India Flexi Cap	31.5	5595	1.8	0.4	4.8	8.0	21.0	12.2	0.37	
★★★★★ Union Flexi Cap	44.5	1995	2.1	1.0	1.1	12.2	19.8	10.3	0.35	
★★★★★ Aditya Birla SL Flexi Cap	1559.5	20080	1.7	0.9	7.2	12.8	19.0	12.2	0.30	
★★★★★ Canara Robeco Flexi Cap	294.3	11391	1.7	0.6	4.6	11.3	17.9	11.5	0.33	
★★★★★ DSP Flexi Cap	90.6	10320	1.7	0.7	10.7	14.4	18.3	12.2	0.31	
★★★★★ Edelweiss Flexi Cap	33.1	2209	2.0	0.5	7.0	15.0	20.5	12.6	0.35	
★★★★★ HSBC Flexi Cap	184.6	4183	2.0	1.2	4.9	14.1	19.8	10.8	0.31	
★★★★★ Kotak Flexicap	72.9	45433	1.5	0.6	5.6	14.0	18.1	12.1	0.30	
★★★★★ Bandhan Flexi Cap	181.3	6595	1.9	1.2	5.7	11.5	16.2	9.4	0.27	
★★★★★ LIC MF Flexi Cap	82.9	875	2.3	1.3	0.0	10.0	13.4	6.9	0.23	
★★★★★ SBI Flexic平	97.2	20030	1.7	1						

bl.rating	Scheme Name	Latest NAV (₹)	Latest Corpus (₹ Cr)	Expense Ratio (%)		Trailing Returns (%)					AA & Below
				Regular	Direct	1 Month Absolute	3 Month Absolute	6 Month Absolute	1 Year CAGR		
★★★★★	360 ONE Liquid	1970.9	1090	0.3	0.2	6.5	6.9	6.9	7.1	-	
-	Aditya Birla SL Liquid	412.0	57091	0.3	0.2	6.5	6.9	7.0	7.2	-	
-	Axis Liquid	2847.6	42867	0.2	0.1	6.7	7.0	7.1	7.3	-	
-	Bandhan Liquid	3090.8	15178	0.3	0.1	6.5	6.9	7.0	7.2	-	
-	Bank of India Liquid	2945.2	1741	0.1	0.1	6.6	7.0	7.1	7.3	-	
-	Baroda BNP Paribas Liquid	2941.9	10429	0.3	0.2	6.5	6.9	7.0	7.2	-	
-	Canara Robeco Liquid	3078.4	5294	0.2	0.1	6.7	7.0	7.1	7.3	-	
-	DSP Liquidity	3651.8	22387	0.2	0.1	6.5	7.0	7.1	7.3	-	
-	Edelweiss Liquid	3270.0	7270	0.2	0.1	6.5	7.0	7.0	7.2	-	
-	Growth Liquid	2472.6	158	0.2	0.1	6.6	7.0	7.1	7.3	-	
-	HDFC Liquid	5017.2	7043	0.3	0.2	6.5	6.9	7.0	7.2	-	
-	HSBC Liquid	2550.1	20043	0.2	0.1	6.5	6.9	7.0	7.2	-	
-	ICICI Prudential Liquid	378.7	55112	0.3	0.2	6.5	6.9	7.0	7.3	-	
-	Invesco India Liquid	3515.4	14276	0.2	0.2	6.5	6.9	7.0	7.3	-	
-	ITI Liquid	1333.0	48	0.3	0.1	6.3	6.7	6.8	6.9	-	
-	JM Liquid	69.8	3341	0.3	0.2	6.5	6.9	6.9	7.2	-	
-	Kotak Liquid	5169.5	38144	0.3	0.2	6.5	6.9	7.0	7.2	-	
-	LIC MF Liquid	4625.5	11780	0.3	0.2	6.5	6.9	7.0	7.3	-	
-	Mahi Manu Liquid	1664.8	1324	0.3	0.2	6.6	7.0	7.0	7.3	-	
-	Mirae Asset Liquid	2682.4	12731	0.2	0.1	6.5	7.0	7.0	7.3	-	
-	Motilal Oswal Liquid	13.5	962	0.4	0.2	6.2	6.5	6.5	6.8	-	
-	Navi Liquid	27.9	68	0.2	0.2	6.2	6.7	6.8	6.9	-	
-	Nippon Ind Liquid	6242.1	33917	0.3	0.2	6.5	6.9	7.0	7.2	-	
-	Parag Parikh Liquid	1420.7	2426	0.3	0.2	6.2	6.6	6.7	6.9	-	
-	PGM India Liquid	332.8	391	0.2	0.1	6.4	6.9	7.0	7.2	-	
<b>ARBITRAGE FUNDS</b>											
-	Aditya Birla SL Arbitrage	26.0	14297	1.0	0.3	6.8	6.9	6.7	7.2	-	
-	Axis Arbitrage	18.3	5781	1.0	0.3	7.1	7.0	6.7	7.2	-	
-	Bandhan Arbitrage	31.8	7877	1.2	0.4	6.7	7.0	6.7	7.2	-	
-	Bank of India Arbitrage	13.6	45	0.9	0.5	6.7	6.8	6.5	6.8	-	
-	Baroda BNP Paribas Arbitrage	15.8	1144	1.2	0.4	6.7	6.5	6.1	7.0	1.10	
-	DSP Arbitrage	14.7	6185	1.0	0.4	6.8	7.0	6.7	7.1	-	
-	Edelweiss Arbitrage	19.0	13644	1.1	0.4	6.9	7.2	6.9	7.3	-	
-	HDFC Arbitrage	30.1	18054	1.0	0.4	7.0	7.1	6.8	7.3	-	
-	HSBC Arbitrage	18.6	2247	0.9	0.2	7.0	7.0	6.6	7.0	-	
-	ICICI Prudential Equity-Arbitrage	33.6	25880	0.9	0.4	7.0	7.1	6.8	7.3	-	
-	Invesco India Arbitrage	31.3	19341	1.1	0.4	7.2	7.2	6.8	7.3	-	
-	ITI Arbitrage	12.7	44	0.9	0.2	8.2	7.4	6.7	7.2	-	
-	JM Arbitrage	32.1	212	1.0	0.4	6.9	6.8	6.5	6.8	-	
-	Kotak Equity Arbitrage	36.7	58923	1.0	0.4	6.9	7.2	6.9	7.4	-	
-	LIC MF Arbitrage	13.6	349	1.0	0.3	6.9	6.9	6.6	6.9	-	
-	Mahi Manu Arbitrage	12.2	104	1.2	0.4	5.4	5.7	5.5	5.9	-	
-	Mirae Asset Arbitrage	12.8	2970	0.9	0.1	7.2	7.3	6.7	7.2	-	
-	Nippon Ind Arbitrage	26.1	14436	1.1	0.4	6.8	6.9	6.6	7.1	-	
-	PGM India Arbitrage	18.0	89	1.1	0.4	7.3	6.6	6.4	6.9	-	
-	SBI Arbitrage Opport	33.1	32171	0.9	0.4	7.1	7.1	6.7	7.3	-	
-	Sundaram Arbitrage	14.2	220	1.0	0.3	7.0	7.0	6.5	7.0	-	
-	Tata Arbitrage	14.1	12682	1.1	0.3	6.9	6.9	6.7	7.2	-	
-	Union Arbitrage	13.8	231	1.0	0.4	7.0	7.0	6.8	7.2	-	
-	UTI Arbitrage	34.3	6415	0.7	0.3	6.8	7.1	6.9	7.4	-	

bl.rating	Scheme Name	Latest NAV (₹)	Latest Corpus (₹ Cr)	Expense Ratio (%)		Trailing Returns (%)					AA & Below
				Regular	Direct	1 Year CAGR	2 Year CAGR	3 Year CAGR	5 Year CAGR	%	
★★★★★	Nippon Ind Ultra Short Duration	3934.6	7545	1.1	0.4	7.1	7.0	6.3	6.2	9.18	
★★★★★	UTI Ultra Short Duration	4142.3	3385	0.9	0.3	7.0	7.0	6.3	6.0	6.10	
★★★★★	Aditya Birla SL Savings	534.2	14988	0.6	0.3	7.6	7.5	6.8	6.2	10.79	
★★★★★	Baroda BNP Paribas Ultra Short Duration	1505.7	1408	0.5	0.3	7.3	7.4	6.7	5.7	0.57	
★★★★★	HDFC Ultra Short Term	14.8	14202	0.7	0.4	7.3	7.2	6.5	5.8	2.28	
★★★★★	ICICI Prudential Ultra Short Term	27.0	13589	0.8	0.4	7.2	7.2	6.5	5.9	6.51	
★★★★★	Axis Ultra Short Duration	14.4	5595	1.2	0.4	6.8	6.8	6.1	5.3	5.28	
★★★★★	Bandhan Ultra Short Term	14.9	3641	0.5	0.3	7.3	7.3	6.5	5.6	-	
★★★★★	Invesco India Ultra Short Duration	2634.4	1337	0.7	0.2	7.1	7.1	6.3	5.3	2.54	
★★★★★	Kotak Savings	41.9	12726	0.8	0.4	7.0	7.0	6.4	5.5	2.35	
★★★★★	PGM India Ultra Short Duration	33.3	204	0.9	0.3	6.7	6.7	6.1	5.4	-	
★★★★★	SBI Magnum Ultra Short Duration	5833.5	11987	0.5	0.3	7.3	7.2	6.5	5.7	-	
★★★★★	WhiteOak Capital Ultra Short Dur	1331.8	372	1.0	0.5	6.7	6.7	5.9	5.0	-	
<b>DEBT FUNDS</b>											
<b>DEBT - ULTRASHORT DURATION FUNDS</b>											
★★★★★	Nippon Ind Ultra Short Duration	3934.6	7545	1.1	0.4	7.1	7.0	6.3	6.2	9.18	
★★★★★	UTI Ultra Short Duration	4142.3	3385	0.9	0.3	7.0	7.0	6.3	6.0	6.10	
★★★★★	Aditya Birla SL Savings	534.2	14988	0.6	0.3	7.6	7.5	6.8	6.2	10.79	
★★★★★	Baroda BNP Paribas Ultra Short Duration	1505.7</td									

# Electronics manufacturing has come a long way in India, says IT Minister

**END-TO-END.** Zetwerk inaugurates its largest electronic manufacturing facility near Chennai

**Our Bureau**  
Chennai

Zetwerk Electronics, a part of the \$2-billion Zetwerk Manufacturing Businesses, on Saturday inaugurated its largest electronic manufacturing facility near Chennai.



**NEW CAMPUS.** Ashwini Vaishnaw, Electronics and IT Minister; TRB Rajaa, TN Industry Minister; S Krishnan, MeitY Secretary; Josh Foulger, President, Zetwerk Electronics, at the inauguration of Zetwerk Electronics unit at Sriperumbudur, near Chennai. (from left) Amrit Raj, Chief Marketing Officer; Amrit Acharya, Co-founder and CEO, and Rahul Sharma, Co-founder, are also seen BIJOY GHOSH

The 15-acre campus at Pannur, 55 km from the city in Tiruvallur district, will play a pivotal role in strengthening India's position in the global Electronics System Design and Manufacturing sector, contributing to India's ambition of a \$500-billion ESDM market and Tamil Nadu's vision of becoming a \$1 trillion economy, said Amrit Acharya, CEO and Co-founder of Zetwerk.

Established in 2021, the contract manufacturing company delivers end-to-end Electronics Manufacturing Services (EMS) from concept to production.

The new facility was part of a ₹1,000-crore investment that was announced earlier. It will produce electronic components for various sectors, including consumer durables and IT hardware for the domestic market, and later for international markets.

The new factory will focus on manufacturing control boards for washing machines, refrigerators,

air-conditioners, and IT hardware, with advanced production capabilities including five Surface-Mount Technology (SMT) lines, Manual Insertion (MI) lines, potting, conformal coating, and rigorous testing processes. At full capacity, the facility will employ approximately 1,200 skilled professionals.

#### FULL SUPPORT TO INDUSTRY

Inaugurating the facility, Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology, said, "As Zetwerk launches its 7th factory, we reaffirm our commit-

ment to supporting Indian companies in becoming global leaders." Two major Electronics Manufacturing Clusters with an approved cost of ₹1,112 crore will be developed at Pillaiyappakkam and Manallur. This will help the growth of electronic manufacturing in Tamil Nadu in a big way, he said.

"When Prime Minister Narendra Modi took up the responsibility of the country, the electronic manufacturing was a very small industry. However, today electronics has become the second largest export item overtaking many conventional in-

dustries. I want to thank the Tamil Nadu government for taking forward the PM's vision," he said.

#### TN LEADS IN MANUFACTURE

Tamil Nadu's Industries Minister TRB Rajaa said that as India's top electronics producer with a 36 per cent share in national exports, Tamil Nadu has always been at the forefront of India's manufacturing revolution. Investments from new age companies like Zetwerk strengthen the ecosystem and will enable the State's ambitious target to scale up yearly electronics exports to ₹100 billion.

#### EXPORT HUB

Zetwerk CEO Acharya said the new facility was the largest for the company, and designed to be an export hub, leveraging India-US trade opportunities and contributing to India's role in global supply chains.

Later talking to newscasters, Acharya said the company is looking to go public in 15-24 months. Preparatory works are going on in that direction.

As a 6-year-old company, there is no time pressure to do the IPO because when companies get "to let's say 10 or 12 years, there is a time pressure as most of the funds who invest have a 7-to-10-year kind of investment horizon," he said.

## 'M&A, PE deals surging to three-year high in Feb shows investor confidence in India'

**KR Srivats**  
New Delhi

India's mergers and acquisitions (M&A) and private equity (PE) deals saw a sharp rise in February, with volumes hitting a three-year high, despite global economic uncertainties.

According to the latest Grant Thornton Bharat Dealtracker, the month recorded 226 M&A and PE

deals worth \$7.2 billion, reflecting a 67 per cent surge in volumes and a 5.4x increase in value compared to February 2024. The strong performance signals growing investor confidence in India's economic trajectory, supported by strategic acquisitions and policy tailwinds from Budget 2025.

Even as foreign portfolio investments in Indian equities declined and concerns over trade tariffs loomed, the

domestic deal landscape remained resilient, bolstered by corporate expansions and sector-specific consolidations.

The Indian deal landscape continued its strong start from January into February by clocking the highest monthly deal volumes over the last three years. M&A and PE deals are expected to sustain this momentum, with support from the 2025-26 budgetary proposals and

sectoral tailwinds especially in manufacturing, energy, infrastructure, and banking," said Shanthi Vijetha, Partner, Growth, Grant Thornton Bharat.

#### REMARKABLE SURGE

India's overall deal landscape witnessed a remarkable surge in February with a total of 233 deals valued at \$9.1 billion, including Initial Public Offerings (IPOs) and Qualified Institutional

Placements (QIPs). February's M&A activity set a new benchmark with 85 deals, marking a 23 per cent jump in volumes over January.

However, deal values slipped 11 per cent to \$4.7 billion, continuing a downward trend since December. The drop in value suggests a market shift towards mid-size deals rather than mega transactions.

Domestic deals dominated the M&A space, ac-

counting for 68 per cent of the total volume and 78 per cent of the overall deal value. While inbound M&A activity weakened, outbound deals saw notable traction as Indian companies pursued international expansion.

#### LARGEST TRANSACTION

Key acquirers included Zen Technologies and Nitco, each closing four acquisitions and contributing to the rise in deal volumes.

The month's largest transaction was ONGC NTPC Green Pvt. Ltd.'s \$2.3 billion acquisition of Ayana Renewable Power Pvt Ltd, underscoring continued interest in India's renewable energy sector. Private equity investments also maintained strong momentum in February, with 141 deals totalling \$2.4 billion.

This represented a 9 per cent increase in deal volumes and a 16 per cent

rise in value compared to January. The month recorded the highest PE deal volume since May 2022 and marked the fourth consecutive month of increasing investment activity.

Seed funding led the way with 30 deals, followed by pre-Series A with 12 deals and pre-seed funding with 11 deals. However, there were few large PE deals, with only 15 transactions exceeding \$50 million.

## + In 5<sup>th</sup> 'exclusive' Agri Budget, TN allocates 8% more for FY26 to boost farmer income

**G Balachandar**  
Chennai

The Tamil Nadu government unveiled its fifth exclusive Agriculture Budget on Saturday increasing the total allocation for agriculture and allied sectors by 8 per cent for 2025-26 compared to the revised estimates for 2024-25.

The State allocated ₹45,661 crore up from ₹42,282 crore in the previous year.

The Agriculture Budget 2025-26 focusses on boosting farmers' income while expanding into crop diversification, organic farming, mechanisation, and nutrition initiatives. Special priority is given to schemes benefiting SC/ST communities.

Presenting the Budget, Agriculture Minister M R K Panneerselvam noted that the State's gross cropped area had increased from 146.77 lakh acres in 2019-20 to 151 lakh acres in 2023-24, while the double-cropped area rose from 29.74 lakh acres to 33.60 lakh acres. The State has also made significant advancements in productivity, ranking first in ragi production, second in



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin with State's Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare MRK Panneerselvam before the presentation of the 'Budget Statement for the Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department' PTI

maize, oilseeds, and sugarcane, and third in groundnut and minor millets at the national level.

#### KEY GROWTH DRIVER

Horticulture remains a key growth driver, with the total area under horticulture crops reaching 16.3 lakh hectares in 2023-24. To support food security, the government has increased the food subsidy allocation from ₹10,500 crore in the previous year to ₹12,500 crore in 2025-26.

Additionally, ₹525 crore has been earmarked to incentivize paddy procurement.

For farmers' electricity needs, the State will provide

₹8,186 crore to the Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation to ensure free electricity connections, an increase from ₹6,962.93 crore in 2024-25.

For sugarcane farmers, the government has introduced a ₹349 per metric ton (MT) incentive over the central government's Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP), bringing the total price to ₹3,500 per MT.

This initiative is expected to benefit 1.3 lakh farmers, with an allocation of ₹297 crore.

The State is also promoting agricultural mechanization, with plans to establish 130 custom hiring centres with a subsidy of ₹10.5

crore. In 2025-26, Tamil Nadu will distribute 7,900 power tillers and 6,000 power weeder to small and marginal farmers.

Additionally, 5,000 agricultural machines and implements will be provided to villages under the Kalaignar All Village Integrated Agricultural Development Programme.

The Agricultural Mechanization scheme will be implemented at an outlay of ₹215.80 crore, benefiting 17,000 farmers. Subsidies for small paddy transplanters will be increased from ₹1.5 lakh to ₹1.7 lakh, while subsidies for power weeder will rise from ₹63,000 to ₹85,000.

#### AGRI GRADUATES

Recognising the growing number of agriculture graduates in the State, the government will establish 1,000 Chief Minister's Farmers Service Centres. Each centre, costing ₹10-20 lakh, will receive a 30 per cent subsidy of ₹3-6 lakh.

A total of ₹42 crore has been allocated for this initiative, which aims to provide farmers with seeds, fertilisers, expert guidance, and modern agricultural techniques.

## Hyderabad Angels launches ₹100-cr fund for growth stage start-ups; will also mentor them

**K V Kurmanath**  
Hyderabad

Hyderabad Angels has launched the Hyderabad Angels Fund (HAF) with a target of ₹100 crore focusing on growth-stage start-ups. The fund has an option to raise ₹50 crore more.

"HAF would like to address the crucial funding gap for start-ups as they scale beyond early-stage traction. By offering not

just financial backing but also strategic guidance, mentorship, and a strong investor network, HAF aims to accelerate start-up growth and drive long-term success," Hyderabad Angels Fund (HAF) Chief Executive Officer and Investment Director Rathnakar Samavedam has said.

#### FUNDING HUB

"It will make strategic co-investments for high-potential start-ups in the Pre-

Series A to Series B stages. This will help Hyderabad solidify its position as a leading start-up funding hub," he said.

"Unlike sector-specific funds, HAF follows a sector-agnostic investment approach, allowing it to support disruptive and scalable businesses across various industries," he said.

Pradeep Dholabale, Chairman, Hyderabad Angels, said HAF was designed to empower fledgling entre-

preneurs with not just funding but also the right strategic support and network connections.

**businessline.**

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## Middle-Income Group driving home loan growth: NHB study

**Robust growth**  
New Delhi

#### Primary Lending Institution

	Outstanding (in ₹ crore) as on	Sep 2024	Sep 2023
Housing Finance Companies	5,49,293	6,25,813	
Public Sector Banks	12,52,239	14,70,341	
Private Sector Banks	11,38,341	12,57,514	
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,39,873</b>	<b>33,53,668</b>	

The middle-income group (MIG) has solidified its position as the backbone of the country's home loan market, accounting for 44 per cent of outstanding individual housing loans as of September 2024, according to the National Housing Bank's (NHB) latest report, 'Trend and Progress of Housing in India 2024'.

With individual housing loans surging 14 per cent year-on-year to ₹33.53-lakh crore as of September 30, 2024, the data reflect the increasing aspiration for home-ownership, rapid urbanisation, and the role of supportive government policies in fuelling this demand.

#### EXPORT HUB

Zetwerk CEO Acharya said the new facility was the largest for the company, and designed to be an export hub, leveraging India-US trade opportunities and contributing to India's role in global supply chains.

Later talking to newscasters, Acharya said the company is looking to go public in 15-24 months. Preparatory works are going on in that direction.

As a 6-year-old company, there is

no time pressure to do the IPO because when companies get "to let's say 10 or 12 years, there is a time pressure as most of the funds who invest have a 7-to-10-year kind of investment horizon," he said.

During the first half of FY25, individual housing loan disbursements stood at ₹4.10-lakh crore, surpassing the ₹3.99-lakh crore disbursed in the same period of the previous year. In 2023-24, total disbursements reached ₹9.07-lakh crore, indicating sustained momentum in home loan uptake.

**SOUTH ON A HIGH**  
The report also highlights regional variations in home loan distribution. Southern States accounted for the largest share of disbursements at 35.02 per cent, followed by West (30.14 per cent) and Northern States (28.73 per cent). The East (including North-East) States lagged, with 6.10 per cent of housing loans to GDP having climbed steadily from 3.2 per cent in 2001-02 to 6.6 per cent in 2011-12 and further to 11.25 per cent in 2023-24.

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Experts attribute the rise in MIG housing demand to increasing disposable incomes, urban expansion, and government initiatives such as subsidies under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY).

The NHB report further highlights the expanding footprint of housing loans in the economy. The ratio of housing loans to GDP has climbed steadily from 3.2 per cent in 2001-02 to 6.6 per cent in 2011-12 and further to 11.25 per cent in 2023-24.

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