

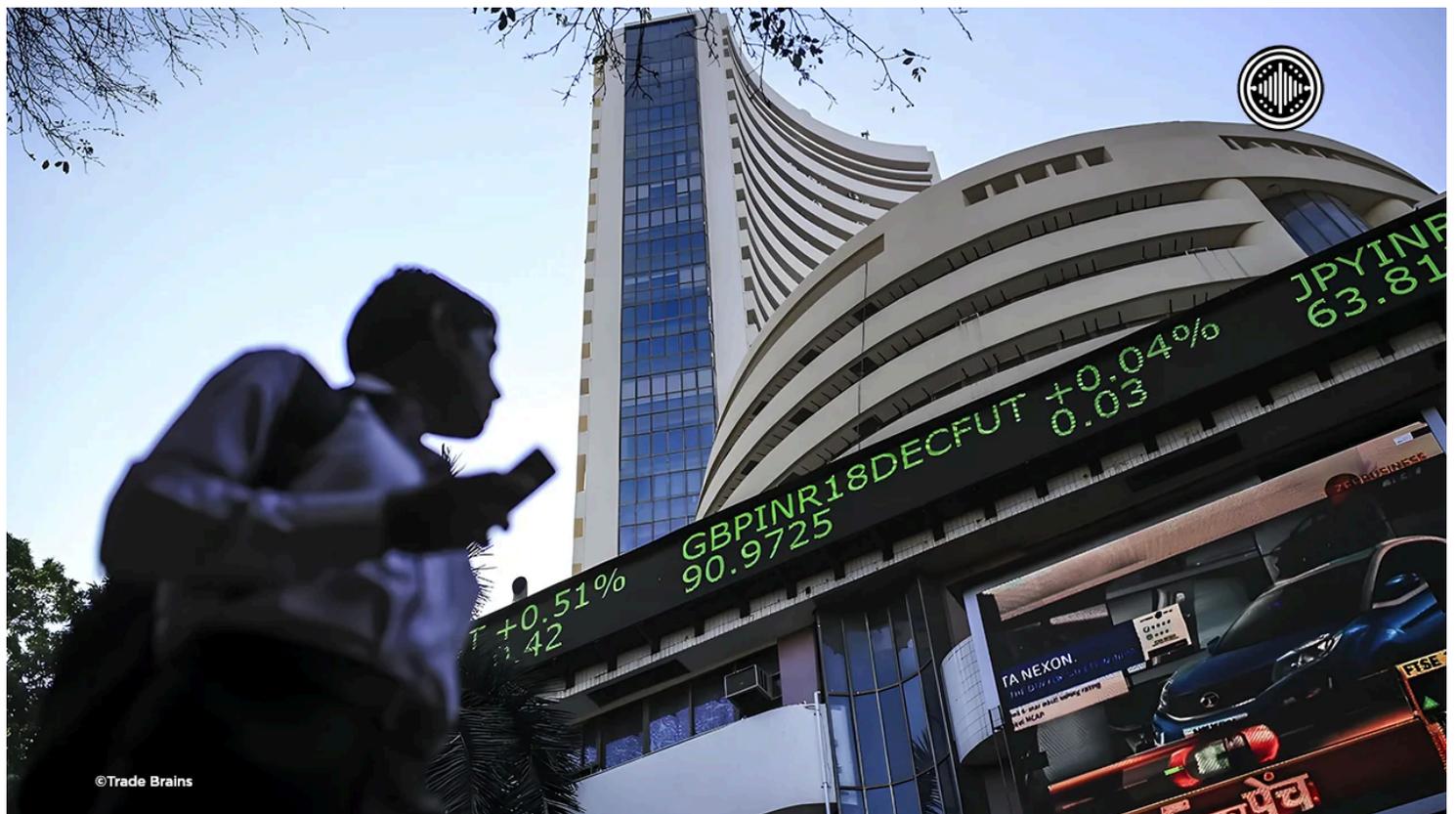
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Stock Markets Decline as Sensex and Nifty Slide Nearly 1%

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Indian stock markets witnessed a sharp decline on Monday, with benchmark indices ending lower for the third consecutive session. The BSE Sensex dropped by 572 points or 0.70 percent to close at 80,891.02, while the NSE Nifty fell 156.10 points or 0.63 percent, settling at 24,680.90.

Investors remained cautious amid mixed corporate earnings, global economic uncertainty, and persistent foreign capital outflows. Market experts cited weak sentiment in IT and banking sectors, with particular drag from Kotak Mahindra Bank and underwhelming results in the technology space.

Broader market performance also reflected the overall bearish tone. The BSE Midcap index declined by 0.73 percent and the Smallcap index lost 1.1 percent. Most sectoral indices closed in the red, with notable weakness seen in FMCG, IT, and financial stocks.

Among the major laggards, shares of Nestle India dropped around 1.9 percent, contributing to the FMCG sector's weakness. The IT index also declined by 0.38 percent amid ongoing concerns over global demand and profitability in the sector.

Foreign institutional investors remained net sellers, having pulled out over ₹13,000 crore from Indian equities in the previous week. Analysts pointed to the strengthening US dollar and geopolitical tensions as factors influencing investor sentiment.

Rahul Ghose, head of research at Prabhudas Lilladher, noted that the market appears to be forming a head-and-shoulders pattern, indicating the possibility of further corrections. However, he added that the downside may be limited, with defensive sectors such as finance and utilities offering relative stability.

In the past three trading sessions, the Sensex has shed more than 1,800 points, while the Nifty has declined by over 500 points, bringing both indices to levels not seen in nearly two months.

Looking ahead, market participants are expected to closely monitor developments in India-US trade relations, upcoming corporate earnings, and global monetary policy cues for direction. Until clarity emerges on these fronts, volatility may persist across domestic equities.