

BUSINESS & FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

European Stocks End Sharply Lower As Coronavirus Fears Escalate

European stocks nosedived on Monday amid an escalation in worries about the spread of coronavirus outside China.

It was a free fall for stocks from across various sectors as selling was widespread in almost all the major markets in the region.

According to reports, South Korea raised its virus alert to the highest level, while Italy became Europe's epicenter for coronavirus cases over the weekend. Iran has confirmed an uptick in infections.

Italian bank Intesa Sanpaolo has reportedly decided to close 4 branches in the country as the government imposed strict quarantine restrictions in two northern "hotspot" regions close to Milan and Venice.

Following the move, about 50,000 people cannot enter or leave several towns in Veneto and Lombardy for the next two weeks without special permission.

Meanwhile, the National Health Commission said China had 150 new confirmed deaths from the coronavirus on Sunday, pushing the death toll nationwide to 2,592 among 77,150 confirmed cases.

The pan European Stock 600 tumbled 3.79%. Among the major indices, the U.K.'s FTSE 100 declined 3.34%, Germany's DAX plunged 4.01% and France's CAC 40 plummeted 3.94%. Switzerland's SMI shed 3.58%.

Among other markets in Europe, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden lost 2.8 to 4.5%.

Greece tumbled more than 8%, while Italy lost nearly 5.5%. Russia shed about 0.6% and Turkey ended lower by about 1.6%.

Airlines, automobile and financial stocks were among the most prominent losers.

In the French market, STMicroElectronics, Peugeot, ArcelorMittal, Renault, Essilor Luxottica, Accor, Bouygues, Airbus Group, Safran, Michelin, Publicis Groupe, BNP Paribas, Technip and Credit Agricole tumbled 3 to 7%.

In Germany, Lufthansa ended nearly 8.5% down. Daimler, Adidas, Deutsche Bank, Volkswagen, Merck, Bayer, BMW, Deutsche Post, Infineon and Fresenius lost 4 to 7%. Wirecard, SAP, Allianz, HeidelbergCement, RWE and E.ON also declined sharply.

In the U.K. market, EasyJet ended nearly 17% down. TUI declined almost 10%, International Consolidated Airlines shed 9.1%, Anglo American declined 8.5% and Melrose Industries shed about 7.5%.

On the other hand, Intu Properties soared 11.1%, Fresnillo climbed up 3.2%, Pearson gained about 3.25% and Bunzi gained 2.7%.

