

ICICI Bank Up 8.4% After Monday's Erosion

I've to stand by my customers: Kamath

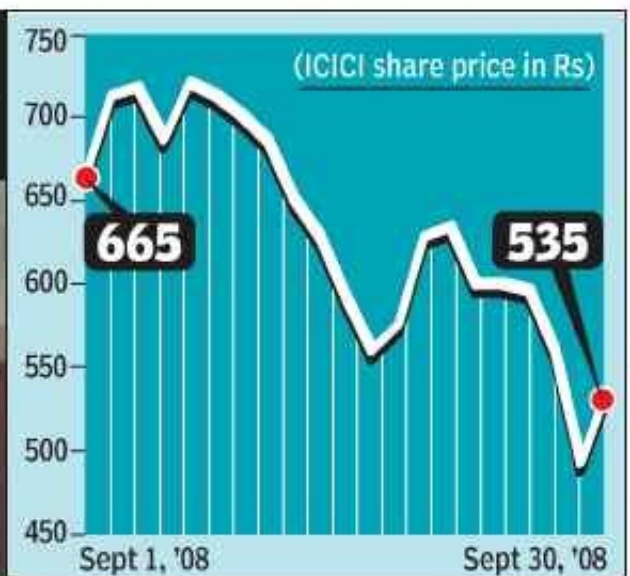
Mumbai: Digging his heels for a hard battle against market manipulators, ICICI Bank chief K V Kamath cancelled all his engagements, including the visit to France as leader of a delegation, to stand by the bank, its customers and stakeholders, which include some major foreign investors.

"I have to prioritise what I see as urgencies. I have to stand by my company, my staff, my customers, my stakeholders," said Kamath, who was slated to go for 'EU-India Business Summit' in Paris starting on Tuesday in his capacity as president of industry chamber CII.

Trying to reassure the high valued as well as retail clientele, Kamath said the kind of attack mounted through malicious and baseless rumours was possibly the biggest challenge of this kind and exuded confidence in the bank's strong financial position and wisdom of stakeholders.

"None of our major investors, including Temasek,

NO MAJOR INVESTORS ARE PANICKING



have panicked or talked of concerns. No body has raised any issue. We pro-actively continue to communicate with them... (There is) no panic call from major foreign shareholders," Kamath said.

ICICI has nearly 70% foreign ownership, including stake held by Singapore state investor Temasek and the Government of Singapore Investment Corporation (CIG).

Amid the ongoing American financial crisis, ICICI shares lost close to 12% on

Monday in a continuous hammering down of its shares amid panic selling fuelled by rumours that the bank was under acute crisis. However, shares on Tuesday rebounded and closed at Rs 535, up nearly 8.4%.

Kamath said ICICI Bank was profitable. "This was due to the strong core performance, which more than offset the impact of adverse debt and equity market conditions in India and globally since the second half of 2007-2008." PTI