

Reliance Industries posts 5.45 per cent drop in net profit for April-June quarter

Mumbai: Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) reported a 5.45 per cent drop in net profits in the first quarter of the current fiscal because of lower margins from its oil to chemical (O2C) business. RIL posted a consolidated net profit of ₹15,138 crore (attributable to the owners of the company) against ₹16,011 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year. Analysts were expecting net profits of around ₹16,000 crore.

Margins from the O2C business fell 320 basis points to 8.3 per cent over the previous year. O2C revenues showed a growth of 18.1 per cent to ₹157,133 crore from ₹133,031 crore a year ago.

But EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation & amortisation) declined 14.3 per cent to ₹13,093 crore from ₹15,286 crore. EBITDA was lower on account of lower transportation fuel cracks (margins), particularly gasoline



cracks which was down 30 per cent over the previous year. Downstream chemical margins were also lower compared with the same period in the last fiscal.

Reliance's consumer-facing business represented by digital services and retail put up a good show, Jio Platforms Ltd (JPL) saw revenues rising nearly 13 per cent to ₹34,548 crore from ₹30,640 crore. EBITDA improved ₹14,638 crore. The EBITDA margins declined 50 basis points to 49.7 per cent.

Net profit rose 11.7 per cent to ₹5,698 crore from ₹5,101 crore. RIL said the growth in revenues was primarily driven by robust subscriber growth across mobility and homes. Within digital services, revenues at Reliance Jio Infocomm rose to ₹26,478 crore from ₹24,042 crore, while net profit was at ₹5,445 crore against ₹4,863 crore a year ago.

The average revenue per user (ARPU) was stable at ₹181.7 per subscriber per month on a sequential basis and up 0.7 per cent over the previous year. Per capita data consumption increased to 30.3 GB per month or more than 1 GB a day.

Revenues at Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL) gained nearly 7 per cent over the previous year period to ₹66,260 crore from ₹62,159 crore. EBITDA margins improved by 30 basis points to 8.5 per cent. The profit after tax came in at ₹2,549 crore against ₹2,436 crore, a rise

of 4.6 per cent.

For RIL, gross revenues from all the businesses showed a rise of 11.5 per cent to ₹2,57,823 crore (₹2,31,132 crore) which was in line with estimates. The EBITDA was up 2 per cent at ₹42,748 crore. "Reliance's resilient operating and financial performance in this quarter underscores the strength of its diverse portfolio of businesses," Mukesh Ambani, chairman and managing director of Reliance, said.

"Reliance has made significant progress on the implementation of new energy giga-factories. On completion, these projects will provide India a world-class, integrated green energy ecosystem which can propel the next leg of sustainable growth," he said. During the quarter, RIL's net debt stood at ₹112,341 crore compared with ₹116,281 crore in the preceding three months.

Rupee, stocks down as Microsoft outage triggers sell-off in equities in global markets

Mumbai: Stocks and the rupee plunged on Friday amid a global sell-off in equities triggered by an IT outage that caused devices to crash globally.

While the BSE Sensex tanked 738.81 points or 0.91 per cent to end at 80604.65, the rupee ended at record low of 83.66 to the dollar in the wake of the share crash.

The global Microsoft outage gave investors the opportunity to resort to profit booking: The 30-share BSE Sensex hit a new all-time high of 81587.76 in initial trade but failed to carry forward the winning momentum to settle below 81000. Forex traders said the weak domestic markets and elevated oil prices pressured the rupee. "We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on weak global markets and a strength in the US dollar. Weak Asian and European currencies may also weigh on the rupee," Anuj Choudhary, research analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said.

The NSE Nifty tumbled 269.95 points, or 1.09 per cent, and ended at 24530.90 after reaching a new peak of 24854.80 during the opening



bell. Among the Sensex pack, Tata Steel tumbled over 5 per cent, while JSW Steel tanked nearly 5 per cent.

Tata Motors, NTPC, UltraTech Cement, Tech Mahindra, Bajaj Finance, Power Grid, Mahindra & Mahindra, and Reliance Industries were the other major laggards.

Infosys climbed nearly 2 per cent after the IT major reported a 7 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at ₹6,368 crore in the April-June quarter and raised its growth outlook for the current financial year, signalling an improvement in the IT segment. ITC, Asian Paints and HCL Technologies were the other gainers.

The NSE and the BSE said they are not impacted because of the global outage of Microsoft systems even as disruptions were reported in functioning of several airlines, banks, media outlets worldwide.

L&T Technology Services reports net profit growth, revenue up 7 pc

Mumbai: L&T Technology Services Ltd (LTTS) on Thursday reported a net profit of Rs 314 crore for the first quarter of the current fiscal (FY25) ended June 30, marking a nearly 1 per cent year-on-year growth. The engineering services company posted revenues at Rs 2,462 crore, a 7 per cent growth YoY. During the quarter, LTTS won two \$30 million deals, two \$15 million deals, and three deals with a total contract value (TCV) of \$10 million. Am-

itChadha, CEO and Managing Director, L&T Technology Services, said that the company's mobility grew by 6 per cent sequentially "driven by our differentiated presence across EV, SDV and connected car technology". "In hi-tech and sustainability, our new strategy is driving a significant increase in the pipeline and large deal discussions that make us confident of a pickup in growth momentum," said Chadha. The company said it is reassured of



its performance for the rest of the year and "reaffirm our aspirations to reach \$1.5 billion in annualised revenues". At the end of Q1 FY25, the patents portfolio of L&T Technology Services stood at 1,343, out of which 853 are co-authored with its customers, while the rest are filed by LTTS.

LIC shares surge nearly 80 per cent in one year



Mumbai: India's largest insurance company, LIC's shares railed 78 per cent over the last one year, following strong operational performance or positive sentiment for PSU shares among the investors. LIC share

price was Rs 1,101 at 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, which was Rs 620 on July 18, 2023. The company's revenue in the financial year 2023-24 has been Rs 8.46 lakh crore, which was Rs 7.84 lakh crore in the financial year 2022-23. During this period, the company's profit increased from Rs 35,997 crore to Rs 40,885 crore. Talking about other insurance sector stocks, HDFC Life Insurance has given negative returns of about two per cent. In

the last one year, the share price of HDFC Group's life insurance company has declined from Rs 656 to Rs 645. SBI Life Insurance has given returns of about 24 per cent in the last one year. Its share price is Rs 1628, which was Rs 1,314 on July 18, 2023. ICICI Prudential Life Insurance shares have given a return of 12 per cent in the last one year. Its share price on July 18, 2024 was Rs 642, which was Rs 574 on July 18, 2023.

HSBC Mutual Fund unveils campaign to educate investors on SIP Top-up

New Delhi: As our lives evolve, so do our goals, lifestyles, expenses, cost of living, and dreams. But how many of us actually think about giving our money the promotion it deserves? The money that works hard to grow our wealth, to enable us to fulfill our aspirations. Sabko life mein growth chahiye, Sabko job mein promotion chahiye, Waise hi wealth creation keliyetumhare SIP kobhi promotion chahiye! Recognizing this, HSBC Mutual Fund has unveiled Apne #SIPKoDoPromotion, a unique digital campaign to create awareness and educate investors about SIP Top-up and the role it plays in their long-term wealth creation. The campaign is a series of three short films of 30 seconds each, with an aim to encourage investors to embrace the concept of giving their money a well-deserved promotion by opting for a Top-Up facility on their Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs). SIPs are a popular investment tool that allows investors to invest a fixed amount in a mutual fund scheme at regular intervals (monthly, quarterly, etc.). An SIP Top-Up takes this concept a step further. This facility allows investors to increase their SIP by a fixed amount or percentage, at predefined intervals. A SIP Top-up can take care of inflation, evolving lifestyles, expenses, etc. thus helping investors to save in line with their regular income. The Apne #SIPKoDoPromotion uses real life situations to nudge investors to opt for a top-up plan to meet their long-term wealth creation goals. The aim is to bridge the disconnect between rising aspirations and investment strategies by promoting the power of SIP Top-Up. Apne #SIPKoDoPromotion aims to encourage investors to consider investing in a Sip Top-up, to align it with their evolving goals, lifestyle, expenses, dreams, etc.

Tata AIA Life Insurance ranks 6th globally with record number of MDRT advisors

Guwahati: Tata AIA Life Insurance (Tata AIA) has secured a prestigious 6th position in the Global Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT) rankings for 2024, underscoring its leadership in the life insurance sector. The company registered an impressive 2584 MDRT-qualified advisors and employees as of 31st December 2023, marking a substantial 30.64% increase from the previous year.

Tata AIA also achieved a significant milestone by topping the list in India for the highest number of female MDRT qualifiers, with 1238 qualified advisors, and ranked 7th globally in this category.

MDRT is a renowned global association of financial professionals, representing excellence in life insurance and financial services across 80 nations. Members of MDRT are recognized for their exceptional knowledge, ethical conduct, and outstanding client service.



Amit Dave, Chief Distribution Officer - Proprietary Business at Tata AIA, expressed pride in the company's achievement, stating, "This recognition reaffirms our commitment to delivering best-in-class advice to our consumers, ensuring they secure their future and fulfill their aspirations."

In Guwahati, a key market for Tata AIA, the recognition of MDRT-certified advisors is expected to bolster consumer confidence, driving higher engagement and satisfaction among policyholders. The city's growing demand for comprehensive financial planning and robust insurance solutions aligns well with Tata AIA's commitment to excellence and customer-centric approach.

CEAT ISRL Season 2 breaks records with surge in global rider registrations



Guwahati: The CEAT Indian Supercross Racing League (ISRL) has set new benchmarks for global motorsport as it kicks off Season 2 with unprecedented enthusiasm. Since the registration opened on June 21, 2024, the league has recorded over 100 entries within the first three weeks, surpassing last year's total of 102 registrations. This rapid surge underscores the growing international appeal of the league, with riders from 13 countries joining the fray.

The roster for Season 2 includes returning stars like Matt Moss and Jordi Tixier, alongside newcomers such as Luke James Clout and Mike Alessi. With athletes representing diverse regions, including the USA, Australia, and several European nations, ISRL is solidifying its status as a premier global Super-

cross event.

In Guwahati, the excitement is palpable as the city anticipates the league's return. Local fans are eagerly following the registration updates, with the upcoming season promising to bring high-octane action and top-tier competition to the city. The involvement of Indian riders like Rugved Barguje and Ikshan Shanbhag adds to the local enthusiasm, highlighting Guwahati's growing role in the international Supercross scene.

Season 2 is set to commence in January 2025, featuring a mix of 450cc international riders, 250cc international riders, and 250cc India-Asia competitors. Organized in collaboration with the Federation of Motor Sports Clubs of India (FMSCI), the league aims to deliver a thrilling blend of action and entertainment across multiple Indian cities.

Vi announces enhanced international roaming packs for Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Jordan to serve growing Indian travel market

Shillong: Vi, a prominent player in India's telecom sector, has launched new Postpaid International Roaming packs tailored specifically for travelers visiting Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Jordan. Starting at an affordable Rs. 649, these packs ensure seamless connectivity across 120 countries, catering to the increasing number of Indian travelers exploring Central and West Asia.

In Guwahati, a vital economic hub in Northeast India renowned for its vibrant trade and cultural exchanges, Vi's expanded international roaming options are set to facilitate smoother business communications and travel experiences.

This move supports Guwahati's position as a pivotal gateway to global markets, enabling local enterprises to maintain uninterrupted connections with international partners while exploring new business opportunities in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Jordan.

Shillong, another significant market in the Northeast, stands to benefit significantly from Vi's latest offerings. The diverse range of Vi's roaming packs, including options like 24-hour, 10-day, 14-day, and 30-day plans, coupled with the 'ALWAYS ON' feature to prevent unexpected charges post-pack expiry, ensures that businesses and travelers can stay



connected efficiently during their overseas ventures.

Vi's initiative comes as Kazakhstan, home to the Baikonur Cosmodrome, Uzbekistan with its historic city of Samarkand, and Jordan with attractions like the Dead Sea and Petra, continue to attract a growing number of Indian tourists seeking

unique cultural and historical experiences.

"We are excited to introduce these enhanced international roaming packs," said a Vi spokesperson. "Vi remains committed to providing seamless connectivity solutions tailored to meet the diverse needs of our users."

Prime Day 2024: Unbeatable fashion deals await on Amazon



Aizawl: Amazon India is set to delight Prime members with the much-anticipated Prime Day on July 20-21, 2024. This event promises an unparalleled shopping experience with savings of 50-80% on top fashion and beauty brands, including FOREVER 21, LOUIS PHILIPPE, and PUMA, among others. Over 15,000 new product launches will be available, offering everything from trendy apparel to chic accessories and premium travel luggage.

Shoppers in Aizawl are particularly excited about the deals. The bustling Aizawl market, known for its keen fashion enthusiasts, eagerly awaits the discounts on favorite brands like Hush Puppies, Colorbar, and Skybags. Local vendors anticipate a surge in demand for stylish and budget-friendly items, enhancing the city's vibrant shopping scene.

Prime Day is not just about great deals; it's about enhancing lifestyles. Whether it's a FOREVER 21 A-line dress, a Seiko analog watch, or Tommy Hilfiger luggage, Amazon ensures Prime members stay fashionable and avoid #FashionFOMO. Additionally, Prime membership benefits include free and fast delivery, access to Prime Video, Amazon Music, and much more.

Singhania Quest+ announces 'Go Coderz': National coding competition for schools

Imphal: Singhania Quest+, in partnership with the World Book of Records (London, UK), has launched 'Go Coderz,' India's first and largest national coding competition for school students. Designed in line with the New Education Policy (NEP), which integrates coding into the curriculum, the event invites participation from grades 3 to 10.

The competition boasts the Gautam Singhania Coding

Scholarship worth ₹1 lakh for the winners. It has already garnered over 15,000 registrations, with expectations to reach 50,000 students from 100 schools across 25 cities by the 15 August 2024 registration deadline. Participating students will receive free coding master classes to enhance their skills before competing.

Dr. Brijesh Karia, Chief Operating Officer of Singhania Quest+, stated, "The NEP

marks a transformative shift in education. 'Go Coderz' is aligned with this policy, aiming to nurture young coding talent."

From an Imphal market perspective, local schools have enthusiastically embraced this initiative, highlighting the city's commitment to technological advancement in education. Imphal's participation is expected to significantly contribute to the overall competition.

CMF launches Phone 1, Buds Pro 2 and Watch Pro 2 in India

Aizawl: CMF, a sub-brand of the London-based tech giant Nothing, has launched its latest devices: CMF Phone 1, CMF Buds Pro 2, and CMF Watch Pro 2, with sales beginning today at 12 PM IST.

The CMF Phone 1 stands out with its MediaTek Dimensity 7300 5G processor, offering unparalleled performance. It features a 5000 mAh battery for two days of use, up to 16 GB RAM, a Sony 50 MP rear camera, and a 16 MP front camera. The 6.67" Super AMOLED display with a 120 Hz adaptive refresh rate ensures a smooth user experience.

The CMF Watch Pro 2 combines style and functionality with a 1.32" AMOLED always-on display, over 120 sports modes, and 11 days of battery life. It supports health monitoring, Bluetooth calls, and music control, and is IP68 rated for water and dust resis-



tance.

The CMF Buds Pro 2 deliver a premium audio experience with dual drivers, LDAC™ technology, and 50 dB Smart ANC. These earbuds offer 43 hours of battery life, with a quick 10-minute charge providing seven hours of playback.

In Aizawl, tech-savvy consumers are excited about the new CMF products. Local retailers like Croma and Vijay Sales are gearing up for high demand, driven by competitive pricing and launch offers. The CMF Phone 1, available at

₹15,999 for the 6GB model and ₹17,999 for the 8GB model, is expected to attract significant interest, especially with Day 1 Sale prices of ₹14,999 and ₹16,999, respectively.

The CMF Watch Pro 2 is priced at ₹4,999 (Dark Grey, Ash Grey) and ₹5,499 (Blue, Orange Vegan Leather). The CMF Buds Pro 2 are available for ₹4,299. All products are available on Flipkart, Croma, Vijay Sales, and other partner stores starting today, with additional discounts valid until July 31st.

Yuva Sur Sartaj 2024: Dedhia Music Foundation launches premier talent hunt for Hindustani classical musicians

Guwahati: Dedhia Music Foundation (DMF) has announced the debut of Yuva Sur Sartaj 2024, an innovative platform aimed at discovering and nurturing young talent in Hindustani Classical Music nationwide. Founded by Aatish Dedhia, CEO of Zycus, DMF is committed to promoting and preserving India's cultural heritage through music. Yuva Sur Sartaj 2024 offers

aspiring musicians aged 15-30 a prestigious opportunity to showcase their talent. Judged by esteemed artists Kaushiki Chakraborty, Rahul Deshpande, and Sanjeev Abhyankar, the competition aims to rekindle interest in Hindustani Classical Music among India's youth.

"This initiative aims to restore focus to our country's rich musical traditions amidst

a predominantly Western music landscape," said Aatish Dedhia. The competition spans three stages: Call for Entries, Virtual Auditions, culminating in a Grand Finale on October 15, 2024, at Mumbai's Nehru Auditorium, with live-streaming across social media.

Participants can register at Yuva Sur Sartaj to compete for significant cash prizes and

mentorship. Winners in two age categories (15-22 and 23-30) will receive cash awards and funding for further classical vocal training, underscoring DMF's commitment to nurturing talent.

Mrs. Kaushiki Chakraborty, renowned Hindustani classical vocalist, lauded the initiative for its role in inspiring future generations to embrace and excel in classical music.

PNB MetLife kicks off 8th Junior Badminton Championship in 10 cities

Guwahati: PNB MetLife has announced the launch of the 8th edition of its Junior Badminton Championship (JBC), designed to empower young athletes across India. The championship will cover 10 major cities, starting in New Delhi on 1st August, and includes Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Guwahati, Kochi, Jalandhar, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Ranchi, and Lucknow.

Since its inception, the JBC has attracted over 48,000 participants across 38,000 matches, earning recognition from the World Record Certification Agency (WRCA) for 'Most kids participating in a Badminton Championship in multiple cities' for two consecutive years. This year, the championship aims to build on its legacy of fostering sportsmanship and skill development among young shuttlers aged 7 to 17, offering categories from Under 9 to Under 17.

The Guwahati leg of the championship will be held from 7th to 10th August, providing local young athletes a platform to showcase their talent and compete at a state level. This event is expected to boost the sports culture in Guwahati and inspire more young players to take up badminton seriously.

Sameer Bansal, MD & CEO of PNB MetLife, expressed his enthusiasm: "The JBC has become synonymous with nurturing talent and promoting sportsmanship among our youth. As we gear up for the 8th edition, our focus remains on providing budding shuttlers with a platform to refine their talents and achieve their dreams."

Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, Asian Games Gold Medalists and mentors for the JBC, also shared their excitement. Shetty stated, "My passion for badminton compels me to give back to the sport that has shaped my life." Rankireddy added, "This initiative is more than just a tournament; it's a steppingstone for young players to hone their skills and achieve their dreams."



Sony LIV teases 'Pehla Pyaar: <1% Chance' ahead of August 5 premiere



Mumbai: Sony LIV has unveiled the teaser for its highly anticipated love story series, 'Pehla Pyaar: <1% Chance,' set to premiere on August 5. This new series, produced by RnD Films, is crafted by renowned storyteller Dilip Jha, with Ritesh Modi as the showrunner. The narrative promises a nostalgic journey into the realm of first love, complete with rain-soaked meet-cutes and heart-fluttering moments.

'Pehla Pyaar' introduces new talents Arista Mehta and Krish Rao, who play the lead roles of Nandani and Murlidhar. The series aims to capture the magic and innocence of school romance, offering an emotional rollercoaster that resonates with audiences of all ages.

Sony LIV's strategic release of 'Pehla Pyaar' aligns with the platform's commitment to delivering diverse and engaging content. By featuring fresh faces and compelling storytelling, the series is poised to attract a broad viewer base, enhancing Sony LIV's position in the competitive streaming market.

The teaser is available for viewing on Instagram, generating excitement and anticipation among potential viewers. Dive into the world of 'Pehla Pyaar' and experience the magic of first love, exclusively on Sony LIV starting August 5.

Škoda Auto India announces stylish compact SUV design, eyes 2025 global debut

Guwahati: Škoda Auto India has revealed the second teaser of its highly anticipated compact SUV, slated to make its global debut in 2025. Positioned to compete in India's burgeoning sub 4-metre SUV segment, this new offering underscores Škoda's strategic expansion and commitment to the Indian market.

Built on the versatile MQB-A0-IN platform, which also underpins the successful Kushaq and Slavia models, Škoda's upcoming SUV promises a blend of European craftsmanship and localized design sensibilities. Petr Janeba, Brand Director at Škoda Auto India, emphasized the significance of this launch, stating, "Our new compact SUV will deliver a 'big car' experience within a compact footprint, ideal for urban driving conditions in India."

The design teaser showcases Škoda's Modern Solid design language, featuring clean lines and muscular contours that enhance its road presence.



With high ground clearance and robust wheel arches, the SUV is engineered to tackle diverse terrains with ease.

In Guwahati, known for its burgeoning automotive market, Škoda's new compact SUV is poised to capture attention with its blend of style, performance, and practicality. As a gateway to Northeast India, Guwahati's discerning consumers are likely to appreciate Škoda's European heritage and the reliability of its locally developed MQB-A0-IN platform.

Godrej Consumer Products launches India's first indigenous mosquito repellent molecule

Guwahati: In a landmark achievement for India's scientific community, Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL) has introduced 'Renofluthrin,' the nation's first indigenously developed and patented mosquito repellent molecule. This innovative molecule, featured in the new Goodknight Flash liquid vapouriser, promises to be twice as effective as any other formulation currently available in the market.

Renofluthrin has undergone rigorous testing and received approval from the Central Insecticide Board and Registration Committee (CIB&RC), ensuring its efficacy and safety. This breakthrough comes as India faces increasing reliance on illegal and unregistered Chinese mosquito repellent molecules, highlighting the importance of self-reliance in combating mosquito-borne diseases.

The introduction of Renofluthrin is expected to have a significant impact on markets like Guwahati,

where residents have increasingly turned to potent repellent formats due to the ineffectiveness of existing solutions. Goodknight Flash liquid vapouriser, priced economically at around INR 100 for the complete pack, aims to provide an affordable and highly effective solution for urban and rural areas alike.

Sudhir Sitapati, MD & CEO of GCPL, expressed confidence in the new molecule, stating, "Renofluthrin makes India self-reliant in mosquito control. With its broad-spectrum efficacy, targeting species like Anopheles, Aedes, and Culex, it offers immediate and long-lasting protection."

Prominent Developmental Pediatrician Dr. Samir Dalwai emphasized the public health benefits, noting, "Mosquito-borne diseases pose severe health risks and economic burdens. Renofluthrin's introduction is a major step forward in providing effective and safe protection against these threats."

Flipkart expands digital payment offerings with new recharge and bill payment categories

Guwahati: Flipkart, India's home-grown e-commerce giant, has announced the launch of five new recharge and bill payment categories, expanding its digital payment services. The new categories include Fastag, DTH recharges, landline, broadband, and mobile postpaid bill payments, adding to the existing options for electricity and mobile prepaid recharges.

In collaboration with BillDesk and integrated with the Bharat Bill Payments System (BBPS), these services aim to enhance the customer experience by offering seamless electronic bill payments. As part of a limited-time offer, customers can redeem up to 10% in rewards using Flipkart UPI with SuperCoins.

Gaurav Arora, Vice President of Payments and SuperCoins at Flipkart, commented, "With a rapid surge in the digital payments industry, customers are increasingly opting for electronic modes for paying their bills. We have diversified our selection of services in-line with Flipkart's vision to



simplify the digital payments journey for customers and further the government's vision of a cashless economy."

Ajay Kaushal, Co-Founder and Director of BillDesk, expressed his excitement about the collaboration, stating, "This strategic expansion allows Flipkart customers to experience seamless bill payments, receive timely notifications, and check amounts due across their preferred billers, leveraging BBPS capabilities."

In Guwahati, this initiative is expected to significantly impact local markets by offering a convenient, secure, and rewarding digital payment experience. With the growing trend of electronic transactions, businesses and consumers in Guwahati can now enjoy the benefits of hassle-free bill payments while shopping on Flipkart.

Messi Sidelined for Inter Miami Due to Ankle Injury Sustained in Copa America Final



Fort Lauderdale: Inter Miami will be without their star player Lionel Messi for at least two upcoming Major League Soccer games due to an ankle injury he sustained during the Copa America final. Coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino confirmed that Messi is dealing with a ligament injury in his right ankle, which will see him absent from the field as he undergoes rehabilitation.

The injury occurred during Argentina's Copa America final against Colombia, where Messi had to leave the match in the 64th minute after a non-contact incident. Visibly

distressed, Messi was seen removing his boot and later sobbing on the bench with a noticeably swollen ankle.

Messi, in a statement via Instagram on Monday, reassured fans of his condition, expressing optimism about his recovery and eagerness to return to play soon. Inter Miami, currently holding the second spot in the Eastern Conference standings, faces Toronto FC on Wednesday and Chicago on Saturday. The team will have to navigate these fixtures without their influential captain as they await further updates on his recovery progress.

Hardik Pandya Set to Lead India in T20Is Against Sri Lanka; Takes Break from ODIs

New Delhi: Hardik Pandya, the star all-rounder, has been appointed to lead the Indian cricket team in the upcoming three-match T20 International series against Sri Lanka starting July 27. This announcement comes after Rohit Sharma's recent retirement from T20 Internationals, following India's triumph at the T20 World Cup last month.

However, Pandya will not be participating in the subsequent three-match ODI series scheduled for August, citing personal reasons for his absence. "Hardik Pandya was India's T20 vicecaptain under Rohit Sharma. He is completely fit and available for the three-match T20I series and will lead the side," stated a senior BCCI source under the condition of anonymity.

The T20I matches are scheduled to be played in Pallekele from July 27 to 30, while the ODIs will take place in Colombo from August 2 to 7. While the BCCI has not yet disclosed who will serve as Pandya's deputy for the T20Is, potential

candidates include Shubman Gill, who led India to a 4-1 series victory over Zimbabwe, and Suryakumar Yadav, who captained the team during the T20Is against South Africa last year.

For the ODIs, with Pandya and regular skipper Rohit Sharma both taking breaks, the leadership could fall to KL Rahul, who previously led the team in South Africa, or possibly to Shubman Gill.

In related news, BCCI secretary Jay Shah emphasized the importance of domestic participation for players not engaged in international duties. Exceptions to this rule will be made for senior players like Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, and Jasprit Bumrah.

"This time there is no zonal selection committee for Duleep Trophy. Only the national selection committee will pick Duleep teams. All Test team contenders will be picked. For Rohit, Virat, and Bumrah, it will be their choice if they want to play or not," added the BCCI source.

Tussle over T20 captain delays squad, Rohit Sharma may return to play ODIs in Sri Lanka

The selection committee meeting to pick the limited overs squad for the Sri Lanka tour was postponed to Thursday following a difference of opinion over the captain for the three-match T20I series.

The Ajit Agarkar-led committee was scheduled to meet on Wednesday evening but it was called off barely a few hours earlier.

None were willing to go on record but The Telegraph understands that new head coach Gautam Gambhir and chief selector Agarkar's move to elevate Suryakumar Yadav to the leadership role failed to get the approval from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) brass.

The decision can't be delayed any further since convener and BCCI secretary Jay Shah has to leave for Colombo to attend the ICC's annual conference which begins on Friday.

Sources confirmed by late evening that Surya was ahead in the race since the BCCI didn't wish to defy Gambhir's choice. Gambhir preferred Surya — with whom he had shared the dressing room at Kolkata Knight Riders — as captain over Har-

dik Pandya. It was during their association at KKR that the world's No.2 T20 batter earned the nickname SKY.

The head coach had made his intentions clear during a virtual meeting, his first since taking charge, with the selection committee members last week which was also attended by Shah. The composition of the white ball squads and the roadmap ahead for Team India were discussed in detail.

Pandya, who was the vice-captain during the T20 World Cup in the USA and the West Indies, was deemed to be an automatic choice but his injury-prone nature came in the way. Gambhir wants consistency and a settled line-up in the run-up to the 2026 World Cup and doesn't have much confidence in Pandya's fitness.

The BCCI's contention has been simple: Pandya had been groomed to step into Rohit Sharma's shoes and his exploits in the World Cup can't be dismissed in a hurry. He hasn't shown any injury concerns in the West Indies last month.

Gambhir also made it clear at the meeting that he would want the Big 3 — Rohit,



Virat Kohli and Jasprit Bumrah — to be available for the ODIs in Sri Lanka as not many matches were slotted ahead of the Champions Trophy in February. It was learnt that while Kohli and Bumrah were unlikely to make themselves available, Rohit could cut short his vacation overseas and return home to lead India in the three-match ODI series, which begins on July 27.

In case Rohit fails to make it, KL Rahul is set to be the stand-in captain. There could also be some good news for Shreyas Iyer, who lost his central contract in February, with a return to the ODI squad.

FIFA Rankings: India retains 124th spot

New Delhi: The Indian football team has retained its 124th spot while Lionel Messi's Argentina consolidated the top position in the latest FIFA rankings issued on Thursday. Argentina's unbeaten run to the continental title glory strengthened their hold at the top spot. India heaved a sigh of relief as it didn't drop any place in the rankings after descending three spots in the previous rankings updated in June after a failed 2026 World Cup qualifying campaign. India's performance has been declining since December last year. It had ranked 99 at its highest point when it first entered the top 100 last year, but it has since been falling. In Asia, India are placed in the 22nd spot, behind the likes of Syria, Palestine, and Vietnam. France maintained their second spot in the rankings after making it to the semifinals of Euro 2024. European champions Spain gained five places to finish third while finalist England moved up one place to fourth ahead of Brazil, which dropped to fifth. Belgium fell three places to sixth, now outside the top five, followed by the Netherlands in seventh, and Portugal, which dropped two places to eighth. Colombia, despite a narrow loss to Argentina in the Copa America final, moved up three places to ninth, marking its return to the top 10.

Uncertainty Over Seine's Cleanliness Looms as Paris Olympics Approach

Paris: With the Paris Olympics on the horizon, set to start on July 26, concerns persist about whether the Seine River will be sufficiently clean to host the triathlon and marathon swimming events. Historically offlimits for swimmers due to pollution, the Seine's current condition varies, with recent tests showing both unsafe and safe levels of contaminants.

Paris has invested significantly, approximately 1.4 billion euros, in infrastructural upgrades aimed at enhancing the river's water quality. A new underground storage basin capable of holding 20 Olympic pools' worth of water was recently inaugurated. This basin

is designed to prevent overflow from storms from entering the Seine, yet sporadic heavy rainfall continues to pose a risk of spiking E. coli levels above the safe threshold set by the World Triathlon Federation. The issue stems partly from Paris's aging combined sewer system, which is overwhelmed during persistent or heavy rain, leading to untreated wastewater discharging into the river. While local authorities monitor the water quality daily, the fluctuating E. coli levels have led Olympic organizers to plan alternative arrangements for events should heavy rains compromise water safety.

Optimism remains that

weather conditions will improve, allowing the events to proceed as scheduled without relocation. The city's efforts to upgrade its infrastructure are part of a longer-term initiative to clean the Seine beyond the Olympics, ensuring lasting benefits for Parisians.

The upcoming games, coupled with the unpredictable weather patterns of recent years, underline the challenges cities face in managing legacy infrastructure amid changing environmental conditions. As the games draw near, athletes and officials alike hope for favorable conditions that will keep the historic debut of these events at the Seine on track

Paris Olympics: Will go all out to get that gold medal, says Sindhu

New Delhi: India's two-time Olympic medallist P.V. Sindhu is aiming to make history in Paris as she sets the bar high for herself in the quadrennial event. The ace shuttler is eyeing to complete her medal cabinet with a coveted gold in the upcoming Olympics. Having won silver at the Rio Olympics in 2016 and bronze at Tokyo 2020, Sindhu is hoping to become the first Indian athlete to secure three individual Olymp-

pic medals.

Reflecting on her previous Olympic experiences, Sindhu expressed her excitement and determination. For me, the Olympics is where I give my 200%. The journeys in 2016 and 2020 were wonderful, filled with immense effort and unforgettable moments. As I prepare for Paris 2024, it's a fresh start, and I have to give my 100% no matter what," she told JioCinema's The Dream-

ers. Ranked among the world's top players, Sindhu draws from her past experiences to fuel her quest for gold. "There are a lot of experiences from my previous outings at the Olympics that I will take into Paris 2024, but I don't want to get overconfident thinking about the medals. I hope I can fulfil the hopes of the nation and get the third medal because getting three consecutive medals is not a joke.