

IndiGo's June quarter profit slumps 12% to Rs 2,729 crore on higher expenses

Mumbai: The country's largest airline IndiGo on Friday posted a nearly 12 per cent decline in profit after tax at Rs 2,728.8 crore in the three months ended June as higher fuel and other expenses crimped the bottom line. While the total income shot up 18 per cent to Rs 20,248.9 crore in the first quarter of the current financial year, the overall expenses, mainly driven by higher fuel costs, jumped 24 per cent to Rs 17,444.9 crore.

In the 2023 June quarter, IndiGo's parent InterGlobe Aviation had a profit after tax of Rs 3,090.6 crore. Excluding the

impact of foreign exchange, the carrier's profit after tax in the latest June quarter was Rs 2,786.3 crore, according to a release. Total income in the year-ago period stood at Rs 17,160.9 crore.

The airline's total expenses surged 24 per cent to Rs 17,444.9 crore, with fuel costs rising 22.7 per cent to Rs 6,416.5 crore in the three months ended June 2024.

In the same period a year ago, total expenses were at Rs 14,070.2 crore.

According to the company, aircraft and engine rentals also went up to Rs 624.1



crore in the latest June quarter from Rs 194.6 crore in the year-ago period. The load factor, which refers to seat occupancy in a flight, dropped to 86.7 per cent in the quarter under review from 88.6 per

cent in the same period a year ago. "I am pleased to report another strong quarterly financial performance for the first quarter of financial year 2025.

"A continued growth in total income of 18 per cent as compared to the same period last year to 202.5 billion rupees and a net profit of 27.3 billion rupees, resulting in a solid margin of around 14 per cent," IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers said. At the end of June, the airline had 382 planes, including 18 aircraft on wet lease. Shares of the company gained 1.37 per cent to close at Rs 4,491.25 apiece on the BSE.

India's forex reserves jump USD 4 billion to new high of USD 670.857 billion

Mumbai: Surpassing the all-time high level achieved the previous week, India's forex reserves jumped by another USD 4 billion to USD 670.857 billion for the seven days ended July 19, the Reserve Bank said on Friday.

The overall reserves had jumped by USD 9.699 billion to an all-time high of USD 666.854 billion in the week ended July 12.

For the week ended July 19, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased by USD 2.578 billion to USD 588.048 billion, the data released on Friday showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves increased by USD 1.329 billion to USD 59.992 billion during the week, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up by USD 95 million to USD 18.207 billion, the apex bank said.

India's reserve position with the IMF were unchanged at USD 4.610 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed.

This method, commonly used in the valuation of assets, is expected to attract private investment by offering a more predictable and potentially lucrative return on investment

PNGRB chairman Anil Kumar Jain said the shift aims to provide "financial stability and attractiveness" for pipeline infrastructure growth.

The decision is expected to have a positive impact on major oil companies such as Indian Oil Corporation and Reliance Industries, which operate extensive pipeline networks.

Increased tariffs could lead to higher revenues for these companies, allowing them to invest in infrastructure upgrades and expansion.

All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council push for pan-India gold price

New Delhi: The All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council (GJC), an industry body representing retail jewellers, is working towards building a consensus for a single rate of gold applicable for jewellers across the country.

At present, gold prices vary between different cities in the country on account of factors such as region-specific demand, stock purchase trends and transportation cost.

"The idea is to create a level playing field for all stakeholders and prevent any undercutting," said Saiyam Mehra, the chairman of GJC. The GJC in association with the Swarna Shilpa Bachao Committee (SSBC) on Thursday held a panel discussion with small and large retailers in Bengal and eastern India to work out the implementation of the uniform rate.

According to city-based jewellers who were present at the discussion, there are significant benefits of a uniform rate which will prevent large players from undercutting smaller players in the form of discount on gold prices and help build trust among consumers, regardless of their location. The elimination of price disparities could lead to a reduction in gold prices in some markets with no opportunities of arbitrage.

While welcoming the decision of the government to



lower customs duty on gold in the Union budget, jewellers hoped that the government would also consider a cut in the GST rate in the future.

"The industry hopes that the GST rate will come down from 3 per cent to around 1-1.5 per cent. In the days of VAT, it was around 1 per cent. Representations have been made to the government in this regard," said Samar Kumar De, working president, SSBC.

Gold prices continued to fall for the third day on Thursday and tumbled by ₹1,000 to ₹70,650 per 10 grams in Delhi. In Calcutta, prices were down by ₹950 to ₹68,600 per 10 gram.

The customs duty on gold and silver was cut from 15 per cent to 6 per cent in the Union budget. While this will significantly benefit consumers, jewellers may face near term pressure on margins having to manage its existing inventory at higher duty-paid prices.

Gold prices declined on selling by local jewellers amidst a weak global market.

Mankind Pharma buys Bharat Serum from Advent International for Rs 13,630 crore

New Delhi: Mankind Pharma Ltd is acquiring Bharat Serum and Vaccines Ltd (BSV) from Advent International for an enterprise value of ₹13,630 crore. BSV is a branded specialty pharma platform in women's health and critical care.

It is present in branded pharmaceutical formulations, active pharmaceutical ingredients (API), biotech & biological formulations, medical devices and ayurvedic medicines. It posted a turnover of ₹1,723.5 crore in 2023-24.

Mankind Pharma is India's fourth largest pharmaceutical company by market share. The company is present across acute and chronic therapeutic areas including anti-infectives, cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, antidiabetic, neuro/CNS and respiratory.

In the consumer healthcare business, the company operates in condoms, pregnancy detection, emergency contraceptives, antacid powders, vitamin and mineral supplements and anti-acne preparations.

In a regulatory filing post market hours, Mankind Pharma said that it has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire a 100 per cent stake in BSV from Advent, subject to closing related adjustments.

According to the company, the strategic move marks a significant leap, positioning it as



a market leader in the Indian women's health and fertility drug market. The acquisition is also expected to give it access to other high entry barrier products in critical care with established complex R&D tech platforms.

Mankind Pharma added that BSV has also developed recombinant and niche biologic products in-house, demonstrating its strong R&D capabilities and has a robust branded product portfolio. This is spread across women's health, fertility and critical care, with a few of its marquee brands enjoying a strong leadership position in their respective therapy areas.

"BSV's acquisition represents a pivotal milestone in Mankind's journey, establishing us as market leader in Indian women's health & fertility segment." Rajeev Juneja, vice-chairman and managing director, Mankind Pharma said.

Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board introduces dual tariff plan for pipelines

New Delhi: The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) on Friday unveiled new regulations for fixing transportation tariffs for petroleum product pipelines, aiming to attract investments and improve efficiency in the sector.

The new rules, effective from August 1, 2024, move away from benchmarking tariffs against railway freight rates, which have not been revised since 2018. The new pricing framework introduces a dual approach to tariffs.

For existing pipelines, often referred to as 'legacy pipelines', tariffs will be indexed to railway freight rates with additional escalations to account for inflation. This means pipeline operators will benefit from a gradual increase in their revenue. However, for pipelines commissioned after 2010, a more market-oriented approach is being adopted. These pipelines will see their tariffs determined by a discounted cash flow (DCF) methodology.

Father-daughter duo Anil and Sonam Kapoor come together

Guwahati: Johnson's®baby, a pioneer in baby skincare, has launched its latest television campaign (TVC), featuring Bollywood's illustrious actors, Anil Kapoor and Sonam Kapoor. The new round of advertising features a fun, playful, and heartwarming film starring one of Bollywood's most favourite father-daughter duos. The film conceptualised by DDB Mudra reinforces the brand's unwavering commitment to help protect a baby's delicate skin from day-one with products formulated using only 'baby safe ingredients'.

Anil Kapoor added, "Johnson's baby is an iconic brand, a brand that has always been a trusted partner for parents like us in our parenting journey. It was in Johnson's that Sunita and I trusted when our babies were born, from

their first bath and first massage to many more milestones."

The highly anticipated 'Protection* ka Promise, Pehle Din Se' campaign goes live across prominent television channels, digital platforms, and social media networks. 1k+ influencer mums will go live taking this promise ahead with the new campaign across social media platforms.

Mr Manoj Gadgil, Business Unit Head-Essential Health & Vice President Marketing, Kenvue, said, "Over the years, Johnson's® Baby has been a trusted partner to parents, working consistently to deliver the best for their babies. We are now delighted to share our latest advertising campaign, featuring Anil Kapoor and, Sonam Kapoor."

Nissan launches 4th generation X-TRAIL with advanced engine technology

Guwahati: Nissan Motor India has announced the launch of the all-new 4th generation X-TRAIL, a premium urban SUV equipped with the world's first production engine featuring variable compression technology. This milestone marks the re-launch of Nissan's Completely Built Unit (CBU) business in India.

The new X-TRAIL, renowned globally with over 7.8 million units sold, has made its mark in the top five bestselling SUVs of 2023. It boasts a 1.5L petrol Variable Compression-Turbo engine coupled with Nissan's 3rd generation XTRONIC CVT, promising enhanced performance and fuel efficiency. Additionally, the SUV includes advanced features such as a 31.2cm high-resolution driver display and 20.3cm HD touch screen with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay.

Bookings for the X-TRAIL will open on 26 July for INR 1 lakh, with deliveries starting in August 2024. Available in Diamond Black, Pearl White, and Champagne Silver, the SUV also features a 7-seater layout and a panoramic sunroof, enhancing its appeal.

In Guwahati, the market is abuzz with anticipation as customers eagerly await the



launch of the X-TRAIL. The city's demand for premium SUVs is growing, and Nissan's reintroduction of the X-TRAIL aligns perfectly with this trend, promising to deliver an unmatched driving experience and innovative technology.

Frank Torres, President of Nissan India Operations, emphasized India's importance in Nissan's global strategy, stating, "This launch is a significant milestone that brings the best of Nissan's global SUV portfolio to discerning Indian customers."

Saurabh Vatsa, Managing Director of Nissan Motor India, added, "The X-TRAIL sets a new benchmark for premium SUVs in India, embodying sophistication, versatility, and advanced technology."

HMD launches Crest and Crest Max 5G smartphones in India

Shillong: HMD Global has officially entered the Indian smartphone market with the launch of its HMD Crest and HMD Crest Max 5G smartphones, now available exclusively on Amazon Specials. These new models set a high bar in mobile photography, featuring a 50MP selfie camera on both devices, with the Crest Max further boasting a 64MP Triple AI camera for exceptional image quality.

The HMD Crest and Crest Max come equipped with advanced AI-driven photography features, including "Hands Free Selfie" mode, slow-motion video, and AI Super Portrait mode. The devices are designed with a 6.67" FHD+ OLED display and are powered by a robust 5000mAh battery with 33W fast charging. The Crest Max also offers up

to 16GB RAM and 256GB storage, while the Crest provides up to 12GB RAM and 128GB storage.

In Shillong, the market has responded positively, with a strong interest in the innovative camera capabilities and sleek design of the new smartphones. The introductory prices of ₹12,999 for the Crest and ₹14,999 for the Crest Max during the Great Freedom Sale are expected to drive significant sales among local tech enthusiasts.

Ravi Kunwar, VP of India & APAC at HMD, highlighted the company's commitment to combining high-end technology with sustainable design. Both models are available for purchase on Amazon and HMD's official website.

Canara Robco Mutual Fund launches Balanced Advantage Fund

Mumbai: Canara Robeco Mutual Fund, India's second oldest asset manager, announced the launch of the Canara Robeco Balanced Advantage Fund, an open-ended dynamic asset allocation fund. This fund aims to generate alpha during favorable market conditions and minimize downside risk during adverse periods. The New Fund Offer (NFO) will be open from July 12, 2024, to July 26, 2024.

The fund will allocate at least 65% towards equities to ensure equity taxation benefits, with the remainder invested in debt and money market instruments. The fund addresses investor behavior impacted by market volatility by dynamically adjusting exposure to equities and debt for long-term capital appreciation and income generation.

Mr. Rajnish Narula, CEO of Canara Robeco Mutual Fund, emphasized the fund's suitability for investors seeking dynamic equity exposure and risk mitigation. The asset allocation will be guided by a proprietary three-factor model that has been back-tested over 20 years. This model utilizes 'Trailing P/B', 'Equity Risk Premium', and 'Forward P/E' to determine asset allocation.

Equity investments will follow a top-down approach for sector allocation and bottom-up selection for stocks, combining compounders and cyclicals. The debt segment will focus on government bonds and AAA-rated corporate papers, managed dynamically to exploit yield curve mispricings.

The fund offers special features like Auto Switch and Smart STP to facilitate staggered investments. It is benchmarked against the CRISIL Hybrid 50+50 – Moderate Index. The fund managers include Mr. Shridatta Bhandwadar, Ms. Ennette Fernandes, Ms. Suman Prasad, and Mr. Amit Kadam.

Mahindra launches high-tech dealerships, revolutionizes trucking services across India

Guwahati: Mahindra's Truck and Bus Division (MTBD) is making waves in the automotive sector with the launch of five cutting-edge dealerships in Jhansi, Ghaziabad, Raipur, Bharuch, and Kadappa. These technologically advanced facilities, boasting 37 service bays, are designed to handle over 75 vehicles daily, equipped with the latest innovations in service technology. Features include driver lodging, 24-hour breakdown assistance, and AdBlue availability, setting new benchmarks in the commercial vehicle sector.

Jalaj Gupta, Business Head – Commercial Vehicles at Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd, highlights the company's remarkable 46% CAGR growth in FY24 and the pivotal role these dealerships play in expanding MTBD's technological footprint. "Our new facilities represent the future of vehicle servicing, offering unparalleled efficiency and support," Gupta states. He also introduced the "Zyada Mileage



Nahin toh Truck Wapas" guarantee for BS6 OBD II trucks, a breakthrough in fuel efficiency and profitability for transporters.

The new dealership in Guwahati will integrate advanced technology to enhance service capabilities and elevate customer experience, reinforcing Mahindra's commitment to innovation. This expansion reflects Mahindra's drive to lead the industry with cutting-edge solutions and customer-centric advancements.

Founded in 1945, the Mahindra Group continues to set standards in technology and innovation, impacting industries and communities globally.

Godrej Agrovet urges for stronger state-industry partnership to advance oil palm sector at New Delhi forum

Guwahati: At the Indian Vegetable Oil Producers Association conference in New Delhi, Godrej Agrovet's (GAVL) Oil Palm Plantation business called for a deeper partnership between state governments and the industry to boost the oil palm sector and support farmers.

Sougata Niyogi, CEO of Godrej Agrovet's Oil Palm Business, emphasized, "Addressing misconceptions about oil palm—from health concerns to environmental impacts—is crucial for industry progress." He underscored the need for enhanced collaboration to meet the target of 3 million metric tonnes of crude palm oil by 2030, a goal set by

the National Mission on Edible Oil – Oil Palm (NMEO-OP).

Recent dietary guidelines from the Indian Council of Medical Research highlight oil palm's benefits, noting its balanced fats that help lower cholesterol. Niyogi advocated for Viability Gap Funding in state policies to protect farmers from price volatility and ensure their income stability.

In Guwahati, the oil palm sector is gaining traction as a sustainable agricultural option. The region's farmers are showing increasing interest due to oil palm's high yield and lower land requirements, which promise enhanced economic returns and align with sustainable farming practices.

Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Ltd. Q1FY25 Results

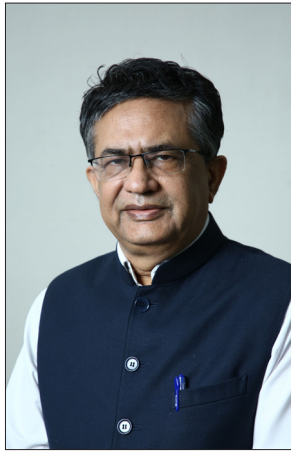
Mumbai: Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Ltd. has announced its financial performance for the quarter ended June 30, 2024. Actually Ujjivan Small Finance Bank has reported results for first quarter ended June 30, 2024 (Q1FY25). The bank has reported 7.09% fall in its net profit at Rs 301.08 crore for the quarter ended June 30, 2024 as compared to Rs 324.07 crore for the same quarter in the previous year. However, total income of the bank has increased by 21.19% at Rs 1,774.27 crore for Q1FY25 as compared to Rs 1,464.10 crore for the corresponding quarter previous year. Ujjivan

Small Finance Bank (USFB) offers small finance to underserved & unserved segments in India. The bank aims to work for the financial inclusion of the country.

This was significantly supported by strong growth in secured asset book improving by 5% QoQ, especially led by affordable housing. As on Jun'24 the secured book proportion stands at 31.3% vs 30.2% as on Mar'24. I am happy to see that we are on track to meet our stated objective and will ensure to improve the secured book contribution to 40% of the total gross advances by end of next financial year."

NSE Chief applauds Union Budget 2024 for boosting job creation and entrepreneurship

Guwahati: In response to the Union Budget 2024 presented by Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Shri Ashishkumar Chauhan, Managing Director and CEO of the National Stock Exchange (NSE), has praised the government's strategic focus on job creation and entrepreneurial support. Chauhan highlighted several key aspects of the budget that he believes will significantly impact India's economic landscape.



Chauhan commended the budget for its robust support in generating employment opportunities by involving the private sector alongside government efforts. He emphasized the budget's provisions to enhance India's status as a leading startup hub by addressing angel tax concerns and increasing the Mudra loan scheme limit from Rs 10 lakhs to Rs 20 lakhs per individual.

Moreover, Chauhan noted the budget's emphasis on in-

creasing women's participation in the workforce, which is expected to bolster India's demographic dividend. He also praised the budget's commitment to skill development, infrastructure, and fiscal discipline, reducing the fiscal deficit to 4.9% and setting a trajectory for a 4.5% deficit by 2025-26.

Overall, Chauhan rated the budget highly, giving it a perfect 10/10 for its comprehensive and forward-thinking approach.

IIM Bangalore launches innovative BBA Programme in Digital Business and Entrepreneurship

Shillong: Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) has announced the launch of an online undergraduate programme focusing on Digital Business and Entrepreneurship, scheduled to commence in September 2024. This initiative marks IIMB's entry into the undergraduate education realm, leveraging its renowned digital learning platform, IIMBx.

Led by Prof. Suresh Bhagavatula, the three-year Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) programme will combine cutting-edge digital technologies with essential business management principles. It aims to equip students with the skills needed to thrive in today's dynamic business landscape, offering internship opportunities and practical projects to enhance practical learning.

Professor Rishikesh T Krishnan, Director of IIMB, highlighted the programme's flexible structure and emphasis on digital readiness, stating, "Our goal is to produce graduates who can lead digital transformations in businesses

or launch their own ventures in the digital realm."

The launch of this programme is expected to have a significant impact on the Guwahati market, where businesses are increasingly embracing digital innovations. As local enterprises in Guwahati adapt to digital transformation, there is a growing demand for skilled professionals in digital business management and entrepreneurship. The programme aims to fill this gap by nurturing talent equipped with the latest digital skills, thus enhancing the region's competitiveness in the digital economy.

The BBA in Digital Business and Entrepreneurship underscores IIMB's commitment to educational excellence and its leadership in online learning. Prof. Vasanthi Srinivasan, Chairperson of Digital Learning at IIMB, emphasized the programme's interactive learning approach, incorporating faculty videos, readings, and practical assignments to ensure a holistic educational experience.

Sansaar unveils new nationwide TVC with Brand Ambassador Ranveer Singh

Guwahati: D'Décor, leader in home décor fabrics, has announced the nationwide retail launch of its new brand, Sansaar. Available in 350 stores across 50 metro and non-metro cities, Sansaar is dedicated to conscious living and offers mindfully crafted home décor fabrics. Ahead of the launch, Sansaar unveiled a new TVC, featuring Powerhouse Ranveer Singh, the brand ambassador & Bollywood Superstar, with the tagline 'live consciously'. The commercial

resonates with Sansaar's dedication to mindful living. It portrays homes where every choice contributes to a positive impact on the environment.

Ranveer Singh's association with Sansaar underscores the brand's message of integrating style seamlessly with environmental awareness, offering consumers an opportunity to enhance their living spaces responsibly.

Sanjana Arora, Business Head of Sansaar said "Sansaar takes pride in its

premium, minimalist fabrics crafted in India. These products will be available through our extensive network of exclusive retail outlets in major metros, tier 1, 2, and 3 cities throughout India."

Starting July, Sansaar will introduce an extensive collection of premium soft furnishing fabrics, including curtains and upholstery, followed by a comprehensive range of premium home décor fabrics designed to elevate any living space in the coming months.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor praises balanced Budget focused on infrastructure, social sector and green transition

Shillong: In response to today's budget announcement, Mr. Vikram Gulati, Country Head and Executive Vice President of Corporate Affairs and Governance at Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM), expressed strong approval of the government's approach. He commended the budget for its balance between infrastructure development and social sector investments, while maintaining fiscal discipline with a projected fiscal deficit of 4.9%.

Gulati highlighted the budget's emphasis on enhancing

agricultural productivity and increasing women's participation in the workforce, noting these measures will broaden the benefits of economic growth. He also welcomed the targeted support for MSMEs and the manufacturing sector, which he believes will boost their contribution to the national GDP.

Additionally, Gulati praised the government's commitment to energy transition and climate change mitigation, aligning with TKM's sustainability goals, including carbon neutrality by 2050. He also

supported the increased focus on education and skill development, including the new internship scheme funded by CSR spending, which aims to enhance job opportunities for youth.

"The tax rationalization will increase disposable incomes and stimulate consumption, which is essential for economic growth," Gulati said. "We look forward to the government's upcoming reforms and reaffirm our commitment to 'Grow in India, Grow with India' in support of the nation's development goals."

Glenmark Foundation and partners launch boat clinic to boost maternal and child health in Assam

Guwahati: Glenmark Foundation has teamed up with the Centre for North East Studies & Policy Research (C-NES) and the District Administration of Darrang to launch a pioneering boat clinic program. This innovative project aims to enhance maternal and child health by delivering essential healthcare services to remote and flood-prone riverine communities in Assam.

The boat clinic program addresses significant barriers to healthcare access caused by geographical isolation and seasonal flooding. The mobile healthcare unit is specially designed to navigate these challenges, providing critical medical services including immunizations, prenatal care, and health education. Equipped with a laboratory and pharmacy, the boat will host a team of doctors, nurses, lab technicians, and pharmacists who will conduct regular health camps in the most vulnerable



areas.

Nayana Parasher, DPM NHM Darrang, highlighted the program's importance, stating, "The Boat Clinic will fill a crucial gap in health services, significantly improving access in remote areas." Munindra Nath Ngatey, District Commissioner of Darrang, praised the initiative, noting it will bolster efforts to extend health services to the district's river islands.

Since 2008, C-NES has been operating similar boat clinics across 14 districts in Assam, and this new launch in Darrang

marks the 15th district to benefit from this model. Sanjoy Hazarika, Founder and Managing Trustee of C-NES, emphasized the program's impact, stating, "This initiative will improve health care access for marginalized communities."

Cheryl Pinto, Director - Corporate Affairs at Glenmark Pharmaceuticals, expressed enthusiasm about the collaboration, saying, "This program reflects our commitment to innovative solutions for maternal and child health, especially in flood-prone areas."

New skill loan scheme to empower India's youth with advanced training opportunities

Guwahati: The Indian government has unveiled a revamped Model Skill Loan Scheme, designed to alleviate financial barriers for students pursuing high-end skill courses. Launched by Shri Jayant Chaudhary, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and the Ministry of Education, the scheme now offers loans up to INR 7.5 lakhs, significantly up from the previous cap of INR 1.5 lakhs.

In a move to broaden access, the revised scheme includes Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs), Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs), and Small Finance Banks as eligible lenders, with the government providing a 75% credit guarantee against defaults. This initiative aims to support advanced training in fields such as healthcare, IT, AI-data science, and digital marketing.

"The Model Skill Loan Scheme represents a significant reform," said Shri Chaudhary during the launch at Kaushal Bhawan. "It provides collateral-free loans to empower youth with skills that match the rapidly evolving job market and aligns with our strategic vision for 2047."

From a regional perspective, the Guwahati market stands to benefit substantially from this scheme. With its burgeoning tech and service industries, Guwahati's youth will have enhanced access to high-quality training, promoting local economic growth and supporting the city's aspirations as a regional educational hub.

Gautam Gambhir Takes the Helm as India Begins Training in Sri Lanka

Pallekele: In a notable leadership shift, Gautam Gambhir has officially commenced his role as the head coach of the Indian men's cricket team, overseeing the team's first practice session in Sri Lanka. The team is gearing up for a threematch T20I series that marks the beginning of their white-ball tour.

Gambhir, who recently took over from Rahul Dravid, was active and involved throughout the training session held in Pallekele. He engaged directly with the players during various fielding drills and one-on-one sessions, bringing a new energy to the team's preparations.

The session included intensive fielding drills and team discussions, with new T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav taking an active role in player engagements. Gambhir



was spotted providing batting tips to Sanju Samson and discussing strategies with all-rounder Shivam Dube, signaling a hands-on approach in his coaching debut.

Supporting Gambhir on this tour are former India all-rounder Abhishek Nayar and Dutch international Ryan ten

Doeschate, both of whom collaborated with Gambhir to secure the IPL 2024 title for Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR). This trio's dynamic involvement is anticipated to inject a fresh perspective and strategy into the team.

The continuity in the coaching staff sees T Dilip maintaining his role as the fielding coach, while Sairaj Bahutule from the National Cricket Academy has stepped in as the interim bowling coach.

India's tour of Sri Lanka will officially begin with the first T20I on July 27, followed by three ODIs. This series not only tests the new coaching regime but also sets the stage for India's approach under Gambhir's leadership, promising a blend of strategic acumen and onfield dynamism.

Paris Olympics: Indian Archers Aim for Medals with Strong Team Dynamics



New Delhi: As the Paris Olympics approach, Indian archer Deepika Kumari voiced her confidence in the team's prospects, emphasizing the importance of communication, particularly in highpressure situations. The Indian archery team, which includes the talented trio of Kumari, Ankita Bhakat, and Bhajan Kaur, will compete across all five archery events—individual, team, and mixed categories.

Deepika, who has previously demonstrated her prowess on the global stage, highlighted the cohesive dynamics within the team. "The strength of any team lies in how well its members communicate and support each other under various circumstances. Our team has been focusing on these aspects, and we believe it's a huge strength for us going into the Olympics," she shared during an interview on JioCinema's 'The Dreamers'.

Ankita Bhakat, set to make her Olympic debut, shared her excitement and optimism. "From the moment I began archery, my dream was to compete in the Olympics. Now, not only am I fulfilling that dream, but our team's performance has improved

significantly from the lessons learned in past competitions. I'm confident that if I deliver my best, a medal will follow," Bhakat stated. Bhajan Kaur, who has shown remarkable improvement since her first World Cup appearance, is focused on maintaining her momentum. "With each tournament, my goal is to enhance my performance. At the Olympics, our aim is to give our best and hopefully return with a medal," she said.

The presence of a seasoned competitor like Deepika Kumari, attending her fourth Olympics, brings invaluable experience to the team. Bhakat appreciates this, noting, "Having Deepika with us is an incredible advantage. She understands the unique challenges of competing in the Olympics and guides us through them." Deepika, a former World No.1 and one of India's most decorated archers, brings a wealth of experience from her successes in World Cups, Asian Championships, and other major international events. This mix of youth and experience in the Indian archery team makes them strong contenders for podium finishes in Paris, as they look to strike gold with their arrows and teamwork.

Mandhana Commends Middle-Order Batters for India's Dominant Win Over Nepal



Dambulla: Stand-in skipper Smriti Mandhana expressed satisfaction over her team's batting depth after India's middle-order batters gained valuable match experience in their comprehensive victory over Nepal in their final group match of the Women's Asia Cup here on Tuesday.

With India already securing a top spot in their group and regular captain Harmanpreet Kaur resting for the match, Mandhana shuffled the batting lineup, giving other players a chance to shine ahead of the semifinals. Shafali Verma took full advantage of the opportunity, smashing 81 off 48 balls, while Dayalan Hemalatha contributed a brisk 47, propelling India to an imposing

total of 178 for 3.

Reflecting on the decision to rotate the batting order, Mandhana highlighted the importance of game time for the middle order, especially since they had limited opportunities in the previous matches and during the recent series against South Africa. "The middle order didn't get much time in the middle in the South Africa series as well, so it was good they could spend some time in the middle today," Mandhana said during the post-match presentation.

The skipper also discussed the team's ongoing preparation for the World T20 in Bangladesh later this year, emphasizing the necessity of continuous improvement. "Not only this tournament, but in the last five or six months since the WPL, we've been fine-tuning and preparing. We have to keep improving; we cannot go into a World Cup underprepared," she asserted.

Looking ahead to the semifinals, where India is likely to face Bangladesh, Mandhana stressed the importance of maintaining focus, regardless of the opponent. "You don't take any team lightly in the semifinals. We have two days to rest and practice before we go out and apply ourselves," she stated.

Shafali Verma, named player-of-the-match for her explosive innings, shared that her recent double century against South Africa has boosted her confidence significantly. "The double hundred was big for any batter. I wasn't in good form before that, but that innings helped me get back my confidence," she reflected.

Nepal's captain Indu Barma commended her team's effort and the invaluable experience gained from playing against top teams like India and Pakistan. "It was a great exposure to play against India. I am happy with my team; the bowlers got good momentum after 10 overs and restricted them to below 200," she noted, looking forward to returning stronger based on the lessons learned in this tournament.

As India gears up for the crucial semifinal clash, the team's balanced preparation and strategic player rotation underline their readiness to contend for the top honors in the upcoming World T20.

Sri Lanka and Bangladesh Secure Semifinal Spots in Women's Asia Cup T20

Dambulla: Sri Lanka and Bangladesh both claimed emphatic victories to advance to the semifinals of the Women's Asia Cup T20 tournament. Sri Lanka delighted the home crowd by demolishing Thailand with a 10-wicket win, while earlier in the day, Bangladesh overpowered Malaysia by 114 runs.

Bangladesh set the tone for the day, with opener Murshida Khatun leading the charge with a stellar 80 off 59 balls, supported by captain Nigar Sultana who contributed a quick 62 off 37 balls. Their efforts helped Bangladesh post a formidable total of 191 for 2. The partnership between Khatun and Sultana, particularly, yielded 89 runs and was instrumental in setting up the score. Dilara Akter also added a valuable 33 at the top of the order. In response, Malaysia was restricted to just 77 for 8, securing Bangladesh's spot

in the semifinals with a comprehensive victory.

In the concluding group match, Thailand, opting to bat first, could only manage 93 for 7. Nannapat Koncharoenkai was the standout performer for Thailand, scoring 47 from 53 deliveries. Sri Lanka's off-spinner Kavisha Dilhari led the bowling effort with figures of 2/13. The Sri Lankan chase was dominated by their openers, with captain Chamari Athapaththu scoring an unbeaten 49 and Vishmi Gunaratne supporting with 39 not out, ensuring a swift victory without the loss of any wickets.

The semifinals are now set, with India facing Bangladesh and Sri Lanka taking on Pakistan on Friday. Both matches are eagerly anticipated, promising exciting cricket as the teams battle for a spot in the final.

Indian Golf Legends Jeev, Atwal, and Randhawa to Compete in 2024 Senior Open; Chopra Makes Debut

Carnoustie: Indian golfing legends Jeev Milkha Singh, Arjun Atwal, and Jyoti Randhawa are set to make their second consecutive appearance at the 2024 Senior Open. Joining them is Daniel Chopra, who will be making his debut in the Seniors Major. Chopra, who earlier competed under the Swedish flag, has two PGA Tour wins to his name.

Atwal holds the distinction of being the only Indian to win on the PGA Tour with his victory in 2010. Jeev has achieved multiple wins across Asia, Europe, and Japan, while Randhawa has also claimed several titles throughout Asia. At last year's event held at Royal Porthcawl in Wales, Jeev was the sole player among the trio to make the cut, fin-

ishing at T-14. The tournament was won by Germany's Alex Cejka. This year, the competition is fierce with 15 Major champions in the field, including the likes of Bernhard Langer, who aims for a record fifth Senior Open title. Other notable players include Ian Woosnam, Paul Lawrie, and Darren Clarke, each looking to capture both The Open and The Senior Open titles, a feat only achieved by a select few like Gary Player and Tom Watson.

The Senior Open returns to Scotland, hosted by Carnoustie, where previous editions saw victories for Langer and Paul Broadhurst. This prestigious event continues to attract top talent, spotlighting seasoned players as they compete on one of golf's grandest stages.