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State Bank of India hikes lending rate by 10 basis points across tenors, raising EMIs for borrowers

Mumbai: State Bank of India hikes lending rate by 10 basis points across tenors, raising EMIs for borrowers

State Bank of India, the country's biggest lender, has raised the Marginal Cost of Funds-based Lending Rate (MCLR) by 10 basis points (0.1 percentage point), across tenors, making most of the consumer loans costlier.

This is the third time in a row that the bank has increased MCLR.

The benchmark one-year tenor MCLR, which is used to price most consumer loans such as auto and personal, is now pegged higher at 8.95 per cent against the earlier rate of 8.85 per cent, according to the information posted on its website.



The three-year MCLR is 9.10 per cent, while the two-year is now 9.05 per cent, up 10 basis points.

Among others, the rates of one-month, three-month and six-month tenors are in the range of 8.45-8.85 per cent. The MCLR on overnight tenor will be 8.20 per cent against 8.10 per cent.

The new rates are effective from August 15, 2024, it said.

The rate hike has come days after RBI kept its benchmark lending rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent for the ninth consecutive time earlier this month.

Sensex and Nifty jump nearly 2% to hit over two-week highs on rally in global peers

Mumbai: Benchmark Sensex spurted by 1,330 points to close at a more than two-week high while Nifty rallied 397 points to settle above the 24,500 level following buying in IT shares and Reliance Industries and a sharp global stocks rally.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,330.96 points or 1.68 per cent to settle at 80,436.84, marking its best single-day gains in more than two months. During the day, it zoomed 1,412.33 points or 1.78 per cent to 80,518.21.

The NSE Nifty surged 397.40 points or 1.65 per cent to close at a two-week high of 24,541.15.

From Sensex firms, Tech Mahindra, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Motors, UltraTech Cement, Tata Consultancy Services, HCL Technologies, ICI-CI Bank and Tata Steel were the biggest gainers.

Sun Pharma emerged as the only laggard. All the sectoral indices closed in green. BSE Midcap spurted 1.8 per cent while Smallcap index rose by 1.7 per cent.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled significantly higher. European markets were trading mostly in the green. The

US markets ended with sharp gains on Thursday.

"The stability of the JPY has been instrumental in driving a global market recovery. Besides that, the strong US retail sales and a decline in weekly jobless claims have helped alleviate fears of a US recession.

"Further, the market sentiment has improved due to a decrease in US CPI inflation. On the backdrop of these, the Indian IT firms exhibited strong buying interest," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 2,595.27 crore on Wednesday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) were buyers as they bought equities worth Rs 2,236.21 crore, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 1.22 per cent to USD 80.05 a barrel. Indian stock markets were closed on Thursday on account of Independence Day.

The BSE benchmark climbed 149.85 points or 0.19 per cent to settle at 79,105.88 on Wednesday. The NSE Nifty ended marginally up by 4.75 points or 0.02 per cent at 24,143.75.

Mahindra & Mahindra launches five-door Thar Roxx to sell at Rs 13-19 lakh, bookings open from October 3

Mumbai: Mahindra & Mahindra on Thursday launched the five-door Thar, christening it the Thar Roxx at a price range of ₹12.99 lakh and ₹18.99 lakh. Bookings for the car will open from October 3 with deliveries scheduled for Dussehra.

Built on a new platform called M_Glyde, the Thar Roxx is a body-on-frame SUV longer than the three-door version.

Veejay Nakra, president – automotive division, Mahindra & Mahindra, said, "With the Thar Roxx, we are setting our sights on making the Thar brand the No. 1 SUV in the less than ₹12.5 lakh segment by volume within the next 3 to 5 years.

Engine options include the petrol G20 TGDI mStallion and diesel D22 mHawk engines, delivering a torque of 380 Nm and 370 Nm, respectively. The company is offering a 6-speed manual and a 6-speed

AISIN torque converter automatic.

Addressing the press conference, Rajesh Jejurikar, executive director at Mahindra and Mahindra, said: "About 50 per cent of the SUV sales is in the ₹12.5 lakh and above category. The less than ₹12.5 lakh category comprises 45 per cent of the market and Mahindra has 27 per cent market share there.

"In this segment, Scorpio is the number one brand and XUV 700 is in the fifth position. With the Thar brand, which includes the three-door and the Thar Roxx, we want to take the leadership position in the next three to five years."

Designed at the Mahindra India Design Studio in Mumbai, engineered at the Mahindra Research Valley near Chennai, and developed and tested at the Mahindra SUV Proving Track, the Thar Roxx is built at



Mahindra's advanced facility in Nasik.

R. Velusamy, president, automotive technology and product development, Mahindra & Mahindra, said, "Thar Roxx represents a new era of refined body-on-frame SUVs, built on our all-new M_GLYDE platform. This cutting-edge platform enables us to deliver the refined sophistication typically found in monocoque SUVs such as the XUV700 with tech-enabled off-road capabilities."

Ola lays out road map for EV journey

Mumbai: From making high-powered lithium ion cells that can charge faster and extend the range of electric vehicles to developing India's own silicon chip, Ola founder Bhavish Aggarwal on Thursday laid out a road map for the group that is seeking to compete with global majors in these segments.

Speaking at Ola's annual launch event Sankalp, Aggarwal said that Ola Electric has emerged as the 5th largest EV company by market cap globally (excluding China) after Tesla, Rivian, VinFast Auto and Lucid Motors and the fourth largest EV company by revenue globally (excluding China).

He also said that the company has developed Bharat 4680 lithium ion cell and battery pack, which will be integrated into its vehicles by Q1FY26 and will also see wider applications such as powering microgrids in the future. The company also showcased its Gen 3 vehicle platform, electric motorcycles Roadster, Roadster X, Roadster Pro and MoveOS 5 software at the event.

"Today 2/3rd of India's two-wheeler market consists of motorcycles and with Ola's entry into the segment, EV penetration is poised to further accelerate," Aggarwal said adding that more models in the two-wheeler segment are in the pipeline.

The company is also expanding the capacity of its factory at Krishnagiri, Tamil Nadu from the present 1.5 GWh to 5 GWh this fiscal, 20 GWh by 2026 with ambitions to scale up to 100 GWh by 2030. Part of the proceeds from the ₹6,145 crore initial public offer would be used to support some of the expansion.

Aggarwal further said that group company Krutrim, which has become India's first AI unicorn, will launch its first fam-



ily of chips called Bodhi for AI, Sarv for general compute and Ojas for Edge. The company will design and develop the AI silicon chip by 2026 and a more state-of-the-art version called Bodhi 2 by 2028.

The company has also signed strategic partnerships with Arm and Untether AI to realise its chip vision for India. Along with the announcement of the launch of over 50 services on Krutrim cloud, the company also announced its aim to expand data centre capacity to 1 GW by 2028.

"India being the source to 20 per cent of the world's data and home to one of the largest tech talent pools, is fully equipped to lead the AI wave. With Krutrim, we are focussed on making India technologically independent and are making rapid progress in developing full stack AI capabilities, silicon upwards," Aggarwal said.

The company's consumer focused arm Ola Consumer will also partner with ONDC to make commerce accessible, affordable and efficient. AI shopping copilot, electrification of last mile delivery, fully automated dark stores, credit on demand were among some of the announcements from Ola Consumer at the event.

"In the last six months we have progressed beyond mobility and powered OLA Consumer with technology innovations, redefining commerce for India, while delivering more value to our consumers," Aggarwal said.

25 Indian companies gear up to launch IPOs worth Rs 22,000 crore

New Delhi: The initial public offering (IPO) season has warmed up and at least 25 companies, already approved by the market regulator SEBI, are planning to enter the market to raise about Rs 22,000 crore in the coming few weeks, analysts said on Friday. Despite the ups and downs in global stock markets, the Indian primary market continues to be robust, they said.

In the first week of August, four companies launched IPOs worth over Rs 11,850 crore, and they were all successful, according to Pantomath Capital Advisors. "India's IPO success story is taking shape amid global economic uncertainty and geopolitical tensions. Whether the country can keep up this momentum, amidst the global challenges, will depend on several factors, including economic growth, the regulatory landscape, and global market trends," the analysts noted.

Ola Electric Mobility shares saw a rally and were locked in the upper circuit of 20 per cent at Rs 133.08 on Friday, its new high. Ola Electric is now valued at Rs 58,664 crore. With the fresh rally, Ola Electric is trading 75 per cent higher against its issue price of Rs 76 per share on August 9. The stock of Brainbees Solutions, the parent company of FirstCry, listed at Rs 651 against the IPO price of Rs 465, a premium of 40 per cent. While on the BSE it started trade at Rs 625, a premium of over 34 per cent. Meanwhile, the Indian market is consolidating in narrow range for short term. On economic data front, the WPI for the month of July cooled in July on low food prices and primary articles.

DSP Mutual Fund launches India's first Nifty top 10 equal weight Index Fund & ETF

Guwahati: DSP Mutual Fund has unveiled India's pioneering Nifty Top 10 Equal Weight Index Fund & ETF, marking a significant milestone in the Indian investment landscape. This new offering, launching on August 16, 2024, and closing on August 30, 2024, aims to leverage the comparatively attractive valuations of the top 10 companies in the Nifty index by equally distributing investments among them.

The Nifty Top 10 Equal Weight Index has shown notable performance, outperforming broader indices such as the Nifty 50 and Nifty 500 in 9 out of the last 16 years. Despite recent underperformance relative to other indices, historical data indicates potential for a turnaround, with the index displaying positive forward alpha following negative three-year historical alpha periods.

Anil Ghelani, CFA, Head – Passive Investments & Products at DSP Mutual Fund, stated, "Amid the rising interest in small and mid-cap stocks, large-cap stocks are currently trading at more attractive valuations. Investing in the Nifty Top 10 Equal Weight Index provides a strategic advantage by focusing on high-quality companies with lower valuations, offering potential for long-term gains and reduced risks during market downturns."

CDSL IPF launches investment awareness program for police officers in Nadia

Nadia: The CDSL Investor Protection Fund (CDSL IPF) has launched a significant initiative aimed at enhancing financial literacy among police officers in Nadia. The investment awareness program, conducted in Bengali, English, and Hindi, focused on empowering participants with the knowledge to make informed investment decisions and navigate the capital markets confidently.

The program covered essential topics such as the basics of investments, the workings of depositories, and core investment principles. By simplifying complex investment concepts, the program aimed to foster a better understanding of financial instruments and investment strategies among the police officers. This initiative is part of CDSL IPF's broader mission to promote financial inclusion and develop self-reliant investors, encouraging participants to become #AtmanirbharNiveshaks.

In Nadia, this program represents a crucial step in broadening financial literacy across various sectors, including law enforcement. As these officers gain deeper financial knowledge, it may positively influence their personal investment choices and potentially serve as a catalyst for greater community engagement in financial education.

NSDC and WES team up to revolutionize digital verification of academic records

Guwahati: The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and World Education Services (WES) have announced a groundbreaking partnership aimed at transforming the verification and transfer of digital academic credentials from Indian educational institutions. This collaboration is set to leverage blockchain technology to enhance the security and efficiency of document verification, addressing the growing need for reliable and fraud-resistant academic records.

The partnership will allow for real-time support to applicants, issuing institutions, and recipients, significantly reducing the verification process time from 5-6 weeks to just one week in most cases. Esther T. Benjamin, CEO of WES, highlighted the importance of India in WES's glob-

al strategy, noting, "India will be an important part of our global future. This partnership will broaden and deepen our impact, supporting global mobility and advancing opportunities in India and beyond."

Ved Mani Tiwari, CEO of NSDC, echoed this enthusiasm, stating, "This collaboration marks a significant step forward in enhancing the credibility and efficiency of academic credential mobility."

In Guwahati, this partnership is expected to streamline processes for students and professionals seeking international opportunities, offering a more efficient way to manage and verify academic records. This development aligns with the region's growing focus on digital transformation and educational advancement.

Nissan expands Karnataka network, debuts 4th Gen X-TRAIL in Bengaluru

Guwahati: Nissan Motor India Pvt. Ltd. (NMIPL) has strengthened its presence in Karnataka by launching three new customer touchpoints in Bengaluru. The expansion includes two state-of-the-art showrooms and a high-capacity service workshop, bringing Nissan's national network to 273 touchpoints.

In a significant milestone for Nissan, the first All-New 4th Generation X-TRAIL was delivered to a customer at the Jubilant Nissan showroom in Nagarbhavi. This launch underscores Nissan's focus on the Southern region, with Karnataka emerging as a critical market. The expansion in Bengaluru reflects Nissan's commitment to enhancing customer experiences and meeting the growing demand for their products in this region.

Guwahati, another key market for Nissan, is



experiencing similar momentum. With increasing interest in advanced models like the 4th Gen X-TRAIL, Nissan is poised to capture a substantial market share in Guwahati. The brand's emphasis on customer satisfaction and innovative technology is driving growth across these strategic markets.

Vi launches Independence Day offers with extra data and OTT benefits for prepaid users



Guwahati: In celebration of India's 78th Independence Day, Vi (Vodafone Idea) has rolled out exclusive offers for its prepaid customers, featuring additional data and complimentary OTT subscriptions. The limited-period offers are available from August 13 to August 28, 2024, exclusively on the Vi App.

Prepaid users who recharge with half-yearly or annual packs will receive 30GB to 50GB

of extra high-speed data beyond their daily limits. The bonus data is valid for 45 days on half-yearly packs and 90 days on annual packs. Additionally, Vi is offering a one-year subscription to popular OTT platforms, including Disney+ Hotstar and Amazon Prime Video, at no extra cost with select annual recharges.

To further sweeten the deal, Vi App users will enjoy additional discounts on yearly recharge packs. For instance, recharges of ₹3,499, ₹3,699, and ₹3,799 will include discounts of ₹50, ₹75, and ₹100, respectively. Vi is also offering gift cards and discounts on 30+ brands via the Vi Shop.

In Guwahati, these offers are expected to attract significant interest as consumers increasingly seek value-added services. With growing demand for OTT content in Assam, Vi's bundled offers with Disney+ Hotstar and Amazon Prime Video are likely to resonate well with users in the region.

Mahindra launches Thar ROXX: The new benchmark in SUV luxury and off-road capability

Guwahati: Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd., a leading SUV manufacturer, has launched the Thar ROXX, setting a new standard in the premium SUV segment. Priced from ₹12.99 Lakh, the Thar ROXX combines robust off-road prowess with luxurious features, redefining the SUV landscape.

Built on Mahindra's new M_GLYDE platform, the Thar ROXX offers a smooth ride and precise handling. It features dynamic engine options, including the G20 TGDI mStallion and D22 mHawk, delivering torque up to 380 Nm. Advanced safety is ensured with 35+ features and Level 2 ADAS.

Engineered to excel in extreme conditions, the Thar ROXX boasts India's first Crawl Smart Assist and IntelliTurn for superior off-road maneuverability. Luxurious amenities include a panoramic Skyroof™, Harman Kardon 9-speaker system, twin HD screens, and ventilated seats.



Mr. Veejay Nakra, President – Automotive Division, emphasized, "Thar ROXX is 'THE' SUV, combining design, luxury, and unparalleled off-road capability."

Bookings open on October 3, 2024, with deliveries beginning this Dussehra. With its bold design and cutting-edge technology, the Thar ROXX is poised to dominate the SUV market, aiming for the No. 1 spot in the >₹12.5 Lakh segment.

NSE celebrates Independence Day with a heartfelt commitment to India's future

Guwahati: This Independence Day, the National Stock Exchange (NSE) is not just celebrating the nation's journey of freedom but also reaffirming its dedication to shaping a brighter future for all Indians. Shri Ashishkumar Chauhan, the MD and CEO of NSE, shared a heartfelt message that connects the spirit of independence with the exchange's role in fostering economic growth and inclusivity.

Reflecting on the sacrifices made by India's freedom fighters, Chauhan said, "On the occasion of India's 78th Independence Day, let us honour the sacrifices of our freedom fighters who envisioned a progressive and prosperous country. As a catalyst for wealth creation in India in addition to being a front-line regulator, we are committed to building a stronger and more inclusive nation. NSE continues to foster the capital markets for investor awareness and protection in its sustained efforts towards nation-building. Happy Independence Day!"

MG Windsor teaser highlights segment-leading water wading capabilities

Guwahati: JSW MG Motor India has released a captivating teaser of its upcoming MG Windsor, India's first Cross-over Utility Vehicle (CUV), highlighting its remarkable water wading capabilities. The teaser showcases the Windsor's ability to navigate challenging terrains, including monsoon-soaked roads, a frequent challenge for Indian drivers.

The MG Windsor's superior engineering, elevated ground clearance, and robust design enable it to effortlessly handle water depths, ensuring a secure and smooth driving experience. This feature, combined with the previously revealed segment-first Aero-Lounge seats, positions the Windsor as a top choice for consumers seeking luxury and practicality.

Inspired by the iconic Windsor Castle, the MG Windsor embodies meticulous craftsmanship and a commitment to excellence. This Intelligent CUV is designed for diverse terrains, offering aerodynamic design and spacious interiors, ideal for both urban commutes and weekend getaways.

Amitabh Bachchan and Manoj Pahwa lead GSK's new shingles awareness campaign

Guwahati: GSK has launched a new awareness campaign on shingles, featuring veteran actors Amitabh Bachchan and Manoj Pahwa. Titled "Yeh Science Hai," the campaign aims to educate the public on the scientific link between chickenpox and shingles, particularly focusing on the increased risk for individuals with diabetes.

In the campaign, Amitabh Bachchan and Manoj Pahwa engage in everyday conversations to highlight the heightened susceptibility to shingles in those with diabetes. The initiative underscores that people who have had chickenpox and also suffer from diabetes face a 40% higher risk of developing shingles due to weakened immune systems.

Manoj Pahwa, commenting on his involvement, said, "Being in an age group susceptible to shingles, I've come to understand more about this painful disease and its risk factors. I urge adults over 50 to discuss shingles prevention with their doctors."

GSK's Vigyeta Agrawal noted that a 2023 survey revealed many shingles patients were unaware of the disease's cause. "We believe Amitabh Bachchan's universal appeal will drive the message home, encouraging more aging adults to seek medical



advice on shingles prevention." The campaign, directed by R. Balki, will be widely distributed across digital platforms and TV, with a special partnership with the popular quiz show Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC) to maximize outreach.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor advocates sustainable mobility on World Biofuel Day 2024

Shillong: Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) has reinforced its commitment to sustainable mobility on World Biofuel Day 2024, emphasizing a holistic approach to clean vehicle technology. As part of its broader global initiative, Toyota aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, with net zero carbon emissions in manufacturing by 2035, aligning with the Toyota Environmental Challenges 2050 (TEC 2050).

India, the world's third-largest energy consumer, is facing a growing dependency on fossil fuels, with April 2024 witnessing a record import of 21.4 million tonnes of crude oil. The transportation sector, accounting for 50% of oil demand, is a significant contributor to carbon emissions. TKM highlights biofuels as a vital solution to reduce fossil fuel consumption and achieve energy security, particularly through ethanol production, which has seen rapid growth

in India. Ethanol blending with petrol reached 15.90% in June 2024, and the country is on track to achieve 20% blending by 2025. TKM's Flex Fuel Vehicle (FFV) technology, combined with electrified powertrains, offers a promising solution for enhanced fuel efficiency.

In Shillong, a key market for alternative fuels, TKM's emphasis on biofuels is seen as a potential boost for local farmers and businesses involved in biomass and ethanol production. The initiative is expected to create new economic opportunities and drive sustainable growth in the region.

Speaking at the SIAM International Conference, TKM's Executive Vice President, Mr. Vikram Gulati, emphasized that biofuels, especially ethanol, are crucial for India's energy security and environmental goals, supporting both the national agenda of carbon neutrality and the agrarian economy.

QNET India launches luxurious gift collection for Rakshabandhan

Guwahati: As Rakshabandhan approaches, QNET India has introduced an exquisite gift collection to help siblings celebrate the bond of love with elegance and sophistication. The collection features premium items that perfectly capture the spirit of this cherished festival.

Among the highlights is the ORITSU Dinnerware collection, which offers a luxurious dining experience with its 24-karat gold-infused porcelain, crafted

in collaboration with Dankotuva in Sri Lanka. With three stunning designs—ORITSU White Lotus, Royal Petals, and Water Lily—each piece promises to add a touch of opulence to any meal.

For those seeking a timeless gift, the Chairros Onyx MS watch, designed for the modern woman, stands out. Its rose gold bezel, dark green dial, and Japanese automatic movement make it a statement of grace and style.

Jewelry enthusiasts can indulge

in the Kinnari Nila, a part of QNET India's Royal Collection. This diamond-studded piece epitomizes luxury and craftsmanship, perfect for those looking to gift something truly special.

In Guwahati, the QNET India collection is expected to resonate with customers seeking premium gifts that blend tradition with modern luxury. The diverse offerings cater to a growing demand for sophisticated and high-quality products during festive seasons.

Survey reveals year-round mosquito-borne disease fears among Indians

Guwahati: A recent survey conducted by Goodknight, a leading brand under Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL), has uncovered widespread concern among Indians about the year-round threat of mosquito-borne diseases like malaria and dengue. The study, titled "One Mosquito, Countless Threats," reveals that 81% of Indians believe these diseases can strike at any time, not just during the monsoon season. This finding is most strongly supported in East India, where 86% of respondents expressed this concern, followed by the West (81%) and North & South regions (80%).

With over 94,000 dengue cases

reported last year, the data emphasizes the urgent need for continuous vigilance. Experts, including Dr. Kirti Sabnis of Fortis Hospital, warn that factors like climate change and urbanization are contributing to the year-round transmission of these diseases, posing a serious public health risk.

The economic implications are significant, with mosquito-borne diseases affecting over 40 million Indians annually. GCPL's new Goodknight Flash liquid vapouriser, featuring the indigenously developed molecule 'Renofluthrin,' promises 2X more effectiveness against mosquitoes, offering hope for better protection.



In Guwahati, where mosquito-borne illnesses have disrupted daily life and the local economy, this survey's findings resonate deeply. The continuous threat has led to increased demand for effective mosquito repellents, highlighting the importance of products like Goodknight's latest innovations in safeguarding health year-round.

ITC Sunfeast announces 'Super Egg & Milk' biscuits to boost kids' nutrition

Guwahati: ITC Sunfeast has launched its latest innovation, the 'Super Egg & Milk' Biscuit, designed to enhance children's nutrition through a tasty and convenient option. This launch follows a unique conference featuring representatives of hens and cows, humorously addressing the challenge of making milk and eggs more appealing to kids. The event included a panel of experts, including Mr. Madan Mohan Maiti from NECC West Bengal, Dr.

Dulal Chandra Sen from IDA East Zone, and celebrity mom Koneenica Banerjee.

The panel highlighted the importance of eggs and milk in children's diets, noting their rich nutritional profile including proteins, vitamins, and iron. ITC Sunfeast's new biscuit aims to address a market gap by combining these essential nutrients into a single, accessible product. The biscuits are available in South and East India at Rs. 5, Rs. 10,

and Rs. 30, reflecting ITC's commitment to offering affordable, nutritious options.

In Guwahati, the launch of the Sunfeast 'Super Egg & Milk' Biscuit is expected to resonate well with local parents looking for nutritious, easy-to-consume options for their children. The introduction of this product aligns with the growing demand for healthier snacks in the region, providing a much-needed boost to the market for value-added food products.

Royal Enfield Celebrates Manipur's "Haoram Royal Enfield" Spirit

Imphal: Royal Enfield, timelessly representing wanderlust and camaraderie, proudly unveils its latest tribute to India's rich cultural tapestry - the Regional T-Shirt Collection. In a celebration of diversity and the shared passion for motorcycling, Royal Enfield presents 16 exclusive designs, each paying homage to the distinct heritage, culture, and spirit of different Indian states. Every design encapsulates the

essence of a region, resonating with riders who cherish their roots.

Crafted with meticulous attention to detail, the State-Inspired T-shirts embody local pride. From majestic monuments to celebrated landmarks, every T-shirt highlights the unique charm of its respective region - with the unmistakable silhouette of the iconic Bullet/Classic subtly woven into each design.

Riders in Manipur can showcase

their local pride and love for their iconic motorcycles with the "Haoram Royal Enfield" T-shirt. This shirt goes beyond mere clothing; it's a celebration of the state's unique spirit, its cherished dialect, and the rider's trusty Royal Enfield. Priced at INR 990, these t-shirts are designed with 100% BCI cotton, promising equal parts comfort and style. They seamlessly transition from the open road to

everyday adventures, making them a must-have addition to any rider's wardrobe. Started in 2014, the Royal Enfield Apparel division was conceived with a single aim - to create an ecosystem around pure motorcycling and enhance the motorcycling experience. Safety is the prime consideration for Apparel, with three important parameters - protection, comfort, and style.



Kohli, Rohit Exempt as Gill, Pant Lead Duleep Trophy Squads

New Delhi: In a blend of seasoned campaigners and emerging talents, the national selectors have crafted four diverse squads for the upcoming Duleep Trophy, scheduled to start on September 5 in Bengaluru. However, senior stalwarts like Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Jasprit Bumrah, and R Ashwin will not be partaking in the tournament, having been granted exemptions.

The limelight in this year's Duleep Trophy is on the inclusion of India's bright prospects such as Shubman Gill, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rishabh Pant,

and all-rounders like Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel. The tournament is set to showcase a host of international stars, ensuring a high-quality competition. Among the notable selections, T20 captain Suryakumar Yadav makes a return to the red-ball format, having played his sole Test against Australia last year. He is included in Team C, captained by Rituraj Gaikwad, which also features promising pacers Anshul Khamboj and Himanshu Chauhan.

Rishabh Pant's inclusion is particularly poignant, marking his return to



first-class cricket following a severe car accident in 2022. He will be a part of Team B, which also includes Mohammed Siraj and spinner Washington Sundar.

Team A will be led by Shubman Gill and will feature players like KL Rahul and Kuldeep Yadav, setting up a strong lineup capable of competing at the highest level. Team D, led by Shreyas Iyer, includes dynamic players like Ishan Kishan and Axar Patel, promising a blend of experience and youthful zest.

The selectors have ensured that the squads are balanced, with players being given the opportunity to prove their mettle ahead of a busy international season, which includes a home Test series against Bangladesh.

AIFF Plans Charity Football Matches to Aid Kerala and Himachal Pradesh Flood Victims

New Delhi: In response to the devastating floods that have hit Kerala and Himachal Pradesh, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) has announced its plan to organize two charity football matches to support the victims and fund relief efforts in the affected states.

The first of these matches is scheduled to take place on August 30 in Manjeri, Malappuram district, Kerala. This game will feature the historic Kolkata club, Mohammedan Sporting Club, going head to head with a Super League Kerala XI team. The AIFF is also planning a second match for September 2 in Lucknow, although details about the participating teams are still being

finalized.

Kalyan Chaubey, the President of AIFF, expressed his gratitude towards Mohammedan Sporting Club for their prompt agreement to participate in the Kerala match. He emphasized the importance of the football community coming together during times of crisis. "Sports is a powerful medium to offer comfort and heal humanity after such tragedies," Chaubey stated. "We often celebrate cups won by clubs; let's now come together to raise the cup of solidarity." These charity matches are part of a broader initiative by the AIFF to use football as a platform for humanitarian efforts. The recent natural disasters in Kerala

and Himachal Pradesh have led to significant loss of life and widespread damage, with massive landslides in Kerala on July 30 and ongoing landslides and flash floods in Himachal Pradesh killing over 100 people and impacting thousands more.

The AIFF is currently in discussions with additional clubs to participate in the second match in Lucknow, with further announcements expected as plans are solidified. The federation aims to harness the unifying power of football to mobilize support and resources for the flood victims, reinforcing the role of sports in fostering community and resilience in the face of adversity.

Sports Minister Mandaviya to Strategize with Hockey Team for 2028 Los Angeles Olympics

New Delhi: Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya announced plans to meet with the Indian men's hockey team, which recently secured a bronze medal at the Paris Olympics, to discuss future strategies aimed at achieving gold at the 2028 Los Angeles Games. The meeting is scheduled to take place before September 10.

During a felicitation event for key players including goalkeeper PR Sreejesh, defender Sanjay, Amit Rohidas, and striker Abhishek, Minister Mandaviya praised the team's performance in Paris. "You've shown commendable spirit, especially bouncing back after the semifinal. We're close to gold, and we need to plan meticulously to clinch it in Los Angeles," Man-

daviya stated.

The minister emphasized that this meeting would focus on collaboratively crafting a robust plan to enhance performance and ensure optimal support from the government. "I am eager to hear your insights and ensure we provide all necessary resources," he added.

Reflecting on India's overall performance in Paris, where the country secured six medals compared to seven in Tokyo, Mandaviya acknowledged the slight dip but also highlighted the near misses. "We came



close in several other events, finishing fourth in seven instances, which also speaks volumes about our potential," he noted.

This upcoming strategic session underscores the government's commitment to elevating India's standing in the global sporting arena, particularly in field hockey, as the team prepares for the 2028 Olympics.

Sri Lanka Cricket rope in Ian Bell as batting coach ahead of away Test series vs England

Agency: Sri Lanka on Tuesday appointed Ian Bell as their batting coach ahead of their tour of England comprising three Tests. Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) announced on its website that Bell, who scored 7727 runs in 118 Tests, will start working with the national side later this week.

"He will start working with the team from August 16 and remain until the conclusion of the three-Test match series," SLC said. SLC CEO Ashley de Silva expressed: "We appointed Ian to bring in a person with local knowledge to help the players with key insights on the conditions there." "Ian has a lot of experience playing in England, and we believe his inputs will help our team in this crucial tour.

Sri Lanka's tour of England



begins with the first Test at Manchester from August 21-25. The second Test will be played at Lord's from August 29-September 2 while The Oval will host the third and final Test from September 6-10. Meanwhile, England could be in a race against time with skipper Ben Stokes suffering a hamstring injury last Sunday while playing in The Hundred. Stokes sustained the injury while batting and was eventually helped off the field. He was taken for scans and was also seen walking with the help of crutches.

Olivier Giroud Debuts for Los Angeles FC in Leagues Cup Victory

Los Angeles: Olivier Giroud, the renowned French striker, made his highly anticipated debut for Los Angeles FC in their Leagues Cup Round of 16 victory against the San Jose Earthquakes on Tuesday night. Entering the game as a substitute in the 71st minute, Giroud participated in LAFC's convincing 4-1 win, although he narrowly missed scoring.

The 37-year-old, who joined LAFC in May, expressed enthusiasm about his first game, despite needing to regain match fitness. "I wish I could play even more tonight, but it was a good first step. Giroud's move to LAFC marks the latest chapter in his illustrious career, which spans 18 years across top leagues in France, England, and Italy, most recently with AC Milan. His track record includes scoring 285 goals in 716 club matches. Prior to joining LAFC, Giroud represented France in the European Championship, contributing as a substitute in several games, including a semifinal loss to Spain on July 9.

Giroud's addition to LAFC's roster brings not only his extensive experience but also reunites him with former French national teammate and current LAFC goalkeeper, Hugo Lloris. His presence is expected to bolster LAFC's attacking options as they progress in the Leagues Cup and other competitions. LAFC fans will have their next opportunity to see Giroud in action this Saturday when the team faces Seattle in the Leagues Cup quarterfinals.

Manu Bhaker Targets More Olympic Success After Historic Double Medal Win

New Delhi: Fresh off her historic performance at the Paris Olympics, Indian shooter Manu Bhaker is already setting her sights on future glory, aiming to win multiple Olympic medals. The 22-year-old Bhaker became the first Indian athlete in the post-independence era to win two medals in a single edition of the Games, securing bronze in both the women's 10m air pistol and the mixed team event with partner Sarabjot Singh.

stop there; she nearly added a third medal in the 25m pistol event, finishing fourth. Her achievements in Paris have made her one of India's most decorated Olympians, and she is keen to build on this success. "The aim is to work hard and better this performance in the future," Bhaker told PTI Videos. "I am aiming to win many more Olympic medals for India." Her role as India's flag-bearer alongside veteran hockey goalkeeper PR

Sreejesh at the closing ceremony was a highlight of her Olympic journey. "Being the flag bearer was an opportunity of a lifetime, and I will cherish this for a lifetime," she expressed.

The celebrations continued with the arrival of the bronzewinning Indian hockey team, including Sreejesh, Amit Rohidas, Sumit, Abhishek, and Sanjay, who received a grand welcome complete with garlands and traditional dhols. "We are getting a lot of love, and hockey players should get more love because we have got two medals (Tokyo and Paris Games). It has been great for the sport of hockey and hockey lovers of the country," Sumit remarked.

As Bhaker and her fellow athletes turn their sights to the future, the support and enthusiasm from their countrymen are sure to fuel their ambitions for the 2028 Los Angeles Games and beyond.