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India pips US to become 2nd largest 5G mobile market, Apple leads

New Delhi: India has overtaken the US to become the world's second-biggest 5G handset market for the first time, behind China, a report has mentioned. Global 5G handset shipments grew 20 per cent (year-on-year) in the first half of 2024, according to the Counterpoint Research. Apple led the 5G handset shipments, accounting for more than 25 per cent share.

Apple led the 5G handset shipments globally, accounting for more than 25 per cent share, driven by strong shipments of the iPhone 15 series and 14 series. 5G handset shipments have been growing steadily and with the increased availability of 5G handsets in the budget segment, the emerging markets have witnessed high growth in this segment. "India became the second-biggest 5G handset



market during the first half, overtaking the US. The strong shipments from Xiaomi, vivo, Samsung and other brands in the budget segment were the main reason for this trend," said senior analyst Prachir Singh.

Samsung followed in the second position, capturing more than 21 per cent share, driven by the Galaxy A series and S24 series. Apple and Samsung took five spots each in the top-10 list for 5G mod-

els in the first half of 2024, with Apple taking the top four spots.

Other emerging markets also witnessed high growth in 5G handsets. Consumers in emerging markets are looking at 5G handsets as an upgrade to their devices, even in the lower price segments. Asia-Pacific accounted for 63 per cent of the overall global net adds and commanded a 58 per cent 5G shipment share. In Europe and the Middle East and Africa (MEA) regions also, 5G handset shipments witnessed double-digit growth.

Research Director Tarun Pathak said that as the democratisation of 5G handsets increases with increasing 5G penetration in lower price segments as well as increasing expansion of 5G networks, this trend will further grow.

Demat accounts rise to 171 million in August, up 4 million

New Delhi: India's total demat accounts continue to rise, with over four million new ones added in August, as per the depositories' data. National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) and Central Depository Services Limited (CDSL) data showed that the total number of demat accounts in the country rose by over four million in August to 171.1 million.

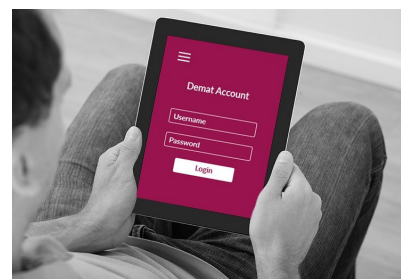
The demat count was boosted by record IPOs in August. Last month, 10 companies raised around Rs 17,000 crore via IPOs. On average four million demat accounts have been added since 2024, monthly.

About 3.2 crore demat accounts have

been opened in the first eight months of the current year. The reason for opening of demat accounts in large numbers is also new IPOs in this calendar year.

More than 50 companies have raised Rs 53,419 crore through IPOs from the beginning of 2024 to August 31. It was reported in the study that almost half of the demats used for IPO applications from April 2021 to December 2023 were opened after the pandemic. The stock market has given excellent returns to investors in 2024. Since the beginning of this year, Nifty surged about 15 per cent and 27 per cent in the last one year.

The Sensex rallied by 13 per cent since the beginning of this year and 24 per



cent in the last one year. The reason for the rise in the Indian stock market is the strengthening of the economy.

India's GDP growth rate was 8.2 per cent in the financial year 2023-24, which is estimated to be 7.2 per cent in the financial year 2024-25.

PLI sops likely for more textile items

Mumbai: The government is considering an expansion of the production linked incentive (PLI) scheme to more items in textiles, pharmaceuticals and solar photovoltaics (PV) as well as expand its duration to six years from five. The PLI scheme, launched in 2021 with a budget of ₹1.97 lakh crore, aims to promote domestic manufacturing.

The government believes that expanding the PLI scheme will encourage higher investments, production and exports. The PLI pays subsidies to manufacturers based on their output and on capital spending in sectors such as semiconductors. The PLI scheme has seen varying levels of success across its 14 sectors.

While it has performed well for mobile manufacturing and shows promise in electronics, telecom and food processing, progress has been slower in sectors such as textiles and solar PV. According to government officials, cabinet notes have been submitted to the PMO and cabinet secretariat.

Since its inception, the PLI scheme has attracted investments of ₹1.5 lakh crore, result-



ing in the production of goods worth approximately ₹10 lakh crore and the disbursement of incentives worth ₹10,000 crore. The scheme is limited to man-made fiber (MMF) apparel, MMF fabrics and technical textiles. Over 60 per cent of Indian fabric exports come from small mechanised looms scattered across the country.

Textile and apparel exports declined to \$35.94 billion in the 2023-24 from a record \$44.51 billion in 2021-22, commerce ministry data showed. Similarly, for pharmaceuticals and solar PV, additional items are being proposed to enhance the utilization of the scheme's outlay.

Swiggy discloses Rs 33 crore fraud by employee, takes legal route

New Delhi: IPO-bound food delivery platform Swiggy has disclosed that a former junior employee allegedly embezzled more than Rs 33 crore over a period of time from one of its subsidiaries. As per reports, the Zomato rival initiated a probe with an external team and has filed a legal complaint against the individual whose name was withheld in its annual report for the financial year 2023-24.

"The Group, during the current year, identified embezzlement of funds in one of the subsidiaries by a former junior employee amounting to INR 326.76 Mn over the past periods," the annual report mentioned.

Sensex declines 233 points to 81,967 in early trade; Nifty drops 60 points to 25,085



Mumbai: Benchmark equity indices declined in early trade on Friday tracking a weak trend in global markets and fresh foreign fund outflows.

Falling for the third day running, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 233.98 points to 81,967.18 in early trade. The NSE Nifty dropped 60 points to 25,085.10. Among the 30 Sensex firms, State Bank of India, UltraTech Cement, Reliance Industries, NTPC, ICI-ICI Bank and Titan were the biggest laggards.

Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, Hindustan Unilever, Asian Paints and IndusInd Bank were among the gainers. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong were trading lower. The US markets ended mostly in the negative territory on Thursday.

"The near-term trend in the market will be influenced by the US jobs data to be published tonight," said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services. The BSE benchmark on Thursday failed to hold on to initial gains and declined 151.48 points or 0.18 per cent to settle at 82,201.16.

The NSE Nifty dipped 53.60 points or 0.21 per cent to 25,145.10 despite a positive beginning of the trade. Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said, all eyes are now on the upcoming August US jobs report on Friday.

GST Council set to discuss proposal on waiver of past tax dues for extra neutral alcohol

Mumbai: The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council is set to discuss a proposal to write off past tax dues on extra neutral alcohol (ENA) at its meeting in Delhi on September 9. ENA, a high-purity alcohol distillate, has been at the center of tax disputes since the GST's implementation in 2017.

Discrepancies in ENA's taxation across states, including VAT, GST or no tax, have led to confusion and financial strain for liquor producers. The council previously agreed to exclude ENA from the GST when used for alcoholic beverage production, allowing states to levy their own taxes.

"The council's decision will be crucial in clarifying ENA's tax treatment and providing relief to producers," said an official. Budget 2024 removed ENA from the scope of central GST law, clarifying that no GST will be applicable on un-denatured ENA or rectified spirit used for alcoholic liquor production.

However, ongoing litigation and varying tax practices across states have created confusion and demands for both GST and VAT. Industry experts, including Rajat Mohan of Moore Singhi and Vinod Giri of the Brewers Association of India, have called for resolution to the issue.

"Pursuant to the Finance (No. 2) Act, 2024, the government has clarified that, effective from a date yet to be notified, no GST will be applicable on un-denatured extra neutral alcohol (ENA) or rectified spirit when used for the manufacture of alcoholic liquor for human consumption," said Mohan.

Giri echoed Mohan's concerns, stating that the GST Council should consider writing off past tax dues and adopting an "as is, where is" approach to settlement.

Nissan Magnite surges past 1.5 lakh sales milestone with record monthly figures

Guwahati: Nissan Motor India has achieved a significant milestone with the Nissan Magnite surpassing 1.5 lakh cumulative sales as of August 2024, since its debut in December 2020. The company reported its highest monthly wholesale figure for FY24, with 10,624 units dispatched in August, including 8,361 units for export—a record high for the past five years. Domestic sales also showed robust performance, with 2,263 units sold, reflecting a 12.5% month-on-month growth.

Nissan's success is marked by a remarkable 336% year-on-year and 91% month-on-month increase in exports,

aligning with its 'Make in India, Make for the World' philosophy. This growth underscores Nissan's expanding global footprint and commitment to quality manufacturing in India.

In Guwahati, the Magnite's popularity continues to rise, driven by its appealing design and competitive pricing. The vehicle's strong sales performance in the city reflects a growing preference for affordable yet stylish compact SUVs in the region. As Nissan expands its network with new touchpoints, including those in Guwahati, the Magnite is expected to further solidify its market presence.

Janhvi Kapoor joins Vitro Tiles as brand ambassador to boost market presence

Guwahati: Vitro Tiles, a prominent name in the Indian tile industry under Aparna Enterprises Ltd, has announced the onboarding of Bollywood star Janhvi Kapoor as its brand ambassador. This strategic move is part of the company's broader vision to enhance brand visibility and establish itself as a leading player in the competitive tile market.

Mr. Ashwin Reddy, Managing Director of Aparna Enterprises Ltd, expressed enthusiasm over the collaboration, stating, "We are excited to welcome Janhvi Kapoor to the Vitro family. Her dynamic persona and eye for style perfectly complement our brand's vision of redefining interiors with contemporary

and high-quality tiles." He highlighted Vitro's substantial market presence in Southern India and the company's recent expansion efforts, including a joint venture in Morbi, to strengthen its foothold in Northern, Western, and Eastern markets.

In Guwahati, Vitro Tiles is expected to make a significant impact, leveraging Kapoor's widespread appeal. With this new partnership, the brand aims to resonate with modern consumers in Guwahati, offering innovative designs and superior quality tiles that align with contemporary tastes. Vitro's commitment to excellence is set to further solidify its position in both retail and B2B segments across India.

Grand Shopsy Mela kicks off with unbeatable festive deals and prizes

Guwahati: Shopsy by Flipkart has launched its much-anticipated Grand Shopsy Mela, transforming its platform into a vibrant virtual fair. Running from September 1 to 8, this sale offers over 50 lakh products priced under Rs. 199, capturing the essence of traditional Indian melas while providing an immersive shopping experience.

This year's event features an expanded range of 150 categories, including fashion, beauty, home, mobiles, and large electronics, more than double last year's offerings. Customers can enjoy limited-time deals starting at just Re. 1 and stand a chance to win grand prizes worth Rs. 1 lakh. Engaging activities like treasure hunts and interactive games add to the festive fun.

Prathyusha Agarwal, Business Head of Shopsy, emphasized the platform's commitment to affordability and variety, stating, "The Grand Shopsy Mela brings Bharat's biggest mela to the digital world, offering something for every family member."

With actress Sara Ali Khan endorsing the event in a lively commercial, the Grand Shopsy Mela is set to be the ultimate destination for festive shopping this season.

CEAT ISRL sees 20% surge in registrations for Season 2, promises exciting new talent

Guwahati: The CEAT Indian Supercross Racing League (ISRL) is revving up for its highly anticipated second season, with registrations showing a significant 20% increase. A total of 145 riders from around the globe have signed up, setting the stage for a competitive and dynamic season. The impressive roster includes athletes from the USA, Spain, France, Germany, and several other countries, reflecting the league's growing international appeal.

Season 2 will feature fan favorites such as 9x Australian Champion Matt Moss and MxON World Champion Jordi Tixier, alongside new stars like AMA Pro Motocross Champion Mike Alessi and French Supercross Champion Greg Aranda. Indian talent is well-represented with riders like 3x Indian Supercross



Champion Rugved Bargeje and champions Shlok Ghorpade and Ikshan Shanbhag aiming to shine on their home turf.

The CEAT ISRL is not only expanding its talent pool but also strengthening its presence in the Indian market. In Guwahati, where motorsports enthusiasm is surging, the league's growing popularity is evident. Local fans and businesses are eagerly anticipating the action, which is

expected to drive increased engagement and economic activity in the region.

Eeshan Lokhande, Co-founder & Director of CEAT ISRL, expressed excitement about the upcoming season, highlighting the league's role in elevating Supercross in India. The rider auction, scheduled for October 2024, will further intensify the competition and set the stage for an exhilarating season ahead.

Jawa unleashes the bold 42 FJ with 350 alpha2 engine

Guwahati: Jawa Yezdi Motorcycles has once again redefined the neo-classic motorcycle segment with the launch of the 350 Jawa 42 FJ, starting at Rs. 1,99,142 (ex-showroom Delhi). This latest addition to the '42 Life' series, which includes the popular 42 and 42 Bobber, promises to captivate enthusiasts with its stunning design, advanced technology, and unbeatable performance.

The 350 Jawa 42 FJ features an all-new muscular design, complete with segment-first brushed aluminium tank panels, higher ground clearance, and a longer wheelbase, ensuring a bold road presence. Powered by the new 350 Alpha2 engine, the bike delivers an

impressive 29.2 PS and 29.6 Nm, setting a new benchmark in performance within its class.

Jawa's commitment to craftsmanship is evident in the 42 FJ's meticulously designed features, including an upswept exhaust, fully digital instrument cluster, and premium alloy wheels with tubeless tires. The motorcycle is available in five striking colors, allowing for personalization that caters to both classic and contemporary tastes.

In Imphal, the launch of the Jawa 42 FJ is expected to draw significant attention from motorcycle enthusiasts. Known for its vibrant market, Imphal is poised to become a key hub for the latest in two-wheeler



innovations, with the 42 FJ appealing to those seeking a blend of traditional aesthetics and modern performance.

With its competitive pricing and robust feature set, the Jawa 42 FJ is set to become a formidable player in the neo-classic segment, continuing Jawa's legacy of blending timeless design with cutting-edge technology.

India dispatches largest-ever contingent to WorldSkills 2024 in Lyon, France

Guwahati: India is gearing up to make a significant mark on the global stage as 60 young talents are set to represent the country at the WorldSkills 2024 competition in Lyon, France. The event, often referred to as the "Olympic Games of Skills," will feature participants from over 70 nations competing across 52 skill categories from September 10-15.

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) organized a grand send-off ceremony for Team India, which boasts one of the largest contingents ever. These skilled individuals will compete against the best from around the world, backed by rigorous training from industry leaders like Toyota Kirloskar and L&T. The event will witness over 1,400 competitors showcasing their expertise in various sectors, including construction, IT, and creative arts.

Shri Jayant Chaudhary, Minister of State for Skill Development, expressed high hopes for the team, aiming for a top 10 finish. "In the eyes of the nation, you're already winners," he stated, encouraging the participants to continue their journey as ambassadors of the Skill India Mission.

The enthusiasm for WorldSkills 2024 is palpable even in regional markets like Guwahati. Local industry leaders and educational institutions see this as an opportunity to connect with global talent, enhancing the region's skill development initiatives. The success of Team India is expected to inspire a new generation of skilled professionals in Assam, contributing to the state's growth as a hub for vocational training and skilled manpower.

Star Health Insurance launches trailblazing Braille policy, sets new industry standard

Guwahati: Star Health and Allied Insurance Co. Ltd has announced a groundbreaking advancement in the insurance industry with the launch of India's first Braille insurance policy, "Special Care Gold." This pioneering initiative caters specifically to individuals with 40% or more disability, providing comprehensive health coverage while promoting inclusivity for the visually impaired. The policy, developed in collaboration with the National Association of the

Blind (NAB), includes essential medical treatments and support services.

Alongside this launch, Star Health has introduced a long-term diversity and inclusivity program aimed at empowering the 34 million visually impaired individuals in India. This initiative offers training and career opportunities as health insurance agents, with fully funded exam preparations, audio training, and a dedicated support hotline, allowing participants to work flexibly from home.

The introduction of this policy is poised to make a significant impact in Guwahati's insurance market. As the city continues to expand its financial services sector, Star Health's innovative approach is likely to enhance local market dynamics by setting a new standard for accessibility and inclusivity. This move underscores the company's commitment to addressing underserved communities and may inspire other insurers to follow suit.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor launches T CARE to revolutionize customer experience

Shillong: Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) has introduced "T CARE," an innovative initiative designed to enhance customer ownership experiences across India. This comprehensive program bundles multiple services under one brand, reflecting Toyota's commitment to superior quality and customer care.

T CARE features a range of offerings, including T DELIVER for secure car delivery, T GLOSS for expert car detailing, and T ASSIST providing 24/7 roadside support for five years. Custom-

ers can also benefit from T SECURE's extended warranties, T SMILE's customizable maintenance packages, and T CHOICE's diverse service parts options. Additional services include T INSPECT for used car inspections and T SPARSH, which supports rural areas with complete vehicle assistance.

Mr. Sabari Manohar, Vice President of Sales, Service, and Used Car Business at Toyota Kirloskar Motor, highlighted that T CARE aims to deepen customer relationships by offering seamless and personalized support throughout



the ownership journey. With a robust network of 685 touchpoints and 360 T SPARSH outlets, Toyota is poised to deliver exceptional service nationwide.

TRC enhances expertise with top eye surgeons Dr. Anamika Nath and Dr. Pranamee Das

Guwahati: The Retina Centre (TRC) has significantly expanded its team by welcoming Dr. Anamika Nath and Dr. Pranamee Das, two highly esteemed eye surgeons, reinforcing its position as a leading eye care provider in Guwahati.

Dr. Anamika Nath, a Vitreo Retina Surgeon with an MS in Ophthalmology, joins TRC from the Regional Institute of Ophthalmology, Guwahati Medical College and ARAVIND Eye Hospital, Pondicherry. Known for her work along-

side Dr. S.U. Ahmed, a pioneer in VR surgery in North-East India, Dr. Nath also contributes to the Ramakrishna Mission, offering consultations to underprivileged patients on Sundays. "Working with Dr. Ahmed has been transformative. I look forward to continuing this journey of learning and growth," she said. She advises wearing helmets, limiting color contact lens use, avoiding smoking, and protecting eyes from UV rays.

Dr. Pranamee Das, a Phaco Surgeon

with an MS from Assam Medical College, brings her expertise to TRC and actively organizes eye check-up camps for the less fortunate. Celebrating her three-month tenure, Dr. Das remarked, "Being part of TRC has been a great learning experience. I aim to continue this enriching journey." She recommends a balanced diet, avoiding eye rubbing, limiting screen time, and regular eye check-ups for maintaining optimal eye health.

SMFG India Credit opens 1000th branch, celebrates with special cover & my stamp release

Aizawl: SMFG India Credit Co. Ltd., a key player in India's Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) sector, has marked a significant milestone by opening its 1000th branch in Vashi, Navi Mumbai. The occasion was commemorated with the release of a Special Cover & My Stamp in collaboration with India Post, a ceremony attended by notable dignitaries including Mr. YAGI Koji, Consul-General of Japan in Mumbai, and Mr. Abhijeet Bansode, Director - Post Services (HQ) Maharashtra Circle.

The launch of the 1000th branch signifies

SMFG India Credit's strategic expansion into underpenetrated markets, reflecting its commitment to bringing formal financial services to diverse populations across India. The company has grown substantially since its inception in 2007, now operating in over 670 towns and 70,000+ villages, supported by a workforce of more than 23,000 employees.

Over the past two years, SMFG India Credit has established approximately 300 new branches, with 95% located in Tier-2 and semi-rural areas. This expansion aligns

with the company's mission of extending credit access to all, particularly in regions like Aizawl, where markets have responded positively to the increased availability of financial services, fostering local economic growth.

"This achievement underscores our dedication to providing financial access to every Indian," said Mr. Shantanu Mitra, CEO & MD of SMFG India Credit. "The Special Cover & My Stamp release symbolizes our growth and contributions to India's financial sector."

Samsung announces top 10 finalist teams for 'Solve for Tomorrow' 2024 grand finale

Shillong: Samsung India has announced the top 10 finalist teams for its flagship CSR programme, Solve for Tomorrow 2024. These teams, comprising 22 students from across India, will now compete in the grand finale, where they will pitch their innovative solutions to a jury of Samsung and industry leaders. The shortlisted teams hail from remote regions such as Golaghat in Assam, Udupi in Karnataka, and Bilaspur in Chhattisgarh.

The programme saw entries under the themes of Community and Inclusion and Environment and Sustainability. Ideas ranged from arsenic pollution solutions to VR-based learning tools for underprivileged students. The finalists, selected after multiple pitch rounds, were mentored by experts from Samsung and IIT Delhi's Foundation for Innovation & Technology Transfer (FITT).

In Meghalaya's Shillong local tech enthusiasts view this pro-

SAMSUNG

gramme as a crucial platform for innovation. The Shillong market, known for its growing interest in digital technologies, sees opportunities for similar regional participation in future editions of Solve for Tomorrow, potentially enhancing Northeast India's tech landscape. The winning teams will receive grants of up to ₹50 lakh for further development and incubation. Samsung's initiative continues to empower youth across the nation to drive social change through technological innovation.

Kingfisher strong beer slashes price by Rs 40 in Assam

Guwahati: United Breweries Limited (UBL), India's leading beer manufacturer and part of the HEINEKEN Group, has announced a significant price cut for its flagship Kingfisher Strong Beer in Assam, reducing the cost by Rs 40. This move is aimed at enhancing consumer access and aligns with the Assam government's recent measures to lower alcohol prices across the state.

Vivek Gupta, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer of UBL, emphasized the importance of Assam as a key market, stating, "The recent positive measures by the State Government to reduce alcohol prices will benefit the consumers. By brewing Kingfisher Strong locally in Assam, we ensure that our consumers get access to fresh and high-quality beer while promoting moderate and responsible consumption."

Kingfisher Strong, known for its balanced taste and moderate alcohol content, is now available at a more attractive price, further demonstrating UBL's commitment to consumer satisfaction and responsible drinking. The local brewing of Kingfisher Strong ensures that consumers enjoy a product made with premium ingredients and uncompromising quality.

In Guwahati, the price reduction is expected to bolster the local market, making Kingfisher Strong more accessible to consumers who appreciate quality beer at a better value. This move reflects UBL's dedication to supporting the growing acceptance of beer as a social beverage in the region.

Škoda announces Slavia Monte Carlo with special offer for early adopters



Guwahati: Škoda Auto India has launched the highly anticipated Slavia Monte Carlo edition, marking a significant milestone in the company's Indian journey. In celebration of this launch and its 112th anniversary at Rallye Monte Carlo, Škoda is offering ₹30,000 in benefits to the first 5,000 bookings of the Slavia Monte Carlo and the newly introduced Sportline variants of the Kushaq and Slavia. This promotional offer is valid until September 6, 2024.

Mr. Petr Janeba, Brand Director of Škoda Auto India, highlighted the brand's commitment to delivering sporty and stylish vehicles with the introduction of the Monte Carlo edition. "The Monte Carlo badge embodies sport and victory, reflecting our rich heritage and ongoing evolution in India. The new Sportline trims

offer customers an accessible yet sporty alternative," Janeba said.

The Slavia Monte Carlo features sporty black design elements, including a distinctive black roof, alloy wheels, and interior accents. It is powered by 1.0 TSI and 1.5 TSI engines, available in Tornado Red and Candy White. The Sportline trim also enhances the Kushaq and Slavia with blacked-out design elements and additional features.

In Guwahati, Škoda's latest offerings are set to attract car enthusiasts looking for unique and stylish vehicles. The Monte Carlo edition's striking design and the Sportline's sporty appeal are expected to resonate well with the city's growing automotive market, promising increased brand visibility and customer engagement in the region.

Neeraj qualifies for Diamond League final in Brussels



New Delhi: Indian javelin star Neeraj Chopra, who won a silver medal at the Paris Olympics, has qualified for the Diamond League finale at Brussels after finishing fourth in the overall standings following the culmination of 14 series meetings. The season finale will be a two-day event on September 13 and 14.

The Indian ace, who won the 2022 edition of the Diamond League, featured in the two meets of the series in Doha and Lausanne and accumulated 14 points from his second-place finishes. He opted out of the Zurich leg of the meet on Thursday. Neeraj is two points behind third-placed Jakub Vadlech of Czechia. Paris Olympics bronze medallist Anderson Peters of Grenada and German star Julian Weber take the first two spots with 29 and 21 points, respectively.

The 26-year-old became the second Indian track and field athlete to win two Olympic medals. Earlier, he won the gold medal in the Tokyo Olympics to create history.

Rahul Dravid Poised to Take Helm as Rajasthan Royals' Head Coach for IPL 2025

New Delhi: Following his successful stint as the architect behind India's T20 World Cup 2024 victory, Rahul Dravid is on the brink of being appointed as the head coach of the Rajasthan Royals for the IPL 2025 season. Currently on a brief career hiatus after India's triumph in Barbados this June, Dravid is expected to commence his new role by addressing key strategies, including player retention, ahead of this year's auction. Sources close to the negotiations confirm that discussions are in their final stages, with an official announcement anticipated soon. Kumar Sangakkara,

presently the Director of Cricket for the Royals since 2021, will maintain his position while also taking a more active role with the Barbados Royals in the CPL and the Paarl Royals in the SA20 league.

Dravid's connection with the Rajasthan Royals dates back to his time as a player and captain during the 2012 and 2013 seasons, followed by a mentoring role for two additional years. Post his tenure with the Royals, he joined the Delhi Capitals in a similar capacity before transitioning to the head of the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru. In 2021, Dravid



accepted the mantle as India's head coach, succeeding Ravi Shastri. His return to the Royals marks a full-circle moment, particularly in reuniting with Sanju Samson, who is poised to

continue as the team's captain under Dravid's guidance. Samson's cricketing prowess first flourished significantly under Dravid's mentorship.

In related developments, ESPNcricinfo has reported that Vikram Rathour, the former batting coach of India during Dravid's tenure as national coach, may also join the Rajasthan Royals, potentially as the assistant coach. This move would further strengthen the coaching team with familiar and experienced individuals as the franchise aims for greater successes in the upcoming IPL seasons.

Dhoni's Guidance Elevates Simarjeet Singh's T20 Skills

New Delhi: MS Dhoni's impact on emerging talents continues to resonate as Chennai Super Kings pacer Simarjeet Singh credits the seasoned cricketer for enhancing his prowess in T20 cricket. Currently shining as the leading wicket-taker with 15 wickets in the Delhi Premier League for East Delhi Riders, Simarjeet has demonstrated significant growth under Dhoni's mentorship.

In an exclusive interview with PTI videos, the 26-year-old detailed how Dhoni's approach has simplified his game, particularly in highpressure scenarios

of the IPL, helping him secure important wickets like those of Yashasvi Jaiswal, Jos Buttler, and Sanju Samson.

"MS Dhoni has not only improved my game but he's instilled a better understanding of T20 dynamics. His advice is always to keep things simple, which has been incredibly effective," said Simarjeet.

With an eye on continuous improvement, Simarjeet looks forward to the upcoming domestic season where the return of senior Indian players is anticipated. He values the learning from experienced cricketers, which aids in refining his skills



further.

As the cricket community gears up for the next IPL's mega auction, Simarjeet's focus remains unwavering: to enhance his cricketing journey irrespective of the team he represents.

Praveen wins India's record-breaking sixth gold at Paris Paralympics



Paris: India's Praveen Kumar won the gold medal in the men's high jump T64 event at the 2024 Paris Paralympics, clearing 2.08 meters to claim his second consecutive Paralympic medal. Praveen had previously secured silver at the 2021 Tokyo Paralympics with a personal best of 2.07 meters, marking a remarkable continuation of his success on the international stage.

The 21-year-old athlete from Noida, Uttar Pradesh, became only the second Indian, after Mariyappan Thangavelu, to win gold in Paralympic high jump competitions. The 21-year-old athlete from Noida, born with a shorter leg, delivered a season-best jump of 2.08m in a six-competitor field to secure the top spot on the podium.

USA's Derek Loccident took silver with the best jump of 2.06m, while Uzbekistan's Temurbek Giyazov, achieving a personal best of 2.03m, finished third. Praveen competes

under the T44 classification, designated for athletes with lower leg movement affected to a low or moderate degree, whereas the T64 category is for athletes with moderate movement impairment in one lower leg or those missing one or both legs below the knee.

With this achievement, Praveen became the third Indian high jumper to medal in Paris, following Sharad Kumar, who took silver, and Mariyappan Thangavelu, who earned bronze in the men's high jump T63 event. India's tally at the Paris Paralympics now stands at 26 medals: six gold, nine silver, and 11 bronze.

Born in Govindgarh, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, Praveen made history as the youngest para-athlete to win a Tokyo 2020 Paralympic medal. He secured a silver medal in the men's high jump T64 category with an outstanding jump of 2.07 meters, marking a significant moment for Indian athletics.

Jaiswal Cites Rohit Sharma as Crucial Mentor in Evolving Test Career

Bengaluru: Emerging Test cricketer Yashasvi Jaiswal credits his rapid development at the international level to the guidance and on-field experiences shared by India's Test captain, Rohit Sharma. Describing batting alongside Sharma as a profound learning experience, Jaiswal believes his captain's nuanced understanding of adapting to different pitches and match situations has been invaluable.

"Batting with him is an incredible experience. Rohit's ability to control the game and his tactical acumen in reading the wicket and conditions has immensely helped my approach," Jaiswal remarked during a press conference ahead of the Duleep Trophy. The young opener, who debuted last year, has quickly found his rhythm in the international arena, crafting several significant partnerships with Sharma. He highlighted how Rohit's insights have helped him tailor his batting technique



to suit varying conditions and scenarios, enhancing his effectiveness and consistency.

Jaiswal also expressed his growth in cricketing intelligence over the past year, crediting his exposure to international cricket with broadening his understanding and improving his strategic thinking. "My awareness about different game situations has definitely sharpened, helping me adjust my game accordingly,"

he added. The 22-year-old batsman also spoke highly of India's new head coach, Gautam Gambhir, praising his supportive approach and encouragement to play freely. "His backing really boosts our confidence, allowing us to express ourselves without fear," Jaiswal said.

As he prepares for the upcoming Duleep Trophy and a Test series against Bangladesh, Jaiswal is focused on using these domestic matches as a platform to refine his skills and prepare for the challenges of international cricket. He underscored the importance of tournaments like the Duleep and Irani Trophy in getting match-ready and staying in top form.

With an eye on the future, Jaiswal is determined to make the most of the opportunities and continue learning from seasoned players like Rohit Sharma, aiming to cement his place in the Indian Test squad and contribute significantly to the team's successes.