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Apple reaches \$5 billion in iPhone exports from India in April-August period

New Delhi: Driven by the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme, Apple has reached around \$5 billion in iPhone exports from India in the April-August period this fiscal.

According to industry data, this is a growth of over 50 per cent from the same period of first five months in FY24. With the country set to commence production of the flagship iPhone Pro and Pro Max models, the value of iPhone exports is going to jump further in the festive quarter and months ahead, according to the industry analysts.

The new iPhone 16 series will be available in the country from September 20 at attractive financing options and

other offers. According to Union Railways and Electronics and IT Minister, Ashwini Vaishnaw, Apple's latest iPhone 16 is being produced and launched globally from the Indian manufacturing plants. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Make in India' initiative is now driving the creation of iconic products for the world," the minister posted on X social media platform.

iPhone exports continue to clock around \$1 billion each month thanks to the government's PLI scheme. The iPhone exports from India surged sharply to \$12.1 billion in 2023-24 from \$6.27 billion in 2022-23. Overall, the company's India operations reached 23.5



billion dollars in value in the last fiscal (FY24).

The company's revenues in India are likely to grow 18 per cent (year-on-year) in 2024 and the new iPhone 16 series would help the company further solidify its presence in the country, along with boosting its exports figures.

Gold price rises to two-month high level of Rs 75,550/10gm, silver at Rs 87,000/kg

Mumbai: Gold prices bounced by Rs 1,200 to hit nearly a two-month high level of Rs 75,550 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, tracking a buying rush in domestic markets by jewellers amid a firm global trend. The precious metal had closed at Rs 74,350 per 10 grams on Thursday.

Extending its gains for the fourth straight session, silver prices also rallied by Rs 2,000 to Rs 89,000 per kilogram on increased offtake by industrial units and coin makers, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The white metal had finished at Rs 87,000 per kg in the previous close on Thursday. In the past four sessions, the metal has surged Rs 5,200 per kg. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 percent purity also jumped by Rs 1,200 to Rs 75,200 per 10 grams from Rs 74,000 per 10 grams in the previous close. In July, gold prices have corrected sharply by Rs 5,000 to Rs 71,050 per

10 grams in the local markets after the government slashed basic customs duties on gold and silver from 15 per cent to 6 per cent. In the Asian trading hours, Comex gold was trading 0.74 per cent high at USD 2,599.70 per ounce.

"Comex gold prices reached a new all-time high on Friday, fuelled by the weakening dollar, as investors anticipating an interest rate cut by the US Federal Reserve next week," Kaynat Chainwala, AVP-Commodity Research, Kotak Securities, said.

According to commodity market experts, lower interest rates are positive for the bullion prices because it reduces the opportunity cost of holding the non-interest-bearing asset, making it attractive to investors. Silver also quoted higher at \$30.47 per ounce in the overseas markets.

"Gold prices surged to new



highs, exceeding \$2,550 per ounce, while silver reached three-week highs, following significant rate cuts by the European Central Bank and a weakening dollar index," Rahul Kalantri, VP Commodities of Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

According to Deveya Gaglani, Senior Research Analyst at Axis Securities, Comex gold prices experienced a strong 1.9 percent rally, the strongest since August 16 this year. "This week's latest inflation data has significantly increased the likelihood of a rate cut by the Fed next week. This key factor has fuelled a bullish sentiment among yellow metal traders," Gaglani said.

CMFRI to be Centre of Excellence for seaweed cultivation

Kochi: The Department of Fisheries under the Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying has designated the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) as a Centre of Excellence for seaweed cultivation.

The Mandapam Regional Centre of CMFRI in Mandapam, Tamil Nadu will serve as the hub for research, development, training and capacity

building in seaweed cultivation. The centre will promote sustainable seaweed farming practices and address key challenges in the area with an aim to enhance India's role in the global seaweed industry.

Dr Grinson George, Director of CMFRI termed this development as a crucial step in unlocking the country's potential in seaweed cultivation

Mobil hosts India's first night street race in Chennai

Chennai: Mobil, a leader in automotive lubricants, associated with Racing Promotions Private Limited (RPPL) for India's first-ever night street race in Chennai during the 'Indian Racing Festival 2024' at the Chennai Formula Racing Circuit on August 31 and September 1. This landmark event marked Mobil's third year of association with the Indian Racing Festival, showcasing a spectacular combination of speed, skill, technology and performance.

Commenting on the occasion, Vipin Rana, CEO - Exxon Mobil Lubricants Pvt. Ltd. said, "We are honoured to be a part of the India Racing Week, an event that not only demonstrates our dedication to advancing global motorsports but also accelerates the future of racing in India. In the last three years, we have empowered racers and enthusiasts with the confidence provided by Mobil™ products, enabling them to unlock their potential. Akhilesh Reddy, Chairman of RPPL, added, We are incredibly proud of this association with Mobil and thrilled to bring India's first night street race to life. Congratulations to all the teams of F4 and IRL for their remarkable performance, and we look forward to continue the same momentum in the future.

After record rally, Sensex declines 200 points to 82,762 in early trade; Nifty drops 67 points to 25,321

Mumbai: Equity benchmark indices declined in early trade on Friday after the previous session's record rally on the emergence of profit-taking amid weak trends from Asian peers.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dived 200.03 points to 82,762.68 after beginning the trade on a positive note. The NSE Nifty dropped 67.5 points to 25,321.40.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, Asian Paints, Mahindra & Mahindra, ITC, Hindustan Unilever, Bharti Airtel, Sun Pharma, Infosys and Bajaj Finance were the biggest laggards. Tata Steel, JSW Steel, Tata Motors and Power Grid were among the gainers.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Shanghai were trading lower while Hong Kong quoted in the positive territory. The US markets ended with gains on Thursday.

A sharp fag-end rally on Thursday drove the BSE



benchmark to the 83,000 level for the first time. The barometer surged 1,593.03 points or 1.95 per cent to hit its lifetime intra-day peak of 83,116.19. The index ended at a record high of 82,962.71, up by 1,439.55 points or 1.77 per cent.

The NSE Nifty surged 470.45 points or 1.89 per cent to settle at a record closing high of 25,388.90. The benchmark hit its fresh all-time intra-day high of 25,433.35, a jump of 514.9 points or 2 per cent.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 7,695 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.40 per cent to 72.26 a barrel.

Ford Chennai manufacturing plant to reopen to roll out vehicles for exports

Mumbai: American automaker Ford on Friday said it is preparing to utilise its Chennai manufacturing plant to roll out vehicles for exports and has intimated the same to the Tamil Nadu government.

The company which in 2021 had said that it would stop manufacturing vehicles in India, has submitted a Letter of Intent (LOI) to the Tamil Nadu government, confirming its intention to utilise the Chennai plant for manufacturing for exports.

The announcement follows a meeting between Ford leadership and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin as part of his visit to the United States, Ford said in a statement. "This step aims to underscore our ongoing commitment to India as we intend to leverage the manufacturing expertise available in Tamil Nadu to serve new global markets," Ford International Markets Group President Kay Hart said.

Ford said the strategic move will see the facility repurposed to focus on manufacturing for export to global markets, as part of the company's ambitious 'Ford+ growth plan'. The company currently employs 12,000 individuals in Global Business Operations in Tamil Nadu, a number expected to grow by 2,500 to 3,000 jobs within the next three years, it added.

"Combined with the engine manufacturing operations in Sanand, India represents Ford's second-largest salaried workforce worldwide," the company said. In September 2021, after nearly three decades of struggling to make a mark in India, Ford Motor Co had announced that it would stop vehicle production at its two plants in the country and will sell only imported vehicles going ahead, as part of a restructuring exercise.

While the company sold its vehicle manufacturing plant at Sanand in Gujarat to Tata Motors, it could not wind down its vehicle and engine manufacturing in Chennai by the targeted timeline of second quarter of 2022.

Swiggy and MSDE team up to revolutionize workforce skills with new initiative

Guwahati: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has entered a strategic partnership with Swiggy to launch the 'Swiggy Skills' initiative, aimed at elevating the skill sets and employability of workers in the food delivery and quick commerce sectors. This collaboration, marked by a newly signed Memorandum of Understanding

(MoU), aligns with the Government's Viksit Bharat 2047 vision, focusing on the burgeoning logistics sector where over Rs 80 lakh crore is being invested.

The initiative will integrate Swiggy's platform with the Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH), providing a range of online skill development courses, certifications, and training modules. This

move is set to benefit around 2.4 lakh delivery partners and staff from Swiggy's restaurant network, enhancing their career prospects.

For Guwahati, this partnership is poised to create substantial local employment opportunities. The integration with SIDH will provide Guwahati's workforce with enhanced access to training resources, thereby supporting

the city's economic growth and expanding career opportunities in the food delivery and retail sectors.

Swiggy's CEO, Shri Rohit Kapoor, noted the transformative impact of this initiative: "By integrating with SIDH, we aim to significantly enhance our workforce's skills and align with the growing demands of the logistics and retail industries."

Rapido secures \$200 million in Series E funding, valuation surpasses \$1.1 billion

Guwahati: Rapido, India's leading ride-sharing platform, has raised \$200 million in its latest Series E funding round, boosting its valuation to over \$1.1 billion. The round was led by WestBridge Capital, with participation from existing investor Nexus and new investors Think Investments and Invus Opportunities.

This funding comes on the back of rapid user growth, with Rapido now facilitating 2.5 million daily rides, a 2.5x surge in GMV over the past year. The investment will be used to expand Rapido's operations and enhance its technology platform, strengthening its leadership in urban mobility.

Co-founder Aravind Sanka said, "This investment empowers us to innovate and expand our offerings to meet evolving customer needs. Our growth has been tremendous, and we are committed to enhancing urban mobility for everyone."

WestBridge Capital's Managing Partner, Sumir Chadha, praised Rapido's capital-efficient scale-up, noting its dominance in bike taxis and expansion into auto and cab services. With a presence in over 100 cities, Rapido is poised for continued growth in India's urban and semi-urban markets.

Festive online shopping Boost: Amazon tops preferences for Indian consumers

Shillong: With the festive season approaching, a survey by Ipsos Research for Amazon India reveals a surge in online shopping enthusiasm. The study highlights that 89% of respondents are excited about the festivals, and 71% plan to shop online, driven by convenience and diverse product selections.

Amazon emerges as the leading online shopping choice, with 73% of consumers trusting the platform for their festive needs. Shoppers appreciate Amazon's extensive product range

(75%) and attractive deals (72%). Notably, 44% of consumers intend to spend more this year, reflecting optimism about the economic outlook.

In Shillong, the trend mirrors national patterns. Local shoppers are increasingly favoring Amazon for its reliability and comprehensive offerings, particularly in fashion and electronics. This shift is evident in the growing preference for online shopping in Shillong's market, aligning with the broader online shopping boom.

LEAD Group's TECHBOOK set to revolutionize learning in India

Guwahati: LEAD Group, the leading School Edtech company in India, has introduced TECHBOOK, a revolutionary educational tool set to transform classroom learning. Designed to replace traditional textbooks, TECHBOOK integrates Augmented Reality (AR), personalized reading assistance, and interactive exercises to offer a cutting-edge, personalized learning experience.

The TECHBOOK features Augmented Reality Instructor (ARI) to bring subjects like Science and Mathematics to life in 3D, Independent Reading Assistant (IRA) to enhance language skills with real-time feedback, and Personalized Interactive Exercises (PIE) for adaptive learning at each student's pace. LEAD Group aims to have this innovative tool adopted by India's top 5,000 schools by 2028.

In Guwahati, TECHBOOK is poised to revolutionize educational practices. With its advanced features, it promises to elevate the learning standards in local schools, setting new benchmarks for interactive and personalized education in



Assam. The introduction of TECHBOOK could position Guwahati as a leader in adopting high-tech educational solutions.

LEAD Group's co-founder and CEO, Sumeet Mehta, emphasized the importance of this shift, stating, "TECHBOOK is not just a product but a significant leap towards modernizing education with AI and AR." The company plans to pilot TECHBOOK in 400 top schools before a broader rollout, with a goal to impact over 60,000 schools across India by 2028.

Tally Solutions launches TallyPrime 5.0, eyes 30-40% CAGR in 3 years

Guwahati: Tally Solutions has unveiled its latest software version, TallyPrime 5.0, as part of its continued efforts to support India's fast-growing MSME sector. The new version, which introduces API-driven tax filing and connected GST capabilities, aims to simplify GST filing for businesses, enhancing their operations without the need to visit the GST portal.

TallyPrime 5.0 also expands its global reach by integrating advanced multilingual support, including Arabic and Bangla, catering to the growing demand from the Middle East and Bangladesh markets. The new features provide a comprehensive solution for online GST

operations, e-invoicing, and e-way bill generation, along with improved flexibility for GSTR-1 and GSTR-3B reconciliation.

According to Tejas Goenka, Managing Director of Tally Solutions, the new launch will save MSMEs 60-70% of their time on GST filing. Tally aims to grow its user base by 50% over the next three years and expects a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 30-40%.

In Guwahati, local MSMEs stand to benefit greatly from TallyPrime 5.0's simplified compliance processes, streamlining operations and promoting growth in the region's business ecosystem.

Diageo India and BharatCares launch WASH projects in Meghalaya schools

Shillong: Diageo India, in collaboration with BharatCares, has inaugurated new Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) projects in two schools in Meghalaya. The launch took place at Seng Khasi Upper Primary School in Mawlai Khasi Hills and Soso Tham Memorial School in Lawsohtun. These projects are set to benefit over 120 students and staff by enhancing their learning environment.

At Seng Khasi, improvements will include a renovated water station and new boundary walls, while Soso Tham will receive a new classroom with a dyna roof, separate toilets, and a handwashing station.

Navdeep Singh Mehram, Head of CSR & Sustainability at Diageo India, emphasized the company's commitment to water preservation and community well-being through its Society



2030 ESG action plan. Manoviraj Singh of CSRBOX Foundation highlighted the initiative's role in improving school infrastructure and student access to essential facilities.

In Shillong, where educational institutions are expanding rapidly, the demand for improved WASH facilities has become critical. The city's growing population and the push for enhanced educational standards make these WASH projects particularly timely. They address the urgent need for modern infrastructure, aligning with Shillong's broader development goals and community health improvements.

Assam's Pritisha Barman shines at WorldSkills 2024 in France

Guwahati: Assam's Pritisha Barman is making waves at WorldSkills 2024 in Lyon, France, representing India in the beauty therapy category. Barman, a finalist at IndiaSkills 2022, returns with a wildcard entry to showcase her skills on an international stage. Her participation underscores Assam's growing reputation for excellence in skill development and highlights the importance of high-quality training in beauty therapy.

Team India, the fourth largest contingent at the competition, is competing in 52 categories. Barman's journey, marked by resilience and dedication, reflects the state's commitment to fostering

talent and advancing skill development. The performance of Indian competitors, as praised by Shri Jayant Chaudhary, Minister of State for Skill Development, and Shri Atul Kumar Tiwari, Secretary of MSDE, aligns with the vision of making India a global leader in skills. In Guwahati, the enthusiasm for Barman's participation is palpable. Local businesses and training institutes are rallying behind her, seeing her success as a testament to the region's potential and the impact of robust skill development programs. This local support highlights Guwahati's growing role in contributing to national and international skill achievements.

Vi sets new industry standard with PCI DSS 4.0 certification

Guwahati: Leading telecom operator Vi has announced a significant achievement by attaining the Payment Card Industry-Data Security Standard version 4.0 (PCI DSS 4.0) certification for its retail stores & payment channels. This positions Vi as the first telecom operator in India to secure this prestigious certification, further highlighting its commitment to safeguard customer payment information through adherence to the highest global security standards. PCI DSS 4.0, developed by the PCI SSC, is a stringent security protocol designed to safeguard credit and debit card organizations from data breaches and fraud.

The PCI DSS 4.0 certification is already

mandated by RBI Guidelines for banking and financial institutions in India. Commenting on this development, Jagbir Singh, CTO, Vi, said, "At Vi, the security of our customers' data is not just a priority, it is our commitment." Vi worked with Vista InfoSec, a renowned security consulting firm, to achieve this certification. Narendra Sahoo, Founder & Director of VISTA InfoSec, said, "Working with Vi on their PCI DSS 4.0 certification was a remarkable experience." Vi's commitment to data security is further underlined by its earlier distinction this year, as the first telecom operator in India to achieve SOC2 Type II attestation.

SBI Life Insurance and Mirchi launch 14th edition of Spell Bee 2024, nurtures future leaders

Guwahati: SBI Life Insurance, in collaboration with Mirchi, has unveiled the 14th edition of Spell Bee 2024, themed "Bee Spellbound." The nationwide competition, spanning 30 cities and 500+ schools, aims to engage over 3 lakh students, with the top 50 moving on to the National Finale. The grand prize includes INR 1 lakh and a

trip to Disneyland, Hong Kong, for the crowned "Spellmaster of India 2024."

This year's Spell Bee goes beyond spelling, focusing on fostering leadership, creativity, and values like courage and innovation. Ravindra Sharma, Chief of Brand, Corporate Communications, and CSR at SBI Life, highlighted the plat-

form's role in shaping not just spellers but future leaders capable of making meaningful societal contributions.

In Guwahati, the competition has gained significant traction, with several schools actively participating. The city's market for educational initiatives continues to grow, driven by strong community support

for events like Spell Bee that emphasize intellectual growth and leadership.

Mirchi's EVP & National Director, Pooja Gulati, expressed excitement for this season, calling it the most impactful yet, as it continues to merge learning with entertainment, further expanding its reach across India.

Nissan launches extensive support for flood-affected vehicle owners across India

Aizawl: In response to the severe flooding impacting various regions of India, Nissan Motor India Pvt. Ltd. (NMIPL) has rolled out a comprehensive support initiative for owners of flood-affected vehicles. The automaker has set up a dedicated helpdesk to assist customers, offering free Roadside Assistance (RSA) services, including vehicle towing to authorized Nissan service workshops. Additionally, Nissan is waiving insurance claim process fees of up to INR 1000 for affected vehicles. These support measures will be in effect until 30th September 2024.

Saurabh Vatsa, Managing Director of Nissan Motor India, stated, "We recognize the difficulties our customers face due to the ongoing floods. Our top priority is their safety and satisfaction. By extending our support until the end of September, we aim to provide essential relief and expedite vehicle repairs."

In Guwahati, the flood crisis has heightened demand for vehicle repair services, and Nissan's assistance is seen as a crucial support for local residents. The special offers, including 10% discounts on engine oil and floor carpet replacements, along with free vehicle health check-ups, are expected to provide significant relief to the community.

NSE commemorates 30 years with bull statue unveiling and book launch



Guwahati: Maharashtra Governor Shri C.P. Radhakrishnan inaugurated the iconic NSE Bull statue and launched the commemorative Coffee Table Book, "The Journey of Empowering 1.4 Billion Dreams," at the NSE Headquarters today. The statue, symbolizing strength and resilience, is surrounded by diverse figures representing India's broad investment landscape, highlighting the unity and inclusivity of the country's financial ecosystem.

The Coffee Table Book chronicles NSE's 30-year journey since its inception in 1994, detailing its transformative role in India's cap-

ital markets. NSE has evolved into the world's largest stock exchange by activity, mirroring India's rise to become the fifth-largest economy globally.

Governor Radhakrishnan lauded NSE for its role in revolutionizing the financial sector, emphasizing the Bull's symbolic significance and NSE's contribution to India's growth. NSE MD & CEO Ashishkumar Chauhan highlighted the Bull's representation of the symbiotic relationship between the market and society, celebrating NSE's achievement in reaching over 10 crore unique investors.

In Guwahati, the NSE Bull's unveiling and the book launch underscore the significant impact NSE's advancements have had across various regional markets. Guwahati, as a growing financial hub, reflects the broader trends of increased market accessibility and investor confidence fostered by NSE's innovations. The event reaffirms NSE's commitment to driving economic progress and inclusion throughout India.

Israel seeks to recruit 10,000 Indian construction workers and 5,000 caregivers

Guwahati: Israel is ramping up its recruitment efforts, targeting a significant influx of talent from India to address shortages in construction and healthcare. The country is set to recruit 10,000 construction workers and 5,000 caregivers as part of a new drive. This follows a similar initiative earlier this year.

The Population, Immigration, and Border Authority (PIBA) has specified needs for roles including Framework, Iron Bending, Plastering, and Ceramic Tiling. A PIBA assessment team will visit India next week to conduct skill tests, focusing on candidates from Maharashtra for construction positions. For caregiving roles, applicants must have completed at least the 10th grade and hold a caregiving certificate with 990 hours of training.

In the previous recruitment round, 16,832 candidates were evaluated, with 10,349 selected. Successful applicants will earn Rs 1.92 lakh per month, plus medical insurance, food, accommodation, and a Rs 16,515 monthly bonus.

The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) is overseeing the recruitment process, following a government-to-government agreement from November 2023. This initiative aligns with India's vision of becoming a global skill capital.

In Guwahati, this recruitment drive is anticipated to stimulate local markets, boosting demand for training and placement services. Local training centers are expected to see increased enrollments as job seekers prepare for these opportunities, which will also contribute to the economic growth of the region.

India's Pre-Diabetes surge spurs demand for nutrient-rich foods: Dr. Rohini Patil's guide highlights market trends

Guwahati: With 136 million Indians now living with pre-diabetes, the focus on dietary management is intensifying. Dr. Rohini Patil, a leading MBBS and nutritionist, underscores the growing importance of specific nutrient-rich foods to combat this health crisis. Her recommendations include almonds, green leafy vegetables, Greek yogurt, lean proteins, and

whole grains, all of which help regulate blood sugar levels and prevent the progression to diabetes.

The surge in pre-diabetes cases has led to increased consumer interest in health-focused foods, notably almonds, which research shows can significantly stabilize blood sugar levels when consumed before meals. Dr. Patil's insights are driving de-

mand in markets across India.

Guwahati is responding swiftly to this trend. Vendors report rising sales of almonds, leafy greens, and whole grains as consumers seek to adopt healthier eating habits. Local retailers are expanding their stock of these items, anticipating sustained demand driven by heightened awareness of pre-diabetes management.

Star Health and Policybazaar announces 'SUPER STAR' health insurance plan



Guwahati: Star Health and Allied Insurance, in partnership with Policybazaar, launched a revolutionary health insurance plan named 'SUPER STAR.' The plan offers personalized, long-term coverage with a policy term of up to five years. Designed to address the unique health insurance needs of individuals and families, SUPER STAR introduces modular coverage that adapts throughout life stages, offering flexibility and comprehensive protection.

SUPER STAR stands out with features like 'Freeze Your Age,' allowing policyholders to maintain their entry-age premiums, and a 50-100% No Claim Bonus. Additionally, automatic restoration of the Sum Insured for unrelated ill-

nesses and wellness rewards further enhance the value. The plan's digital availability on Policybazaar and Star Health's portals adds convenience.

In Guwahati, the launch of SUPER STAR is expected to meet the growing demand for flexible and affordable health insurance solutions. With healthcare costs rising, this plan promises enhanced financial security for Guwahati's families, aligning with the city's increasing preference for long-term healthcare options.

"With healthcare costs escalating, SUPER STAR offers a solution that grows with customers," said Sarbvir Singh, Joint Group CEO of PB Fintech, highlighting the plan's potential to reshape India's health insurance sector.

Tata AIA ranks 6th globally with record MDRT advisors leading India in female advisors

Aizawl: Tata AIA Life Insurance has achieved a notable milestone by securing the 6th position in the global Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT) rankings for 2024. The company registered 2,584 MDRT-qualified advisors, marking a substantial 30.64% increase over the previous year. Tata AIA stands out in India for having the highest number of female MDRT advisors, with 1,238 qualifying, placing it 7th globally among firms with female members.

MDRT is recognized as the benchmark for excellence in the life insurance and financial services sector, celebrating advisors who excel in client service and ethical standards. This accolade reinforces Tata AIA's commitment to providing top-notch financial advice and securing consumer trust.

Amit Dave, Chief Distribution Officer of Tata AIA, praised the company's performance, emphasizing how



the growing number of MDRT advisors enhances client confidence and policy renewals. "Our large pool of MDRT members ensures that our consumers receive the best advice, reinforcing our leadership in persistency," Dave noted.

In Mizoram, Tata AIA's expanded advisor network has bolstered its presence, with increasing consumer engagement and a higher rate of policy renewals, reflecting the company's strong foothold and growing influence in the region.

Duleep Trophy's Second Round Puts Focus on Emerging and Overlooked Cricketers

Anantapur: As the second round of the Duleep Trophy commences this Thursday, the focus will pivot to a host of emerging and previously overlooked cricketers eager to make an impression in the absence of the mainstays who are prepping for the upcoming Test against Bangladesh.

Sarfraz Khan remains the solitary representative from the India squad featuring in this domestic fixture, as key players like Rishabh Pant and K L Rahul are away at a national camp. This opens the door wide for players like Rinku Singh, whose omission from the first round was notable given his strong record in domestic cir-

cles, and Mayank Agarwal, who is looking to claw his way back into the national setup.

The tournament will also serve as a crucial stage for Prasidh Krishna, who is making a return post-recovery, and India B's skipper Abhimanyu Easwaran, who seeks redemption after a subpar outing in Bengaluru last week. All-rounder Washington Sundar and speedster Mukesh Kumar will be under the microscope, showcasing their skills in anticipation of the forthcoming Australian tour.

For the young guns in India C, openers Sai Sudharsan and Ruturaj Gaikwad will be keen on fortifying their credentials as



potential backup options for the national squad. Their performances could very well set the tone for their future inclusion in more prestigious fixtures.

The round is equally critical for seasoned players who have drifted from the selector's radar. Figures such as Shreyas Iyer,

who leads India D, and Rajat Patidar are on a quest to amass hefty scores to reclaim their positions. Likewise, dynamic talents like Devdutt Padikkal and Sanju Samson, particularly after being sidelined in previous selections, are desperate to prove their mettle.

The left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh, notable for his prowess in shorter formats, is another athlete aiming to enhance his credentials in the red-ball game, underscoring his adaptability and skill across formats.

With the Australian tour on the horizon, the performances in these matches could be pivotal for selection, making every inning and every wicket extremely consequential. The Duleep Trophy not only provides a platform for these athletes to showcase their abilities but also serves as a critical juncture in their careers, potentially influencing their future trajectories in international cricket.

Will be exciting to watch Kohli, Smith go head-to-head: Maxwell

New Delhi: Australia's big-hitting all-rounder Glenn Maxwell said seeing premier batters Steve Smith and Virat Kohli go head-to-head in the upcoming Border-Gavaskar Trophy will make for a pretty exciting watch.

Smith has amassed 2042 runs in 19 Tests against India, averaging an incredible 65.87 with nine centuries and five fifties against his name. On the other hand, Kohli has also made the same number of runs in 25 Tests against Australia at a remarkable average of 47.48, including hitting eight tons.

In 13 Test matches Kohli has played in Australia, the right-handed batter has amassed 1,352 runs, including six centuries and four fifties, at an average of 54.08.

"One of those two is going to make a lot of runs, if not both of them, and it's going to be pretty exciting to watch the two of the finest players of our generation go head-to-head," said Maxwell to Star Sports.

Techno India Group Opens Manchester City Football School in Kolkata



Kolkata: Techno India Group officially partnered with City Football Group to launch the first-ever Manchester City Football School in West Bengal, marking a new era in Indian football development. The school, which began its preregistration in September, aims to nurture young talent from across the country by offering players a unique blend of world-class football coaching and a strong sports foundation. The football school will cater to athletes aged three to seventeen, providing them with top-tier training led by full-time Manchester City coaches who have been handpicked by City Football Group. These coaches will implement Manchester City's renowned training methodology.

Indian Athletes Aim to Shine at South Asian Junior Athletics Championships in Chennai

Chennai: The Indian contingent is poised to leverage its home advantage at the upcoming South Asian Junior Athletics Championships, starting this Wednesday at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. Among the hopefuls, Sharuk Khan, who recently set the national U20 record in the 3,000m steeplechase, is a prominent figure expected to excel.

The 62-member team, assembled by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI), includes notable athletes such as Pooja, the national U20 record holder in women's high jump, who achieved a personal best of 1.83m at the World Athletics U20 Championships in Lima, Peru. In addition to individual events, the championships are set to witness strong performances in team events. "The Indian 4x100m women's team, which set a national U20 record at the World U20, is an-

anticipated to continue their impressive performance," noted N Ramesh, the chief junior national athletics coach.

The team, which boasts several medalists from the 2024 Asian U20 Championships in Dubai, including Anurag Singh Kaler and Siddharth Choudhary in shot put, and Ritik in discus throw, is looking to make a significant impact.

With the majority of the team members having competed at the World Athletics U20 Championships, the event in Chennai provides a critical platform for further exposure and development on home soil.

Competing against a strong international field from Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and the Maldives, the Indian athletes are set to demonstrate their prowess and potentially secure a significant medal haul.

Chopra and Sable Set to Shine at Diamond League Finale in Brussels

Brussels: As the Diamond League draws to a spectacular close this Friday in Brussels, all eyes are on India's Neeraj Chopra and Avinash Sable, who are set to compete against some of the world's finest athletes at the King Baudouin Stadium. This year's finale, uniquely spread over two days, promises fierce competition with an extraordinary lineup of Olympic and world champions.

Neeraj Chopra, the javelin throw sensation and Olympic silver medalist, aims to cap off his season with a standout performance on Saturday. Having secured his place in the finale with robust performances in Doha and Lausanne, where he finished second in both events, Chopra is a strong contender for the prestigious 'Diamond Trophy'. Despite grappling with a nagging groin injury that has hampered his form, Chopra's participation is highly anticipated as he seeks to overcome physical setbacks and deliver another memorable throw.

Avinash Sable, the national record holder in the 3000m steeplechase, is looking to redeem himself after a less-than-ideal showing at the Olympics. Sable, who secured his spot in the finale by benefitting from the withdrawal of higher-ranked athletes, will compete on Friday. His season's best performance came in July at the Paris leg of the Diamond League, where he set a new national record. This event presents a crucial opportunity for Sable to assert his credentials on the global stage.

Harry Kane Celebrates 100th England Cap with Double Strike, Ake Suffers Injury in Netherlands Game



London: England captain Harry Kane commemorated his 100th international appearance with two goals, leading England to a 2-0 victory over Finland in the UEFA Nations League on Tuesday at Wembley Stadium. Kane, adorned with a golden cap and wearing gold boots for the special occasion, was a focal point of celebration, receiving a standing ovation upon his substitution following his impactful performance.

The match commenced with Kane being honored with a golden cap, celebrating his century of caps for England. He quickly

demonstrated his scoring prowess, initially breaking the deadlock with a fierce shot that ricocheted off the underside of the crossbar. Later, newcomer Noni Madueke assisted Kane's second goal, which slightly deflected but maintained its course into the net, cementing the forward's standout performance.

In parallel, the Dutch team faced setbacks in their Nations League campaign during a 2-2 draw against Germany. Notably, Manchester City's Nathan Ake suffered a potential muscle injury, exiting before half-time, which could impact City's upcoming fixtures in both the Premier League and Champions League.

The Netherlands initially took an early lead thanks to Tijjani Reijnders but found themselves trailing at the half following goals from Germany's Deniz Undav and Joshua Kimmich. Denzel Dumfries later equalized, securing a draw in a match filled with historical rivalry.

This encounter marked the Netherlands' adjustment to life without Steven Bergwijn, who was recently excluded from the national setup by coach Ronald Koeman following his transfer to a Saudi Arabian league team. In response to Bergwijn's move, Koeman criticized the forward's ambition, highlighting the broader implications of such transfers on player selection.

Solapur Swimmer Bharadia to Make Historic Sea Crossing

Solapur (Maharashtra): Kirti Nandkishore Bharadia, an 18-year-old swimmer from Solapur, Maharashtra is poised to make waves with an ambitious attempt to set a new world record. On September 20, Bharadia will undertake a monumental challenge: swimming nonstop from

Talaimannar in Sri Lanka to Dhanushkodi (Rameswaram) in India, a distance estimated between 34 to 40 kilometers. Rupali Repale, Bharadia's coach based in Mumbai, confirmed that officials from the world record community will be on-site to oversee and authenticate the attempt.