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330 million mobile phones being manufactured in India a year: Govt

New Delhi: India's electronics sector is currently employing about 1.2 million people all over the country, as 325 to 330 million mobile phones are being manufactured every year, the government said on Thursday. The country has witnessed rapid growth in electronics manufacturing - from Rs 1.9 lakh crore in 2014-15 to Rs 9.52 lakh crore in production in 2023-24 (with an annual compounded growth rate of 17.4 per cent) and 22.7 per cent export growth.

On the 10th anniversary of the 'Make in India' initiative, S. Krishnan, Secretary, IT Ministry, emphasised that electronics has emerged as one of the most impactful sectors. "Exports from India in the electronics manufacturing sector have also risen substantially from about Rs 38,263 crore in 2014-15 to Rs 2.41 lakh crore at the CAGR of 22.7 per cent. This is also significantly faster than the



growth of other export sectors," he said.

In 2014-15, only 26 per cent of the mobile phones which were being sold in the country were made in India and the rest were being imported. Today, 99.2 per cent of all mobile phones which are sold in India are made in India.

"We are manufacturing between 325 to 330 million mobile phones a year in India and on average there are about a billion mobile phones in use in India. We have virtually saturated the domestic market and

that's why you see that there's a substantial uptick in the exports of mobile phones," Krishnan informed.

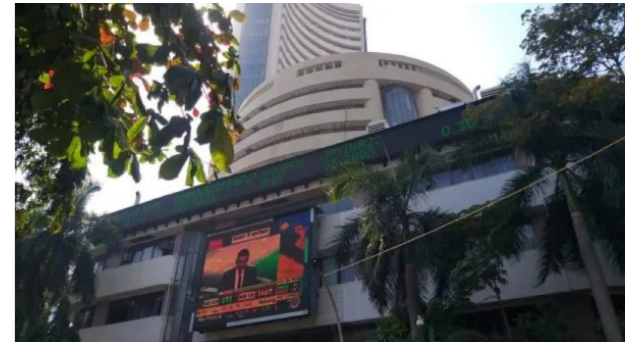
The mobile phone export was about Rs 1.2 lakh crore in 2023-24 and the exports have increased 77 times from what it was in 2014-15. In 2014-15, mobile phones export was worth about Rs 1,566 crore which has reached around Rs 1,20,000 crore now. Speaking on the PLI scheme for mobile sector, the Secretary said we have exceeded our overall production target, and have

reached Rs 6.61 lakh crore as the total value of production and investment of Rs 9,100 crore, which is again well above the investment.

"The total employment achieved has been 1,22,613, which again is as per the original target of the scheme. So this has been one of the big stories in the Make in India, and today, the electronic sector employs close to about 1.2 million people all over the country," said Krishnan. Setting up a semiconductor manufacturing base in the country has been the other big part of 'Make in India.'

With the launch of the India Semiconductor Mission and the five major projects which have been approved, starting with Micron, the two projects by Tata Electronics, the one project by CG Power, and the last project by Keynes, a real manufacturing base of semiconductors is being established in the country.

Sensex hits fresh record high of 85,955 in early trade; Nifty climbs 34 points to 26,250



Mumbai: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty hit fresh all-time high levels on Friday amid heavy buying in IT stocks and a rally in global markets. Fresh foreign fund inflows also added to the optimism in the markets.

The BSE Sensex climbed 129.91 points to reach a record peak of 85,966.03 in early trade. The NSE Nifty went up 61.3 points to hit an all-time high of 26,277.35.

From the 30 Sensex firms, Titan, IndusInd Bank, Tata Steel, Infosys, Asian Paints, Tata Consultancy Services, Hindustan Unilever, Tech Mahindra, HCL Technologies and NTPC were the biggest gainers.

Power Grid, Larsen & Toubro, Bharti Airtel and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among the laggards. In Asian markets, Tokyo, Shanghai, and Hong Kong were trading higher while Seoul quoted lower.

The US markets ended in the positive territory on Thursday.

"A significant global market trend is the outperformance of China and Hong Kong this month on hopes that the Chinese stimulus will improve the

Chinese economy and valuations in these markets where valuations are cheap now. IT stocks are likely to respond positively to the good guidance of Accenture," said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers on Thursday as they bought equities worth Rs 629.96 crore, according to exchange data. Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) also bought equities worth Rs 2,405.12 crore. Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.29 per cent to USD 71.39 a barrel.

The BSE benchmark jumped 666.25 points or 0.78 per cent to settle at an all-time high of 85,836.12 on Thursday. During the day, it reached a record intra-day peak of 85,930.43, surging 760.56 points or 0.89 per cent.

The Nifty climbed 211.90 points or 0.81 per cent to close at a record high of 26,216.05.

During the day, it soared 246.75 points or 0.94 per cent to hit a fresh intra-day lifetime peak of 26,250.90.

Launching ICICI Pru Signature Pension

Gangtok: ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has launched 'ICICI Pru Signature Pension', a market linked pension product enabling customers to build a cost and tax efficient retirement fund. Retirement planning is a crucial activity and a must for all customers to be financially independent. This unique product helps customers to effectively plan for both the accumulation and income generation phases of retirement planning. Announcing the launch Mr. Amit Palta, Chief Distribution Officer, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance said, "We are happy to offer ICICI Pru Signature Pension, a market linked product which provides customers the opportunity to participate in the India growth story to build their retirement corpus.

Importantly, the product allows customers to make a tax-free withdrawal of up to 60% of the accumulated savings at the end of the policy tenure with the balance required to be deployed to purchase an annuity to receive guaranteed lifelong income." He concluded, "Our claim settlement ratio of 99.17% in FY2024 for individual death claims, with an average settlement turnaround time of just 1.27 days is one of the best in the industry."

Petrol, diesel likely to see Rs 2-3 per litre cut if crude prices remain stable: ICRA

New Delhi: Healthy marketing margins on auto fuels could spur price reductions of Rs 2-3 per litre in petrol and diesel prices in the country if crude prices remain stable, leading rating agency ICRA said on Thursday. The marketing margins on retail sales of auto fuels for the Indian oil marketing companies (OMCs) have improved in recent weeks with the reduction in crude prices.

The rating agency anticipates that there is headroom for the downward revision of retail fuel prices if crude prices remain stable at current levels. The outlook for the refining and marketing sector remains stable. "ICRA estimates that the OMCs' net realisation was higher by Rs 15/litre for petrol and Rs 12/litre for diesel compared to international product prices in September 2024 (till September 17)," said GirishkumarKadam, SVP and Group Head - Corporate Ratings, ICRA.

Another leading rating agency CLSA said on Wednesday that petrol and diesel prices may be reduced after October 5. According to ICRA, the retail selling price (RSPs) of these fuels have been unchanged since March 2024 (Rs 2/litre was reduced on petrol and diesel on March 15) and there appears to be headroom for their downward revision by Rs 2-3/litre, if crude prices remain stable, he added.

Crude prices have witnessed a sharp decline in the last few months, primarily due to weak global economic growth and high US production and the OPEC+ has pushed the rollback of its production cuts by two months to combat the declining prices. The impact is mainly on account of weak demand from China due to rising electric vehicle (EV) sales,



mutated industry demand and real estate downturn.

Petroleum, oil and lubricants (POL) consumption in India witnessed YoY growth of 5 per cent in FY24 and is likely to witness a 3-4 per cent growth in FY25, driven by economic progress, increasing mobility and air travel. The OMCs have planned a significant capex in the refining segment. The domestic refining capacity is expected to increase to 306 million MT over the next three to four years from the current capacity of 256.8 million MT as of March 2024 to support the increased consumption and exports.

GreenLine partners with Sterlite Copper to enhance sustainable logistics

Mumbai: GreenLine Mobility Solutions Ltd, a key player in Essar's Green Mobility initiative, has announced its partnership with Sterlite Copper, a unit of Vedanta Ltd, to advance the deployment of its liquefied natural gas (LNG) powered vehicles and further decarbonise Sterlite Copper's transportation operations.

The partnership was initiated with the flag-off of LNG trucks at Vedanta's Sterlite Copper Plant in Silvassa. These LNG vehicles will be transporting finished goods to the northern region, utilising a reverse logistics model. GreenLine's LNG trucks, capable of carrying a 40-tonne payload and travelling up to 1,200 kilometres on a single tank, will enhance logistics efficiency while significantly reducing carbon emissions.

Commenting on the partnership, AnandMimani, CEO, GreenLine Mobility Solutions Ltd said, "Our partnership with Sterlite Copper marks an important milestone in our commitment to sustainable logistics. By integrating our LNG technology into their operations, we not only enhance our service offerings but also set a standard for decarbonisation in the transportation sector."

Flipkart's B2B app 'Flipkart Reset for Business'

Guwahati/Dibrugarh: Flipkart, India's home-grown ecommerce marketplace's group company, has announced 'Flipkart Reset for Business', a dedicated mobile app designed to empower small and big sellers of refurbished products across the country to reach last-mile customers. The platform offers a user-friendly interface for a hassle-free experience with a vast selection of quality-assured refurbished smartphones and accessories. It aims to empower a wider network of sellers with an organized refurbished products market, promote the use of refurbished products, and contribute to building a more sustainable circular economy. Flipkart Reset for Business offers quality and warranty benefits and a wide selection of refurbished phones and accessories.

The B2B platform will serve retailers across India, offering a wide range of products. B2B sellers can purchase refurbished products in varied quantities with no minimum order quantity



restrictions.

Ashutosh Singh Chandel, Senior Director & Business Head, Re-commerce at Flipkart, said, "The re-commerce industry is growing rapidly, fulfilling the aspirations of millions of customers to own devices at affordable prices. As per a report by Redseer, the refurbished electronics goods market in India could grow to \$11 billion in gross value by March 2026."

Currently, the platform services 800+ cities across 29 states. Flipkart aims to expand the Flipkart Reset for Business program significantly. Currently, the platform sells smartphones and accessories.

Empowering Bijnor's youth: 4,400 job offers distributed at Kaushal Mahotsav

Guwahati: The Bijnor Kaushal Mahotsav concluded successfully today, spearheaded by Shri Jayant Chaudhary, Hon'ble Minister of State (I/C) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. The event showcased the government's commitment to empowering local youth through skill development initiatives. Over 13,500 youths registered for the month-long job readiness program, with 3,500 candidates receiving job offers after intensive training and career counseling.

During the festival, which attracted around 6,000 participants, nearly 900 on-the-spot job offers were distributed. Major companies, including Flipkart, Burger King, and Zepto, lined up to recruit from a diverse talent pool, enhancing employment prospects across sectors like IT, logistics, and tourism. The initiative not only aims to boost local employment but also positions Bijnor as a key player in workforce development.



Guwahati could benefit significantly from Bijnor's model. With increased employment opportunities and a skilled workforce emerging from such initiatives, local businesses in Guwahati may find a ready supply of talent, fostering economic growth in the region. Chaudhary emphasized, "Our government is committed to equipping every young person in Bijnor with essential skills for a competitive economy."

Toyota Kirloskar Motor champions environmental sustainability on World Environment Health Day

Shillong: On the occasion of World Environment Health Day, Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) reaffirmed its dedication to environmental sustainability, emphasizing its transformation from a traditional carmaker to a comprehensive mobility company. This commitment aligns with the global Toyota Environmental Challenge 2050 (TEC 2050), which focuses on achieving carbon neutrality and fostering a net positive environmental impact.

TKM's initiatives include substantial advancements in water management, achieving 89.3% of its production water from recycled sources

and rainwater harvesting. The company also aims for a zero waste-to-landfill goal, with over 96% of its waste being recycled. Notably, TKM has transitioned to 100% renewable energy since June 2021, resulting in significant CO2 reductions.

In Shillong, these sustainable practices resonate strongly with local consumers who are increasingly prioritizing eco-friendly products. The growing awareness of climate issues among residents encourages them to support companies that adopt responsible practices. TKM's eco-conscious initiatives not



only enhance its brand reputation but also contribute to a broader cultural shift toward sustainability in the region.

As stated by Mr. B. Padmanabha, Executive Vice President of TKM, the com-

Tata AIA announces NIFTY Alpha 50 Index Fund to drive growth and protection

Guwahati: Tata AIA Life Insurance Co. Ltd. has launched the Tata AIA NIFTY Alpha 50 Index Fund, enhancing its unit-linked insurance products. This open-ended New Fund Offering (NFO) will remain available until September 30, 2024, allowing investors to acquire units at an NAV of Rs. 10 each. The fund targets the top 50 performing stocks from the Nifty Alpha 50 Index, blending investment potential with life insurance coverage.

The NIFTY Alpha 50 Index Fund focuses on high-performing stocks across multiple market capitalizations, investing 80%-100% in equity instruments. According to Harshad Patil, Chief Investment Officer at Tata AIA, this fund presents a substantial opportunity for wealth creation amidst India's expanding economy, offering policyholders a chance to earn higher returns while securing their loved ones.

In Guwahati, the launch aligns with the growing trend of financial literacy and investment among residents. As consumers in Guwahati increasingly seek integrated financial solutions that combine investment and insurance, the NIFTY Alpha 50 Index Fund positions itself as an attractive option, catering to the aspirations of a more financially savvy population. This innovative offering is expected to resonate well in the region, supporting both growth and security for policyholders.

Utkarsh SFBL celebrates 15th Foundation Day

Guwahati: Utkarsh Small Finance Bank Limited (Utkarsh SFBL) has marked its 15th Foundation Day by inaugurating 18 new banking outlets across India, bringing its total to 966. The new branches are strategically located in states including Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh, enhancing the bank's commitment to financial inclusion.

Chairman Parveen Kumar Gupta emphasized the significance of this expansion, stating, "This step reinforces our vision of empowering com-

munities with accessible banking solutions." MD & CEO Govind Singh reflected on the bank's journey, highlighting its evolution into a vital player in the financial landscape.

In Guwahati, the addition of new outlets promises to cater to the growing demand for financial services, particularly in underserved areas. With a robust portfolio including savings accounts, loans, and digital banking options, Utkarsh SFBL is well-positioned to support local businesses and individuals in achieving their financial goals.

World Heart Day serves as a reminder of the importance of heart health

Guwahati: World Heart Day, observed annually on September 29, serves as a reminder of the importance of heart health. Each year on this day, health-care providers, government bodies, and international organizations come together to raise awareness about cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) and promote actions to prevent, detect, and manage these conditions. In recent years, India has experienced a concerning rise in CVD cases. A recent study involving 65,562 Indian adults aged 45 and above found 29.4% self-reported prevalence of diagnosed cardiovascular diseases, highlighting urgent public health concerns and the need for targeted awareness and prevention programs.

Bollywood Actress, Soha Ali Khan said, "Maintaining a

healthy, balanced diet and staying active are essential for heart health—something I prioritize for both me and my family. I'm always mindful of our food choices, making sure we limit junk food and choose healthier options like almonds."

Dr. Rohini Patil, MBBS and Nutritionist said, "It's crucial to recognize how our dietary and lifestyle choices impact heart health. Unhealthy eating habits, high stress levels, lack of sleep, and sedentary lifestyles are all factors that can contribute to obesity, heart problems, and diabetes."

This World Heart Day let's pledge to build a healthy body and a stronger heart by making mindful choices. Embrace nutritious foods like almonds, stay active, and prioritize overall well-being.

Starbucks celebrates 12 years in India with new "Classics" coffee range

Guwahati: To honor its 12-year journey in India, Starbucks has unveiled its new "Classics" coffee range, a tribute to the country's rich cultural and sensory heritage. The Classics menu features beverages meticulously crafted from the world's top 3% Arabica coffee beans, blending local flavors with a commitment to quality and consistency.

The lineup includes the Classic Hot Coffee, a rich espresso and milk blend, and the Classic Iced Coffee, a refreshing mix of bold espresso, jaggery, and milk, with prices starting at INR 150. To complement these beverages, Starbucks has introduced an array of Classic sandwiches, featuring popular



flavors like Chilli Paneer, Spinach Corn, Paneer Tikka, Egg & Mayo, and Chicken Salad, aimed at enhancing the customer experience.

Sushant Dash, CEO of TATA Starbucks, stated, "This beverage lineup reflects the growing cultural confidence and pride of India." With over 454 stores across 67 cities and more than 3,800 partners, TATA Starbucks continues to offer a blend of global and localized offerings, creating a vibrant "Third Place" experience for customers.

Flipkart revamps two-wheeler shopping ahead of festive season

Guwahati: Flipkart, India's leading e-commerce platform, is redefining the two-wheeler shopping experience just in time for the festive season. The platform now offers a diverse range of petrol and electric two-wheelers from renowned brands such as Hero, Bajaj, TVS, and Ola, available across 12,000+ pin codes and 700+ cities. This initiative comes as demand for two-wheelers on Flipkart has skyrocketed by six times in August 2024 compared to last year.

Customers can benefit from an array of financing options, including 5% unlimited cash-back on the Flipkart Axis Bank Credit Card and special deals

from leading banks. The shopping experience is further enhanced by innovative features like 3D and augmented reality tools, allowing customers to visualize two-wheelers in their own settings.

Guwahati is seeing a significant uptick in interest for electric two-wheelers, reflecting a shift towards more sustainable commuting solutions. This aligns with national trends, as urban consumers increasingly seek eco-friendly options. With its transparent pricing and expert assistance, Flipkart is well-positioned to lead the charge in the evolving two-wheeler market this festive season.

India-Israel recruitment drive draws massive turnout in Pune

Guwahati: The India-Israel workforce collaboration has reached new heights as thousands of skilled Indian workers flock to ITI Aundh, Pune,

for a pivotal recruitment drive running from September 17 to 25, 2024. This initiative, overseen by a delegation of 12 Israeli officials, addresses Israel's growing demand for skilled construction labor while providing Indian talent with unmatched international career prospects.



Building on the success of an earlier drive that deployed approximately 4,800 Indian workers to Israel, this round aims to recruit an additional 10,000 candidates, focusing on areas such as Framework, Iron Bending, Plastering, and Ceramic Tiling. Workers can earn competitive salaries of around Rs 1.32 lakh per month, along with bonuses.

The Maharashtra Government, alongside the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), supports the initiative, ensuring that candidates are well-prepared for the challenges ahead. This collaboration not only enhances employment opportunities for Indian workers but also solidifies India's role in the global skilled labor market.

In Guwahati, this drive underscores the increasing demand for skilled labor across regions, highlighting opportunities for local candidates to participate in international placements, thereby boosting the local economy and enhancing workforce capabilities.

ACESO launches ALIP: A game-changer for life insurance policyholders

Jorhat: To support life insurance policyholders, ACESO has introduced the Assignment of Life Insurance Policies (ALIP) program, allowing individuals to access their policy's surrender value while retaining their life cover. This innovative solution targets those considering surrendering their policies, ensuring they do not lose out on benefits after years of premium payments.

The program comes as a relief to many who face financial difficulties, as surrendering policies often results in a complete loss of coverage for their nominees in case of death. ALIP allows policyholders to maintain their insurance benefits while obtaining funds when needed. ACESO, founded in 2018, has facilitated over Rs 400 million in assignments and is now extending its services to include policies

from all major private insurers.

In Jorhat, the ALIP program offers crucial financial assistance to residents who often rely on life insurance as a safety net. It empowers policyholders to navigate financial challenges without sacrificing their long-term security. Moreover, insurance agents benefit by continuing to earn commissions, thereby reinforcing the ecosystem's stability and trust.

Plan ahead: The importance of early retirement savings in India

Guwahati: As life expectancy in India rises, planning for retirement has never been more critical. According to UN estimates, the average lifespan is expected to reach 75 years by 2050, with potential increases up to 82 by the century's end. With the typical retirement age remaining around 60, individuals now face the prospect of funding 15 to 20 years of post-retirement life, underscoring the need for strategic financial planning.

Despite the pressing need, many individuals postpone retirement savings, focusing instead on immediate life goals such as education, marriage, and homeownership. However, starting early with retirement savings is crucial, as timely investments significantly enhance financial security in the long run.

One of the most compelling reasons to

plan early is the power of compound interest. For instance, a 25-year-old saving ₹1,000 monthly with an annual return of 10% could accumulate around ₹1.5 crore by retirement. In contrast, a 45-year-old would need to save ₹30,000 monthly to reach the same goal, illustrating the significant advantages of early savings.

Investing in schemes like the National Pension System (NPS) and the Public Provident Fund (PPF) can help individuals build a substantial retirement corpus. Both options provide tax benefits, while NPS also offers exposure to equity markets, which can outperform inflation in the long run. This combination ensures that retirees can maintain their living standards despite rising costs.

Early planning also enhances flexibility in financial strategies. The NPS allows

individuals to allocate funds across various asset classes and adjust portfolios based on market conditions, enabling better control over investments. Additionally, contributions can start as low as ₹1,000, accommodating varying financial situations.

Emerging legislative measures, such as the NPS-Vatsalya scheme and increased employer tax benefits, further encourage early retirement savings. The government's initiatives make it easier for families to secure their financial futures.

A satisfying retirement requires a well-rounded approach to financial, mental, and physical health. Early planning mitigates the risk of depleting savings and creates a clear roadmap toward financial security, allowing individuals to focus on enjoying their retirement years.

Gulf Oil revives 'Chai-Pakoda' ride in Guwahati, unite bikers in celebration

Guwahati: Gulf Oil Lubricants India Limited returns to Guwahati with the second annual 'Chai-Pakoda' Ride, enhancing its partnership with India Bike Week (IBW) 2024. This year's event, held on September 23, attracted over 100 bikers from various backgrounds who embarked on a thrilling 32-kilometer journey from the Assam Public Service Commission Office to PRP Valley, Chandrapur.

The ride not only celebrated motorcycling camaraderie but also prioritized safety. Participants attended a 'safety riding' session before the ride, led by IBW Marshals, with Gulf Oil providing fluorescent safety jackets to all riders. The event culminated in a fun push-up and

burpee challenge, energizing the biking community.

Mr. Ravi Chawla, Managing Director and CEO of Gulf Oil, expressed enthusiasm for the ongoing partnership, stating, "These rides encapsulate the spirit of India's motorcycling community—one rooted in adventure, brotherhood, and the love for the open road."

In Guwahati, the event generated significant buzz, with local vendors reporting increased foot traffic and sales, as riders and their families explored the area post-ride. The 'Chai-Pakoda' tradition remains a highlight, blending the joy of biking with the taste of Indian culture, further enriching the city's vibrant community spirit.

Vodafone Idea secures \$3.6 billion deal for network expansion with global partners

Guwahati: Vodafone Idea Limited (VIL) has successfully concluded a major \$3.6 billion (~Rs. 300 billion) deal with global network leaders Nokia, Ericsson, and Samsung, marking its largest capital expenditure investment to date. This three-year agreement is a critical component of VIL's broader \$6.6 billion capex plan aimed at expanding 4G population coverage to 1.2 billion and introducing 5G services in key markets.

CEO Akshaya Moondra highlighted VIL's commitment to cutting-edge technology, saying, "This investment cycle marks a new era for VIL as we embark on a smart turnaround to capitalize on industry growth."

The equipment from these long-term partners will enable VIL to improve network performance and energy efficiency, reducing operating costs. Initial rollouts have already enhanced capacity by 15%, covering an additional 16 million people.

In Guwahati, this investment is expected to bring significant improvements to network quality, particularly in expanding 4G coverage and laying the groundwork for future 5G rollouts in Assam, benefiting both consumers and businesses.



Godrej launches HIT Spray Matic: A smart solution for mosquito control

Guwahati: Godrej Consumer Products Limited (GCPL) has entered the smart home gadgets market with the introduction of HIT Spray Matic, India's first government-registered automatic mosquito spray device. Designed to combat mosquito-borne diseases, this innovative device provides instant protection by automatically spraying every two hours for up to six hours, ensuring a continuous defense against pests.

Available exclusively on Amazon, the HIT Spray

Matic offers twelve hours of uninterrupted protection, making it a practical choice for modern households. As noted in a recent Redseer report, the adoption of smart home devices in India has surged, with penetration rates expected to rise from 10% in 2023 to 28% by 2028, driven by increased internet access.

In Guwahati, HIT Spray Matic is poised to capture the attention of consumers seeking effective mosquito solutions amidst the city's humid

conditions. With a growing awareness of health issues related to mosquitoes, the device's convenience and efficacy may resonate well with local buyers.

Shilpa Suresh, Head of Marketing at GCPL, expressed optimism about the product's potential, highlighting its innovative features and the positive early response from consumers. Priced at INR 650, the HIT Spray Matic is set to redefine mosquito control in Indian homes.

Pant Re-enters Top 10; Rohit, Kohli Slip in ICC Test Batting Rankings

Dubai: Riding high on a stellar century in his Test comeback, Rishabh Pant has surged back into the top 10 of the ICC Test batting rankings, securing the sixth position. However, Indian captain Rohit Sharma and former skipper Virat Kohli slipped down the rankings, reflecting a major shake-up. Pant, who marked his Test return with a brilliant hundred in the first Test against Bangladesh in Chennai, earned 731 rating points, placing him at the sixth spot. Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal also moved up, now ranking fifth with 751 points after scoring a half-century in the same match.

Rohit Sharma, despite stay-

ing within the top 10, dropped five places to sit at tenth, with 716 points, following two lackluster performances in the opening Test. Kohli, too, faced a significant drop, slipping out of the top 10 to now sit at 12th after losing five spots. The recent Sri Lanka-New Zealand Test match in Galle caused shifts in the bowling rankings. Sri Lankan spinner Prabath Jayasuriya jumped five spots to eighth after an outstanding nine-wicket haul, affirming his status as one of the top spinners in the game. Jayasuriya, with 743 rating points, is now Sri Lanka's highest-ranked player across batting, bowling, and all-rounder categories.



Other significant movements include Kamindu Mendis rising three spots to 16th in the batting rankings and Dhananjaya de Silva climbing five places to 18th in the all-rounder rankings. ODI Rankings: In the ODI rankings, Afghanistan's Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Australia's

Travis Head broke into the top 10 of the batting rankings, fueled by their recent centuries in matches played in the UAE and England.

Gurbaz, who hit his seventh ODI century before turning 23, surged 10 places to claim the eighth spot with 692 rating points, becoming the first

Afghan batter to break into the top 10 in the ODI rankings. The previous best for an Afghan player in the ODI rankings was Ibrahim Zadran, who reached 12th. Head, on the other hand, leaped seven spots to ninth with 684 points after a remarkable 154* in the first ODI against England.

Meanwhile, Afghan leg-spinner Rashid Khan moved eight spots to third in the ODI bowling rankings with 668 points, following his seven-wicket haul in Afghanistan's two victories against South Africa. These key contributions helped Afghanistan secure a historic series win over a top-five ranked team for the first time in their history.

India Have Power and Depth to Make a Strong Impression in Women's T20 WC: Sthalekar

New Delhi: Former Australian captain Lisa Sthalekar believes India has the all-round depth and power to secure their elusive first ICC title in the upcoming Women's T20 World Cup, set to be held in the UAE from October 3. India's best performance in the event came in 2020, where they reached the final but lost to Australia. Speaking at a cricket commentary and mojo programme organized by ABC – International Development at the Australian High Commission, Sthalekar expressed optimism about India's chances of reaching the semifinals, and potentially the finals, alongside Australia and England.

"India has got power, depth, decent bowlers, and if their 4-7 number batters can score at a good strike rate, they will be in a strong position," Sthalekar said. She added that a good start from the openers would be key to India's success and highlighted the form of Jemimah Rodriguez, who performed well in the Caribbean Premier League (CPL). Sthalekar, the first woman to score 1,000 runs and take 100 wickets in ODIs, also emphasized India's ability to beat their long-time rivals Australia. Recalling India's victory over Australia in the 2020 T20 World Cup opener, she noted how Poonam Yadav's four-wicket haul dismantled the Australian middle order. "If any top-order Indian batter scores a century or bowlers have a good day, they can take the game away," she said.

Sthalekar also praised the ICC's decision to



implement equal prize money for men's and women's World Cups. She said, "What I'm more pleased about is how much money teams are getting for just participating, ensuring it's not just the strong nations benefitting but also efforts to grow the global game." She cited Scotland's first-time participation, where players could earn more than their national contracts. "The headline is equal prize money, but deeper down, it's about having a bigger impact on the game."

Sthalekar, who has become a respected voice in cricket commentary post-retirement, shared her own career journey, recalling her first IPL commentary experience at Eden Gardens in 2015. "You have to have goals, and IPL commentary was my 10-year goal, but I was called within six months." India, led by Harmanpreet Kaur, will be looking to make a strong statement in the tournament with their formidable lineup.

Kylian Mbappé sidelined with a hamstring injury

Paris: Kylian Mbappé will be sidelined with a hamstring injury, Real Madrid said Wednesday. "Following tests carried out today by Real Madrid's medical services on our player Kylian Mbappé, he has been diagnosed with an injury to the biceps femoris in his left leg," Madrid said. "His progress will be monitored." The club did not give a time frame for Mbappé's recovery, but he is set to miss at least Sunday's derby at Atletico Madrid in the Spanish league. He could also miss

France's Nations League matches against Israel in Budapest on Oct. 10 and away to Belgium four days later.

Madrid said the injury was diagnosed a day after the 3-2 win over Alaves in the Spanish league on Tuesday, when Mbappé scored his seventh goal since joining Madrid this season. Mbappé asked to be substituted in the 80th minute. Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti had said after the game that the injury did not appear to be serious.

Lewandowski Scores Seventh Goal to Secure Barcelona's Seventh Straight Win

Madrid: Robert Lewandowski continued his impressive form, scoring his seventh goal in as many matches, as Barcelona extended their perfect start to the Spanish league season with a 1-0 victory over Getafe at home on Wednesday. The win marked Barcelona's second-best league start ever, matching the seven consecutive victories they achieved at the beginning of the 2017-18 season. Their best start remains eight straight wins from the 2013-14 campaign.

"I'm really proud of my team. They fought for 90 or 95 minutes," said Barcelona coach Hansi Flick. "I'm also very proud because the fans realized that we needed them, and they gave everything. There's a great connection at the moment, and I'm really happy about that." Barcelona has been dominant in the league so far, outscoring their opponents 23-5 over their first seven games. They now hold a four-point lead over defending champions Real Madrid, who secured a 3-2 victory over Alaves on Tuesday.

Lewandowski's decisive goal came in the 19th minute, capitalizing on a loose ball after Getafe goalkeeper David Soria failed to control a high cross. The Polish striker's seventh goal also marked Barcelona's 6,500th goal in 3,035 league matches, according to the club.

Iñaki Peña started in goal for Barcelona in place of Marc-André ter Stegen, who suffered a serious knee injury in the team's previous match. Barcelona players entered the field wearing T-shirts with messages of support for Ter Stegen, one of the team's captains. Getafe, which remains winless and second-to-last in the standings, nearly equalized in stoppage time when Borja Mayoral came close to scoring. However, Barcelona held on for the three points.

"That was a big scare, but the ball didn't go in, and we left with the three points," said Barcelona defender Alejandro Balde. Elsewhere, Girona and Rayo Vallecano played out a 0-0 draw in Girona. Barcelona's next league match will be against Osasuna on Saturday, followed by a visit to Alaves the following weekend.



Manchester United Held 1-1 by Twente in Revamped Europa League

Manchester: Manchester United's struggles continued as they were held to a 1-1 draw by Dutch side FC Twente in the revamped Europa League. Erik ten Hag's team was left frustrated after Sam Lammers capitalized on a second-half mistake by Christian Eriksen to level the score at Old Trafford. Eriksen had earlier put United ahead with a stunning first-half goal, but Lammers' equalizer earned Twente an unexpected point. Speaking after the game, Ten Hag criticized his team's inability to finish the game off. "99% is not enough, you have to give 100%. You have to kill the game," said the United manager, who was facing his old club.

Eriksen's opener came in the 35th minute when he rifled a first-time shot into the top corner from just inside the box. However, Twente's Lammers seized on an error by Eriksen in the 68th minute and beat United goalkeeper Andre Onana at his near post to equalize. United has now won just three of seven matches in all competitions this season, including a goalless draw against Crystal Palace last weekend in the Premier League. Despite the early lead, United failed to push on and secure the win, leaving the home fans disappointed.

The draw came in the new-look Europa League, which now features 36 teams in a league system, replacing the previous group stage format. Elsewhere in the competition, Galatasaray defeated PAOK 3-1, with Nigerian striker Victor Osimhen playing a key role.

Southern Superstars register their second win

Jodhpur: Banking on Jesal Karia's all-round performance, Southern Superstars registered their second win in the Legends League Cricket (LLC) 2024 by defeating India Capitals by four wickets with five balls to spare at the Barkatullah Khan Stadium here on Wednesday. After winning the toss and electing to bat first, Dwayne Smith and Faiz Fazal opened the innings for India Capitals. They lost their first wicket at 14 runs on the board, as Faiz Fazal (9) was dismissed by Abdur Razzak.