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Bank credit grows by 15 pc in August in India, agriculture and industry pick up

Mumbai: Bank credit grew by 15 per cent in August in India, maintaining steady levels compared to the same month last year (14.9 per cent) as agriculture and industry picked up, a report showed on Saturday. The non-food credit demand has also grown by 15 per cent in August with broadly similar growth last year, according to the report by Bank of Baroda (BoB). According to JahnviPrabhakar, economist, Bank of Baroda, the credit to agriculture sector rose at a steady pace of 17.7 per cent from 18.1 per cent in July and higher than 16.5 per cent growth in August last year.

The credit to the industry sector saw a moderate increase of 9.8 per cent YoY in August, compared to 5.3 per cent same month last year. Notably, medium-sized firms saw robust growth in demand, rising 19.2 per cent YoY, while large industries

witnessed a 7.7 per cent credit growth. According to the report, the food credit demand has seen some moderation as it registered a growth of 25.9 per cent after declining by 30.3 per cent last year.

Credit to services sector inched up by 15.6 per cent (three-month high) as of August, from 15.4 per cent last month. "Within services, barring higher growth in commercial real estate sector and computer software, all the other sectors have registered much lower growth this year," Prabhakar said. Credit growth in the personal loan segment has witnessed deceleration down to 16.9 per cent from 18.3 per cent last year.

On the other hand, the report mentioned, credit growth for loans against gold jewellery has gathered momentum, registering a growth of 40.9 per cent (20.4 per cent last year). "The recent



surge in global gold prices will keep the demand buoyant in the coming months. Moreover, the credit growth in the housing sector picked up pace registering a growth of 18.8 per cent in August compared with a growth of 13.4 per cent last year," the report mentioned.

Credit card growth has softened in the last few months down to 19.9 per cent in August from 31.4 per cent in the same month last year.

Sensex jumps 584 points to settle at 81,634; Nifty climbs 217 points to end at 25,013

Mumbai: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty bounced back sharply on Tuesday after six days of slump following a rally in index heavyweights HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries and Mahindra & Mahindra.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 584.81 points or 0.72 per cent to finish at 81,634.81.

The NSE Nifty rose 217.40 points or 0.88 per cent to 25,013.15.

From the Sensex pack, Adani Ports & Special Economic Zones, Mahindra & Mahindra, Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, Larsen & Toubro, NTPC, State Bank of India, UltraTech Cement and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the major gainers.

In contrast, Tata Steel, Titan, Bajaj Finserv, JSW Steel, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever, ITC, Tata Motors and Tata Consultancy Ser-



vices were among the laggards.

European markets were trading lower in mid-session deals. The US markets ended in negative territory on Monday.

In Asian markets, Tokyo, Hong Kong and Seoul settled lower, while Shanghai ended on a positive note. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 1.84 per cent to USD 79.44 a barrel.

On Monday, the BSE Sensex tumbled 638.45 points to settle at 81,050. The NSE Nifty slumped 218.85 points to end at 24,795.75.(PTI)

LIC increases stake in Bank of Maharashtra to 7.10% through QIP

New Delhi: State-owned Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) has increased its stake in Bank of Maharashtra from 4.05% to 7.10% after the life insurer acquired 25,96,86,663 equity shares through the bank's qualified institutional placement (QIP).

Bank of Maharashtra raised Rs 3,499 crore through issuance of 61,01,81,311 equity shares of face value Rs 10 each to eligible qualified institutional buyers at the issue price of Rs 57.36 per share against the floor price of Rs 60.37 per equity share. LIC acquires 42.56% of the total shares issued through the QIP. Other major buyers included ICICI Prudential Life Insurance (8.51%) and Aditya Birla Sunlife Insurance (5.67%).

The Issue opened on 30 September 2024 and closed on 4 October 2024. After the QIP offer, the paid-up equity share capital of the Bank of Maharashtra now stands increased to Rs 7,692 crore from Rs 7,081 crore. LIC holds more than 10% stake in ITC (15.19% stake), Stock Holding corporation of India



(14.95%), Sidbi (13.33%) and Golster Ltd (12.73%).

The state-owned insurer is also categorised as promoters in around dozen companies through its stake holding. These include Axis Bank, in which the company holds around 8%, Stock Holding corporation of India (14.95%) and J&K Development Finance Corporation Ltd (12.5%) and Clearing Corporation of India (10%). Other banks where LIC holds substantial stake include IDBI Bank (49.24%), Axis Bank (8%), State Bank of India (8.83%) and Punjab National Bank (8.34%).

India's domestic air passenger traffic reaches 132.3 lakh in Sep at 8.1 pc YoY growth

New Delhi: Domestic air passenger traffic reached nearly 132.3 lakh in the month of September, up by 0.8 per cent compared to 131.3 lakh in August, a report showed on Tuesday. The domestic passenger traffic data witnessed a year-on-year growth of 8.1 per cent, compared to 122.5 lakh in

September last year, as per data by credit rating agency ICRA.

For the first half of current fiscal (FY25), domestic air passenger traffic was 795.5 lakh, a YoY growth of 5.6 per cent and 12.9 per cent higher than the pre-Covid level of 704.4 lakh in H1 FY2020. In the first five month of FY25,

the international passenger traffic for Indian carriers stood at 135.9 lakh, with a YoY growth of 15.7 per cent and higher than the pre-Covid level of 92.2 lakh by 48.7 per cent.

The International passenger traffic for Indian carriers is expected to grow by 15-20 per cent in FY25

Gold prices soar amid heightened tension in Middle East

New Delhi: Gold prices continue to rise amid heightened tension in the Middle East, as the precious metal saw a definitive surge this week. The Iran-Israel conflict has kept buyers position intact even after prices were overbought. Gold prices experienced a minor increase on Saturday as the cost of 24 carat gold was Rs 7,785.3 per gram in the morning trade, reflecting an increase of Rs 120. The cost of 22 carat gold was Rs 7,138.3 per gm, an increase of Rs 110 from Friday. According to Narinder Wadhwa, Managing Director at SKI Capital Services Ltd, in times of geopolitical instability, particularly in the Middle East, gold often serves as a safe haven, while crude oil prices react sharply to concerns over supply disruptions.

"The uncertainty fuels a flight to safety in gold and drives energy markets to speculate on potential oil shortages, making both commodities a barometer of global risk sentiment," said Wadhwa. However, gold prices dropped by 0.2 per cent to \$2,649.69 per ounce globally, as US job growth increased in September as the unemployment rate slipped to 4.1 per cent. US markets closed higher on Friday after a stronger-than-expected jobs data.

SEBI clears NSDL IPO; IDBI Bank, SBI to sell stakes in OFS

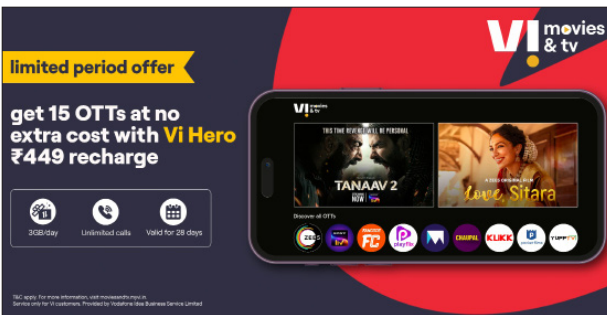
Mumbai: The Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has cleared the initial public offering (IPO) of India's largest depository, the National Securities Depository Ltd (NSDL). The market watchdog issued an observation on Sept 30, for the company's public offering. In SEBI's parlance, obtaining the observation letter means its go-ahead to float the public issue. The issue of the Mumbai-based securities depository will consist only of an offer for sale component.

According to a draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) filed by NSDL on July 7, 2023, the depository will sell up to 5.72 crore shares through the issue of equity shares with a face value of Rs 2. The IDBI Bank which holds a nearly 26 per cent stake in NSDL, will sell up to 2.22 crore shares, while the NSE which has a 24 per cent stake in the depository firm, will sell up to 1.8 crore shares in the IPO. The

State Bank of India (SBI), the Union Bank of India (UBI), and the Canara Bank hold 5 per cent, 2.8 per cent and 2.3 per cent stakes in the company, respectively. The UBI will sell 56.2 lakh shares, and the SBI, and the Administrator of the Specified Undertaking of the Unit Trust of India (SUUTI) will sell 40 lakh and 34 lakh shares in the OFS, respectively.

The HDFC Bank holds an 8.95 per cent stake in the NSDL and the private lender will sell a 2 per cent stake in the company. The National Securities Depository Ltd. is the largest depository in India, as of March 31, 2023, measured by the number of issuers, active instruments, market share in demat settlement volume, and the value of assets held under custody. In November 1996, NSDL became the pioneer of securities dematerialisation in India following the implementation of the Depositories Act.

Vi Movies & TV launches 'Super Pack' at Rs 175 to boost OTT access for prepaid users



Guwahati/Shillong: The new avatar of Vi Movies & TV, launched in March earlier this year, is a one-stop entertainment destination for all Vi subscribers. Vi Movies & TV provides a vast range of entertainment to its users, with upto 17 OTT apps, 350 live TV channels and complimentary access to several content libraries all under one app through thoughtfully designed packs across postpaid and prepaid. With the latest addition of 'Super' pack, Vi prepaid users can access 15+ OTT platforms including SonyLIV, ZEE5, ManoramaMAX, FanCode, PlayFlix, and more, along with 10GB data. A recent report by Ormax media reveals that India's OTT audience has

reached an impressive 547.3 million, with rural regions contributing around 65% of video consumption.

The penetration of OTT services has risen to 38% of the population, up from 34% last year. The Vi Movies & TV App offers four subscription plans for prepaid users: Vi Movies & TV Plus, Vi Movies & TV Lite, Vi Movies & TV Pro with the recent addition - Vi Movies & TV Super at just Rs175. As the number of OTT platforms are growing, handling multiple subscriptions can be both inconvenient and costly. Vi Movies & TV App guarantees that customers can enjoy their favourite content on a single App with a single subscription, without burning a hole in their pocket.

MG Windsor EV achieves milestone with 15,176 bookings on launch day

Guwahati: MG Motor India has made headlines with the launch of its latest offering, the Windsor EV, which recorded an unprecedented 15,176 bookings within just 24 hours



of its launch on October 3, 2024. This remarkable achievement makes the Windsor the first passenger electric vehicle (EV) in India to reach such a milestone, reflecting the rapidly increasing demand for electric mobility in the country.

Priced attractively starting at INR 9.99 lakh plus INR 3.5 per kilometer under the Battery as a Service (BaaS) program, the Windsor EV blends the elegance of a sedan with the spaciousness of an SUV. Equipped with a 38 kWh Li-ion battery pack, it delivers 136 PS power and an impressive ARAI-certified range of 332 kilometers. Deliveries are set to commence on October 12, 2024.

Bhubaneswar's auto market has responded enthusiastically to the Windsor EV, mirroring national trends. The rising interest in sustainable transport options in the city reflects a broader shift towards electric vehicles, driven by favorable policies and increasing awareness of environmental issues.

Satinder Singh Bajwa, Chief Commercial Officer of JSW MG Motor India, expressed gratitude for the customer response, emphasizing the Windsor's role as a progressive force in the EV market. The Windsor is set to redefine the landscape of electric mobility, providing an eco-friendly alternative for discerning Indian car buyers.

MLMML announce the official launch of the Mahindra ZEO

Guwahati: Mahindra Last Mile Mobility Limited (MLMML), India's No.1* electric 3-wheeler company, has announced the official launch of the Mahindra ZEO, a revolutionary new electric four-wheeler. The name 'ZEO', stands for "Zero Emission Option", displays the environmental benefits of the electric vehicle. It resonates with the MLMML's mission: to electrify the last-mile transportation and help customers prosper in their lives. Available in two variants, the Mahindra ZEO is specifically engineered to meet the evolving demands of urban logistics. MLMML has priced the Mahindra ZEO very attractively starting from ₹ 7.52 Lakh, ex-showroom, pan-India. With the Mahindra ZEO, customers can save up to ₹ 7 Lakh in seven years, when compared with a diesel SCV.

Mahindra ZEO's 300+ V high-voltage architecture ensures superior energy efficiency, higher range and faster charging time. The Mahindra ZEO, ably supported by regenerative braking, offers a real-world driving range of up to 160 km. The Mahindra ZEO, with 60 minute fast charging, gives 100 kilometre range.

Ms. Suman Mishra, Managing Director and CEO of Mahindra Last Mile Mobility, said, "The Mahindra ZEO is a perfect testament of our ethos of reimagining the last mile ecosystem with innovative technologies, reliable products and integrated solutions. We are confident that the Mahindra ZEO will help accelerate adoption of electric vehicles in the commercial < 2 t segment."

ICICI Prudential Life Insurance posts record 99.35% claim settlement ratio in Q1-FY2025

Shillong: ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has set a new industry benchmark with a remarkable claim settlement ratio of 99.35% for the first quarter of FY2025, reaffirming its commitment to customer satisfaction in the Indian life insurance market. The company settled death claims worth ₹381.24 crore during this period, with an impressive average turnaround time of just 1.2 days for non-investigative claims.

Mr. Amish Banker, Chief

Operations Officer of Customer Service, emphasized the importance of trust in the insurance industry, stating, "Life insurance ensures financial security for families in the absence of an earning member. We process claims with sensitivity and speed, reflected in our leading ratio." This achievement highlights ICICI Prudential's consistent performance, improving from a ratio of 97.94% in Q1-FY2024 to 99.17% for FY2024.

Shillong has welcomed ICICI Prudential's swift claims processing, with many residents expressing their confidence in the insurer's ability to provide timely support during challenging times. The 'Claim For Sure' initiative, which promises to settle eligible claims within one day, has particularly resonated with customers, reinforcing the company's reputation as a reliable choice for life insurance in the region.

Samsung announces winners of 'Solve for Tomorrow 2024' competition

Kamrup/Golaghat: Samsung India has announced the winning teams, Eco Tech Innovator and METAL for the 3rd edition of 'Solve for Tomorrow 2024', the company's flagship national education and innovation competition. While Eco Tech Innovator from Golaghat, Assam was declared the Community Champion in the School Track, METAL from Udupi, Karnataka was announced as the Environment Champion in the Youth Track, demonstrating the reach of the programme outside major Indian cities. Eco Tech Innovator, which developed an idea around equitable access to non-contaminated potable drinking water, received a seed grant of INR 25 lakh for prototype advancement. METAL, which developed technology for arsenic removal from ground water, received a grant of INR 50 lakh for incubation at



IIT-Delhi.

"At Samsung, we are incredibly proud of the innovation and creativity showcased by all the participants of this year's edition of 'Solve for Tomorrow'. Through our flagship CSR initiative, we aim to empower young minds by providing them with the tools, mentorship and opportunities they need to address some of

the most pressing challenges in their communities and the environment." said JB Park, President and CEO, Samsung Southwest Asia.

First launched in the US in 2010, the "Solve for Tomorrow" programme is now active in 63 countries across the world and has engaged over 2.3 million young innovators globally.

SBI General Insurance launches 'SBIG Health Super Top-Up' to address rising medical costs

Shillong: SBI General Insurance has launched the 'SBIG Health Super Top-Up' policy, a flexible health insurance solution designed to complement any existing base health plan. This initiative comes in response to the increasing financial burden of medical expenses, with medical inflation in India soaring at approximately 14%.

The new policy allows customers to enhance their coverage with sum insured options ranging from ₹5 lakhs to ₹4 crores, ensuring financial security during unexpected medical emergencies. It caters to diverse segments, including individuals and families, as well as High-Net-Worth Individuals



(HNIs) seeking extensive insurance.

In Shillong, where healthcare costs are on the rise and access to adequate insurance remains a challenge, this super top-up policy is particularly rel-

evant. Residents can now tailor their health coverage to meet specific needs, ensuring they are better equipped to handle unforeseen medical situations. With competitive premiums starting at ₹3,377 for younger individuals, SBI General aims to provide a cost-effective solution that prioritizes customer well-being.

Mr. Subramanyam Brahmajosyula, Chief Product & Marketing Officer at SBI General, emphasized the importance of comprehensive coverage in today's healthcare landscape, stating, "This policy is tailored to meet the diverse needs of individuals and families."

ICICI Bank partners with PhonePe to offer instant credit on UPI

Guwahati: ICICI Bank has announced a new partnership with PhonePe, enabling its pre-approved customers to access instant credit on UPI transactions. The collaboration allows millions of ICICI Bank customers to activate a short-term credit line of up to ₹2 lakh on the PhonePe app, with a repayment period of 45 days. This offering is set to enhance the per-

sonal banking experience, especially during the festive season when customers can use the credit for high-ticket purchases, including electronics, travel bookings, and bill payments.

Niraj Tralshawala, Product Head - Payment Solutions at ICICI Bank, expressed enthusiasm about the partnership, stating, "We are delighted to provide seamless

and easy access to credit for our customers, empowering them to meet their festive shopping needs."

Deep Agrawal, Head of Payments at PhonePe, added, "This collaboration is a key milestone in revolutionizing credit access in India, offering a fully digital user experience on our platform."

In Guwahati, this initiative is expected to fuel consumer

spending, as the region witnesses growing demand for electronics and travel services, especially during the festive period. The instant credit line on UPI offers customers greater flexibility, further driving local commerce.

The credit line is interoperable across UPI platforms, making it convenient for users to transact using any app.

MMTC-PAMP launches exclusive store in Guwahati, elevates precious metal access

Guwahati: MMTC-PAMP, India's only LBMA-accredited gold and silver refinery, has inaugurated its first exclusive store in Guwahati, marking a significant expansion into Northeast India. This strategic move responds to the region's longstanding cultural affinity for gold and silver, offering 24K and 99.99%+ pure products that reflect the finest Swiss craftsmanship.

The new "Brand Experience Store" will provide residents with a unique opportunity to have their old gold expertly evaluated for free, allowing them to sell it back through MMTC-PAMP's transparent process. This innovative evaluation method guarantees accuracy and prevents value loss commonly associated with traditional approaches.

Vikas Singh, Managing Director & CEO, stated, "We're honored to become part of Northeast India's vibrant cul-



ture. Opening our first store in Guwahati is a testament to our commitment to providing world-class precious metal products."

With recent openings in cities like Delhi and Pune, MMTC-PAMP aims to strengthen its nationwide presence and ensure a seamless customer experience. The Guwahati store, located at Avtar Niwas, Ground Floor, G.S Road, Paltan Bazar, will serve as a hub for consumers seeking trusted gold and silver solutions, reinforcing MMTC-PAMP's reputation for authenticity and quality.

Lava launches AGNI 3

Guwahati: Lava International Limited, the leading Indian smartphone manufacturer, announces the launch of its latest flagship smartphone, Lava AGNI 3, a hi-tech smartphone this festive season. Setting new standards of excellence with segment-first features at an exciting introductory price of INR 19,999*, AGNI 3 is designed for tech savvy generation. Expanding the flagship series, the new smartphone offers a groundbreaking user experience, combining cutting edge hardware and software advancements. Launched in three variants: 8GB+128GB without charger, 8GB+128GB with charger, and 8GB+256GB with charger, the AGNI 3 will go on sale on Amazon from 9th October, 12 AM. Introduced in two color variants - Heather Glass and Pristine Glass, pre-booking starts today at 12:00pm.

Leads the segment with a multi-functional Rear AMOLED display. Device comes with a Segment First customizable Action Key. Equipped with a powerful 50MP Sony Quad-Bayer primary camera with OIS, an 8MP Telephoto camera with 3X Optical and 30X Super zoom, and an 8MP Ultrawide camera. Lava Guarantees 3 Android Upgrades and 4 Years of Security Updates for Agni 3 with Agni Shapat.

Mr. Sumit Singh, Head-Product, Lava International Ltd. said, "AGNI 3 embodies the fiery spirit of innovation and excellence that defines the series. It's not just a smartphone; it's a testament to India's technological prowess and our commitment to providing quality products with unparalleled user experiences designed in India."

Mansion House goes for gold; Tilaknagar debuts premium whisky in Assam

Guwahati: Tilaknagar Industries Limited (TI), a major player in the Indian-Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) market, has set its sights on the whisky segment with the launch of Mansion House Gold Barrel Whisky. This meticulously crafted blend of Select Scotch Malts and Indian Grain Spirits arrives first in Assam, a strategic move targeting the region's substantial whisky market.

The launch marks a significant expansion for TI, known for its leadership in brandy with brands like Mansion House and Courier Napoleon. "This aligns with our plan to diversify our portfolio and establish a strong presence in the whisky segment," stated Amit Dahanukar, Chairman and Managing Director of TI. Assam presents a particularly attractive entry point, with whisky holding an impressive 80% share of the IMFL market in the East and North-East.

Mansion House Gold Barrel Whisky promises a luxurious experience. Aged in oak casks, it offers a harmonious blend of flavor, aroma, and smoothness. The sleek, modern bottle and trendy "hipster pack" for the 180ml size cater to Assam's specific market preferences.

This launch represents a major opportunity for TI to capture a significant share of the



growing Indian whisky market, estimated at 252 million cases in 2023 (as per IWSR report). With its established reputation and innovative spirit, TI is poised to become a key player in the premium whisky segment.

The arrival of Mansion House Gold Barrel Whisky in Assam signifies a heightened competition in the state's booming whisky market. The premium blend, with its focus on quality and a trendy presentation, is likely to appeal to a growing segment of discerning consumers in Guwahati and beyond. Its success will depend on effectively competing with established brands while catering to Assam's specific price points and preferences.

Northeast Skills Development takes center stage; 30 entrepreneurship development centres launched



Guwahati: In a significant move to bolster entrepreneurship and skill development in the Northeast, Hon'ble Minister Jayant Chaudhary inaugurated 30 Entrepreneurship Development Centres (EDCs) at the Northeast Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Conclave 2024 held at IIM Shillong. The event, organized by the Ministry

of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), aimed to align regional initiatives with national objectives under the "Act First for Northeast" initiative.

Minister Chaudhary highlighted the region's potential, stating, "Our North-Eastern States have experienced a resurgence, reclaiming their position of prominence." The conclave focused on enhancing local craftsmanship, emphasizing the need for ITI upgradation and a rigorous selection process for instructors to ensure high training standards.

The initiative plans to train 600 mentors and create 900 startups through a blend of hard and soft interventions, including 90 entrepreneurship awareness programs and 40 faculty development programs. The Skill India Mission has already trained over 13.40 lakh candidates in the region, with an allocation of ₹857.84 crore for skill development initiatives.

Johnson's® baby cream is design with only baby safe ingredients



Guwahati: Johnson's® baby, a pioneer in baby skincare launches its latest television campaign titled 'Irresistible Cheeks' under the broader campaign 'Protection Pehle Din Se'. Featuring Bollywood's popular father daughter duo Anil and Sonam Kapoor, the film highlights Johnson's promise to protect from day 1 with its iconic moisturising cream designed with purposeful ingredients and tested by doctors. Conceptualised by DDB and produced by Flirting Vision, the new film captures a fun acting face-off between Anil Kapoor, playing the role of a doting grandfather, and a baby. A film told from a baby's perspective shows Anil pulling the baby's soft cheeks. What follows is a fun banter between Anil and his reel grandson, as the baby resists and puts up an act every time his cheeks are pulled. Sonam Kapoor steps in revealing the secret to the baby's soft and smooth skin—Johnson's baby cream. Enriched with chamomile extracts and naturally derived glycerin, Johnson's baby provides long lasting protection from dryness from day 1.

Mr. Manoj Gadgil, Business Unit Head-Essential Health & Vice President Marketing, said, "Johnson's® baby has partnered with parents to provide the best for babies. A newborn's skin is 30% thinner compared to adults and loses moisture faster."

The TVC is set to air on television channels nationwide in 9 languages, as well as on digital platforms and multimedia channels.

Suryakumar Confirms Samson as India's Second Opener for T20I Series Against Bangladesh

Gwalior: India's T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav has announced that wicketkeeper Sanju Samson will open alongside Abhishek Sharma in the upcoming T20I series against Bangladesh, starting at the Shrimant Madhavrao Scindia Cricket Stadium on Sunday. This series marks India's return to T20 cricket after their 3-0 series win over Sri Lanka in July.

With several regular players rested due to the priority of Test matches, this presents a significant opportunity for Samson, who has played 30 T20Is and previously opened in five of those, with a top score of 77. "The second

opener is Sanju Samson. He will play, and he will open in the series going forward," Suryakumar confirmed during the prematch press conference.

Attention will also be on new talents in the squad, including fast bowler Mayank Yadav and pace all-rounders Harshit Rana and Nitish Kumar Reddy, as India prepares for the 2026 Men's T20 World Cup on home soil. Suryakumar expressed optimism about these newcomers: "It is a good opportunity. They have shown their potential in state and IPL matches, and I hope they can continue that performance."



Despite not facing Mayank Yadav in the nets, Suryakumar noted his impressive IPL season and his potential impact on the team. "There is an X factor in all players, not just him," he said. "He has the extra pace, and it's

important to manage him well given the busy cricket schedule." As for the pitch conditions, Bangladesh anticipated a slow and low surface, but Suryakumar disagreed, stating, "We practiced for three days and didn't find much difference. The wickets are good and competitive for T20."

Lastly, Suryakumar reflected on his T20I captaincy journey and his experience under Rohit Sharma with the Mumbai Indians. "I'm really enjoying this new role. I've learned from other captains and it's a good role to take the team forward. Let's see what happens next," he concluded.

Messi Comes Off the Bench as Inter Miami Faces Toronto



Toronto: Lionel Messi made an impact off the bench for Inter Miami during their match against Toronto, as the team approached the end of the regular season in MLS. The eight-time Ballon d'Or winner entered the game in the 61st minute, alongside fellow substitute Sergio Busquets. Notably absent from the starting lineup were other stars, including Jordi Alba, Luis Suarez, and goalkeeper Drake Callender. Inter Miami's coach, Gerardo "Tata" Martino, had mentioned earlier that Messi's workload would be carefully managed now that the team has secured the No. 1 seed and home-field advantage for the MLS Cup playoffs. Their first playoff match is scheduled for October 25.

Messi is also set to join the Argentina national team shortly for World Cup qualifying matches on October 10 and 15, which may affect his availability for Inter Miami's regular-season finale against New England on October 19. Oscar Ustari, a former teammate of Messi's from the 2008 Olympic gold medal-winning squad, made his debut in goal for Inter Miami, stepping in for Callender. Ustari joined the club last month.

As of Saturday, Inter Miami aimed to set a new MLS single-season points record, needing two wins in their final matches to finish with 74 points—surpassing the 73-point record set by New England in 2021. Messi entered the match with an impressive tally of 17 goals in 17 MLS appearances this season, including two crucial goals in their shield-clinching 3-2 victory over Columbus on Wednesday.

Golf: Kevin Yu makes history on PGA Tour, wins title in playoff

Jackson (USA): Kevin Yu made golf history by becoming only the third player from Chinese Taipei to win a PGA TOUR tournament following a thrilling playoff victory over Beau Hossler in the Sanderson Farms Championship on Sunday.

The 26-year-old Yu birdied the 18th hole twice at The Country Club of Jackson, Mississippi, first from 15 feet in regulation to force extra time and then from six feet to claim a "dream" victory in front of his parents who were amongst the fans gathered for the second of eight PGA TOUR FedExCup Fall tournaments.

Mohun Bagan Dominates Mohammedan Sporting with First-Half Hat-Trick

Kolkata: Mohun Bagan delivered a resounding performance against city rivals Mohammedan Sporting, netting three first-half goals to secure a decisive victory in the much-anticipated 'Kolkata Derby' on Saturday. The reigning champions got off to a quick start, with Australian forward Jamie Maclaren scoring the opener in the eighth minute. Following a corner kick, Maclaren headed the ball past goalkeeper Padam Chhetri, putting Bagan in front early.

Fueled by the initial goal, coach Jose Molina's side pressed hard, forcing Mohammedan Sporting into mistakes in midfield. Their attacking quartet, consisting of Liston Colaco, Manvir Singh, Ma-



claren, and Greg Stewart, showcased impressive synergy as they continued to threaten the opposition's defense.

The hosts extended their lead in the 31st minute when Stewart's free kick found veteran defender Subhasish Bose, who powered a header into the net. Just five minutes later, Stewart turned from provider to scorer. After winning

the ball in midfield, he surged forward and unleashed a powerful shot into the bottom left corner, marking a fantastic individual effort. With this convincing win, Mohun Bagan will head into the international break on a high note. Their next match promises to be a thrilling encounter against arch-rivals East Bengal on October 19.

India face Sri Lanka in crucial T20 World Cup clash

Dubai: In the tournament, India came back strongly from the devastation of 58 runs at the hands of New Zealand. They outplayed Pakistan by six wickets in Dubai. At the end of Group A stand the abysmal Sri Lanka who have lost both their matches—one by 31 runs to Pakistan and the other by six wickets to Australia.

India is concerned about the fitness of skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, who sustained a neck sprain during the last overs of the match against Pakistan. She was seen applying an ice pack post-game after retiring hurt. More importantly, Pooja Vastrakar did not play in the last game due to a marginal injury, and S Sajana replaced her. Whether Vastrakar will return for the Sri Lanka match is yet to be known.

India is pretty confident about their record in T20I with Sri Lanka, where they stand at 19-5. But one of those five defeats occurred just a



few weeks ago in the Asia Cup final this July. So, India is desperate for revenge. For India to raise the ante, a win will be required as their win against Pakistan did not contribute much towards raising their NRR higher, where they confined Pakistan to just 105 runs. A defeat for Sri Lanka will be a huge blow to their chances of going any further..

Arctic Open Super 500: Sindhu and Sen Aim for Comeback After Paris Setback

Vantaa: Indian badminton stars PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen will headline the Indian contingent at the Arctic Open Super 500 tournament, starting here on Tuesday, as they look to bounce back after a challenging run at the Paris Olympics. This will be the first competitive outing for both Sindhu and Sen since the Olympic Games, where neither was able to secure a medal. The tournament offers them a crucial opportunity to regain their form and confidence. Both players have reassessed their strategies and made significant changes in their preparations.

Sindhu, who exited in the round of 16 in Paris, has made key changes to her coaching setup, bringing in Anup Sri-dhar and Korean badminton legend Lee Hyun-il as her new coaches. She parted ways with Indonesia's Agus Dwi Santoso in a bid to reset her career path.

Sen, who narrowly missed out on a bronze medal in Paris, has spent time at the Red Bull Arena in Austria for physical assessments to improve his fitness. In his opening match, Sen will face Denmark's Rasmus Gemke, against whom he lost at the 2023 India Open. Former world number one Kidambi Srikanth, who recently returned to action at the Macau Open after a four-month injury layoff, will begin his campaign in the qualifiers. He will face compatriot Kiran George, while Sathish Kumar Karunakaran will take on France's Arnaud Merkle in another qualifier.

In the women's singles draw, Sindhu is joined by inform players Malvika Bansod and Aakarshi Kashyap. Malvika, who reached the quarterfinals at the China Open Super 1000, will face World No. 24 Sung Shuo Yun of Chinese Taipei in her opener, while Aakarshi Kashyap is set to battle Yvonne Li of Germany. Rising star Unnati Hooda, winner of the 2022 Odisha Masters, will compete in the qualifiers against Israel's Heli Neiman. While there is no Indian representation in men's doubles, the Panda sisters, Rituparna and Swetaparna, will compete in the women's doubles, and Sathish Kumar will pair with Aadya Variyath in the mixed doubles event.