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Sensex closes at 82,133 after 2,000 pts rally from day low

Mumbai: The Indian stock market closed in the green on Friday, with sharp gains in heavyweights like Bharti Airtel, ITC, HUL, and Kotak Mahindra Bank. At Closing, Sensex was up 843.16 points or 1.04 per cent, at 82,133.12 and Nifty was up 219.89 points or 0.89 per cent, at 24,768.30. During the session, BSE's benchmark made an intraday high of 82,213 after recovering from a low of 80,082.

According to the experts, "Currently, the market is anticipating a revival in consumer spending, driven by the festive season and year-end holidays, adding to the sentiments. Additionally, an expectation of an increase in the US spending is propelling the IT sector." Midcap and smallcap stocks underperformed compared to largecaps. Nifty



midcap 100 index closed at 58,991, down 30 points or 0.05 per cent. and the Nifty smallcap 100 index closed at 19,407, down 59 points or 0.30 per cent.

In the Sensex pack, Bharti Airtel, ITC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, HUL, Titan Company, UltraTech Cement, HCL Tech, Power Grid, and Nestle were top gainers. Tata Steel, IndusInd Bank, JSW Steel, and Bajaj Finserv were the top losers. Among the sectoral indices, Auto, IT, financial service, FMCG, energy and Infra were top contributors. PSU Bank, pharma, metal, realty and media were top laggards.

LIC Mutual Fund eyes Rs 50000 crore in assets under management by March 31, 2025

Calcutta : LIC Mutual Fund has set its sights on clocking ₹50,000 crore in assets under management by March 31, 2025. "As of March 31, 2024, our AUM was ₹27,733 crore. It has increased to ₹36,171 crore as of November 30, 2024. Our plan is that by March 31, 2025, we should cross ₹50,000 crore of AUM," Ravi Kumar Jha, managing director and CEO, LIC Mutual Fund Asset Management Ltd, said on Friday.

Jha said the company is eyeing an expansion both on the distribution and product side, while lowering the SIP amounts to garner more interest in SIP investment from beyond top 30 cities, which accounted for around 18 per cent of the industry's assets under management as of October 2024.

"Our parent (LIC) is very strong as regards its agency force. So I have asked my sales team to put maximum focus on MFDs (mutual fund distributors). Our share of business was around 65 per cent from MFDs. LIC agents also form part of MFDs. We have grown this to more than 85 per cent. Our aim will be to try to take it as close to 90 per cent," Jha said.

"We have also drawn a plan that by March 31, 2025, we should have a minimum of 50 branches," he said.

"We have introduced pocket SIPs. Daily SIP can now be done with a small amount of ₹100 (from earlier ₹300). We have reduced our ticket size in monthly SIP to ₹200 in most of our schemes. The quarterly SIPs have been brought down to ₹1,000," Jha said.

The mutual fund is also looking at expanding its portfolio with more funds in the pipeline.

Amid market volatility, Jha said that retail investors should focus on plain vanilla products such as diversified equity funds and value mutual funds (which invest in stocks that are thought to be undervalued) for long term generation of wealth.

LIC Mutual Fund is also seeing a growing investor interest in its funds from Bengal. As of November 30, 2024, LIC Mutual Fund's AUM in the state was ₹2,700 crore.

Bengal is among the top five states that together contribute 70 per cent of the country's mutual fund assets under management, the other four being Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat and New Delhi.

India's GDP growth to hold steady in FY25, likely to clock 6.7 pc in FY26

Mumbai: India's economic growth will continue to hold steady in FY25 despite global uncertainties, with a projected GDP at 6.7 per cent in FY26, a report showed on Friday. CareEdge Ratings said that it expects Indian government to continue on the path of fiscal consolidation and projects India's GDP growth to remain healthy at 6.5 per cent in FY25 and 6.7 per cent in FY26.

"We expect to see improvement in private investment in 2025, supported by anticipated monetary policy easing," said Sachin Gupta, Chief Rating Officer and ED, CareEdge Ratings. The report said that CPI inflation is expected to moderate in the coming quarters. It expects food inflation to moderate, driven by a strong kharif harvest and favourable conditions for rabi sowing.

The CPI inflation, excluding vegetable

inflation, has been below 4 per cent in the last few months. The average CPI inflation is projected at 4.8 per cent in FY25 and 4.5 per cent in FY26. Core inflation is expected to remain benign, averaging 3.5 per cent in FY25 and 4.3 per cent in FY26. And WPI inflation is anticipated to average 2.5 per cent in FY25 and 3 per cent in FY26.

"We can expect the economic growth in H2 FY25 to rebound, supported by the recovery in consumption and a pick-up in government capex. Healthy agriculture production and robust services sector performance will be supportive of a rebound in GDP," said Rajani Sinha, Chief Economist, CareEdge Ratings. As far as government finances are concerned, net revenue collection will be aligned with the budgeted target.



The report expects RBI to cut policy interest rate by 50-75 bps in 2025, as food inflation moderates. Overall, the report expected India's current account deficit (CAD) to remain manageable at 0.9 per cent of GDP in FY25. On the external front, it projected merchandise exports to rise by 2.5 per cent, while, services exports projected to record a strong growth of 13 per cent in FY25.

Zomato gets GST tax demand notice of Rs 803 crore

Mumbai: Food delivery and quick commerce services provider Zomato has received a tax demand notice of Rs 803 crore from the Goods and Services Tax (GST) department. In a stock exchange filing, the company said this notice has been given by the Joint Commissioner of CGST and Central Excise in Thane. This tax notice includes GST demand and interest and penalty. "This tax demand notice is for not paying GST on delivery charges. The total amount of Rs 803 crore includes GST demand of Rs 401.7 crore and interest/penalty of the same amount," according to the exchange filing.

The company further said, "We believe that we have a strong case on merits, supported by the opinion of our external legal and tax advisors. The company will file an appeal against the order before the appropriate authority." Earlier, in January and June this year, Zomato received Rs 4.2 crore and Rs 9.45 crore GST demand notices, respectively.



Zomato in 2023 received a GST demand notice of Rs 400 crore on delivery charges. Delivery charges are levied by Zomato, Swiggy and other food and quick commerce companies on their services. "These companies claim that gig workers work as delivery partners. They are paid on an order basis. This delivery charge collected from the users is given directly to the gig worker," according to reports.

The delivery charge has been considered a service in GST laws, as the platforms are collecting it. Due to this, 18 per cent GST can be levied on delivery.

Indian agrochemicals sector to see 7-9 pc growth next fiscal

New Delhi: The agrochemicals sector in India is poised to grow at 7-9 per cent in the next fiscal, after a modest 5-6 per cent growth in the current fiscal, a report showed on Friday. The growth will be on the back of stable domestic demand and recovery in export volumes, according to the CRISIL Ratings report.

Operating margins are also seen to be recovering slowly, rising 100 basis points to 12-13 per cent - still below the pre-pandemic levels of 15-16

per cent. This will keep firms cautious with capital expenditure and focus on managing working capital to keep their cash flows and balance sheets steady.

Anuj Sethi, Senior Director, CRISIL Ratings, said that revenue from exports, which comprises half of the sector's total revenue, is witnessing change. "Global firms have largely resolved their excess inventory issues related to low-cost Chinese supplies and are now ordering closer to the crop-

ping season to better manage working capital," Sethi added. "While we expect healthy volume growth this fiscal, revenue growth will be modest at 3-4 per cent amid pricing pressures from competitively priced Chinese products. In the next fiscal, this may improve to over 7 per cent as these pressures ease," he noted.

The domestic revenue is seen rising by 8-9 per cent this fiscal due to good monsoon and adequate reservoir levels, which are boosting agricultural output.

Regulators need to strike balance for optimising growth: CEA Nageswaran

New Delhi: The government's Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) V. Anantha Nageswaran, on Wednesday said there is a need for striking the right balance between optimising growth and the regulatory framework in the light of global uncertainties.

Addressing the plenary session on the Future of Regulation: Balancing Innovation and Risk at the Global Economic Policy Forum 2024 organised by the Ministry of Finance and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Nageswaran highlighted that financial systems require a strict regulatory approach due to their systemic impact. He said there is a need to differentiate between regulation of financial and non-financial sectors as competition in the financial sector can lead to excessive risk-taking that can trigger instability. "Some sectors can self-regulate, but the interconnected nature of financial markets necessitates more vigilant oversight to safeguard economic stability," he said. Debasish Panda, Chairman of Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), while addressing the gathering virtually, said the overall foundation of insurance rests on making insurance simple, available, accessible, and most importantly, affordable.

Vi Business introduces Easy+

Guwahati: Vi Business, the enterprise arm of the leading telecom operator Vodafone Idea (Vi), has launched Easy+, a new innovative proposition on corporate post-paid plans, offering subscribers an option to select and purchase services like International roaming, OTT Subscriptions and others for their personal needs on their existing corporate plans. This service can be availed by downloading the Vi App. This first-of-its-kind proposition introduces a simplified approach by making it seamless for employees to purchase services of their choice on their corporate post-paid plans, thus enhancing the overall customer experience.

Commenting on the launch, Roerich Kaushal, Executive Vice President, Enterprise Mobility Business & Marketing, said, "With Easy+, Vi Business is taking the lead to transform corporate postpaid plan experience by giving employees the flexibility to select and buy services for their personal needs. In the upcoming holiday season, we look forward to our customers using Easy+ for international roaming packs, enjoying the ease and convenience it offers on their corporate post-paid plans". Vi Business's Easy+ offers include: International Roaming, OTT Subscriptions, Gifting Feature.

Mahindra launches CEV-V range of construction equipment at BAUMA CONEXPO Delhi

Guwahati: Mahindra Construction Equipment (MCE), a division of the Mahindra Group, has unveiled its latest CEV-V range of construction machinery at BAUMA CONEXPO 2024. The new offerings, including the RoadMaster G100 motor grader and EarthMaster SX & SXe backhoe loaders, comply with the latest CEV5 emission standards, highlighting Mahindra's commitment to innovation and sustainability. These products are equipped with advanced features like Mahindra IMAXX telematics, larger cabins for enhanced comfort, and higher power engines, ensuring improved performance and operator productivity.

Dr. VenkatSrinivas, Business Head at Mahindra, emphasized



the company's focus on local manufacturing and the "Make in India" initiative, stating that these innovations reflect Mahindra's commitment to driving sustainable growth in the construction sector. The product range also includes the BLAZO X 48 CLS tipper trucks and FURIO 10 fuel bowser, designed to enhance operational efficiency.

Guwahati, a hub for infra-

structure growth in the Northeast, is poised to benefit from Mahindra's new construction equipment. With the demand for reliable and high-performance machinery on the rise, Mahindra's advanced solutions will help businesses in the region achieve greater productivity and reduced operational costs, strengthening the company's position in this expanding market.

Nissan announces the hiring of senior management, effective January 1

Guwahati: Nissan Motor Co., Ltd. has announced the appointment of a new leadership team, effective January 1. Nissan is carrying out its recently announced turnaround actions, designed to restructure the company's operations for enhanced efficiency and resilience. As part of these actions, the appointments are aimed to respond quickly to current issues, restructuring the management following the appointment of a chief performance officer (CPO) effective December 1. Stephen Ma, currently chief financial officer (CFO), is appointed as chairperson of the Management Committee for China. Jeremie Papin, currently chairperson of the Management Committee for Americas, is appointed as CFO.

Christian Meunier joins Nissan and is appoint-

ed as chairperson of the Management Committee for Americas. Asako Hoshino, currently serving as Chief Brand & Customer Officer (CBCO) and Chairperson of the Management Committee for Japan/ASEAN, will retire from her role overseeing Japan/ASEAN operations. Shohei Yamazaki, currently serving as chairperson of the Management Committee for China, has been appointed as chairperson of the Management Committee for Japan/ASEAN. Commenting on the changes, Nissan President and CEO Makoto Uchida said, "These leadership appointments will bring the necessary experience and urgency to the countermeasures we are taking to get the company back on track."

Bajaj Finserv AMC launches 'Bajaj Finserv Healthcare Fund' to capitalize on healthcare boom

Guwahati: Bajaj Finserv Asset Management Company (AMC) has announced the launch of the Bajaj Finserv Healthcare Fund, an open-ended equity scheme designed to tap into the fast-growing healthcare and wellness sectors in India. The fund, which opens for subscription on December 6th and closes on December 20th, 2024, aims to create long-term growth by investing primarily in pharmaceuticals, hospitals, diagnostics, and wellness companies.

The fund will be benchmarked against

the BSE Healthcare Total Return Index (TRI), focusing on a portfolio that invests at least 80% in healthcare-related sectors. The scheme targets investors with a minimum five-year investment horizon and will be managed by Nimesh Chandan and Sorbh Gupta for the equity portion, while the debt portion will be handled by Siddharth Chaudhary. The fund has a low correlation with broader market trends, making it a strong contender for long-term wealth creation.

In Guwahati, a city witnessing a surge in healthcare infrastructure and private hospital investments, the Bajaj Finserv Healthcare Fund offers promising growth potential. The rise in healthcare demand in the city, fueled by increased health awareness and a growing urban population, positions the fund to benefit from this expanding market. Investors in Guwahati are poised to capitalize on this upward trend, with opportunities for long-term returns in the evolving healthcare landscape.

ICICI Prudential Life's mobile app paid commissions on the same day

Aizawl: IPRU Edge, a mobile app offered by ICICI Prudential Life Insurance exclusively for its advisors, has led to a 37% increase in their productivity in H1-FY2025, resulting in higher earnings for them. Importantly, 98.1% of agents using IPRU Edge were paid commissions on the same day. ICICI Prudential Life is the first life insurer to pay out commissions on the

same day to select distributors. The company has a network of over 2 lakh advisors, and approximately 61% of the company's top advisors are now actively using the app, which is helping them grow their business.

In H1-FY2025, the company recorded a 49% year-on-year increase in retail-weighted received premium from its agency channel this showcases the convenience

offered by the app. Mr. Rajiv Arora, Chief of Sales, Proprietary Channel, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance, said, "Our mobile app, IPRU Edge, has enabled our agents to grow their business." The mobile app is a solution for our agents to profitably grow their business. Importantly, it also provides them with a detailed view of their business and earnings.

NSDC and Juspay join forces to enhance payment solutions for skill development

Guwahati: The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has partnered with Juspay Technologies to transform payment solutions for India's skill development sector. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed today aims to streamline financial transactions for NSDC's extensive network, including training providers, candidates, and ecosystem players.

Juspay will deliver a scalable payment orchestration platform that integrates multiple payment methods such as UPI, credit/debit cards, and wallets. This collaboration will enhance transaction efficiency, ensuring seamless payments for millions of learners and training providers across India. Additionally, Juspay's unified analytics will offer actionable insights to improve operational performance.

Ved Mani Tiwari, CEO of NSDC, emphasized the importance of this partnership in making skill development more



accessible and efficient. "This collaboration will empower stakeholders, making skill development initiatives more impactful and sustainable," he said.

In Guwahati, the partnership is poised to enhance the digital payment experience for local training providers and learners. With increasing adoption of digital payments, Guwahati's market can expect improved transaction efficiency, benefiting both candidates and institutions involved in skill development. This development aligns with the growing push for digitalization in Assam's education and training sectors.

The All-New Camry hybrid electric vehicle unveils by Toyota Kirloskar Motor



Shillong: Toyota Kirloskar Motor has unveiled the All-New Camry hybrid electric vehicle, designed to be a "Sedan to the Core". Reiterating its commitment towards realising the carbon-neutral goals, the All-New Camry Hybrid Electric Vehicle is equipped with advanced 5th generation hybrid technology, delivering significantly improved efficiency and enhanced performance. This new model brings unmatched sophistication with cutting-edge safety features, elevated exteriors and interiors, seamless technology integration, thereby deliver the unique aspirations of the consumers. The All-New Camry Hybrid Electric Vehicle is more than a car—it's a reflection of refined style and exclusiveness.

Speaking on the launch of

new model, Mr. Masakazu Yoshimura—Chairman, Managing Director, and Chief Executive Officer of Toyota Kirloskar Motor—said, "The launch of All-New Camry Hybrid Electric Vehicle is a testament to our vision of developing ever-better, sustainable mobility options in line with the Toyota's Global Environmental Challenge 2050." Expressing his views, Mr. Tadashi Asazuma, Deputy Managing Director, Sales-Service-Used Car, Toyota Kirloskar Motor & Lexus, stated, "The all-new Camry exemplifies our unwavering commitment to crafting vehicles that blend performance, sustainability, and cutting-edge innovation." The All-New Camry Hybrid Electric Vehicle's hybrid battery comes with a warranty of 8 years or 160,000 Kms whichever comes first.

NSDC and Unstop forge partnership to empower India's youth with skill-based employment opportunities

Guwahati: The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has partnered with Unstop, a leading community engagement and hiring platform, to revolutionize skill-based employment opportunities for India's youth. This strategic collaboration aims to bridge the skill gap by offering an integrated ecosystem of career opportunities, mentorships, and next-gen assessments that align talent with industry demands.

The partnership will create a pool of pre-assessed candidates, making hiring easier for employers while providing students with the chance to showcase and



enhance their skills. "This collaboration will empower India's youth to thrive in the job market, contributing significantly to the nation's workforce," said ShriVed Mani Tiwari, CEO of NSDC.

In Guwahati, this initiative is a

game-changer. The city, with its growing demand for skilled professionals, will benefit significantly as local youth gain access to skill development platforms and career opportunities with national employers. This partnership will help bridge the employment gap in the region, providing students in Guwahati with the necessary tools to secure meaningful, skill-based jobs, thus driving economic growth in the city.

With Unstop's reach across 20,000 colleges and 5,000+ employers, this collaboration is poised to make a lasting impact on India's employability landscape.

Vi provides the greatest 4G network experience in Assam and North East Circles

Guwahati: Leading telecom operator, Vodafone Idea (Vi) has announced that it has been recognized for its exceptional 4G network experience in Assam and North East Circles. As highlighted in Open signal's 4G Network Experience Report November 2024, where it examines the 4G experience of smartphone 4G users, Vi leads in all the consumer experience parameters delivering an outstanding Data, Voice, Video, and Gaming experience.

The Open signal report underscores Vi's network supe-

riority across the challenging terrains of the Seven Sisters of India – Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura. With the highest data speeds in the region, Vi provides users with unparalleled Video and Gaming experiences. The report also ranks Vi as the top performer in voice call quality and as a leader across all consumer experience categories. Speaking on the occasion Naveen Singh vi, Business Head, Assam & North East Circle, Vi commented, "We are thrilled to



be recognized for our outstanding performance in Assam and North East Circles." Some of its recent offerings include: Vi Guarantee Program, Vi Hero Recharges, Unlimited Night Time High Speed Data from 12am - 6am, Weekend Data Rollover, Data Delight.

EON Reality and NSDC collaborate to revolutionize India's skill development with XR and Spatial AI

Guwahati: In a groundbreaking move set to redefine India's skill development landscape, National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC) has entered into a strategic partnership with EON Reality—an international leader in AI-driven immersive education—to revolutionize how millions of Indians acquire critical 21st-century skills. By combining NSDC's national mandate for workforce readiness with EON Reality's Spatial AI and Extended Reality (XR) technology, this alliance aspires to dramatically accelerate learning, improve knowledge retention, and elevate the global competitiveness of India's workforce.

The first phase of this initiative will provide

an initial allocation of academic licenses and internship licenses to top-performing institutions, training centers, and educators who apply and qualify. "We are at a pivotal moment in India's skill development journey," said Ved Mani Tiwari, CEO NSDC and MD NSDC International. NSDC's involvement guarantees broad reach and alignment with India's strategic skill priorities. From rural ITIs (Industrial Training Institutes) to urban Skills Universities, this initiative is designed to cater to diverse learning environments. "This partnership is not just another educational technology deployment—this is the start of a nationwide learning evolution," said Dan Lejerskar, Chairman, EON Reality.

IHM Hyderabad hosts a spectacular Christmas Gala Lunch at its DD Colony campus

Mumbai: The Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) Hyderabad, a prestigious Central Government institute with a legacy of over 50 years and consistently ranked among India's finest by leading hotel chains, has hosted a spectacular Christmas Gala Lunch at its DD Colony campus. The festive celebration marked the joyous spirit of Christmas while ushering in the New Year with grandeur and cheer. Adding to the grandeur, executive chefs from 5-star hotels, renowned stand-alone restaurants, area directors (H.R.), and training managers from leading hospitality brands joined the students in the celebrations.

This unique gathering provided a platform for interaction and inspiration, making it a memorable occasion for all attendees.

Mr. Sanjay K. Thakur, Principal, IHMH, speaking on the occasion, said, "The Institute of Hotel Management is the only central government institute in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh teaching hospitality and hotel administration." Ms Rachna Agashe, Head of Department, IHMH, said, "we give 100% placement guarantee for our graduates, with over forty companies coming to us every year for placements, in fact many students get 4 to 5 job offers."

Nissan announces Abhishek Arora as director for DND-CQT & Transformation

Guwahati: Nissan Motor India (NMIPL) has announced the appointment and role expansion of Abhishek Arora as Director - Dealer Network Development and Customer Quality Training (DND-CQT), in addition to his current role as Director - Transformation & New Projects, effective from 14 November 2024. In his new role, Abhishek will lead the brand's channel development and management, driving strategic initiatives linked to network development and business to ensure Nissan is future-ready for the upcoming products.

Abhishek had joined Nissan in September 2024 as Director - Transformation and New Projects and was given interim charge of Director - DND-CQT in October 2024. In his previous role with Audi India, he led key functions such as network development, business management, sales train-



ing, and the used car business. Prior to Audi, Abhishek worked with General Motors, Tata Motors, and Honda Motorcycles, further enriching his expertise in channel sales, planning, and managing premium car networks. Speaking on the appointment and role expansion, Mr. Saurabh Vatsa, Managing Director, Nissan Motor India (NMIPL), said, "We are delighted to welcome Abhishek Arora at Nissan as Director—DND-CQT in addition to his current responsibilities in driving transformation projects."

Foreign Secretary Mr. Misri expresses concern over attacks on minorities

Guwahati: On an official visit to Bangladesh, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri has met with Dr. Muhammad Yunus, Chief Advisor to Bangladesh's interim government, and Foreign Affairs Advisor Mohammad Touhid Hussain. During the meetings, Mr. Misri expressed concern over the ongoing attacks on minorities in the neighboring country. He conveyed that New Delhi seeks to build "positive, constructive, and mutually beneficial" relations with Dhaka. Arriving in Dhaka on Monday, Mr. Misri also held consultations with Bangladesh's Foreign Secretary, Masud Bin Momen. The Indian Foreign Secretary reiterated India's desire to build a positive and constructive relationship with Bangladesh based on mutual trust, respect, and sensitivity to each other's concerns and interests.

A statement released by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said, "The Foreign Secretary also discussed certain recent developments and issues and conveyed India's concerns, especially those related to the safety and welfare of minorities." This visit marks India's first high-level engagement with Bangladesh since the transition of power following the ousting of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government in August. The Foreign Secretary's mission aims to sustain and strengthen bilateral ties, addressing shared concerns while fostering progress in key areas of collaboration.

SWITCH Mobility Ltd unveils its contemporary electric bus platform SWITCH EiV12



Guwahati/Dibrugarh: SWITCH Mobility Ltd, subsidiary of Ashok Leyland and part of the Hinduja Group, and a leading manufacturer of electric buses and light commercial vehicles, has unveiled its contemporary electric bus platform SWITCH EiV12—the low-floor electric city bus for the Indian market. It is India's first low-floor city bus with chassis-mounted batteries, featuring a scalable battery capacity of over 400+ kWh. The vehicle was launched by Shri Nitin Gadkari, Hon'ble Minister for Minister of Road Transport and Highways of India, in the presence of Ashok P. Hinduja, Chairman of Hinduja Group Companies (India), other

dignitaries, and industry leaders.

Mr. Ashok P. Hinduja, Chairman of the Hinduja Group of Companies (India), observed while launching these vehicles "These buses are a tribute to the PM's Make in India vision: made in India, for India and the World." Mr. Dheeraj Hinduja, Chairman of SWITCH Mobility, said, "At SWITCH Mobility, we are driving a greener future and advancing our long-term vision to democratize electric mobility worldwide." Mr. Mahesh Babu, Chief Executive Officer, SWITCH Mobility, said, "At SWITCH Mobility, we're excited to unveil two new products for India and Europe, both built on our Global EV architecture."

Pep Guardiola Eyes National Team Coaching Role Post-Manchester City

Manchester: Manchester City's illustrious manager, Pep Guardiola, has hinted at his future career plans, expressing interest in national team coaching upon concluding his tenure with the reigning Premier League champions. Guardiola, who recently extended his contract with City through 2027, discussed his post-City aspirations in an interview with celebrity chef Dani Garcia.

During the interview, Guardiola emphasized his desire for a new type of challenge rather than starting anew at another club. "I'm not going to manage another team. What I'm not going to do is leave Man City, go to another country, and do the same thing as now," he stated, reflecting on the energy and commitment required to begin afresh. He added, "Maybe a national team, but that's different."

Guardiola's successful career has seen him collect numerous



accolades, including 15 major trophies with Manchester City alone, such as six league titles and a Champions League victory. His overall trophy count in his coaching career stands at 32, making him one of the most decorated managers in the history of soccer.

While Guardiola has not dismissed the possibility of retiring from coaching altogether to pursue personal interests like golf, his potential shift to national team management signals an exciting next chapter for the celebrated coach. As he approaches the later years of his current contract, the football world will keenly watch where his renowned tactical acumen will take him next.

"Living My Dream," Says D Gukesh, Youngest Ever World Chess Champion

Singapore: In a display of humility and excitement, the newly crowned world chess champion D Gukesh shared his joy and astonishment at achieving his childhood dream. At just 16, Gukesh has made history by becoming the youngest ever world chess champion, a record he clinched after a thrilling victory against China's Ding Liren in the final match of the championship. Reflecting on his monumental achievement, Gukesh expressed his emotions, saying, "I am just living my dream. I was dreaming this moment for the last 10 years. Happy I realized this dream." His victory came at the conclusion of a dramatic and tense series, where he managed to outplay Liren in the 14th and final game of their battle.

Despite the pressure and high stakes, Gukesh maintained a poised and focused demeanor throughout the tournament. "I got a bit emotional because I was not expecting to win. But then I got a chance to press on," he shared during the postmatch press conference. Gukesh, who has been immersed in the world of chess since he was a young child, also took a moment to acknowledge his opponent's skill and sportsmanship. The young champion also highlighted the significant role his family has played in his journey, particularly the sacrifices made by his parents. "The dream of winning the world chess championship is bigger for them than for me," he remarked, attributing much of his success to their support and encouragement.

Indians shine on Day 1 of US Kids Champs; Pritish hits 66

Gurugram: Indian golfers held the spotlight on the opening day of the fourth edition of the US Kids Golf Indian Championships with Pritish Singh Karayat leading the pack at the Classic Golf and Country Club. Many of the opening round leaders have been winners in local tour events and have also won medals at the past Indian and other international events. A total of 79 players from seven countries are taking part in the event, which awards WAGR points besides Junior Scoreboard and AJGA, which help gain spots into US Kids major international events. The three-day 54-hole event saw a stunning performance from Pritish who carded 6-under 66 to open a six-shot lead over three others.

Smriti Mandhana's Century in Vain as India Suffers 0-3 Series Whitewash Against Australia

Perth: Despite a brilliant century from opener Smriti Mandhana, India fell to a disappointing 83-run defeat against Australia in the third Women's ODI, culminating in a 0-3 series whitewash. The match, held at the WACA in Perth, saw Australia post a formidable 298 for six, thanks to Annabel Sutherland's spectacular 95-ball 110 and significant contributions from Ashleigh Gardner and Tahlia McGrath.

After electing to field first, India initially had Australia on the back foot at 78 for four. However, Sutherland's innings, combined with halfcenturies from Gardner (50) and McGrath (56 not out), propelled the hosts to a competitive total. India's chase was spirited, thanks to Mandhana's 105 off 109 balls, but her dismissal

marked a turning point, dashing hopes of a consolation victory. India struggled to build partnerships after Mandhana's exit, with Harleen Deol, who scored 39 off 64 balls, being the next top scorer. The Indian innings ultimately concluded at 215 all out in 45.1 overs. Gardner, who earlier scored a fifty, shone with the ball too, claiming five wickets for 30 runs, underscoring her all-round capabilities.

The Indian bowling attack, despite a promising start by pacer Arundhati Reddy, who claimed early wickets and finished with career-best figures, could not sustain the pressure. Australia capitalized on this with a strong middleorder performance, especially during a pivotal 96-run partnership between Sutherland and Gardner.



This series has been dominated by Australia, showcasing their depth and resilience, while India will reflect on what might have been a series of missed opportunities and tough lessons. The focus for India will now shift to rebuilding and addressing the areas of concern highlighted during this challenging tour.

Sachin Tendulkar Foundation Launches Advanced Sports Facility in Satara



Mumbai: The Sachin Tendulkar Foundation (STF), in partnership with Mann Deshi Champions, unveiled a new state-of-the-art sports facility in Satara, Maharashtra, aiming to boost sports training and opportunities for rural youth. The inauguration ceremony was attended by cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar, his wife Anjali, and daughter Sara Tendulkar, who recently took on her role as a director of STF.

This modern sports complex

is equipped with top-notch facilities, including basketball and badminton courts, indoor areas for wrestling and boxing, classrooms for educational activities, administration offices, and hostels capable of accommodating up to 150 athletes. The initiative reflects STF's commitment to enhancing sports infrastructure and accessibility in rural areas, fostering a nurturing environment for budding athletes.

During the event, Sara Ten-

dulkar, making her first appearance as a director, emphasized the significant role sports play in transforming lives, particularly for the youth in less urbanized areas. She engaged with many young athletes, reinforcing the foundation's dedication to empowering the next generation through comprehensive sports education and training.

Mann Deshi Champions, a collaborator in this venture, has been instrumental in promoting sports in rural regions and has successfully helped over 100 athletes secure positions in prestigious sectors like the army, police, forest services, and railways. This record underscores the profound impact well-structured support and facilities can have on the careers and lives of young sports talents.

Haryana Steelers Secure First Playoff Spot with Convincing Win Over Bengaluru Bulls

Pune: The Haryana Steelers have become the first team to qualify for the Pro Kabaddi League playoffs this season, following a decisive 37-26 victory over the Bengaluru Bulls at Balewadi Stadium on Wednesday. The Steelers showcased a well-rounded team performance, spearheaded by raiders Vinay and Shivam Patore who combined for a total of 15 points. Defenders Jaideep and Rahul each contributed four tackle points, with Mohammadreza Shadlou adding six points to the team's tally, encapsulating a solid defensive and offensive display.

The match began at a measured pace with both teams feeling out their opposition. The Steelers' defensive strategy, particularly effective in do-or-die situations, allowed them to maintain a slight edge in the early stages, leading 7-6 by the end of the first quarter. A pivotal moment came when Vinay executed a Super Raid, taking out three

Bengaluru players, which significantly extended the Steelers' lead. Bengaluru, although already out of playoff contention, did not back down. Raider Jatin, who surpassed the milestone of 4000 raid points in PKL-11 during the game, led a spirited effort for the Bulls.

Despite a valiant attempt by Bengaluru's Parateek, who executed a super raid, Haryana remained in control, eventually inflicting an all-out that widened their lead to nine points and virtually sealed the game.

The match concluded with Haryana Steelers not only cementing their place at the top of the scoreboard but also becoming the first team to officially secure a playoff berth in this season's league. This win adds momentum to their campaign as they aim to capitalize on their strong form heading into the crucial final stages of the tournament.

Niki Prasad to lead India in inaugural women's U-19 Asia Cup



All-rounder Niki Prasad has been named captain of the India U19 squad for the inaugural edition of the junior women's Asia Cup set to take place in Kuala Lumpur from December 15 to 22. Sanika Chalke will serve as the vice-captain of the side, which has three previous U19 Women's T20 World Cup winners in batter G Trisha, pacer Shabnam Shakil, and left-arm spinner Sonam Yadav. All matches will be held at the Bayuemas Cricket Oval.

play their opening match of the group stage against Pakistan on December 15 and then face Nepal on December 17. The top two teams from both groups will enter the Super Four stage, with matches to take place on December 19 and 20. The top two teams from the Super Four stage will enter the final on December 22 to determine the first-ever champion of the Women's U19 Asia Cup.

The tournament serves as vital preparation for India ahead of the 2025 U19 Women's T20 World Cup, which will also be hosted by Malaysia. India are the reigning champions of the Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup, after winning the inaugural edition in 2023 in South Africa under Shafali Verma's captaincy.