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India's private sector sees robust growth in February due to surge in services activity



Mumbai: India's private sector expanded at its fastest pace in six months in February, driven by a surge in services activity, but underlying imbalances raise concerns about the sustainability of growth.

HSBC's flash PMI data signalled robust aggregate demand, prompting firms to increase hiring. However, while cost inflation eased, firms raised prices at a faster pace, indicating persistent margin pressures.

The HSBC Flash India Composite Output Index rose to 60.6 in February from 57.7 in January, marking the strongest expansion since August 2024.

Growth was overwhelmingly led by the services sector, which posted its fastest rise in nearly a year, while manufacturing activity lagged. The divergence raises questions about the resilience of industrial output, especially amid increasing competitive pressures.

The HSBC Flash India Manufacturing PMI slipped to 57.1

from 57.7 in January, reflecting a slowdown in new factory orders. While the index remained well above its long-term average of 54.1, the loss of momentum suggests that manufacturing's contribution to growth may be weakening. Competitive pressures weighed on firms, limiting their pricing power even as input costs moderated. In contrast, service providers saw the steepest rise in new business since August 2024, reinforcing the notion that growth is being driven by consumer-facing industries rather than industrial expansion.

Export demand provided some relief, with new international orders increasing at the fastest rate in seven months. Goods producers led the upturn, though their growth momentum slightly weakened. The strength in external markets contributed to rising order backlogs, which increased at the sharpest rate in over four years.

Raymond Lifestyle hit by cyber attack, core system 'safe' – 18

Mumbai: Raymond Lifestyle Limited on Wednesday said it faced a cybersecurity incident that affected some of its IT assets. However, the company said that its core systems and overall operations were not impacted. In its regulatory filing with the stock exchanges, the company stated that its technical team, along with cybersecurity experts, took swift action to minimise the impact and safeguard its systems.

It also confirmed that customer and store operations continued to function as usual without any disruption. "The company is investigating the matter and appropriate containment, and remediation actions are being taken in a controlled manner to address the incident," the company said in an update to the bourses.



Indian economy sees 6.3 per cent growth in Q3 due to rural demand, increased government expenditure

Mumbai: India's economy likely expanded by 6.3 per cent in the third quarter of the fiscal, rebounding from 5.4 per cent in the previous quarter, as rural demand and increased government capital expenditure provided a much-needed boost, economists said.

However, the uneven nature of the recovery raises concerns about the sustainability of growth in the coming quarters. A revival in rural consumption has played a critical role in the rebound, marking a shift from the previous quarters when growth was constrained by weak demand outside urban centres.

"The improvement is led by a revival in rural demand and a rise in central government capital expenditure. Urban demand is also showing some signs of improvement,

but the recovery remains relatively softer," said Gaura Sengupta, chief economist at IDFC First Bank. This divergence between rural and urban consumption could have implications for the structure of future growth, particularly if urban spending remains sluggish. The government will release revised data for the previous fiscal, along with second-advance estimates and third-quarter GDP data on February 28.

High-frequency indicators suggest a clear recovery in Q3 after growth slowed to a near two-year low in Q2. "Passenger vehicle sales, petrol consumption, domestic air traffic, and central government capital expenditure have all improved in Q3 compared to Q2," said Rajani Sinha, chief economist at CareEdge. However, the reliance on gov-



ernment spending to drive growth underscores the private sector's hesitancy, particularly in investment.

Bank of Baroda economist Jahnvi Prabhakar projects Q3 GDP growth at 6.6 per cent, attributing the relatively subdued pace to weak manufacturing activity and base effects. "Revival in consumption and rising government spending should support overall growth in Q4," she said.

ICRA expects GDP growth to rise to 6.4 per cent in Q3 from a seven-quarter low of 5.4 per cent in Q2, benefiting from government spending and a turnaround in exports.

Chief economist Aditi Nayar pointed to stronger services exports, higher kharif crop output, and festive-season demand as key factors supporting growth, but noted that urban sentiment remains fragile.

India's CNG vehicle count surged 3-fold to 7.5 million units in last 8 years amid green push: Crisil

New Delhi: Domestic annual sales of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) vehicles are forecast to reach 1.1 million units by the end of the current financial year, driven by the government's ongoing push for cleaner fuels, according to a Crisil report released on Wednesday. This will take the CNG vehicle count in India to 7.5 million, a 3 times increase from 2.6 million in fiscal 2016, and translate into a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of around 12 per cent, the report states.

The rapid uptake has been undergirded by the expansion of the CNG infrastructure, with the number of filling stations set to rise to over 7,400 from 1,081 in fiscal 2016, etching a CAGR of 24 per cent. The report also states that rising sales of CNG passenger vehicles has driven up their penetration in the overall passenger vehicle population to 15-16 per cent this fiscal-end vs 5.6 per cent in fiscal 2016. The availability of over 30 CNG car variants, compared

with single digit not long ago, thus catering to diverse consumer preferences, has accelerated adoption. The commercial vehicle segment has also been gaining traction amid growing options that offer tangible cost savings, with penetration levels currently at 10-11 per cent. Penetration in the two-wheeler segment is growing as well, following the introduction of CNG options, the report states.

However, the three-wheeler segment, which currently has a penetration level of 28-29 per cent, will need to navigate competition from Electric Vehicles (EVs), according to the report. CNG consumption has increased in tandem with the rise in sales of CNG vehicles, at a CAGR of around 13 per cent between fiscal years 2016 and 2025. The expansion and distribution of CNG infrastructure can be gauged from



the fact that the share of the top five states has reduced to 55 per cent in fiscal 2025 from over 90 per cent in fiscal 2016, with newly awarded geographical areas gaining traction, the report points out. Congestion levels at filling stations are also expected to decrease, with the number of vehicles per station reducing by around half since fiscal 2016, thereby enhancing overall customer experience and operational efficiency of the CNG stations.

Going forward as well, the expansion of CNG infrastructure in cities such as Chennai and in tier-II cities is expected to support sustained sales of CNG and, in turn, CNG vehicles, the report states.

India-focused offshore funds, ETFs clock record net inflow of \$23.4 billion in 2024

New Delhi: India-focused offshore funds and exchange-traded funds (ETFs) registered a record net inflow of \$23.4 billion in 2024, despite witnessing a net outflow of \$954 million in the December quarter. According to a report by financial services firm Morningstar, from July to December, India-focused offshore funds and ETFs saw net inflows of \$5 billion. Of this, the offshore funds received \$4.6 billion and ETFs received \$391 million, as per the report.

India-focused offshore ETFs saw net inflows of \$1.1 billion in the September quarter but recorded net outflows of \$716 million in the December quarter. Despite a challenging market environment, the asset base of India-focused offshore funds and ETFs saw a marginal expansion between July and December 2024, rising from \$102.3 billion in June to \$103.4 billion in December 2024—a modest increase of just 0.01 per cent.

Tata Coffee Gold Hazelnut offers a nutty twist to your daily cup

Guwahati: Tata Coffee has launched its new Gold Hazelnut Flavoured Instant Coffee, promising to elevate coffee lovers' everyday brews with a rich, nutty essence. Combining high-quality coffee beans with hazelnut flavor, the freeze-dried blend offers an indulgent experience without the need for a barista.

This premium blend delivers a velvety, well-rounded cup in seconds, with a smooth, subtly sweet hazelnut twist. Designed for convenience and taste, Tata Coffee Gold Hazelnut caters to coffee lovers seeking bold

flavors and a balanced finish. Priced at ₹375 for a 50g jar, the product is available through general trade, modern trade, e-commerce, and quick commerce platforms.

In Guwahati, the coffee scene is evolving, with more consumers embracing premium options like Tata Coffee Gold Hazelnut. The city's coffee enthusiasts, known for their growing taste for high-quality brews, can now enjoy a café-style experience at home with this aromatic blend.

Tata Coffee's latest launch caters to those seeking in-



dulgence and variety in their morning routines. With its rich flavor profile and sleek packaging, Tata Coffee Gold Hazelnut is set to be a popular choice among India's coffee connoisseurs.

Managing diabetes to safeguard heart health: Experts share key insights

Guwahati: The link between diabetes and heart health is crucial but often overlooked. Elevated blood sugar levels can damage blood vessels and nerves, raising the risk of heart complications. Experts are now emphasizing preventative measures to help individuals with diabetes protect their heart health.

Dr. Nripen Das, Senior Internist & Consultant at Caremed Cardio-Diabetic Centre, Guwahati, highlighted the growing issue in India: "Many young people with diabetes are now reporting heart-related complications. Mismanaged diabetes can lead to high blood pressure, bad cholesterol, and triglycerides, increasing cardiovascular risks. Following a heart-healthy diet, exercising regularly, and using tools like continuous glucose monitoring

(CGM) devices can help mitigate risks."

CGM devices were also recommended by Dr. Kenneth Lee, Director of Medical Affairs, Abbott's Diabetes Division. He emphasized the importance of metrics like Time in Range (TIR), noting that a 10% increase in TIR can lower carotid artery thickness by 6.4%, reducing cardiovascular risks.

In Guwahati, health-conscious consumers are showing increased demand for CGM devices and heart-friendly food options, indicating growing awareness of diabetes' effects on heart health.

Experts recommend a heart-healthy diet, regular exercise, real-time glucose monitoring, avoiding smoking and alcohol, and managing stress to better manage diabetes and improve heart health.

Tata Tea Premium celebrates India's diversity with regional blends

Guwahati: Tata Consumer Products' flagship brand, Tata Tea Premium, has launched a range of regionally inspired tea blends to cater to the diverse tastes of India's tea lovers. Known as "Desh Ki Chai," the carefully crafted blends aim to offer a unique and delightful tea experience with rich flavors and aromatic profiles tailored to regional preferences.

The range includes "Rich Assam Chai" for Delhi, "Kadak Assam Chai" for Haryana and Odisha, "BadiDanedaar Chai" for Punjab, "Dumdaar Chai" for Uttar Pradesh, and "SwadBhari Chai" for West Bengal. Each variant is designed to reflect the unique tea-drinking habits and flavor preferences of the regions.

In Guwahati, Tata Tea Premium's regional approach is expected to resonate deeply. With Assam's strong association with premium tea production, the launch is likely to attract consumers who appreciate robust flavors and locally sourced blends.

Tata Tea Premium is also available online on Amazon, making it accessible to a wider audience across India. The brand continues to uphold its identity as a symbol of India's diverse cultural heritage through its "Desh Ki Chai" initiative.

Moto Morini Seiemmezzo 650 range starts at ₹4.99 lakhs

Aizawl: Adishwar Auto Ride India (AARI) has announced a significant price revision for the Moto Morini (MM) Seiemmezzo 650 lineup in India, making premium Italian motorcycles more accessible to enthusiasts. This strategic move aligns with AARI's 2025 vision for Moto Vault and Moto Morini, reinforcing its commitment to expanding the brand's reach and appeal in the Indian market. As part of this initiative, AARI has introduced the MY-2025 Seiemmezzo 650 Scrambler and Retro Street models at a new price, enhancing their value proposition for riders who appreciate Italian design, performance, and heritage.

New Ex-Showroom Prices (Effective February 20th, 2025): MM Seiemmezzo 650 Retro Street: ₹4,99,000 (₹2,00,000 reduction) MM Seiemmezzo 650 Scrambler: ₹5,20,000 (₹1,90,000 reduction). These revised prices are applicable across all available color options, ensuring that customers can enjoy the same premium experience at a significantly lower price. Speaking on the announcement, Vikas Jhabakh, Managing Director, AARI, said, "Moto Morini has a rich Italian legacy, and we are excited to make these exceptional motorcycles more accessible to Indian riders." Customers can visit Moto Vault dealerships nationwide to experience the Seiemmezzo 650 model range at the new, competitive pricing.

Bajaj Allianz Life launches pension plan with industry-first 30-year deferment

Guwahati: Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance has introduced Bajaj Allianz Life Guaranteed Pension Goal II, a new-age annuity plan featuring an industry-first 30-year deferment option. This non-linked, non-participating plan aims to help individuals as young as 35 begin their retirement journey with flexible payout options and lifelong income security.

The plan offers multiple annuity choices, including life annuity, joint life annuity, and customizable Return of Purchase Price (ROP) options ranging from 50% to 100%. It also guarantees lifelong income and provides exclusive benefits for NPS subscribers with a specialized Family Pension option.

"With rising life expectancy and limited social security

options in India, retirement planning has never been more crucial," said Tarun Chugh, MD & CEO of Bajaj Allianz Life. "This product empowers customers with financial independence and flexibility to meet their life goals with confidence."

In Guwahati, this plan could cater to young professionals and entrepreneurs looking for long-term financial stability. With the city's growing workforce, such a product can drive financial literacy and structured retirement planning awareness.

A Bajaj Allianz Life survey revealed that 77% of Indians prefer life insurance for retirement, signaling increasing demand for innovative financial solutions. Visit the company's website for further details.

JSW MG Motor launches India's Most Advanced SUV - MG Astor

Guwahati: JSW MG Motor has launched the MY 2025 editions of India's Most Advanced SUV in its class - MG Astor, introducing new features for its Shine and Select variants. The Shine variant of Astor 2025 comes with a panoramic sunroof and six speakers, providing a pleasurable driving experience. This makes MG Astor the only SUV in its segment to offer a panoramic sunroof under INR 12.5 lakh. The Select variant further elevates comfort and safety with the addition of six airbags and premium ivory leatherette seats. India's first SUV with AI inside will be available in the variants - Sprint, Shine, Select, Sharp Pro and Savvy Pro, starting at an attrac-



tive price of INR 9.99 Lakh ex-showroom price.

The variants of MG Astor MY 25 offer a host of exciting features - Ventilated Seats in the front row, Wireless Charger, Wireless Android Auto & Apple Car Play, and Auto-dimming IRVM for additional security and convenience, along with an updated i-SMART 2.0 with Advanced User Interface for a holistic driving experience. The MG Astor 2025 will be available with 1.5 L MT and CVT and 1.3 Turbo AT powertrains.

Ranveer Singh becomes first brand superstar for Škoda Auto India

Guwahati: Marking its 25th year in India, Škoda Auto India has named Bollywood star Ranveer Singh as its first-ever "Brand Superstar." The announcement comes as the company ushers in a new era, highlighted by people-centric campaigns and the recent launch of its sub-4-metre SUV, the Kylaq.

Škoda Auto India's Brand Director, PetrJaneba, said, "As we celebrate our 25-year milestone in India, we're transforming our business and strengthening

customer engagement. Ranveer Singh's vibrant personality reflects our passion and energy."

Ranveer Singh shared his excitement, saying, "Škoda Auto India's commitment to excellence resonates with me. I look forward to contributing to its growth in the evolving Indian market."

The first ad featuring Singh and the Kylaq will premiere soon, followed by a brand-centric film in March, offering fans a chance to engage with the actor and Škoda's leadership.

On Anti-Smuggling Day 2025, PMI India eradicates the black market tobacco trade

Aizawl: On Anti-Smuggling Day 2025, Philip Morris International Inc.'s (PMI) India affiliate, IPM India has called for cross-sector, international collaboration to eradicate black market tobacco trade, fundamental for safeguarding India's economic interests, national security, and public health. As per the FICCI Cascade report, the illegal trade is a global crisis, fuelling a shadow economy estimated at \$2 trillion annually, equivalent to over 3% of global GDP. Approximately, 11.6% of the global cigarettes consumed are illicit, which impacts governments across the globe to the tune of \$40.5 billion in tax losses. The illicit trade undermines legitimate businesses, deprives governments of crucial revenue, funds criminal organizations, and exposes consumers to unregulated products.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control identifies India as both a transit hub and a key destination for illicit tobacco trade. The Government of India and enforcement authorities like Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) and Customs have made commendable efforts to mitigate the issue. Commenting on the urgent need to curb black market, Navaneel Kar, Managing Director, IPM India, said, "Illegal tobacco trade is a serious threat, stifling economic growth & development."

In Guwahati, Škoda's expanding portfolio is set to attract automotive enthusiasts and the broader customer base alike. As the city's demand for innovative and performance-driven vehicles rises, Škoda's Kylaq and EV offerings are poised to meet market needs.

Škoda aims to sell 100,000 cars annually by 2026, expanding its network to 350 touchpoints by 2025 as it solidifies its position in the Indian market.

TKM announces the commencement of bookings of the Land Cruiser 300

Shillong: Toyota Kirloskar Motor has announced the commencement of bookings of the Land Cruiser 300, an icon of prestige, power, and rugged capability. Built upon a legacy of over 70 years, the Land Cruiser 300 is the ultimate expression of Toyota's engineering excellence, designed to meet the expectations of luxury seekers and off-road enthusiasts. Renowned for its unmatched reliability, commanding presence, and superior performance, the Land Cruiser 300 is the flagship SUV of Toyota's global lineup. The latest iteration combines a revolutionary new

platform, advanced powertrain, cutting-edge safety features, and opulent interiors, ensuring a seamless blend of luxury, strength, and off-road dominance.

The Land Cruiser 300 is available in two distinct grades—ZX and GR-S, powered by a twin-turbocharged V6 engine, offering improved efficiency, higher torque output, and enhanced fuel economy compared to its predecessor. Expressing his views, Mr. Varinder Wadhwa, Vice President – Sales- Service-Used Car Business of Toyota Kirloskar Motor, said, "The



Land Cruiser 300 is the ultimate expression of strength, sophistication, and off-road prowess." From the inside, the Land Cruiser 300 delivers an uncompromising level of

comfort, space, and premium craftsmanship. The Land Cruiser 300 is equipped with state-of-the-art technology that enhances both connectivity and convenience.

AirAsia launches 15 million FREE seats sale for ASEAN destinations

Guwahati: AirAsia has launched its highly anticipated FREE* Seats sale, offering up to 15 million seats across 130 destinations. The airline aims to strengthen affordable connectivity from India to ASEAN destinations like Malaysia and Thailand.

Travelers can fly from Visakhapatnam to Kuala Lumpur, Tiruchirappalli and Guwahati to Bangkok, or Kolkata to Phuket with fares starting at INR 6,599 one-way. Additional options include seamless connections to Singapore, Krabi, and Kota Kinabalu via AirAsia's Fly-Thru service from Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok.

Amanda Woo, Group Chief Commercial Officer of AirAsia Aviation Group, emphasized the airline's mission to expand its network: "We aim to enhance tourism and connectivity from India by offering affordable travel options and new routes." Since its 2008 debut in India, AirAsia has expanded to 30 direct routes to Malaysia and Thailand.

In Guwahati, this campaign is expected to boost outbound travel from the Northeast, providing more accessible routes for travelers exploring ASEAN destinations, especially given visa-free entry for Indian citizens to Malaysia and Thailand.

The sale runs until 23 February 2025 for travel between 1 July 2025 and 15 June 2026. Flights can be booked through airasia.com or the AirAsia MOVE app. Terms and conditions apply.

JSW Group Chairman Sajjan Jindal receives award at AIMA Managing India Awards

Guwahati: JSW Group Chairman Sajjan Jindal has been conferred with the coveted 'Business Leader of the Decade' honour at the 15th AIMA Managing India Awards, in recognition of his transformative leadership in expanding JSW Group into a global conglomerate. The award was presented to Mr. Jindal at a ceremony here in the presence of Chief Guest Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister of Education, and Guest of Honour Shri Jitin Prasada, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry; Electronics and IT. The citation was read by Mr. Yezdi Nagporewalla, Chief Executive Officer, KPMG India.

Under Mr. Jindal's stewardship, JSW Group has achieved



remarkable growth, more than doubling its revenues to US\$24 billion. His strategic vision has led to JSW nearly tripling its annual steel production capacity to 39 million tonnes, whilst establishing the group as a major force in renewable energy and cement manufacturing. The All

India Management Association (AIMA) Managing India Awards celebrate outstanding contributions to India's business landscape. The ceremony brought together distinguished award winners, industry leaders, and AIMA office bearers for this landmark 15th edition of the awards.

Sterlite Power strengthens North-East India's energy infrastructure

Guwahati: Sterlite Power, a leading private sector power transmission infrastructure developer and solutions provider, has announced the successful commissioning of the Nangalbibra-Bongaigaon transmission (400kV D/C) line, an Inter-State Transmission System (ISTS) project. Through its Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) execution, the project strengthens the power infrastructure in the region, ensuring reliable electricity supply in Meghalaya. The project spans across approximately

300 kct km of transmission lines and includes a greenfield substation with a 300 MW transformation capacity across the challenging North-Eastern terrain of Assam and Meghalaya. It includes a 123km, 400kV D/C transmission line connecting Bongaigaon in Assam to a greenfield substation at Nangalbibra in Meghalaya, initially operated at 220kV and crossing the Brahmaputra River.

Speaking on the development, Mr. Arun Sharma, CEO, Infrastructure Busi-

ness, Sterlite Power, said, "The successful commissioning of this project is a crucial step towards strengthening the power infrastructure of North-East India." This new infrastructure project ensures the reliable transmission of over 1000 MW of power from Assam to Meghalaya. Apart from bringing the additional power supply, the project also decongests the downstream networks in the region, thereby improving the quality and reliability of power supply in North-East India.

Tata AIA Life unveils Multicap Momentum Quality Index Pension Fund

Guwahati: Retirement planning is no longer just about saving diligently—it's about investing wisely to sustain the aspirations of a new generation. Today's retirement aspirants are redefining financial independence, seeking solutions that align with their evolving lifestyles, career ambitions, and long-term wealth goals. Whether it's the FIRE (Financial Independence, Retire Early) generation, professionals embracing career shifts, or entrepreneurs building their ventures, they demand investment avenues that offer financial security and opportunities for wealth creation.

As financial awareness grows and digital access simplifies investing, there is an increasing need for innovative, flexible, and growth-oriented retirement solutions. This is where next-generation finan-

TATA AIA
LIFE INSURANCE

cial products, such as Tata AIA Life Insurance Co. Ltd.'s (Tata AIA) latest NFO, the Multicap Momentum Quality Index Pension Fund, have come into play. Commenting on the launch, Harshad Patil, Chief Investment Officer, Tata AIA, said: "Retirement planning today requires a smarter, more strategic approach." Santosh Agarwal, Chief Business Officer—Life Insurance, Policybazaar, said, "We are committed to making this transition smoother through solutions that are easily accessible." AmreshKher, Chief Business Officer, Insurance, Tata Digital said, "Navigating retirement investments can feel overwhelming."

Fenesta expands its exclusive showroom 'The Home Story', located at Guwahati

Guwahati: Fenesta, India's largest Windows and Doors brand, which is also the market leader in its segment, has reinforced its retail expansion with the opening of another showroom. The exclusive showroom, The Home Story, located at Saraswati Tower, Beside Beharbari Flyover, N.H.-37, Guwahati-781029, the best-in-class Aluminum windows and Doors, uPVC Windows & Door and Solid Panel Doors. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Saket Jain, Business Head, Fenesta, said, "These stores are not just places to buy windows and doors—they give customers a chance to see, touch, and experience our products before making a choice."

With this launch, Fenesta marks another milestone to ensure an interactive and informative buying experience for our existing and potential customers. With the rapid growth in Aluminum windows and Doors, uPVC Windows & Door and Solid Panel Doors categories in India, the brand endeavors to further increase its market share and maintain its leadership position in future. The Fenesta showroom located at Saraswati Tower, Beside Beharbari Flyover, N.H.-37, Guwahati-781029 showcases a range of products from windows, doors and various design and color possibilities. With this launch, Fenesta is now servicing 900 locations.

Nothing's Phone (3a) Series to Feature Major Camera Upgrades

Mumbai: London-based tech company Nothing has announced significant camera enhancements for its upcoming Phone (3a) Series, set to launch on March 4 at 3:30 PM IST. The new series boasts a pro-level camera system, including a 50MP periscope lens with 3x optical zoom and advanced AI algorithms for true-to-life photography in any environment.

Key improvements over the Phone (2a) include a 64% increase in light capture and support for Ultra HDR and 4K video recording. The TrueLens Engine 3.0 further enhances image quality through AI-driven tone mapping and scene detection. Interested users can sign up for launch notifications at Flipkart.in.



Rohit Sharma Becomes Second Fastest to 11,000 ODI Runs, Cementing His Place Among Cricketing Legends

Dubai: In a landmark achievement that underscores his status as one of the premier batsmen in modern cricket, India captain Rohit Sharma has become the second fastest player in One-Day Internationals to amass 11,000 runs. Achieving this milestone in his 270th ODI match, Rohit reached the coveted mark during a crucial Champions Trophy clash against Bangladesh in Dubai. His milestone came in the fourth over of India's successful chase of 229, when he powered Mustafizur Rahman over mid-on for a boundary.

This incredible feat places Rohit among an exclusive club of elite batsmen, making him only the fourth Indian and the 10th overall player to cross the 11,000-run barrier in 50-over cricket. His achievement is even more remarkable when compared with the career trajectories of other cricketing greats. Virat Kohli, the only player to have reached this landmark faster than Rohit, accomplished it in 222 innings, while Rohit's

261 innings underline his consistent and high-scoring performances on the international stage. Rohit's journey to this milestone has been a blend of sublime technique and the power-hitting prowess that has become his trademark. Known for his elegant stroke play and the ability to change the course of a match with a single innings, he has racked up an astonishing 32 centuries and 52 half-centuries in ODIs, with an average approaching 50. His contributions have not only buoyed India's batting line-up but have also played a pivotal role in many of India's memorable victories in ICC tournaments.

This record-breaking innings in Dubai was a testament to Rohit's ability to perform under pressure. In the midst of a challenging chase against a competitive Bangladeshi side, Rohit's composed and assertive batting helped steer his team to victory, all while marking a personal milestone that many aspiring cricketers dream of. His performance also helped dispel any



lingering doubts about India's top order amid the pressures of a highstakes tournament like the Champions Trophy. Beyond the individual statistics, Rohit's achievement has broader implications for Indian cricket. With teammates such as Rahul Dravid and MS Dhoni also having crossed the 10,000-run mark, India now boasts six players among an elite list of 15 batters worldwide to have reached this benchmark in ODI cricket. This collective success reflects the depth of talent in Indian cricket and the strength of its batting line-up, a key factor

in India's dominance in international cricket over the past decade.

Rohit's record is also significant in the context of his career milestones. As he continues to rewrite record books, he now sits just behind former India captain Sourav Ganguly, whose total of 11,363 runs remains a high watermark for Indian openers in ODI cricket. Meanwhile, global legends like Sachin Tendulkar and Australia's Ricky Ponting have set even loftier targets, but Rohit's achievement in just 261 innings is a reminder of his exceptional

consistency and skill. The significance of this milestone extends to his role as a leader in the Indian team. With his ability to anchor innings and accelerate when needed, Rohit has become a linchpin for India's batting strategy, especially in crucial tournaments such as the Champions Trophy. His leadership on the field, combined with his recordbreaking performances, serves as an inspiration for younger players looking to make their mark in international cricket.

As the Champions Trophy continues and India aims to build on their recent form, Rohit Sharma's stellar achievement is set to further boost the confidence of the team. Fans and cricket pundits alike will be watching closely as Rohit continues his remarkable journey, adding more records to an already illustrious career. With each innings, he not only reinforces his legacy as one of the finest openers in the history of the game but also cements his status as a true icon of modern cricket.

Indian Women's Hockey Aim to Rebound as They Face Germany in Must-Win Pro League Clash

Bhubaneswar: With just one win in four matches, the Indian women's hockey team is determined to reverse its fortunes when it takes on Germany in Friday's FIH Pro League encounter. Currently sitting eighth in the standings with four points, the side, led by captain Salima Tete, is eager to secure vital points and restore its momentum.

After a promising start with a thrilling 3-2 victory over England, the team has struggled to maintain consistency. A subsequent encounter with England ended in a 2-2 draw and a 1-2 shootout loss, while two consecutive matches against Spain resulted in narrow defeats – a 3-4 loss followed by a 1-0 defeat. Despite these setbacks, India's flashes of brilliance offer hope that the team can tighten its performance. "We know these upcoming games are very important for us, especially after the close matches we've had. The team has shown a lot of heart and effort, but we need to be more clinical in key moments, especially in converting our



chances," said Salima Tete ahead of the game.

Germany, who are yet to notch an outright win in the tournament, face their own challenges. In six matches, the Germans have suffered four regulation losses and one shootout defeat, managing just a single bonus point through a shootout victory. Sitting at the bottom of the standings with three points, the match against India is crucial for both teams. "Our training has been focused on strengthening our defence and improving penalty corner execution," added Salima.

As the match unfolds, both sides will look to capitalize on every opportunity, with India eager to snap their inconsistent run and Germany desperate to claim their first win in the Pro League.

Hridoy's Gritty Ton and Shami's Five-Wicket Display Help India Restrict Bangladesh to 228

Dubai: In a thrilling Champions Trophy opener, Bangladesh's resolve was on full display as Towhid Hridoy, despite battling cramps, crafted his maiden ODI hundred—scoring 100 off 118 balls—while Jaker Ali's determined 68 helped forge a crucial 154-run partnership for the sixth wicket after Bangladesh lost early wickets at 35 for five.

However, it was India's star pacer Mohammed Shami who stole the spotlight with an impressive 5/53 performance. Shami's clinical spell not only eased concerns over the absence of injured pace ace Jasprit Bumrah but also saw him become the fastest Indian bowler to reach 200 ODI wickets. He struck early, dismissing opener Soumya Sarkar in the



very first over, and quickly claimed his second wicket by sending Mehdy Hasan Miraz back, caught brilliantly by Shubman Gill in the slips. Later, Shami disrupted the determined stand between Hridoy and Ali by dismissing the latter and snared two more wickets to finish the innings strongly. Hridoy's composed century—reaching the milestone in just 114 balls—was a masterclass in balancing aggression with maintaining a healthy run

rate, even as both he and Ali showed admirable composure under pressure. Nevertheless, moments of fielding lapses did benefit the Bangladesh batters. For instance, Jaker Ali was dropped off the very first ball from left-arm spinner Axar Patel, and a misjudged play by KL Rahul rescued Hridoy after a risky shot from Hardik Pandya off Kuldeep Yadav when he was on 23.

Despite these minor setbacks, India's bowling unit exploited the slow, smooth pitch expertly, with Shami's new-ball attack proving to be a game-changer. Harshit Rana, who was selected over Arshdeep Singh, chipped in with an economical 3/31, lending crucial support to his senior partner.

Shubman Gill Clinches Top ICC ODI Batter Ranking, Ousting Babar Azam

Dubai: In a dramatic prelude to the eight-team Champions Trophy in Karachi, India's vice-captain Shubman Gill has ascended to the No. 1 spot in the ICC ODI Rankings for batters, replacing Pakistan's Babar Azam. Gill's stellar performance in the recent home

series against England—where he recorded two fifties and a century—proved pivotal in this ranking shake-up. The ICC released the updated rankings just ahead of the match between Pakistan and New Zealand, noting, "India right-hander Shubman Gill overtakes former Pakistan

captain Babar Azam to become the top ranked ODI batter in the world." With 796 rating points, Gill now sits atop the list, edging out Babar's 773 points.

India skipper Rohit Sharma occupies the third position with 761 points, followed by South Africa's Henrich Klaasen

Shami Becomes Fastest Indian to 200 ODI Wickets with Stellar 5-Wicket Display

Dubai: In a dazzling return to international cricket, star pacer Mohammed Shami reached the 200 ODI wicket milestone in his 104th match during the Champions Trophy clash against Bangladesh. Shami, who returned to action after a grueling 14-month hiatus due to an ankle injury and subsequent knee complications, marked the occasion with a superb five-for, finishing with figures of 5/53. The 34-year-old bowler picked up three wickets to notch up his 200th dismissal—surpassing former pacer Ajit Agarkar's record of 133 matches—and then claimed two additional scalps to complete his impressive performance. His milestone wicket came when he dismissed Jaker Ali, who contributed a valuable 68 runs and shared a 154-run partnership for the sixth wicket with Towhid Hridoy.

Shami's achievement not only makes him the fastest Indian to reach 200 ODI wickets but also places him as the second quickest overall, behind only Australian left-armers Mitchell Starc, who reached the landmark in 102 games. With 60 wickets in 50-over ICC tournaments, Shami now stands as India's lead-ing wicket-taker in these events, edging past Zaheer Khan (59), Javagal Srinath (47) and Ravindra Jadeja (43). Known for his lethal pace and precision, Shami averages under 25 in the ODI format and has racked up six five-wicket hauls and ten four-wicket performances in his career. His remarkable comeback, following fears that his career might be over due to a persistent ankle injury suffered in the 2023 ODI World Cup final against Australia, underscores his resilience and unwavering determination to serve his country.