

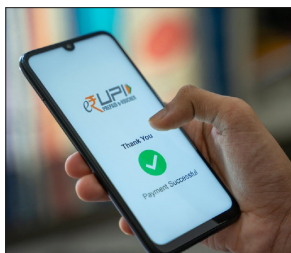
Stock markets rally for 6th straight day, Sensex jumps over 1,000 points

Mumbai: The Indian stock markets on Monday continued their winning streak for the sixth consecutive trading session, with both Sensex and Nifty ending the day with robust gains. Investors remained optimistic as key indices surged over 1 per cent each during the intra-day trade. The 30-share Sensex climbed 1,078.87 points, or 1.40 per cent, to close at 77,984.38. During the day, it even touched an intraday high of 78,107.23. Similarly, the Nifty index ended 307.95 points higher, or 1.32 per cent, at 23,658.35, after reaching a high of 23,708.75 earlier in the session. Market sentiment was bullish, with 24 out of 30 Sensex stocks closing in the green. NTPC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, SBI, Tech Mahindra, and Power Grid Corporation were among the top gainers, rising up to 4.63 per cent. On the other hand, Nestle India, Bharti Airtel, Mahindra & Mahindra, Zomato, IndusInd Bank, and Titan saw some declines, with losses of up to 2.73 per cent. The broader market also performed well, as the Nifty Midcap100 and Smallcap100 indices rose over 1 per cent each. Banking stocks led the rally, with PSU banks showing the strongest performance.



BHIM 3.0 packs in more punch with bill splitting, expense tracking and enhanced payment features

Mumbai: Users of BHIM UPI app will soon be able to split their restaurant bills and rents, track and assign shared family expenses and get clarity with spend analytics and alerts on pending bills.



BHIM, which stands for Bharat Interface for Money, is a mobile payment app developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) that uses the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) for quick and easy digital transactions.

NPCI BHIM Services Limited (NBSL), a wholly owned subsidiary of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), on Tuesday announced the launch of BHIM 3.0 — the third evolution of the app since its launch in 2016.

Expected to be rolled out in phases across platforms, with full availability by April 2025, BHIM 3.0 will be available in over 15 Indian languages for better accessibility and is optimised to ensure seamless transactions even with slow or unstable network connections, NPCI said on Tuesday.

NBSL also announced a

payment solution for merchants — BHIM Vega — which integrates with online merchant platforms, allowing customers to complete payments within the app without switching to third-party apps.

“BHIM 3.0 is designed to meet the needs of today’s users in the fast-evolving world of digital payments. Built for Bharat, it prioritises safety, convenience, and inclusion,” said Lalitha Nataraj, CEO, NBSL.

“BHIM has always played a key role in making digital payments secure and simple for every Indian. The launch of BHIM 3.0 is another step towards empowering millions of users, merchants, and banks, helping India move further into a digitally inclusive future,” said Ajay Kumar Choudhary, non-executive chairman and independent director, NPCI.

Indian domestic software market to hit \$100 billion by 2035: Report

New Delhi: India’s domestic software market is set for massive growth, with projections indicating a fivefold increase over the next decade to reach \$100 billion by 2035, a new report said on Tuesday. This growth will be driven by AI-led automation, cost-effective software development, increased adoption by small and medium businesses (SMBs), and expanding government digital initiatives, according to a report by SaaSBoomi and 1Lattice.

The software market is currently valued at \$20 billion in 2025. The report highlights how India’s software market has grown seven times since 2015. However, nearly 75 per cent of the market is still dominated by global players. To achieve the next phase of



growth, Indian startups will need to develop homegrown solutions tailored to the country’s unique business and regulatory needs. One of the biggest contributors to this expansion will be enterprise AI and cloud adoption, which is expected to add \$35 billion to the market.

Notably, digital-first businesses are expected to increase

their software spending significantly, from \$4.6 billion in 2025 to \$26 billion by 2035, it added. SMBs will also play a crucial role in driving market growth, with vertical SaaS solutions unlocking a \$13 billion opportunity. Cybersecurity is another high-growth area, with market size expected to rise from \$1.6 billion in 2025 to \$10 billion by 2035.

Rupee falls 6 paise to 85.78 against US dollar in early trade

The rupee weakened by 6 paise to 85.78 against the US dollar in early trade on Wednesday, weighed down by a negative trend in domestic equities and the recovery of the American currency in the overseas market. Forex dealers said the rupee faced renewed pressure on liquidity constraints, concerns over reciprocal tariff implementations and month-end demand for the US currency from importers. However, foreign fund inflows supported the rupee at lower levels. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 85.71 against the greenback, then lost ground and touched 85.78, down 6 paise from its previous close. On Tuesday, the rupee snapped its seven-session rally and settled with a loss of 11 paise at 85.72 against the US dollar.

“RBI’s USD 77.53 billion in short-side forward positions signals potential dollar-buying intervention, which could cap the rupee’s gains. Additionally, geopolitical risks — from Israel’s offensive in Gaza to US air strikes on Iran-backed Houthi rebels — are driving demand for safe-hav-

en assets like the US dollar,” CR Forex Advisors MD Amit Pabari said. Meanwhile, the US dollar index, which gauges the greenback’s strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.12 per cent higher at 104.30.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.22 per cent higher at USD 73.18 per barrel in futures trade. “Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump has threatened a 25 per cent tariff on countries purchasing oil and gas from Venezuela. This has pushed Brent crude prices over USD 72.50 per barrel, raising concerns over India’s trade deficit and adding downward pressure on the rupee,” Pabari added.

In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex was trading 59.56 points, or 0.08 per cent, lower at 77,957.63 points, while the Nifty was down 20.60 points, or 0.09 per cent, at 23,648.05 points.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) purchased equities worth Rs 5,371.57 crore on a net basis on Tuesday, according to exchange data.(PTI)

Global telecom organisation GSMA elects Airtel’s Gopal Vittal as Chairman

New Delhi: GSMA, a global organisation which represents mobile network operators worldwide, has elected Bharti Airtel Vice Chairman and MD, Gopal Vittal, as its new Chairman until the end of 2026, it was announced on Monday. Vittal is currently the acting Chair of the GSMA board and is only the second Indian to chair the prestigious telecom industry body, after Sunil Bharti Mittal.

In his new role, Vittal will oversee the strategic direction of the GSMA. The members of this

prestigious body include 1,000 telecom companies from around the world, handset and device companies, software companies, equipment providers, internet companies, as well as organisations in adjacent industry sectors. “I am honoured to be elected as the Chair of the GSMA Board. The mobile industry contributed \$6.5 trillion to the global economy in 2024 and is the spine on which much of the innovation in the world is built,” said Vittal.

SEBI to form high-level panel to review conflict of interest rules for board members

New Delhi: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Monday decided to form a high-level committee to review provisions related to conflict of interest, disclosures, and related matters concerning its board members and officials, including the Chairperson. The approval came during SEBI’s first board meeting under its new chairperson, Tuhin Kanta Pandey.

The committee will conduct a comprehensive review of existing regulations on conflict of interest, covering property, investments, and liabilities of board members, according to a statement, adding that it will consist of experts with experience in constitutional, statutory, and regulatory bodies, as well as government, public and private sectors, and academia.

The markets regulator said it will announce the names of the committee members in the due course of time.

Bajaj Finserv hits over 5-month high; stock surges 25% so far in CY25

Mumbai: Bajaj Finserv hit an over five-month high of ₹1,955.50, as the stock gained 3 per cent on the BSE in Tuesday’s intra-day trade in an otherwise range-bound market. The stock of the non-banking finance company is trading at its highest level since October 3, 2024. It had hit a record high of ₹2,029 on September 27, 2024.

Thus far in the calendar year 2025 (CY25), Bajaj Finserv stock has outperformed the market by surging 25 per cent. In comparison, the BSE Sensex is down 0.22 per cent during the same period.

On March 17, 2025, Bajaj Finserv signed share purchase agreements (SPAs) with Allianz SE to acquire a 26 per cent stake in the two insurance joint ventures — Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company (BAGIC) and Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance Company (BALIC) — for ₹24,180 crore.

Natraj Pipes collaborates with cricketing legend Mr. Sourav Ganguly

Guwahati: Natraj Pipes, a leading name in PE & uPVC piping solutions from Prabhu Poly Pipes Limited, has proudly marked a new milestone by collaborating with cricketing legend Mr. Sourav Ganguly on March 22, 2025. This significant announcement, made on 'World Water Day' at an exclusive press conference at Taj Bengal, Kolkata, underscored the

brand's commitment to innovation, sustainability, and nation-building. Natraj Pipes, renowned for its cutting-edge technology and stringent quality standards, is poised to play an instrumental role in the country's piping infrastructure development. By leveraging high-tech, non-toxic, lead-free piping systems, the brand is dedicated to providing durable, safe, and reli-

able water, sewerage, and gas transportation solutions that support the country's evolving infrastructural landscape.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Sourav Ganguly shared his enthusiasm regarding the association: "I am honored to collaborate with Natraj Pipes, a brand dedicated to pioneering high-quality and innovative piping solutions." Mr. Rohit Agrawal, CEO

and company spokesperson, highlighted the brand's vision: "Our journey has always been about engineering excellence and innovation." Mr. Hari Mohan Marda, Managing Director of Natraj Pipes, emphasized the company's long-term goals: "At Natraj Pipes, we believe that sustainability and infrastructural growth must go hand in hand."

ICICI Prudential Life introduces GIFT Select for wealth preservation and inflation management



Imphal: ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has announced the launch of ICICI Pru GIFT Select, a long-term savings product designed to provide guaranteed income while preserving wealth. The product aims to help individuals manage inflation, navigate market fluctuations, and achieve their financial goals with certainty.

"Our goal is to help customers achieve their long-term financial aspirations with certainty," said Mr. Amit Palta, Chief Product and Distribution Officer, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance. The plan offers flexibility in income duration, a 5% annual compounding income feature, and a lump sum payout on maturity in a tax-efficient manner.

ICICI Prudential is also transforming life insurance distribution through digital innovations like the IPRU Edge mobile app. This platform equips agents

with business leads, social media marketing tools, and a paperless sales process, leading to a 25% increase in agent productivity. Between April and December 2024, 98% of eligible agents received same-day commission payments, while AI-powered solutions enabled 50% of savings policies to be issued within a day.

With a growing investor base in Imphal, there is an increasing demand for secure, long-term investment options. ICICI Pru GIFT Select is well-positioned to cater to the financial aspirations of individuals in the region, offering a stable and inflation-proof income source.

With a 99.3% claim settlement ratio and an average claim processing time of 1.2 days, ICICI Prudential continues to set new industry benchmarks, reaffirming its commitment to customer-centric financial solutions.

Enjoy non-stop cricket with Vi



Guwahati: Uninterrupted match streaming requires sufficient and fast data, as fans gear up to witness thrilling clashes in the T20 league. Vi prepaid customers can enjoy every moment of these matches with an unmatched data experience and a bundled free subscription of JioHotstar.

For an uninterrupted, seamless cricket experience, Vi customers can choose from multiple packs. For this season, specifically, Vi has launched 3 new recharges that offer great value and benefits: 1) Rs. 101 recharge provides a 3-month Jio Hotstar (Mobile) subscription along with 5GB data. 2) Rs. 399 recharge, provides Unlimited Calls + 12am-12pm Unlimited Data + additional 2GB Daily Data and JioHotstar mobile subscription, valid for 28 days. 3) Rs. 239 recharge, provides Unlimited Calls + 2GB Data and JioHotstar mobile subscription, valid for 28 days. All recharge packs offer Mobile-only subscription of JioHotstar. Recharge today via the Vi App or www.MyVi.in and never miss a moment of the game!

India's apprenticeship drive gains momentum; over 41 lakh engaged under PM-NAPS

Guwahati: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has strengthened India's apprenticeship ecosystem, engaging over 41.2 lakh apprentices under the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS). At a Zonal Review Meeting held at the World Skill Centre in Bhubaneswar, stakeholders from 18 states and Union Territories strategized on achieving the target of 46 lakh apprentices by March 2026.

MSDE Secretary Atul Kumar Tiwari emphasized the scheme's role in workforce development, stating, "NAPS is a transformative initiative, equipping youth with industry-relevant skills. With advancements in AI and electric vehicles, we are ensuring a future-ready workforce while fostering inclusivity." The meeting featured industry leaders like Toyota Kirloskar, Tata Group, and Bharat Electronics Limited. Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Telangana led in

apprenticeship participation in the South, while West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Odisha dominated in the East. MSMEs, now comprising 38% of active establishments under NAPS, remain a crucial growth driver.

Guwahati's growing industrial and service sectors stand to benefit from the increased apprenticeship push. With MSMEs forming a significant part of its economy, skill development initiatives will create a steady pipeline of trained professionals, particularly in logistics, IT, and manufacturing. The financial inclusion aspect, with ₹1,550 crore disbursed through Direct Benefit Transfer, ensures transparency and efficiency in stipend payments, attracting more youth to the program.

With over 4,988 job fairs and 219 awareness workshops conducted, NAPS-2 continues to drive India's ambition of a globally competitive workforce, fostering economic growth and industry collaboration.

Johnson's Baby unveils new campaign with Anil & Sonam Kapoor, highlights science of baby eyes

Guwahati: Johnson's Baby has launched its latest digital campaign featuring Bollywood's iconic father-daughter duo, Anil and Sonam Kapoor, spotlighting the science behind baby eye care. The campaign emphasizes how babies blink less frequently than adults, making their eyes more vulnerable to external irritants, reinforcing the need for gentle skincare solutions.

Conceptualized by DDB Mudra, the campaign's ad film playfully illustrates this difference through a staring contest between Anil Kapoor and a baby, ultimately highlighting the necessity of using mild, tear-free products. Johnson's Baby, a pioneer in baby skincare, introduced the revolutionary No More Tears® formula in its baby shampoo, ensuring irritation-free cleansing from Day 1.

Manoj Gadgil, VP Marketing at Kenvue, stat-

ed, "For 130 years, we have pioneered baby skincare, offering science-backed innovations. This campaign creatively educates parents on the need for gentle care." Anil Kapoor, embracing his role as a doting grandfather, expressed excitement about the campaign, while Sonam Kapoor emphasized her trust in Johnson's Baby products as a mother.

In Guwahati, where traditional skincare practices often meet modern parenting choices, the campaign has sparked interest among parents seeking mild yet effective baby care solutions. With increasing awareness about baby skin science, retailers in the city anticipate a rise in demand for Johnson's Baby products.

The campaign will be amplified through influencer collaborations and retail activations, ensuring wider consumer engagement.

Glenmark Nutrition Awards 2025 Celebrate Fight Against Malnutrition

Mumbai, March 2025: The Glenmark Foundation announced the winners of the Glenmark Nutrition Awards 2025, recognizing innovative efforts to combat malnutrition in India. The awards received 403 entries from 22 states, showcasing impactful initia-

tives in nutrition.

Winners include - (1) Rural NGO Category: Baikunthapur Tarun Sangha, West Bengal, (2) Urban NGO Category: SNEH Foundation, Maharashtra, (3) Other Category: Mahavir International Foundation Trust, Rajasthan.

Each winner received a grant of INR 200,000 to support their projects. Cheryl Pinto, Executive Director of Glenmark Pharmaceuticals, emphasized the importance of sustainable solutions for child nutrition. The initiative aims to strengthen India's health and well-being through holistic nutrition strategies.



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MSDE launches DBIM-compliant website to enhance digital governance

Guwahati: In a strategic move to enhance India's digital governance, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has launched its DBIM-compliant website, aligning with the Digital Brand Identity Manual (DBIM) Version 3.0 introduced by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). The new platform is designed to improve accessibility, transparency, and user experience in skilling initiatives.

The revamped website integrates AI-powered search, multi-language support through Bhashini, persona-led navigation, and centralized content management. With a three-click approach, users can efficiently access skilling programs such as Skill India Mission, PMKVY, and NAPS, ensuring seamless connectivity to relevant portals and real-time data dashboards.

Launching the website, the Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge), MSDE, stated, "A unified digital ecosystem under DBIM 3.0 enhances governance and ensures efficient delivery of skilling opportunities. This initiative aligns with India's expanding digital economy."

As a key economic hub in the Northeast, Guwahati stands to benefit from the MSDE's upgraded digital ecosystem. With industries in IT, retail, and logistics witnessing rapid growth, the platform enables entrepreneurs, job seekers, and businesses to access skilled workforce resources, apprenticeship programs, and employment opportunities, driving economic expansion in the region.

MSDE is among the first five ministries to transition to the DBIM framework, reinforcing its commitment to technology-driven public service delivery. The Minister urged all MSDE-operated portals to adopt DBIM standards for standardized governance under the Skill India Mission.



Two NFOs launched by Tata AIA to tap into India's growth story

Guwahati: The Union Government's recent Budget announcement has set the stage for a surge in disposable incomes, creating a strong enabler for India's consumption growth story. With zero tax liability on income up to ₹12.75 lakh or salaried individuals under the new tax regime (effective FY26), Indian consumers will have more spending power, fuelling demand across various sectors. This presents a unique investment opportunity as our econo-

my's consumption-driven growth story gains momentum.

Recognizing this shift, Tata AIA Life Insurance (Tata AIA)—one of India's leading life insurers—has introduced two contextual funds targeting different consumer segments: A) Tata AIA Life Tax Bonanza Consumption Fund, B) Tata AIA Life Tax Bonanza Consumption Pension Fund. Both the New Fund Offers (NFO) will be available from 24th to 31st March 2025, with units priced at ₹10 each. The

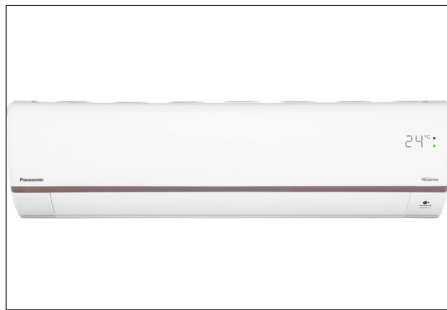
Tata AIA Life Tax Bonanza Consumption Fund and Tata AIA Life Tax Bonanza Consumption Pension Fund are strategically designed to capitalize on these trends, investing in companies poised to benefit from India's evolving consumption patterns. Harshad Patil, Chief Investment Officer at Tata AIA, explains: "India's consumption patterns are evolving rapidly, driven by urbanization, rising incomes, and a shift towards premium products and services."

Panasonic expands 2025 AC portfolio in East India, targets 30% growth

Guwahati: Panasonic Life Solutions India has launched its 2025 range of residential air conditioners (RACs) in East India, featuring 61 new models designed to withstand extreme temperatures up to 55°C. With smart features like MiraiIoT connectivity, AI-driven adaptive cooling, and India's first Matter-enabled RACs in the inverter 3-star segment starting at ₹33,990, the company aims to redefine energy-efficient cooling.

Abhishek Verma, Business Head, Air Conditioners Group, Panasonic Life Solutions India, emphasized the market's potential, stating, "India's AC penetration stands at 7-8%, with the market expected to grow at a CAGR of 16.5% by 2029. Panasonic's AC segment has grown 45% YoY, and we anticipate 30% growth in East India during 2025."

With East India contributing 19% to the national AC market, Guwahati is a strategic hub for Panasonic. The city's rising demand



for smart, energy-efficient ACs, especially models that withstand peak summer heat, has fueled retail expansion. Panasonic's new range, available across leading outlets and e-commerce platforms, is expected to drive strong sales in the region.

The launch will be supported by a 360-degree marketing campaign, including a new television commercial, to enhance brand visibility and consumer engagement.

Nissan Motor India launches two new products starting FY25

Guwahati: Nissan Motor India has announced an all-new 7-seater B-MPV to their existing line-up. The company showcased two new products slated for India at their recently concluded Global Product Showcase Event held in Yokohama, Japan. This is in line with the company's plans for the India business to reshape its new products to meet the rising aspirations of its customers and deliver products in all high-growth segments, such as the B-MPV and C-SUV segments, in addition to its existing share in the B-SUV segment led by the New Nissan Magnite.

Nissan will continue to strengthen its presence in India's rapidly growing market, enhancing domestic



performance and expanding exports. Nissan's planned product offensive has begun with the first-time global reveal of an all-new 7-seater B-MPV (multi-purpose vehicle) scheduled to launch in FY25 as a brand-new addition to the India product portfolio. Nissan Motor India remains

on track to have 4 products by FY26 for Indian customers across the B/C and D-SUV segments. The C-SUV has been designed to disrupt the segment in India. It will be feature-packed and be delivered with state-of-the-art proprietary advanced technologies.

Ayurveda expert recommends 7-day diet plan for seasonal change

Guwahati: As India transitions from winter to spring, the demand for Ayurvedic dietary solutions is on the rise. Dr. Madhumitha Krishnan, an Ayurveda expert, has introduced a 7-day meal plan designed to balance Doshas—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha—while preventing seasonal ailments. The plan emphasizes warm, well-cooked meals enriched with ghee, vegetable soups, and almonds, a natural protein source known for its immunity-boosting properties.

The diet includes dishes such as methithepla with curd, bajrakhichdi, rajma curry with jeera rice, and almond-infused meals, catering to changing digestive needs. Dr. Krishnan also suggests mindful meal plating, ensuring all six Ayurvedic tastes—sweet, sour, salty, bitter, pungent, and astringent—are incorporated for optimal health benefits.

In Guwahati, the shift towards Ayurveda-based nutrition is driving demand for organic staples. Retailers re-



port a surge in sales of millet products, almonds, and fresh greens, with consumers prioritizing health-conscious meal planning. Ayurveda-inspired dietary habits are also influencing restaurant menus, reflecting a broader wellness trend.

With seasonal transitions impacting immunity, Ayurveda-backed diets are expected to see stronger consumer adoption, reinforcing the growing business potential of holistic nutrition solutions.

Uterine Fibroids affect 40% of Indian women, experts urge awareness on non-surgical treatment

Guwahati: While cervical cancer remains a major health concern for Indian women, uterine fibroids, a more common yet often ignored condition, affect nearly 40% of women across the country. Despite causing heavy menstrual bleeding, pain, and discomfort, fibroids are frequently misdiagnosed or dismissed as routine menstrual issues, delaying timely treatment.

Dr. Dibyamohan Hazarika, Senior Consultant in Interventional Radiology at Nemcare Hospital, Guwahati, highlighted the need for greater awareness, stating, "Many women in Assam and across India silently endure the discomfort of uterine fibroids, unaware of non-surgical treatment options like Uterine Fibroid Embolization (UFE). This procedure offers a safe and effective alternative to hysterectomy, allowing women to preserve their uterus and recover faster."

With rising healthcare awareness, Guwahati is witnessing increased interest in minimally invasive treatments. Hospitals and diagnostic centers in the city are expanding their offerings to include UFE, making it more accessible to women who previously had limited options beyond surgery. Experts stress the importance of early diagnosis and treatment to ensure better health outcomes.

Fortis Hospital Bannerghatta Road successfully performs a robotic-assisted surgery

Kohima: Fortis Hospital Bannerghatta Road, Bengaluru, has successfully performed a robotic-assisted surgery to remove the highly inflamed gallbladder of a 65-year-old male patient from Nagaland. This cutting-edge procedure, conducted by a team of expert surgeons led by Dr. Sreedhara V, Director GI, Minimal Access & Bariatric Surgery, Fortis Bannerghatta Road, highlights the hospital's commitment to providing advanced surgical solutions with enhanced precision, reduced risks, and faster recovery times. Patient Mr. Danny (name changed), with a history of hypertension, had been suffering from gallbladder stones for over four months, experiencing intense pain in his upper abdomen for the past two weeks. Upon evaluation, doctors diagnosed him with Acute Calculous Cholecystitis (ACC), a condition in which a gallstone blocks the cystic duct, leading to gallbladder inflammation.

Sharing details of the case by Dr. Sreedhara V, Director GI, Minimal Access & Bariatric Surgery, Fortis Bannerghatta Road said, "Robotic surgery provides a minimally invasive alternative to conventional gallbladder removal procedures. It reduces the risk associated with anesthesia and surgery while ensuring a quicker return to normal life for the patient." Mr. Akshay Oleti, Business Head of Fortis Hospitals Bengaluru, added, "Fortis Hospital, Bannerghatta Road, continues to be at the forefront of medical advancements, offering patients access to world-class healthcare solutions."

Digital-first strategies to expand life insurance access in rural India

Guwahati: The insurance penetration rate of the country has remained at 2.8% despite advances in digital infrastructure, regulation, and technology. This signals a wide gap in coverage, particularly in low-income and rural India. Although these segments have adopted OTT subscription and digital payments, life insurance often lags behind other financial priorities. This dilemma highlights the need for insurers to rethink their distribution models to align with the consumption patterns of rural India, thereby working towards IRDAI's vision of "Insurance for all".

CRM platforms and mobile apps enable agents to offer real-time services in remote locations.

To promote digital literacy, insurers are collaborating with fintech firms and non-governmental organizations. A hybrid distribution model digitizes innovation and, at the same time, retains human contact. Realizing IRDAI's vision of "Insurance for All by 2047" would require strategic leadership as well as localized innovation. Using advanced forms of AI and data analytics and embracing a hybrid distribution model, insurers can create solutions specifically for the underinsured population. Empowered by digital-first strategies, insurers have the opportunity to secure the financial futures of millions, drive economic growth, and transform underserved regions.

Rahane Unshaken by Opening Defeat as KKR's Hopes Rest on a Resilient Core; Hazlewood Returns in Style

Kolkata: Despite a heavy loss to Royal Challengers Bangalore in the IPL opener, Kolkata Knight Riders skipper Ajinkya Rahane remains confident in his squad's ability to bounce back. KKR, the defending champions now led by Rahane, had been cruising at over 10 runs per over at the halfway stage until a match-changing spell from left-arm spinner Krunal Pandya saw them restricted to 174/8. RCB completed the chase with 22 balls to spare at Eden Gardens.

Speaking after the match, Rahane insisted, "We don't need to panic." He underscored his faith in the middleorder, emphasizing that although some batsmen struggled in the middle overs, their past performances have been instrumental for the franchise.

"These are experienced, dangerous, and explosive players. They know how to handle tough situations. Even if it didn't work out today, they'll bounce back because this is a long tournament," he added. A significant talking point was the decision to send Impact substitute Angkrish Raghuvanshi in at number 6 instead of Rinku Singh, who has been in fine form for both KKR and the Indian team. "Rinku has been batting really well, but sometimes you have to play according to the situation. We thought Angkrish was the better option given the overs we had. That could change in future games," Rahane explained.

On the bowling front, KKR's pace attack appeared stretched without Anrich Nortje, who is still recovering from a back



injury. Spencer Johnson, Vaidh Arora, and Harshit Rana were relatively expensive, conceding over 13, 14, and nearly 11 runs per over respectively. "It's a tough sport for fast bowlers, and they're all trying hard. We'll continue to work on the combinations and control our levels," Rahane noted. He also reassured that despite not bowling in the match, Andre Russel is in top

can adapt to any wicket," Rahane re-marked.

In a separate update, Australian pacer Josh Hazlewood marked his return to competitive cricket with a crucial performance, taking 2/22 in his four overs. After missing parts of the season due to a calf injury, side strain, and the birth of his first child, the 34-year-old expressed satisfaction with his comeback. "I feel pretty good; managing only four overs has suited me well. It's been a while since I played—since mid-December—and off-field work has really helped me get back to form," Hazlewood said. He added, "Mentally and physically, I feel refreshed, and I'm eager to build on this momentum throughout the tournament."

Six Holes, Big Ambitions: Youth Golf Tournament Set to Bring Cricket's Excitement to the Fairways

Gurugram: Young golfers from six North Indian states are ready to tee off at the inaugural Golf Sixes Junior Tournament, a fast-paced six-hole event taking place at the DLF Golf & Country Club on Monday. Mirroring the dynamism of T20 and T10 cricket, the tournament aims to transform the traditional pace of golf, making it more engaging and accessible for India's youth.

Organised by the Indian Golf Union (IGU) in partnership with The R&A—the global authority on golf rules—the event will feature two budding talents each from Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Chandigarh. The competition targets players aged 12 and under, marking a strategic effort to foster grassroots growth and ignite a passion for the sport from an early age.

"Just as T20 revolutionised cricket by condensing the game into a more thrilling and spectator-friendly format, this new version of golf does the same," said IGU president Brijinder Singh. "By offering a shorter, more exciting experience, we hope to capture the imagination of young players and audiences alike, potentially sparking a significant surge in the sport's popularity." With its innovative format, the Golf Sixes Junior Tournament is poised to inject fresh energy into the game, opening up a new avenue for young golfers to showcase their skills in a dynamic and competitive environment.

Who will give 21 crore to Starc in Australia: Sidhu labels IPL as marketing manager's dream



New Delhi: Former India batter Navjot Singh Sidhu hailed the Indian Premier League (IPL) as a marketing manager's dream for having incentivised the tournament beyond imagination, making it more appealing for foreign players. As the 2025 IPL season has kicked off in blockbuster fashion, Sidhu cited comparison from his playing days in England's county championship to the outrageous amount of money players have gotten in last year's mega auction in Jeddah.

"The Indian Premier League is the crown jewel and has raised the level of India's pride across the world. Earlier, we used to go to play county championship in England in huge numbers, now they are the ones who come to our country because the IPL has been incentivised. "Who will give 21 crores to Mitchell Starc in Australia? It is a marketing manager's dream. A lot of people criticise but you have to compliment Indian cricket for being run so beautifully.

Shakib Al Hasan Criticizes BCB's Communication Over Suspension, Misses Champions Trophy Opportunity

Dhaka: Veteran all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan expressed his disappointment with the Bangladesh Cricket Board's handling of his suspension communication, which ultimately cost him a chance to cap his ODI career at the Champions Trophy. Shakib, a stalwart in Bangladesh's lineup with 71 Tests, 247 ODIs, and 129 T20Is to his name, was sidelined from

bowling after being reported for a suspect action during a County Championship match between Surrey and Somerset in September 2024. Due to the suspension imposed by the England and Wales Cricket Board, selectors opted to include Shakib only as a batter in the Champions Trophy squad, effectively ruling him out of the tournament. Following a third assessment

test—conducted over two sessions in England and one in India—the 37-year-old was eventually cleared to bowl in both the County Championship and The Hundred. Before taking the test, Shakib took a week-long break with his childhood mentor Mohammad Salahuddin, and subsequently worked intensively with Surrey head coach Gareth Batty.

"Look, I don't have any complaints, but if the communication was better in that case, I would have been happier," Shakib told Cricbuzz. Adding context to the incident, former Bangladesh U-19 player Sirajullah Khadem commented on the matter, noting that the heavy workload in that match might have led to minor changes in Shakib's action due to fatigue.

Mumbai Indians' New Sensation: Vignesh Puthur Shines in IPL Debut

Mumbai: In an unexpected twist to his burgeoning cricket career, 24-year-old left-arm wrist spinner Vignesh Puthur made a memorable impact on his debut for the Mumbai Indians. Selected from a state league with no prior first-class experience, the young spinner claimed three wickets in four overs—3/32—against the formidable Chennai Super Kings, and although MI fell short of victory, his performance signaled that he is ready to take on the big stage.

Hailing from Malappuram in Kerala, Puthur's talent quickly caught the eye



of many, not only for his impressive skills but also for his humble beginnings. With his father working as an auto-rickshaw driver and his mother a homemaker, his journey has been one of grit

and determination. His moment of triumph came when Chennai Super Kings legend Mahendra Singh Dhoni personally congratulated him, a gesture that underscored the significance of his debut.

Guwahati to Debut as Northeast's Premier Cricket Venue With Historic Test and Women's World Cup Fixtures

Guwahati: In a landmark development for Northeast India, Guwahati is set to host its first-ever Test cricket match and a World Cup fixture. According to BCCI General Secretary Devajit Saikia, the city will make its international cricket debut when India faces South Africa in a Test match scheduled for November at the Assam Cricket Association (ACA) Stadium. The historic Test will be the second match of a two-game series between India and South Africa, commencing on November 22. This marks a significant milestone for the region, positioning Guwahati as the newest hub for Test cricket.

In addition to the Test match, Guwahati is slated to stage between five and six games during the ICC Women's ODI World Cup, held from September 24 to November 2. This will be the first instance of World Cup cricket being played in the Northeast, further solidifying the city's growing reputation as a key cricketing venue. Saikia, a former ACA general secretary, emphasized the importance of this decision made at the recent BCCI apex council meeting, noting that neither Test nor World Cup matches had previously been hosted in Guwahati.