

Business Remedies

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India's economy resilient despite global uncertainties: Top official



New Delhi | Agency

Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Anuradha Thakur on Tuesday highlighted India's experience as a compelling example of how a strong macroeconomic foundation can support economic resilience and sustained growth amid global uncertainties. In a special address on 'Financial Stability' on the second day of RBI's SAMVAD 2026, Thakur said that India's fiscal trajectory has been credible and its flexible inflation targeting has anchored inflationary expectations. "India faces the present challenging global scenario from a position of macroeconomic stability," the finance ministry official added. Setting the context for the panel discussion, RBI Deputy Governor Poonam Gupta noted that financial stability has emerged as a policy objective in its own right, and the policy lens has moved from individual institutions to the system as a whole, covering not only banks but also non-banks. Panellists Ajay Seth, Chairman, IRDAI, Yangchen Tshogyel, Governor, Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan, Athanasios Vamvakidis of the IMF and Paul Jackson of Invesco noted that there was a need to stay alert as crises were now coming quicker and were more intense. They said that lessons from past crises regarding the ill effects of financial reengineering should not be forgotten even as innovation in the financial sector is encouraged, while risks posed by climate change, the increasing role of non-bank financial intermediaries and fintechs, and the present non-collaborative phase of geopolitics should be adequately factored in. Gaps in data sharing and concerns arising out of increasing use of AI agents should be addressed and care taken to build resilience not only in balance sheets of banks but also in those of corporates and households, the panellists added. Samvad 2026 - an international seminar for central banks - was inaugurated by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Monday, delivering the welcome address and Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman gave the keynote address. The two-day event brings together Central Bank Governors, senior policymakers, representatives from international organisations and subject matter experts from across the world to discuss emerging challenges and opportunities facing the global financial system.

Gujarat Dy CM meets Nippon Steel chairman in Tokyo, discusses expansion opportunities



Tokyo | BR Team

Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi on Tuesday met Nippon Steel Corporation chairman Eiji Hashimoto at the Japanese steelmaker's headquarters in Tokyo to discuss opportunities to expand steel production capacity and explore further industrial investment in Gujarat. The meeting is part of the state government's efforts to attract Japanese investment ahead of the upcoming Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit. Sanghavi also held a one-to-one discussion with senior company officials, including Managing Executive Officer Hideki Ogawa, on the prospects for expanding the company's industrial presence in the state. The discussions focused on Gujarat's potential as a destination for steel manufacturing and industrial investment. Sanghavi highlighted the state's infrastructure, port connectivity and business environment as advantages for companies looking to expand their operations and strengthen their presence in India.

FTA grants duty-free access to all Indian exports

India-New Zealand free trade agreement

Trade and investment ties set to gain fresh momentum

New Delhi | BR News Network
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Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Tuesday that the India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) marks the beginning of a new chapter of opportunities for both countries. With the agreement coming into effect, all Indian exports to New Zealand have gained duty-free access, a development expected to give fresh momentum to bilateral trade and investment relations.

Sharing details of the development on social media platform X, Goyal said that Indian exports would now benefit from 100% tariff elimination. He added that Indian goods would be able to enter New Zealand at zero duty across all tariff lines.

\$20 billion in investment to be facilitated

The minister also stated that New Zealand would facilitate investments of up to \$20 billion in India, creating significant opportunities for economic growth and employment generation. Goyal emphasised that the agreement fully safeguards the interests of India's sensitive agricultural sectors.

"We have protected the interests of our farmers. Sensitive sectors such as dairy, key agricultural products and animal-based products have been fully protected. The welfare of our farmers remains our highest priority," he said.

A testament to India's manufacturing capabilities

Meanwhile, Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) Secretary General and Chandni Chowk MP Praveen Khandelwal welcomed the implementation of the agreement. He



said that it reflects India's growing manufacturing capabilities and strengthens the vision of Local to Global, Atmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat.

Khandelwal said that the agreement would create significant export opportunities for Indian sectors such as textiles and apparel, leather and footwear, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, automobiles and auto components, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, agricultural products and processed food.

Indian products to become more competitive

CAIT stated that zero-duty access to the New Zealand market would enhance the competitiveness of Indian products, benefiting MSMEs, artisans, farmers, manufacturers, women entrepreneurs and exporters. The agreement is also expected to encourage investments of up to \$20

billion from New Zealand into India while creating new opportunities for Indian professionals and young people.

Bilateral trade targeted to reach NZ\$7 billion by 2030

India and New Zealand have set a target of increasing bilateral trade in goods and services to NZ\$7 billion by 2030. Industry representatives believe that the FTA will provide significant momentum to exports, employment generation and economic growth. Khandelwal said that the agreement demonstrates how Prime Minister Narendra Modi's trade-oriented diplomacy is opening new global markets for Indian businesses while safeguarding the interests of sensitive domestic sectors.

He urged traders, manufacturers and MSMEs to make the most of this opportunity to expand the global reach of Made in India products.

US, India close to finalising trade agreement: Marco Rubio



Mumbai | BR Team

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Tuesday that India and the United States were close to finalising a trade agreement and an announcement on the issue could be expected soon.

"We're very, very close. I would say we're about as close as you can be without having executed the agreement," Rubio told journalists here. "I think there's a small number of items left to wrap up, so I think that will happen shortly," he added, expressing hope that both countries would have an announcement to make soon, followed by the signing of the agreement. Rubio clarified that the US State Department does not directly negotiate trade agreements but remains closely involved in the discussions. "My counterpart, the National Security Advisor, and I care a lot about it," he remarked.

Earlier this month, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said that India expected to finalise the first phase of the trade deal soon. Commerce

Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said that India was seeking preferential access to the US market and greater tariff stability under the proposed agreement. Rubio said that he discussed energy security and defence cooperation with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar during their meeting in Mumbai, reaffirming the importance of the US-India strategic partnership. Sharing details of the meeting on X, Rubio wrote, "In Mumbai, Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and I discussed energy security and defence cooperation while reaffirming the importance of advancing the US-India strategic partnership."

US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor also commented on the meeting in a post on X, saying, "Productive discussions between Secretary Rubio and External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar on deepening US-India cooperation across defence, energy, emerging technologies, and trade, as we continue to build the unrivalled momentum in our bilateral partnership."

Western Railway's scrap sales cross Rs. 300 crore; exceed target by 28 Percent

Ahmedabad | Agency

Western Railway has recorded scrap sales of around Rs. 320 crore in the financial year 2026-27 so far, exceeding its proportionate target by more than 28 percent, according to an official statement issued on Monday. The railway zone crossed the Rs. 300-crore mark in mid-October under its 'Mission Zero Scrap' initiative, which aims to clear scrap from its establishments and units while generating revenue through the disposal of unused and obsolete materials.

"As of October 16, Western Railway had recorded scrap sales of approximately Rs. 320 crore against a proportionate target of Rs. 248.97 crore. Its overall scrap sales target for the financial year 2026-27 stands at more than Rs. 500 crore," the statement said. The railway zone has also exceeded its monthly target of Rs. 55 crore for October during a special



drive conducted this month. The initiative covers the identification and disposal of various categories of scrap, including released railway tracks, permanent way materials, condemned locomotives, coaches, wagons, electronic waste and other miscellaneous materials.

The disposal of such materials is intended to improve material management and operational efficiency, while supporting efforts to maintain cleaner railway premises. The initiative also allows the railways to recover value from materials that are no longer required for operations.

India, Saudi Arabia agree to move ahead with Electrical Interconnection Initiative

New Delhi | BR Team

India and Saudi Arabia held a high-level official discussion on ways to take forward the bilateral Electrical Interconnection Initiative between the two countries and explore avenues for strengthening cooperation in the power sector. Pankaj Agarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Power, held a virtual bilateral meeting with Nasser Al-Qahtani, Assistant Minister of Energy for Electricity Affairs, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to review the progress of the India-Saudi Arabia Electrical Interconnection initiative, according to an official statement issued after the meeting. The discussions focused on the progress of the proposed electrical interconnection between India and Saudi Arabia, which holds significant potential to deepen bilateral energy cooperation. Both sides exchanged views on the way forward and underscored the importance of sustained engagement to advance the initiative, the statement said.

India's nuclear plan dedicated to peaceful purposes: Jitendra Singh



New Delhi | Agency

India's nuclear programme is dedicated to peaceful purposes and not warfare, Union Minister of State for Atomic Energy Jitendra Singh has said, reaffirming the vision that has guided the country's nuclear journey since its inception. In an exclusive conversation on the sidelines of 'Bloomberg Economy Forum 2026,' the minister said that nuclear energy would play an increasingly important role in meeting India's future energy requirements, including the growing demand for reliable electricity to support Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data centres.

Recalling the vision of Homi Bhabha, the architect of India's

nuclear programme, Jitendra Singh said that India had consistently pursued nuclear energy for peaceful applications and national development. The commitment to the peaceful use of nuclear technology, he said, remains central to the country's approach as it expands its capabilities to meet emerging developmental and technological needs.

The minister said that India's nuclear energy ambitions must be viewed in the context of its long-term development goals and clean energy commitments. With the country targeting 100 GW of nuclear power capacity by 2047 and Net Zero emissions by 2070, nuclear energy is expected to complement other sources of power by providing a continuous and reliable supply of clean electricity.

Linking nuclear energy with the next phase of technological growth, Jitendra Singh said that the expansion of Artificial Intelligence and data centres would require dependable sources of electricity capable of meeting their substantial and continuous energy needs.

UDAN scheme clocks 1.49 crore passengers

Govt aims for 4 crore target in next phase



access, and trade, catalyzing economic growth in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities, the factsheet states.

Building on the success of the original scheme, a revamped version aims to add 120 new destina-

tions and enable affordable air travel for 4 crore more passengers over the next decade. The focus will be on expanding connectivity to remote, hilly, and aspirational districts, especially in the North

Eastern region, with special support for helipads and smaller airports. India's airport network expanded from 74 airports in 2014 to 159 airports in 2024, more than doubling in a decade. The government has further committed to developing 50 new airports over the next 5 years. This includes new greenfield airports in Bihar, expansion of Patna Airport, and development of a brownfield airport at Bihta, aiming to meet the future demand for air travel and regional growth.

The scheme has been driven by various incentives such as Rs. 4,023.37 crore disbursed as Viability Gap Funding (VGF) to promote connectivity to underserved and remote regions. Landing and parking charges for RCS flights were waived to promote these flights, and the

Airports Authority of India (AAI) does not levy Terminal Navigation Landing Charges (TNLC) on these flights. Moreover, a discounted Route Navigation and Facilitation Charge (RNFC) is applied.

For the first three years, excise duty on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) purchased at RCS airports is capped at 2 percent. Airlines are also encouraged to enter code-sharing agreements to expand their reach. States have also committed to reducing VAT on ATF to 1 percent or less for ten years and providing essential services such as security, fire services, and utility services at reduced rates. This collaborative framework has fostered an environment where airlines can thrive while serving regions that have long been overlooked, the factsheet observes.

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Editorial

Rising aviation incidents are becoming a cause for concern



Air travel is considered one of the fastest and relatively safest modes of transportation. However, when incidents such as technical malfunctions in aircraft, emergency landings and bird strikes occur frequently, it is natural to raise questions about passenger safety. Despite the high safety standards in the aviation sector, the recurrence of such incidents is a matter of concern. They cannot simply be dismissed as routine technical problems. This morning, an Air India Express flight bound for Bengaluru was involved in a bird strike. Fortunately, all 148 passengers on board remained safe. Earlier, a report of a technical malfunction in an aircraft had also emerged from Lucknow. Such incidents highlight the need for continuous vigilance and effective monitoring of aviation safety. However, bird strikes and technical malfunctions are different in nature, and each incident must be investigated based on its actual cause. Responsibility for aviation safety does not rest solely with pilots or aircraft manufacturers. Airlines, aircraft maintenance teams, airport management and regulatory authorities all play equally important roles. Regular aircraft inspections, timely replacement of components, early detection of technical faults and strict compliance with maintenance regulations are essential. Any haste in declaring an aircraft fit for flight or compromising on safety standards to reduce costs can put passengers' lives at risk. Similarly, effective measures are necessary to control bird activity around airports. Proper waste disposal, controlling food sources that attract birds and using modern monitoring technologies can help address this issue. In addition, every serious incident should be investigated impartially, and the findings should be made public so that concrete steps can be taken to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Is the drug mafia trying to undermine the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana?

BR Team

Access to affordable and quality medicines in India is not just a healthcare policy issue. It is also a question of social justice. The Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana was launched with this very objective: to make quality generic medicines available to ordinary citizens at affordable prices, instead of forcing them to pay high prices for branded medicines. The idea was simple: no family should be pushed into financial distress because someone falls ill. However, the scheme now faces several challenges that deserve serious and impartial investigation. Complaints about the functioning of Janaushadhi Kendras, the alleged entry of private generic medicines into these outlets, concerns about drug quality, claims of unusually high discounts in the market, and weaknesses in local monitoring all need to be examined as part of a larger systemic problem. The most important question is this: Are organised commercial interests trying to weaken a system designed to improve ordinary people's access to affordable medicines? **Discounts of 80-90%: Genuine Relief or a Pricing Game?** Across many parts of the country, medicines are being sold with claims of discounts ranging from 70% to 90% off their maximum retail price, or MRP. The question is not simply about discounts. It is about the credibility of the MRP itself. If a medicine can routinely be sold at such a steep discount, what justifies printing such a high MRP on its packaging? Is the actual cost structure, including manufacturing, distribution and profit margins, transparent? Does the consumer understand the price at which the medicine can rea-

sonably be sold and how that price is determined? Medicines cannot be treated like firecrackers or ordinary consumer products. This is a sector where pricing, quality, manufacturing sources and distribution systems are directly linked to patient safety. Therefore, the government and regulators must look beyond whether a medicine is being sold. They must also examine where it comes from, how it is priced and what assurance exists regarding its quality. **How Are Private Medicines Reaching Janaushadhi Kendras?** The credibility of the Janaushadhi scheme depends heavily on the integrity of its supply chain. If medicines from outside the authorised supply system reach a Janaushadhi Kendra, it is not merely an irregularity at an individual shop. It raises questions about the monitoring of the entire system. If complaints emerge that private companies' medicines are being sold at Janaushadhi Kendras, they must be investigated promptly. If the allegations are established, action must follow. The situation becomes particularly concerning when the brand owner is one company, the manufacturer is another, the marketing company is a third party, and the person selling the medicine has little understanding of its actual background. Ordinary customers visit Janaushadhi Kendras because they trust the scheme. They may not be in a position to distinguish between medicines supplied through the authorised government channel and those sourced through private distribution networks. This is where the credibility of the system matters more than the brand name on the package. **The Growing Gap**



Rotarian Suneel Dutt Goyal
Director General, Imperial Chamber
of Commerce and Industry

Between the Scheme's Vision and Its Ground-Level Implementation : Another important objective of the Janaushadhi scheme was to create employment and self-employment opportunities for trained pharmacy professionals, including young people with B.Pharm and D.Pharm qualifications. Based on my own experience, I can say that the scheme was initially approached with seriousness and a clear commitment to quality. I witnessed its early implementation in Udaipur. At that time, the officials responsible for the initiative, including those working in the Department of Pharmaceuticals, demonstrated a level of commitment and discipline that should continue to serve as a benchmark. The problem is that designing a good scheme is not enough. If monitoring and enforcement become weak, even a well-intentioned initiative can gradually drift away from its original purpose. This is where district-level drug control authorities have a crucial role to play. If complaints persist, inspections are irregular or enforcement actions are not transparent, questions about regulatory accountability are inevitable. It would be inappropriate to make personal allegations against officials without evidence. However, where repeated irregularities are

reported, independent investigations into administrative negligence and possible collusion are essential. **Is This Merely a Problem of a Few Retailers? :** If irregularities are found at one or two shops, they may be localised problems. But if a single business group operates a network of multiple outlets, employs unqualified staff instead of trained pharmacists, or sells medicines from questionable sources, the matter becomes far more serious. Investigations should not stop at the shop's licence. Authorities must trace the entire supply chain: where the medicine originated, who supplied it, who issued the invoice, who marketed it and whether its quality was properly tested. Without examining the entire supply chain, it is impossible to understand or effectively address any large-scale irregularity in the medicine market. **Drug Quality Is a Public Health Issue, Not Just a Business Concern :** Even a small error involving medicines can have serious consequences. Incorrect medicines, improper dosages, substandard products, counterfeit drugs or medicines from questionable manufacturing sources can directly harm patients. That is why it would be a mistake to view the Janaushadhi scheme merely as a programme for selling affordable medicines. It is an important part of India's public healthcare infrastructure. If substandard or unauthorised medicines are sold in the name of a government scheme, the damage extends beyond the individual patient. It undermines the credibility of the entire initiative and can gradually erode public confidence in government systems. **What Should the Government Do Now? :** The government should

treat this as a matter requiring a comprehensive system audit, rather than limiting its response to individual complaints. First, digitise and make the entire supply chain traceable. Every medicine's batch number, source of supply, quantity received and sales record should be digitally documented. This would make it easier to identify unauthorised products and trace them to their source. Second, conduct regular and surprise inspections. Medicines found outside the authorised supply chain should be investigated all the way back to their suppliers. Third, review the pricing structure of medicines. Both MRP and actual selling prices need closer scrutiny. A steep discount should not automatically be treated as evidence of fraud, but unusually large price differences should trigger appropriate regulatory examination. Fourth, establish clear accountability for district drug control authorities. A public performance report could disclose the number of inspections conducted, violations detected, enforcement actions taken and cases pending. Fifth, ensure the availability of qualified pharmacists at every outlet. Selling medicines is not merely a commercial activity. It involves professional responsibility and can directly affect patient safety. Sixth, impose strict penalties for counterfeit and substandard medicines. Simply suspending a licence may not be enough. Where criminal negligence or deliberate fraud is established, criminal prosecution and financial penalties must be enforced effectively. Most importantly, customers and pharmacists must have access to a safe and effective grievance redressal mechanism. If

people do not believe their complaints will lead to action, even the best regulatory framework will remain ineffective on paper. Protecting the Scheme Means Protecting Public Trust The Janaushadhi scheme matters because it challenges a market structure in which medicine prices can become unaffordable for ordinary people. Its success would not merely be a government achievement. It would provide financial relief and greater security to millions of patients and their families. Therefore, wherever complaints arise about the entry of private medicines, questionable product quality, unauthorised supplies or regulatory negligence, the government should respond with independent and transparent investigations rather than a defensive approach. It would be premature to conclude that an organised drug mafia is operating across the country with the specific objective of sabotaging the Janaushadhi scheme. However, if a pattern of organised irregularities exists, identifying and dismantling it is the government's responsibility. In the medicine market, the most valuable asset is not money. It is trust. The Janaushadhi scheme has worked to build that trust. The challenge now is to ensure that commercial interests, administrative weaknesses or regulatory failures do not undermine it. Ultimately, this is not just about a government scheme, a company or a retail outlet. It is about a patient who walks into a pharmacy to buy medicine, often in a vulnerable condition, believing that the product being handed over is safe, effective and reliable. Protecting that trust is the real measure of the Janaushadhi scheme's



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PM Vishwakarma Yojana – A powerful medium for livelihood enhancement through skill development

Jaipur | BR Team

The PM Vishwakarma Yojana is an initiative conceptualized by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and operates under his guidance. It is proving to be an effective medium for the economic empowerment of artisans and craftsmen by connecting their traditional skills with modern technology and financial assistance. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma, Rajasthan has achieved remarkable progress in this scheme, ranging from registration and training to loan sanctions. Under this, more than 2 lakh 30 thousand artisans have been registered in the state, placing Rajasthan fourth in the entire country in this category. **Basic training completed for 2,22,473 beneficiaries :** Through the PM



Vishwakarma Yojana, basic and advanced training is provided to artisans to give them an opportunity to hone their traditional skills, use modern equipment, improve work quality, and develop an understanding of entrepreneurship. In Rajasthan, the basic training of 2,22,473 beneficiaries has been completed. The highest number of registrations in the state has been recorded in the carpenter category

with 45,958 artisans, followed by masons with 38,450 artisans. **More than 2.17 lakh e-vouchers issued :** Under the scheme, eligible beneficiaries are provided loans up to a maximum of 3 lakh at a concessional interest rate, alongside toolkit assistance of up to 15,000. Under this framework, more than 62 thousand loans have been sanctioned in Rajasthan. Furthermore, 2,17,084 e-vouchers have been issued to provide toolkit assistance to eligible artisans. This provides financial support to the artisans for securing modern equipment, purchasing raw materials, and advancing their businesses alongside increasing efficiency. **Target for the year 2028 achieved ahead of schedule :** Under the PM

Vishwakarma Yojana, the Central Government had set a target of registering 30 lakh artisans and craftsmen across the country by the year 2028, which has been achieved ahead of the scheduled time. Out of the 30 lakh 3 thousand 925 artisans and craftsmen registered up to 30 September 2026, basic training has been completed for more than 24.39 lakh artisans. Meanwhile, more than 6.23 lakh loans worth approximately Rs. 5,350 crore have been sanctioned, and over 26.17 lakh toolkit e-vouchers have been issued nationwide. According to a concurrent evaluation by IIM Mumbai, 93 percent of the beneficiaries included in the survey experienced a significant increase in their income after the training.

Holani Group inaugurates new corporate office for two major funds

Jaipur | BR Team

Holani Capital Advisors LLP, a company of the Jaipur-based Holani Group, one of the leading financial and investment advisory groups, has inaugurated a new corporate office in Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan, for its two major funds as part of its expansion strategy. The modern office has been established at Soni Paris Point, located on the fourth floor, Office No. 415, in Bani Park, a prominent commercial area of Jaipur. Taking a significant step forward in the alternative investment sector, the group has opened this corporate office for its two funds, the Holani Venture Capital Fund and the Holani Emerging Growth



Fund. The inauguration ceremony marking the beginning of this new phase commenced at 11:00 AM. Several prominent personalities from the financial sector, industrialists and leading investors attended the special occasion. Ashok Holani, Director of the Holani Group, described the group's growth journey as "A New Beginning, A New Milestone." He stated that this expansion is a major step towards pro-

viding clients with more focused, advanced and world-class financial services. Notably, this new initiative by the Holani Group, which enjoys a strong reputation in the financial market, is expected to become a significant source of investment for emerging startups and growing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Rajasthan and across the country. Holani Capital Advisors LLP: The company primarily operates in asset management and manages both funds. The Holani Venture Capital Fund: The primary objective of this new fund is to provide seed funding and mentorship to innovative startups, early-stage com-

panies and business ideas with high growth potential across the country. Holani Emerging Growth Fund: This fund focuses specifically on established and rapidly growing mid-sized companies that require growth capital to scale up their operations and expand their market presence. Through its new Jaipur hub, the group aims to connect investors from Rajasthan and across India with equity investments and venture entrepreneurship. Industry analysts believe that these two new funds from the Holani Group will give fresh momentum to the industrial and digital transformation taking place in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities.

Yes Bank Q2FY27: Net profit increased 65.0% year-on-year to Rs. 1,080 crore



New Delhi | BR Team

Yes Bank announces Q2 FY2027 financial results.

Key highlights of Q2 FY2027 Profit and loss (P&L) highlights

- Net profit increased 65.0% year-on-year to Rs. 1,080 crore. Return on assets (ROA) stood at 0.9% and return on equity (ROE) at 8.2%.
- Operating profit increased 29.4% year-on-year to Rs. 1,678 crore. Net interest income (NII) grew 22.7% year-on-year, while core fee income recorded an increase of 15.5%.
- **Balance sheet highlights**
- Total deposits increased 19.5% year-on-year to Rs. 3,54,004 crore. Average quarterly balance (AQB) grew 22.1%. Deposits mobilised through retail customers and branches increased 20.9%, accounting for 58.8% of total deposits.
- During the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) concessional swap facility window, Rs. 18,575 crore (approximately US\$ 1.94 billion) was mobilised through Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) [FCNR(B)] deposits.
- Average quarterly balances of Current Account and Savings Account (CASA) deposits increased 15.5% year-on-year.

Average quarterly balances of current account deposits grew 21.8%, while savings account deposits increased 11.6%.

- Total advances increased 23.7% year-on-year to Rs. 3,09,510 crore. After normalising for the impact of Foreign Currency Term Loans (FCTL) linked to FCNR(B), advances grew 17.6% year-on-year and 3.2% quarter-on-quarter.
- Loan disbursements under retail assets grew 35.0% year-on-year. Advances under commercial banking increased 20.2%, while advances under corporate and institutional banking grew 31.4%.
- The average Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) remained healthy at 131.4% during the quarter, while the Common Equity Tier-1 (CET-1) ratio stood at 13.7%.
- **Asset quality highlights**
- The Gross Non-Performing Asset (GNPA) ratio declined to 1.2%, improving by 40 basis points year-on-year and 10 basis points quarter-on-quarter.
- The Net Non-Performing Asset (NNPA) ratio declined by 10 basis points year-on-year to 0.2%.
- Net credit cost during the quarter was approximately 0.3% of average assets. This figure is expressed on an annualised basis.

Mindspace REIT named GRESB 2026 sector leader across development and standing investments

Achieves a perfect score of 100/100 in the Development Benchmark with 5-Star rating

Mumbai | BR Team

Mindspace Business Parks REIT (BSE: 543217 | NSE: MINDSPACE) ('Mindspace REIT'), owner and developer of quality Grade A office portfolio, has once again been recognised as a GRESB Sector Leader across both the Development and Standing Investments benchmarks. This recognition is based on the GRESB Score and identifies the highest-scoring entities within each sector, region and nature of ownership. In the 2026 GRESB Development Benchmark, the REIT achieved a perfect score of 100 out of 100, securing the no. 1 position across the Office/Asia, Office/Listed and Asia/Listed categories, and was named Global Sector Leader, Global Sector Leader - Listed and Regional Sector Leader. The REIT also ranked 1st within its predefined peer group of 12 entities in India and secured a 5-Star GRESB rating. Mindspace REIT's Development score reflects full points across the assessed management and development practices, including ESG governance, policies, risk management, stakeholder processes and sustainability measures applied to development activities. The REIT has been recognised as a Global Sector Leader in the Development Benchmark for four consecutive years, while maintaining near-perfect devel-



opment scores over this period and improving from 99.5 in 2023 to 100 in 2026. In the Standing Investments benchmark, Mindspace REIT achieved a score of 94.2 out of 100, securing a 5-Star rating and the Regional Sector Leader - Listed and Global Sector Leader - Listed titles. The recognition marks an improvement from Regional Sector Leader in the previous year to Global Sector Leader in 2026. The score also improved from 93.0 in 2025 and has risen from 91.2 in 2023, reflecting continued progress in the assessment of its operational portfolio.

Key Highlights:

- ▶ Perfect Development score of 100/100, with a 5-Star GRESB rating.
- ▶ Three Development Sector Leader titles: Global Sector Leader, Global Sector Leader - Listed and Regional Sector Leader.
- ▶ Ranked #1 across Office/Asia (1 of 16), Office/Listed (1 of 13) and Asia/Listed (1 of 38).

- ▶ Ranked #1 among 12 entities in the India Office peer group.
- ▶ Standing Investments recognised as Global Sector Leader - Listed and Regional Sector Leader - Listed, advancing from Regional Sector Leader to Global Sector Leader in 2026, with a score of 94.2/100 and a 5-Star rating, up from 93.0 in 2025.
- ▶ Perfect Management Score of 30/30 in both Development and Standing Investments.
- ▶ 99.9% of the portfolio covered by green-building certifications, including Standing Investments and Development projects.
- ▶ 91% of the completed portfolio is Green Building certified with Platinum rating.
- ▶ 50.4% renewable energy share in the total operational energy mix in FY2026.
- ▶ 100% diversion of construction waste from landfill.
- ▶ Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) validation of Mindspace REIT's emissions-reduction targets under its buildings-sector criteria during FY2026.

Mr. Ramesh Nair, CEO & MD, Mindspace REIT, said, "The real test of sustainability is how effectively it translates into the way buildings are designed, developed and operated. These recognitions, reflects the consis-

tency of our sustainability approach across our portfolio. At Mindspace REIT, we are working across these stages to reduce the environmental impact of our portfolio, from assessing embodied carbon in new developments to improving operational energy performance. Our focus on resource efficiency, responsible development and science-based climate targets is central to building a portfolio that remains resilient as environmental expectations and business needs evolve."

The results follow the integration of sustainability practices across Mindspace REIT's development and operational portfolio. During FY2026, all new acquisitions were assessed through Environmental and Social Due Diligence, with the process also applicable to upcoming acquisitions. All new development projects are subject to embodied carbon assessments through project-level life-cycle assessments, while sustainable design measures include on-site renewable-energy systems. The REIT's operational sustainability initiatives include assessing all LEED Operations and Maintenance-certified buildings through Arc Energy Performance Scores. Its emissions-reduction targets were validated by SBTi under its buildings-sector criteria during FY2026, supporting a science-based approach to decarbonisation.

Justdial Q2 net profit falls 35% sequentially to Rs. 107.8 crore



Mumbai | BR Team

Online classifieds platform Justdial reported a nearly 10 percent year-on-year (YoY) decline in net profit to Rs. 107.8 crore in the September quarter of FY27, compared to Rs. 119.4 crore in the corresponding quarter last financial year (Q2 FY26). Sequentially, the company's net profit plunged over 35 percent from Rs. 166.2 crore reported in the June quarter (Q1 FY27), according to its stock exchange filing. Despite the decline in profitability, Justdial's operating revenue registered healthy growth, rising 13 percent year-on-year and 5 percent quarter-on-quarter to Rs. 342.8 crore during the quarter under review. Including other income of Rs. 54.6 crore, the company's total income stood at Rs. 397.4 crore in the September quarter. The company's expenses increased 15 percent year-on-year to Rs. 262.8 crore during the quarter, putting pressure on its profitability. Tax expenses stood at Rs. 26.8 crore. Justdial's earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) rose 4.1 percent to Rs. 90.6 crore in the September quarter, compared to Rs. 87 crore in the year-ago period. However, the company's EBITDA margin contracted by 230 basis points to 26.4 percent from 28.7 percent in the corresponding quarter last year. The shares of the company closed Monday's trading session at Rs. 745, up Rs. 31.75 or 4.45 percent. In last five days, the stock has delivered a positive return of Rs. 85.90 or 13.03 percent. In past one month, it was up by Rs. 62.30 or 9.13 percent. In last six months, the shares rose Rs. 198.55 or 36.33 percent. On year-to-date (YTD) basis, the stock has delivered a positive return of Rs 18.70 or 2.57 percent.

Punjab & Sind Bank's net profit rises 40% to Rs. 412 crore in Q2

New Delhi | BR Team

Public sector Punjab & Sind Bank's net profit rose around 40% year-on-year to Rs. 412 crore in the second quarter of the current financial year 2026-27. The increase in the bank's profit was mainly driven by higher interest income.

In a statement, the bank said it had reported a net profit of Rs. 295 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous financial year 2025-26.

Punjab & Sind Bank's total income increased to Rs. 3,747 crore in the second quarter of the current financial year, compared with Rs. 3,373 crore in the same quarter a year earlier. Interest income rose to Rs. 3,394 crore in the September quarter of financial year 2026-27, compared with Rs. 2,999 crore in the corresponding quarter of

the previous year. Its net interest income (NII) increased 22% to Rs. 1,161 crore in the July-September quarter, compared with Rs. 950 crore in the same quarter a year earlier. The bank's operating profit also increased 22.3% to Rs. 617 crore in the quarter under review, compared with Rs. 505 crore in the second quarter of the previous financial year. The bank's asset quality also improved. Gross non-performing assets (GNPA) declined to 2.09% of total loans in the July-September quarter, compared with 2.92% in the corresponding quarter of the previous financial year. Net non-performing assets (NNPA), or bad loans, also declined to 0.61%, compared with 0.83% in the same quarter a year earlier.

IREDA's net profit rises to Rs. 554 crore in September quarter

New Delhi | BR Team

Public sector Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) said its standalone net profit rose marginally to Rs. 554 crore in the September quarter. IREDA shared this information in a statement. It had reported a net profit of Rs. 549 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous financial year. The company's revenue from operations increased 14% to Rs. 2,345 crore in the July-September quarter, compared with Rs. 2,057 crore a year earlier.

During the quarter under review, loan disbursements increased 31% to Rs. 10,579 crore, compared with Rs. 8,062 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous year. The company's total loan book grew 15% year-on-year to Rs. 97,411 crore in the second quarter. During the quarter under review, the company's net worth increased 11% to Rs. 14,337 crore, compared with Rs. 12,920 crore in the previous year. IREDA Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) Vijay Kumar Mohanty said, "Our performance in the second quarter of financial year 2026-27 reflects sustained strength and our focus on quality growth." He said the company had achieved a significant improvement in asset quality, with net non-performing assets declining from 1.97% to 1.08%.



Waaree Renewable Technologies Q2 profit falls over 29%



Mumbai | BR Team

Waaree Renewable Technologies Limited on Monday reported a more than 29 percent year-on-year (YoY) decline in consolidated net profit for the quarter ended September 30, 2026 (Q2 FY27), as a sharp increase in expenses weighed on profitability despite strong revenue growth.

The company's consolidated net profit fell to Rs 81.48 crore during the quarter from Rs 116.36 crore in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal (Q2 FY26), according to an exchange filing. Revenue from operations, however, rose 36.5 percent year-on-year to Rs 1,057.84 crore from Rs 774.78 crore,

supported by ongoing execution of renewable energy projects and expansion across new business segments.

Total expenses climbed sharply to Rs 961.66 crore during the quarter, compared with Rs 622.63 crore in the year-ago period. Waaree Renewable Technologies said its consolidated unexecuted order book remained robust at more than Rs 5,500 crore, providing revenue visibility for the coming quarters. The company also highlighted a strong bidding pipeline comprising more than 34.6 GWp of solar projects, over 12.5 GWh of battery energy storage system (BESS) opportunities and transmission and distribution (T&D)

projects worth more than Rs 21,900 crore.

Commenting on the performance, Chief Financial Officer Manmohan Sharma said the growth during the quarter was driven by steady progress across the company's project portfolio, timely execution and expanding capabilities across the renewable energy value chain and T&D segment. He added that the strategic acquisition of APSPL strengthened the company's presence across the transmission and distribution infrastructure value chain.

Sharma noted that acquisition-related financing costs and the addition of businesses with a different margin profile affected near-term profitability, but said the company remains focused on creating long-term value through scale expansion, diversified capabilities and operational efficiencies.

According to the company, the ongoing expansion and integration efforts are expected to provide a strong foundation for its next phase of growth.

PNB warns customers against AI voice cloning, deepfake frauds

New Delhi | BR Team

State-run Punjab National Bank (PNB) has cautioned customers against AI-enabled cyber frauds, including voice cloning, deepfakes and phishing, amid a surge in such incidents.

In a message to customers, PNB MD and CEO Ashok Chandra said fraudsters are using increasingly sophisticated methods to make their attempts more convincing, as October is observed as National Cyber Security Awareness Month. "Many cyber frauds today exploit human behaviour, particularly trust, fear, urgency and everyday digital habits. Fraudsters may imitate the voice or

appearance of your family members, friends, or trusted persons and create a false emergency to seek an urgent transfer of money," Chandra said. He said fraudulent emails, SMS or messages may appear highly personalised and like genuine bank communications, making them difficult to identify, and are designed to create panic and force customers to act without verification. Amid rising cybercrime cases across the country, public and private sector banks are ramping up IT and cybersecurity investments to combat evolving threats from advanced artificial intelligence, quantum computing risks and strict regulatory mandates from the Reserve Bank of India.



Range of the Stock Specific Movement for the Date 21.10.2026		
HINDUSTAN UNILEVER Last Traded Price Rs. 1863 Support Range Rs. 1833 / 1818 Resistance Range Rs. 1878 / 1883 / 1890	BAJAJ FINSERV Last Traded Price Rs. 1708 Support Range Rs. 1686 / 1670 Resistance Range Rs. 1723 / 1730	RELIANCE INDUSTRIES Last Traded Price Rs. 1206 Support Range Rs. 1188 / 1173 Resistance Range Rs. 1223 / 1230
INFOSYS Last Traded Price Rs. 1130 Support Range Rs. 1114 / 1108 Resistance Range Rs. 1147 / 1160	VOLTAS Last Traded Price Rs. 1020 Support Range Rs. 1003 / 993 Resistance Range Rs. 1037 / 1044	GLENMARK PHARMA Last Traded Price Rs. 2210 Support Range Rs. 2188 / 2175 Resistance Range Rs. 2227 / 2260
COLGATE-PALMOLIVE (INDIA) Last Traded Price Rs. 1743 Support Range Rs. 1763 / 1770 Resistance Range Rs. 1727 / 1717	CIPLA Last Traded Price Rs. 1321 Support Range Rs. 1347 / 1360 Resistance Range Rs. 1303 / 1288	DR. REDDY'S LABORATORIES Last Traded Price Rs. 1245 Support Range Rs. 1274 / 1290 Resistance Range Rs. 1230 / 1217
MOTILAL OSWAL FINANCIAL SERVICES Last Traded Price Rs. 1017 Support Range Rs. 1044 / 1053 / 1060 Resistance Range Rs. 997 / 980	Investment in securities are subject to market risk, read all the related documents carefully before investing.	



India-NZ FTA is PM Modi's
Dussehra gift to traders:
Praveen Khandelwal



New Delhi | BR Team

The India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) which comes into effect, is a major gift from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the country's business community on Dussehra, Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) Secretary General and Chandni Chowk MP Praveen Khandelwal said on Tuesday.

In an interview with IANS, Khandelwal said that the biggest feature of the agreement is that Indian goods exported to New Zealand will attract zero per cent duty, making Indian products more competitive in the global market. "I am confident that traders, industries and small artisans across the country will gain significant business opportunities through exports. On behalf of the country's nine crore traders, I extend my Vijayadashami greetings and thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi for this initiative," he said.

Khandelwal said that many Indian sectors, especially automobiles, auto spare parts, grains and pulses, electronics, electrical and pharmaceuticals, will now get access to a large market in New Zealand. He said that the FTA reflects India's grow-

ing manufacturing strength and supports the vision of 'Local to Global,' 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' and 'Viksit Bharat.'

Khandelwal said that the pact would create significant export opportunities for sectors including textiles and apparel, leather and footwear, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, automobiles and auto components, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, agricultural produce and processed food products.

According to CAIT, zero-duty access to the New Zealand market is expected to enhance the competitiveness of Indian products and benefit MSMEs, artisans, farmers, manufacturers, women entrepreneurs and exporters. The agreement also provides for New Zealand to facilitate \$20 billion in investments into India while expanding opportunities for Indian professionals and youth. India and New Zealand have set a target of achieving bilateral trade in goods and services worth NZ\$7 billion by 2030, with industry representatives describing the FTA as a potential driver of exports, employment generation and economic growth. Khandelwal said that the pact demonstrates how Prime Minister Narendra Modi's trade-focused diplomacy is helping Indian businesses access new global markets while continuing to safeguard sensitive domestic sectors. He urged traders, manufacturers and MSMEs to leverage the agreement to expand the global footprint of 'Made in India' products.

India Shifts Ethanol Strategy as Sugar
Diversion Halted and Maize Incentives Cut

New Delhi | BR Team

The government has changed its ethanol procurement strategy for the 2026-27 supply year, barring sugar-based ethanol from the latest tender and reducing incentives for maize-based production. The move aims to protect domestic sugar supplies while maintaining India's target of blending 20% ethanol with petrol.

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), on behalf of state-run oil marketing companies (OMCs), issued a tender on October 16 seeking bids for approximately 11 billion litres of ethanol for the supply period from November 2026 to October 2027. Under the revised conditions, no bids will be invited for ethanol produced from sugarcane juice, sugar, sugar syrup or B-heavy molasses. Instead, procurement will focus on maize, broken rice, surplus rice sourced through the Food



Corporation of India (FCI) and C-heavy molasses.

Sugar Supply Concerns Prompt Policy Change

The decision comes amid concerns over domestic sugar availability following poor rainfall in key sugar-producing states, including Maharashtra and Karnataka. Lower output prospects have raised concerns about the availability and pricing of sugar in the domestic

market. India is the world's largest sugar consumer, and diverting sugarcane products for ethanol production can reduce supplies available for food consumption and other uses. By restricting the diversion of sugar towards fuel, the government aims to balance energy security with domestic food requirements. The policy shift also highlights the challenges of running an ethanol-blending pro-

gramme that depends on agricultural commodities with competing uses.

Maize-Based Ethanol Producers Face Lower Incentives

The latest tender has reduced the price incentive for maize-based ethanol to Rs 2.79 per litre from Rs 5.79 per litre. The procurement price has been lowered to Rs 68.86 per litre from Rs 71.86 per litre.

The reduction could put pressure on the margins of ethanol producers dependent on maize. At the same time, excluding sugar-based feedstocks is likely to increase the importance of grain-based ethanol in meeting procurement requirements. Producers will need to assess raw material costs, plant capacity and operational efficiency to maintain profitability under the revised pricing structure.

Implications for India's Energy Security

India's E20 programme, which

involves blending up to 20% ethanol with petrol, is designed to reduce dependence on imported crude oil and lower transport-related emissions. It has also created additional demand for agricultural produce and supported investments in domestic distilleries.

With sugar-based ethanol excluded from the latest tender, the availability and pricing of maize and rice will become increasingly important. The ability of distilleries to scale up production and oil marketing companies to secure sufficient supplies will influence the programme's implementation.

The government's latest decision reflects an effort to balance fuel-blending ambitions with food security. Its impact will depend on grain availability, ethanol production capacity and the economics of alternative feedstocks in the coming supply year.

SBI wins 'World's best
consumer bank' award

Mumbai | BR Team

State Bank of India (SBI), the country's largest bank, has been named the 'World's best consumer bank 2026' by Global Finance magazine. The bank has received this prestigious global recognition for the second consecutive year. SBI has also been honoured with the 'Best bank in India' award for 2026.

The selection process for the Global Finance awards involves extensive editorial research, along with inputs

from banking consultants, corporate finance executives, analysts and industry



experts worldwide.

Commenting on the recognition, SBI Chairman Challa Sreenivasulu Setty said, "These awards are a matter of pride for SBI, but their significance goes far beyond that. They demonstrate what can be achieved

when the broad capabilities of a national institution are aligned with the aspirations of the country. India is a country of immense diversity. Our customers may have different lifestyles, needs and aspirations, but they all seek banking services that are accessible, convenient and built on trust.

SBI remains committed to upholding this trust. Our goal is to reach every section of society and remain relevant and accessible to meet their needs."

Over 40,000 runners participate
in Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon

New Delhi | BR Team

The streets of the national capital witnessed tremendous energy, determination and a spirit of unity as more than 40,000 runners participated in the Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon (VDHM) 2026, turning their passion into meaningful action through #RunForZeroHunger.

Through the Anil Agarwal Foundation's Nand Ghar and TACO initiatives, every kilometre run contributes one meal for a child in need or an animal, linking the sporting event with a social cause.

Priya Agarwal Hebbbar, Non-Executive Director of Vedanta and Chairperson of Hindustan Zinc



Limited, said, "This year, 40,000 runners took to the streets at the Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon, showcasing outstanding sporting talent, determination and a spirit of unity. Together with everyone who contributed their kilometres to Run for Zero Hunger, we also achieved this year's target of 5 million meals. At the Anil Agarwal Foundation, we believe that sports have the power to create champions and transform lives."

Miscellaneous

Grand Inauguration of Punjab National Bank's New Branch
at Modern International School, Sector 19, Dwarka

New Delhi | BR Team

The new branch of Punjab National Bank, located at Modern International School, Sector 19, Dwarka, was inaugurated today by the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Shri Ashok Chandra. Present on the occasion were Executive Director Shri Amit Kumar Srivastava, Zonal Head-Delhi Shri Rajesh Bhowmick, Circle Head-West Delhi Shri Purushottam Vinit, Branch Head Shri Rajan Arora, and other dignitaries.

The programme began with a floral tribute to Punjab Kesari Lala Lajpat Rai, the founder of Punjab National Bank and a great freedom fighter. On this occasion, Shri Ashok



Chandra and Shri Amit Kumar Srivastava paid tribute to his incomparable contribution to the nation and his visionary role in establishing

the Bank.

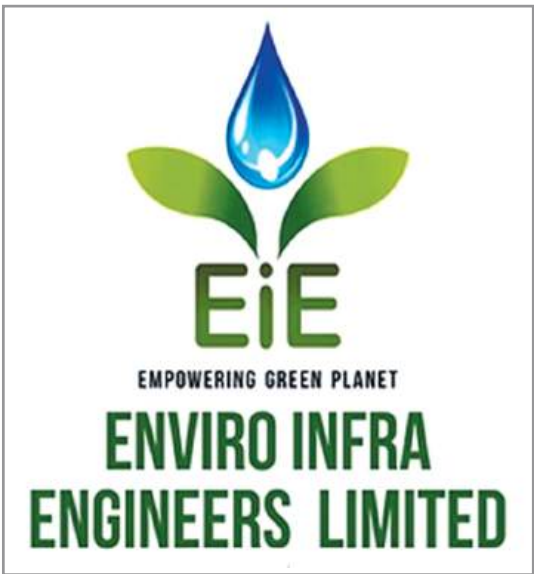
Addressing esteemed customers present at the inauguration ceremony, Shri Ashok Chandra stated that Punjab

National Bank is constantly striving to provide better, simpler, and easier banking services to its customers. He emphasised the Bank's com-

mitment to providing an excellent banking experience through expanded banking services, customer-centric approach and modern digital

banking facilities. He also encouraged customers to maximise the use of digital banking facilities and avail various services offered by the Bank. The opening of the new branch at Modern International School, Sector 19, Dwarka, is an important step towards expanding Punjab National Bank's customer services and strengthening its presence in Delhi. This branch will help ensure better access to banking services for residents, teachers, students, and local businesses. Punjab National Bank is committed to providing its customers a banking experience based on trust, excellent service, modern technology and innovation.

Enviro Infra Engineers' subsidiary
Suyog Urja receives Rs. 228 crore LOI



New Delhi | BR Team

Suyog Urja Limited, a subsidiary of Enviro Infra Engineers Limited (NSE: EIEL, BSE:

544290), a leading EPC company operating in the water and wastewater treatment sector, has received a letter of intent (LOI) worth Rs. 228 crore for a wind power project.

The LOI has been awarded by ARIE Energy LLP for EPC turnkey works related to the development of the 100 MW Ajanvi Wind Power Project in Latur district, Maharashtra. The contract is valued at Rs. 228 crore, excluding GST. The project is scheduled to be completed by July 31, 2027.

Commenting on the development, Sanjay Jain, Chairman of Enviro Infra Engineers Limited, said, "This new achievement, following the award of the 180 MW NTPC wind power project, reflects our strategy to expand our renewable energy business. Our focus remains on disciplined execution, technical expertise and the ability to deliver large-scale projects. Together, these achievements further strengthen our commitment to meeting India's growing clean energy needs."

Brown Sugar Opens New
Outlet at Pacific Mall

Jaipur | BR Team

Brown Sugar, a 100% eggless food and bakery chain, today opened its 18th outlet at Pacific Mall, Mansarovar.

Located on the third floor of Pacific Mall, Brown Sugar's outlet was inaugurated by Vishal Jalani, the brand's founder and managing director, and his grandmother, Shyama Jalani. Prominent citizens of the city were also present on the occasion.

After the inauguration, Vishal Jalani stated that the Brown Sugar brand has a special appeal among the youth, and the opening of this outlet at Pacific Mall was designed to meet their needs. He added that Brown Sugar has now launched a

more modern and youth-friendly brand, targeting newcomers and young people.



The expansion of Brown Sugar outlets is being undertaken to meet the youth's demand. The 17 Brown Sugar outlets established earlier have made a deep impact on the youth.

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Startup Ideas That Can Work in Tier-2 and Tier-3 Cities in India



Charu Bhatia | Jaipur

Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities are emerging as promising destinations for entrepreneurs, thanks to lower operating costs, growing digital adoption and demand for organised services. From food processing and regional e-commerce to home healthcare and skill development, startups can build sustainable businesses by addressing everyday problems that larger companies often overlook.

Startup ideas with potential in smaller cities

Local food brands with a national market

Entrepreneurs can turn regional specialties such as millet snacks, pickles, traditional sweets, spice blends and ready-to-cook mixes into packaged brands. A startup can begin by selling through local retailers, exhibitions and social media before expanding to e-commerce marketplaces. The key is to maintain consistent quality, attractive packaging and food safety standards while building a story around regional ingredients and culinary traditions.

Digital services for traditional businesses

Thousands of small retailers, manufacturers, coaching centres and service providers need help building an online presence. Startups can offer affordable

websites, catalogue creation, social media management, online payment integration and customer relationship management. Instead of developing an expensive app, founders can begin with a small team and subscription-based service packages for local businesses.

Home healthcare and eldercare services

Smaller cities offer opportunities for organised home-based services, including nursing assistance, physiotherapy visits, post-hospitalisation care and support for elderly people living alone. A startup could connect families with verified caregivers and trained professionals through a booking platform. Background checks, service quality, transparent pricing and emergency protocols would be essential to building trust.

Skill development linked to employment

Many young people need practical training that connects directly with jobs. Startups can offer short courses in accounting software, digital marketing, sales, graphic design, customer support and technical trades. Partnerships with local employers can help align training with actual vacancies, while hybrid classes and regional-language instruction can make courses accessible to a

wider audience.

Farm-to-business supply chains

Startups can connect farmers and local food producers with restaurants, grocery stores, hostels, retailers and institutional kitchens. They can aggregate produce, coordinate transport, improve storage and provide predictable delivery schedules. Rather than investing immediately in warehouses or vehicles, founders could start with a limited product category and outsource logistics until demand becomes consistent.

Why Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities matter to India's startup ecosystem

India's startup expansion is no longer limited to major metropolitan areas. According to a government background published in January 2026, around 50% of DPIIT-recognised startups originate from Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities.

The trend reflects the growing importance of entrepreneurship beyond traditional technology hubs. However, founders must assess local purchasing power, customer behaviour, competition and access to skilled workers before launching a venture. A business model that succeeds in one city may need significant changes to work in another.

Small Exporters, Global Customers: How Niche Indian Brands Can Reach Overseas Markets

Jaipur | BR Team

Indian small businesses are increasingly looking beyond domestic buyers to find customers in international markets. From handmade handicrafts and traditional textiles to speciality foods, jewellery and wellness products, niche Indian brands have opportunities to reach global consumers through digital platforms, targeted marketing and cross-border e-commerce.

For small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), international expansion no longer necessarily requires a large overseas distribution network. Online marketplaces, direct-to-consumer websites and digital buyer discovery platforms can help businesses showcase products to customers across borders. However, success depends on more than simply listing products online.

Digital Platforms Open Doors to Global Buyers

Cross-border e-commerce allows small businesses to test overseas demand without immediately investing in physical stores or foreign offices. Brands can target specific customer groups interested in Indian craftsmanship, regional products, sustainable materials or specialised goods.

Government initiatives are also seeking to improve access to international markets. In August 2026, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) expanded eligibility for its 'Source from India' feature on the Trade Connect ePlatform to include eligible DPIIT-recognised startups. The platform allows participating exporters to showcase their capabilities and connect with international buyers.

For niche brands, identifying the right market is crucial. A handicraft business may find



demand among overseas home decor buyers, while a specialised textile manufacturer could target boutique retailers. Researching local preferences, competitors, import requirements and pricing can help businesses avoid investing in markets where their products have limited demand.

Quality, Branding and Compliance Matter

International customers expect consistent product quality, reliable delivery and transparent information. Small exporters need to pay attention to packaging, labelling, product specifications and customer service, alongside the visual appeal of their online storefronts.

Compliance requirements vary by product and destination. Food, cosmetics and other regulated categories may require additional documentation, testing or certifications. Exporters must also understand customs procedures, applicable duties, shipping costs, returns and foreign-exchange regulations.

These expenses can significantly affect profit margins. Businesses should calculate the full cost of fulfilling an overseas order, including packaging,

logistics, marketplace commissions, payment processing and potential returns, before setting prices.

Government Support Can Help Small Businesses Scale

Export-focused digital infrastructure and government support programmes can help eligible businesses navigate international trade. The proposed E-Commerce Export Hubs initiative aims to provide services such as customs clearance, quality certification, packaging and warehousing to facilitate cross-border shipments.

Small businesses can begin by testing demand in one or two markets, collecting customer feedback and gradually expanding their product range. Partnerships with export facilitators, logistics providers and overseas distributors can also help address operational challenges. Ultimately, the opportunity lies in combining India's traditional strengths with modern business practices. Niche brands that understand their customers, maintain quality and manage export costs carefully can build a global presence without immediately adopting the scale of a large multinational company.

Lifestyle

Love, Tarot And Manifestation: Why Gen Z Is Turning To Spiritual Practices To Find Romance



New Delhi | BR Team

From manifestation journals and astrology charts to tarot readings and online love spells, Gen Z is exploring unconventional ways to navigate the uncertainties of modern dating. A new survey suggests that spiritual practices are becoming part of the search for romance, even as dating apps and professional relationship advice remain relevant.

According to a DatingNews survey of 1,013 adults in the US, 64% of Gen Z respondents had tried spiritual, psychic or "witchy" practices in the hope of finding love. Nearly one in five had paid for a spell or love ritual, highlighting the growing interest in alternative approaches to romantic relationships.

Manifestation And Tarot Gain Popularity

Manifestation or scripting emerged as the most popular practice, with 29% of Gen Z respondents saying they had tried it. The survey found that 25% had consulted a psychic, 17% had visited a tarot reader and 16% had used astrology or compatibility charts. Meanwhile, 19% had paid for an online spell or love ritual.

The trend comes amid the complexities of modern dating, where ambiguous messages, inconsistent communication and unclear relationship expectations can leave people searching for reassurance. Spiritual practices may offer a way to reflect on romantic goals and find a sense of direction when relationships feel uncertain. For some, manifestation involves writing down the qualities they seek in a partner or setting intentions for the kind of relationship they want. Tarot and astrology, meanwhile, may

serve as tools for reflection or help people make sense of their romantic experiences.

Do Love Spells Really Work?

The survey found that 46% of Gen Z respondents who had tried these practices believed they had worked at least to some extent. Of these, 17% said that the practices had worked, while 29% reported partial success.

However, these findings reflect respondents' perceptions rather than scientific evidence that rituals can influence another person's feelings or decisions. If a former partner reconnects after a spell, for instance, the timing alone does not establish that the ritual caused the outcome.

Therapy Remains A Trusted Source Of Advice

Despite the growing interest in spiritual guidance, therapy remains the most trusted source of dating advice among Gen Z respondents, at 38%. Daily horoscopes followed at 14%, while 8% said that they would trust a love spell and 7% preferred a dating coach.

The findings suggest that spiritual practices and more conventional forms of relationship guidance can coexist. While manifestation may help people clarify their expectations, healthy relationships still depend on communication, mutual respect, emotional availability and consent. Ultimately, Gen Z's interest in love spells and astrology reflects a broader desire for reassurance in an unpredictable dating landscape. Spiritual rituals may offer comfort or a framework for self-reflection, but they cannot guarantee romantic success. Building a lasting relationship continues to require effort and willingness from both partners.

Alia Bhatt's Pink-and-Blue Saree Look Offers a Fresh Take on Festive Fashion



New Delhi | BR Team

Alia Bhatt brought a playful twist to traditional festive dressing as she attended the North Bombay Sarbojanin Durga Puja celebrations with filmmaker Ayan Mukerji. The actor opted for a striking rani pink saree paired with a sky-blue blouse, demonstrating how contrasting colours can add a contemporary touch to ethnic wear. Hosted by the Mukerji family, including Kajol, Rani Mukerji, Tanishaa Mukerji, Ayan Mukerji and veteran actor Tanuja, the annual Durga Puja celebrations are among Mumbai's prominent festive gatherings. The event is also a much-awaited occasion for celebrity fashion watchers, with Bollywood stars frequently showcasing their festive wardrobes.

A Vibrant Saree With Traditional Gold Detailing

Alia's ensemble stood out for its rich pink hue and intricate gold accents. The saree, which appeared to be crafted from silk, featured delicate gold zari motifs scattered across the fabric. A broad, ornate gold border

der framed the drape, lending the traditional silhouette a festive finish.

The standout styling detail was the slim sky-blue piping along the inner edge of the pallu. It echoed the colour of her blouse, tying the contrasting shades together and adding a playful element to the overall look. Her blouse brought another dimension to the outfit. Instead of relying on elaborate embroidery or a dramatic neckline, the design used sheer organza puff-cap sleeves to create volume around the shoulders while keeping the silhouette light. Gold detailing on the back added a subtle decorative touch.

Antique Gold Jewellery Completes the Look

Keeping the accessories in line with the traditional occasion, Alia chose statement antique gold jhumkas, styled with kanautis. She left her neck bare, allowing the blouse's scoop neckline to remain uncluttered, and stacked chunky, textured gold kadas on her wrist. Her hair was styled in a neat bun adorned

with pink and blue flowers, bringing together the outfit's contrasting colours. The floral accents added a festive finish without competing with the saree and jewellery.

A Styling Lesson in Colour Blocking

Alia's look offers inspiration for those seeking to refresh their festive wardrobes without moving away from traditional Indian silhouettes. Pairing a jewel-toned saree with a contrasting blouse is an effective way to introduce colour blocking into ethnic dressing. The key is to maintain visual balance through coordinated details. In Alia's ensemble, the blue piping, matching floral accents and understated blouse detailing helped connect the two dominant colours, while the gold border and antique jewellery retained the festive appeal.

Her appearance at the Durga Puja celebrations highlights how thoughtful colour combinations and carefully chosen accessories can give a classic saree a contemporary personality.

Charu Bhatia
Jaipur

Pregnancy after the age of 30 is increasingly common, but concerns about declining fertility, delivery

options after a Caesarean section and physical activity during pregnancy continue to create confusion among women. Doctors stress that understanding reproductive health and relying on evi-

dence-based medical advice can help women make informed decisions about conception, pregnancy and childbirth.
Dr. Gargi Agrawal, Senior Consultant in the Department

of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Amrita Hospital, Faridabad, explains common pregnancy-related misconceptions and highlights the importance of personalised medical care.

Pregnancy After 30

Fertility Facts, VBAC And Common Myths About Maternal Health

Does Fertility Decline After 30?:

As women age, the quantity and quality of eggs in their ovaries naturally decline. However, the belief that pregnancy becomes nearly impossible after 30 is inaccurate. While conception may take longer after 35 or 40, many women can have healthy pregnancies with appropriate medical guidance.

Women who experience delays in conception should seek medical advice rather than relying solely on age-related assumptions.

Can You Conceive Despite Regular Periods?

Regular menstrual cycles can indicate hormonal balance, but they do not guarantee fertility. Successful conception also depends on healthy ovulation, open fallopian tubes and adequate sperm quality. If pregnancy does not occur as expected, both partners may need a comprehensive fertility evaluation to identify potential causes and determine suitable treatment options.

Is Normal Delivery Possible After A C-Section?

A vaginal birth after Caesarean delivery, commonly known as VBAC, may be possible for some women. However, the decision depends on several medical factors, including the reason for the previous C-section, the baby's growth and the mother's overall health.

A gynaecologist must assess individual circumstances before recommending a trial of labour. Delivery planning should prioritise the safety of both mother and baby.

Does Everyday Activity Increase Miscarriage Risk?:

In an uncomplicated pregnancy, routine walking, climbing stairs and performing ordinary household chores do not generally cause miscarriages. Complete bed rest is not routinely necessary unless a doctor recommends it for specific medical complications.

Appropriate physical activity, including gentle walking, stretching and prenatal yoga under medical guidance, can support physical well-being during pregnancy. Women should consult their doctors about activity restrictions, particularly if their pregnancy is considered high-risk.

Who Determines A Baby's Biological Sex?:

A baby's biological sex is determined by the sex chromosomes contributed at fertilisation. Typically, women have XX chromosomes and men have XY chromosomes. The egg contributes an X chromosome, while the sperm contributes either an X or a Y chromosome.

Therefore, blaming women for a baby's biological sex has no scientific basis.

Why Personalised Pregnancy Care Matters:

Every pregnancy is different, and medical decisions should reflect an individual's health, fertility history and pregnancy-related risks. Regular consultations with a qualified gynaecologist can help women address concerns, understand delivery options and receive appropriate guidance throughout pregnancy and postpartum recovery.

Doctors emphasise that replacing myths with accurate information is essential to supporting maternal health and helping women navigate pregnancy with greater confidence.

Air Pollution And Heart Health

How PM2.5 Can Raise The Risk Of Heart Attacks And Strokes

BR Team
Jaipur

Air pollution is increasingly emerging as a serious cardiovascular health concern, with doctors warning that exposure to polluted air can affect the heart and blood vessels, not just the lungs. As air quality deteriorates across Delhi-NCR and Mumbai, experts say both short-term exposure to high pollution levels and prolonged contact with harmful particles can increase the risk of heart disease, heart attacks and strokes.

Dr. A Sai Ravi Shankar, HOD and Senior Consultant - Cardiologist at Aster Prime Hospital, says that air pollution deserves greater attention alongside conventional cardiovascular risk factors such as smoking, diabetes, hypertension, unhealthy diets and physical inactivity.

How Does Air Pollution Damage The Heart?

Fine particulate matter, particularly PM2.5, is a major concern because these tiny particles can penetrate deep into the lungs and trigger inflammation throughout the body. According to Dr. V. Vinoth Kumar, Cathlab Director and Senior Interventional Cardiologist at CARE Hospitals, Hitech City, Hyderabad, this inflammation can affect blood vessels and promote plaque buildup in the arteries, increasing cardiovascular risks over time.

Dr. Rahul Sharma, Additional Director - Cardiology at CK Birla Hospitals, Jaipur, explains that fine particles can enter the bloodstream, causing inflammation, oxidative stress and blood vessel damage. These changes can contribute to clogged arteries, high blood pressure, heart attacks and strokes. Doctors caution that the effects may develop gradually and remain unnoticed. Even people who follow healthy lifestyles may face risks from repeated exposure to polluted air.

Who Is Most Vulnerable?

People with existing heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and other chronic conditions face greater risks from air pollution. Older adults are also particularly vulnerable. However, younger and otherwise healthy individuals should not assume they are immune.

Experts warn that even brief exposure to high pollution levels can increase the risk of cardiovascular complications, while prolonged exposure may contribute to the development and progression of heart disease.

How Can You Protect Your Heart?

Doctors recommend checking local Air Quality Index (AQI) readings and limiting strenuous outdoor exercise when pollution levels are high. Indoor physical activity can be a safer alternative on heavily polluted days.

Keeping windows closed during periods of poor air quality, using a suitably sized air purifier and wearing a well-fitted N95 mask outdoors may help reduce exposure to fine particles. People should also avoid smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke.

Those with existing cardiovascular conditions should continue prescribed medication and follow their doctor's advice. Regular monitoring of blood pressure, blood sugar and blood lipids, along with a balanced diet and appropriate physical activity when air quality permits, remains important.

Cleaner Air Is Essential For Heart Health

Experts stress that individual precautions must be supported by broader efforts to reduce emissions and improve urban air quality. Cleaner transport, public awareness and effective pollution-control measures are essential to reducing environmental risks.

Protecting cardiovascular health, doctors say, requires attention not only to lifestyle choices but also to the quality of the air people breathe every day.

Doha Turns Airport Layovers Into Luxury Getaways For Global Travellers

Charu Bhatia
Jaipur

A long airport layover is no longer just time spent waiting for the next flight. Doha is transforming transit travel into an opportunity for cultural discovery, relaxation and premium leisure, attracting business travellers and holidaymakers looking to make the most of a few hours between journeys. Traditionally, stopovers meant airport lounges, quick meals and hotel rooms near terminals. However, changing traveller expectations have encouraged destinations to turn transit time into a memorable travel experience. Qatar is positioning Doha as a destination in its own right, offering visitors a taste of its beaches, cultural attractions, desert landscapes and luxury hospitality.

Why Doha Is Ideal For Short Stopovers

Doha's geographical location between major Asian and European travel markets makes it a convenient transit point for international passengers. Its proximity to Hamad International Airport also allows visitors to explore selected attractions without spending excessive time travelling. Travellers can visit the Museum of Islamic Art, explore the traditional markets of Souq Waqif or enjoy views of the Gulf during a short stay. Those seeking outdoor experiences can consider desert excursions, including trips towards the Inland Sea, subject to available time and travel arrangements. This accessibility makes Doha an attractive option for passengers who want to experience a destination without planning an extended holiday.

Luxury Experiences For Time-Pressed Travellers

The city's premium stopover offerings cater particularly to business travellers seeking comfort and relaxation between long-haul flights. Accommodation options include luxury resorts and hotels, while curated experiences can feature private desert safaris, sunset dinners and guided museum visits. For professionals managing demanding schedules, these shorter experiences offer an opportunity to unwind before continuing their journey. Families and leisure travellers can also use a stopover to discover Qatar's culture and hospitality before reaching their final destination.

How Stopover Tourism Benefits Qatar

By encouraging transit passengers to leave the airport, Qatar can generate additional spending across hotels, restaurants, transport services and tourist attractions. A brief visit may also encourage travellers to return for a longer holiday. This approach reflects a broader shift in international tourism, where airports and airlines are increasingly connected to destination experiences rather than functioning solely as points of arrival and departure.

Planning A Doha Stopover

Travellers considering a stopover should account for immigration procedures, airport transfers, attraction timings and the time required to return for their connecting flight. Entry requirements and visa eligibility should also be checked before departure. With its combination of cultural landmarks, desert adventures and luxury accommodation, Doha is demonstrating how a transit break can become an additional holiday experience. For travellers with sufficient time between flights, the stopover itself can become a highlight of the journey.

Mumbai Metro's Aqua Line Passport Turns Everyday Rides Into a Stamp-Collecting Adventure

BR Team
Jaipur

Mumbai's underground Aqua Line is offering commuters and tourists a new way to explore the city, with a limited-edition passport that allows passengers to collect commemorative stamps across 10 metro stations. Launched by the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC) to mark the first anniversary of full-route operations on Mumbai Metro Line 3, the Aqua Line Passport combines public transport with a souvenir-collecting experience. Priced at Rs. 250, the collectable is designed for daily commuters, visitors and metro enthusiasts who want to make their journeys more memorable. Sales began on October 16, 2026, at 11 am. The passports are available on a first-come, first-served basis, with limited stock. Purchases can be made only through digital payment methods; cash is not accepted.

Where Can You Buy the Aqua Line Passport?: The limited-edition passport is available at 10 designated stations along the Aqua Line: Cuffe Parade, Churchgate, Hutatma Chowk, CSMT Metro, Worli, Siddhivinayak, Dharavi, Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), CSMIA - Terminal 2 and Marol Naka. Travellers planning to purchase one should check availability at the designated stations, as supplies are limited.

How Does the Stamp Trail Work?: Featuring postcard-style illustrations and dedicated pages for commemorative stamps, the passport encourages passengers to explore the participating stations and collect stamps along the route.

Instead of treating a metro ride merely as a means of reaching a destination, travellers can turn their journey into a small exploration challenge. Each stamp adds to the collection, creating a keepsake that documents their experience of travelling on Mumbai Metro Line 3. The initiative could also appeal to visitors looking for experiences beyond the city's conventional tourist attractions. Travellers can incorporate the stamp trail into their Mumbai itinerary while using the underground corridor to access several destinations across the city.

Why Has MMRC Introduced the Passport?: The initiative celebrates the Aqua Line's first anniversary while encouraging greater passenger engagement. By combining metro travel with a collectible souvenir, MMRC aims to make the commuting experience more interactive for regular passengers and tourists alike.

According to the corporation, this is the first passport and multi-station stamp trail of its kind in India's metro sector. For travellers exploring Mumbai, the Aqua Line Passport offers an inexpensive way to add a themed activity to their urban itinerary. However, given the limited availability, interested passengers should check stock before planning their stamp-collecting journey.



India’s smartphone shipments fall 26 pc in Q3: Report

New Delhi | BR Team

India’s smartphone shipments fell 26 per cent year-on-year to 35.8 million units in the third quarter of 2026, while Samsung regained the top position in the market, a report said on Monday. According to a report by Omdia, the decline was driven by higher smartphone prices, cautious consumer spending and weaker replacement demand, prompting vendors to adopt more conservative inventory strategies.

A slowdown in online-focused shipments and the later timing of Diwali also weighed on volumes, as a significant portion of festive inventory build-up shifted from September to October, it added. Moreover, Samsung regained the top position in the Indian smartphone market for the first time since the first quarter of 2024, shipping 6.7 million units during the quarter. The company benefited from demand for its Galaxy A07, A17 and A27 models, while the Galaxy S26 series,

foldable devices and S26 FE strengthened its premium portfolio.

Promotional offers including cashback schemes, exchange benefits and extended financing plans also supported upgrades.

Apple rounded out the top five with shipments of 3.9 million units, supported by dealer stocking ahead of anticipated price increases and continued demand for the iPhone 17 and iPhone 16 models. However, sales were also aided by cashback offers, exchange programmes and no-cost financing schemes.

Meanwhile, vivo slipped in rank with shipments of 6.4 million units, down 34 per cent from a year earlier, the sharpest decline among the top five brands.

The report attributed the fall to repeated price increases, inventory planning disruptions and constrained supplies in the entry-level segment. OPPO witnessed shipments of 4.9 million units, down 24 per cent year-on-year, while Xiaomi’s shipments fell 28 per cent to 4.7 million units.



The report further noted that rising component costs affected pricing strategies and weakened value propositions across key product categories for both brands.

According to Omdia, the quarter highlighted a structural shift in India’s smartphone market as festive-season growth becomes increasing-

ly channel-driven rather than led by large online sales events.

“India’s smartphone market is shifting from online-led shipment expansion during the festive period to more selective, channel-driven growth, challenging vendors’ traditional volume strategies,” said Sanyam Chaurasia, principal analyst at Omdia.

The research firm noted that fewer online-exclusive launches, a limited number of affordable models and narrowing promotional differences reduced the attractiveness of online channels during the festive period.

Additionally, Chinese smartphone makers were particularly affected by the trend with their combined market share declining to about 68 per cent in the third quarter from 75 per cent a year earlier.

The report has expected the domestic smartphone market to contract by a further low-single-digit percentage in 2027 following a difficult 2026 as vendors contend with rising prices and longer device replacement cycles.

Redmi Band 4 launched with 21-day battery life and 5ATM water resistance

News Delhi | BR Team

Redmi has launched the Redmi Band 4 in its domestic market, introducing an upgraded fitness band designed for everyday health monitoring and activity tracking. The successor to the Redmi Band 3 features a 1.47-inch display with a 60Hz refresh rate and 2.5D curved cover glass. The device also offers several health-monitoring functions, including heart rate tracking, blood oxygen readings, stress monitoring and sleep tracking. According to the company, the fitness band can deliver up to 21 days of battery life on a single charge, compared with the claimed 18-day battery life of its predecessor. It also comes with 5ATM water resistance and supports more than 50 sports modes.

Redmi Band 4 price: The Redmi Band 4 has been launched in China at a price of 169 yuan, equivalent to approximately Rs. 2,400. The fitness band is available through the company’s official website in its domestic market. The company has not yet announced its availability in India.

Redmi Band 4 specifications and features: The Redmi Band 4 features a 1.47-inch display with a 60Hz refresh rate and 2.5D curved cover glass. Its design includes a textured metal-style frame and a unibody construction, giving the fitness band a modern appearance. For health monitoring, the device supports all-day stress monitoring, heart rate tracking, blood oxygen readings and sleep tracking. It also includes women’s health tracking features to help users monitor relevant health information. The fitness band supports more than 50 sports modes, including running, cycling and table tennis, allowing users to track a variety of physical activities. These features make it suitable for users looking to monitor their daily movement and exercise routines. Battery life is another key highlight of the Redmi Band 4. According to the company, the device can last up to 21 days on a single charge, offering a longer claimed endurance than the Redmi Band 3. Actual battery life may vary depending on usage and settings. The band also offers 5ATM water resistance, along with notifications, alarms and payment support. With its upgraded display, extended battery life and range of fitness features, the Redmi Band 4 is positioned as an option for users seeking an everyday fitness-tracking device.

Blaupunkt launches Rock & Roll Rhythm 100W party speaker in India

New Delhi | BR Team

Blaupunkt has launched its new Rock & Roll Rhythm party speaker in India, expanding its audio product portfolio with a model designed for parties, celebrations and home entertainment. The Bluetooth speaker delivers a claimed 100W audio output and features karaoke support, dynamic lighting effects and multiple connectivity options. It also supports True Wireless Stereo (TWS) connectivity, allowing users to pair compatible speakers for a more immersive audio experience.

The device packs a 3,600mAh battery, which the company claims can provide up to 10 hours of playback on a single charge. An FM radio feature further adds to its entertainment options. The Blaupunkt Rock & Roll Rhythm party speaker has been launched at a price of Rs. 9,999 in India. It is available through the company’s official website. The speaker has also been listed on Amazon at Rs. 7,999, although the actual selling price may vary depending on availability and ongoing offers. The new party speaker

comes with a three-driver configuration comprising dual 6.5-inch woofers and a high-capacity tweeter. With a claimed 100W output and bass enhancement, it is designed to deliver powerful audio for music playback and social gatherings. The speaker also supports karaoke, making it suitable for users who enjoy singing along to their favourite tracks.

It features six equaliser modes, allowing users to customise the sound according to their preferences. A dedicated EQ button provides convenient

access to these settings. In addition, eight dynamic lighting modes create visual effects that complement music during parties and celebrations.

For connectivity, the speaker supports Bluetooth, AUX, USB and TF card playback. It also includes True Wireless Stereo connectivity for pairing compatible speakers, an FM radio and a dedicated microphone input port for karaoke and other voice-based activities. The 3,600mAh battery is claimed to deliver up to 10 hours of playback on a single charge.

Decathlon launches new electric bike with a 100 km range

New Delhi BR Team

Decathlon has launched its new electric road bike, the Van Rysel E-EDR AF SRAM Apex, in European markets. The new model combines a lightweight design with an electric-assist system, a wireless drivetrain and advanced connectivity features. Designed for road cycling enthusiasts, the e-bike offers a claimed range of up to 100 km on a single charge, which can be extended to 160 km with an additional range extender. It also features hydraulic disc brakes, a carbon fork and 32 mm-wide tyres, making it suitable for riders seeking a combination of performance, comfort and practicality.

Decathlon Van Rysel E-EDR AF SRAM Apex price: The Van Rysel E-EDR AF SRAM Apex has been launched in European markets at a price of euro 2,500, equivalent to approximately Rs. 2,67,000. Customers can purchase the electric bike through Decathlon’s official website. The company has focused on combining road-cycling performance with electric assistance and a relatively low-maintenance design.

Decathlon Van Rysel E-EDR AF SRAM Apex features: The new electric bike comes with a 12-speed transmission system and a wireless SRAM Apex XPLR derailleur. It is powered by a 250W Mahle motor delivering 40 Nm of torque and is equipped with a 250 Wh battery. According to the company, the bike offers a range of up to 100 km, which can increase to 160 km when used with a range extender. The e-bike features a Mahle Pulsar One display that provides information such as battery charge level, remaining battery capacity, estimated remaining range and assistance level. Bluetooth and ANT+ connectivity are also available, allowing compatibility with supported devices. For braking, the bike is equipped with SRAM Apex hydraulic disc brakes with 160 mm rotors. It features an aluminium frame, a carbon fork and 32 mm-wide tyres. The medium-sized model weighs approximately 14 kg, according to the company. With its wireless shifting system, electric assistance and lightweight construction, the Van Rysel E-EDR AF SRAM Apex is designed to offer a practical option for cyclists looking for an electric road bike with performance-oriented

