

JioHotstar collaborates with DGO, launches streaming service in Nepal

MUMBAI, OCT 18: JioHotstar, the OTT platform, has partnered with DGO to launch its streaming services in Nepal.

The collaboration serves as a further expansion of the streaming service, which has been launched in the UK, Canada, Singapore and MENA. It creates a JioHotstar destination within DGO, comprising the JioHotstar content universe of blockbuster films, originals, television, reality franchises and kids' content, according to a press release.

The lineup includes films such as "Bhediya", "12th Fail", "Kesari Chapter 2", "Super 30", and "Welcome to the Jungle", alongside JioHotstar Originals including



"Hunkkaar", "Pritam & Pedro", "Ali Baba Aur 40 Bhoot", "Special Ops" and "Chiraiya", among others. It will also have regional projects such as "Bethlehem Kudumba Unit" and "Thudakkam" available in Hindi, and shows such as "Bigg Boss", "Koffee with Karan", and "India Ka Top 1 Percent".

Amit Malhotra, head of

International Business in JioStar, said "JioHotstar's international expansion is bringing together the scale of what has been created in India and the demand for Indian entertainment overseas."

"Nepal is an important part of that journey, with audiences who have followed our films, television shows and talent for gen-

erations. With DGO, we can give that audience a much broader offering, combining JioHotstar's entertainment with the convenience of a local platform," he said in a statement.

Roshan Niraula, Chief Executive Officer of DGO, said, "This partnership is a milestone for DGO and for Nepal's entertainment industry. Our ambition is to give Nepali viewers more reasons to choose DGO every day, from JioHotstar's films and shows to a new Nepali film every week and live international sport."

"We are bringing the choice together on a platform built for Nepal, at pricing designed for our viewers," he added.

Bandhan Fin to explore health insurance foray post stabilisation of recent acquisitions: Chairman Ghosh

MUMBAI, OCT 18: Bandhan Financial Services, part of Bandhan Group, will explore opportunities in the health insurance sector once the recent acquisitions of a mutual fund company and life insurance companies stabilise, its chairman Chandra Sekhar Ghosh said.

The acquisitions of IDFC Mutual Fund, IDFC Asset Management Company and Aegon Life Insurance were carried out by Bandhan Financial Services Limited (BFSL) subsidiary Bandhan Financial Holdings Ltd (BFHL), which is also the promoter of Bandhan Bank.

BFSL, along with other investors, acquired IDFC

Mutual Fund in 2023 and took over Aegon Life Insurance subsequently in 2024.

The immediate focus is towards consolidating existing businesses before taking up further expansion opportunities, he told PTI in an interview.

The group has a strategic plan to enter new businesses, but it is not yet the right time to indicate when it would foray into health insurance, he said, describing the sector as a significant opportunity.

Ghosh said the group had acquired three companies in the past three-and-a-half years, apart from its social-sector operations, and was currently focused on streamlining and integrat-

ing these businesses.

"These acquisitions need to be streamlined, and that is the focus currently. It will take time before we move into something else," he said.

A composite insurance licence would make it easier for the group to explore opportunities in the sector, he added.

A parliamentary panel in 2024 suggested the introduction of a composite licence for an insurer to undertake life, general, or health insurance under one entity to increase penetration of insurance in the country.

As per the Insurance Act, 1938, and the regulations of the Insurance Regulatory

and Development Authority of India, composite licensing for an insurer to undertake life, general, or health insurance under one entity is not allowed.

Beyond insurance, Gosh said, the group is also looking at potential opportunities in other financial services segments, including investment banking and wealth management, where it does not currently have a presence.

"There are opportunities in investment banking, where we are not present. We are not in wealth management either," he added.

BFSL is the promoter of Bandhan Financial Holdings Ltd and Bandhan Bank Ltd.

NTPC to begin feasibility studies in more states for nuclear programme

MUMBAI, OCT 18: Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India (HMSI) expects its domestic sales volumes to reach 6 million units during the current financial year ending March 2027, said HMSI President and CEO Tsutsumu Otani.

This would represent around 4.3 per cent year-on-year growth compared to domestic dispatches of 5.75 million units in FY 2025-26.

Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India is the second-largest two-wheeler manufacturer in India.

"This year, the market and Honda's sales have been very good. Now, with the Navratri season starting, it is going quite well. Considering the current pace, Honda's domestic sales volume may be around six million units for the year," Otani told PTI in an interview.

In the first half of FY27, Honda's domestic two-wheeler dispatches rose 13.5 per cent YoY to 3.04 million units with a market share of around 25 per cent.



Meanwhile, the domestic two-wheeler industry sales rose 17.6 per cent during the period to 12.09 million units, according to data from the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM).

Around 60 per cent of Honda's two-wheeler volume comes from the scooter segment, which has been the Japanese automaker's forte for a long time. For the broader industry, the contribution from scooters is 40 per cent, with the motorcycle segment dominating sales volumes.

Otani said the scooter segment is growing, in line with a wider global shift from light motorcycles to

scooters. He added that the mix in India would depend on how customers use their vehicles.

He noted that demand is growing across all categories and Honda will focus on both entry-level and premium motorcycles apart from scooters.

While more customers are moving towards premium products, the entry-level market is also expanding, he said, adding the company can draw on its wide global product range and adapt models to suit Indian buyers.

Recently, Honda unveiled 10 two-wheeler models, including the adventure scooter ADV 160, which is E85 fuel-compliant, the

QC3 electric scooter, Rebel 300, XR L300 and XR300 Rally, the CB500 roadster, and the CB350 range of modern classics.

The automaker will expand its production capacity to 8 million units from the current 6.5 million units by 2028, with two new production lines coming up at its existing facilities in Tapukara and Vithalapur in Rajasthan.

In fiscal 2026, Honda produced 6.32 million two-wheelers, of which 5.75 million units were dispatched to the domestic market and 6,20,275 units were exported.

The additional capacity planned is for both internal combustion engine and electric vehicle models.

Honda entered the electric vehicle market in early 2025 with two scooter models, but is yet to see major traction in sales, even as electric vehicle adoption in this segment grows and other established OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) step up competition.

three years from concept to commissioning. Five litres of water is needed to produce 1 unit of nuclear power. Land requirement depends on the size of the project, with a 1-square-kilometre exclusion zone. Among other inputs, continuous water supply is a key requirement for a nuclear project.

For technology, NTPC is also exploring collaborations with global energy players such as US-based Westinghouse, Rosatom of Russia and French company EDF to explore collaboration on deploying large pressurised water reactor (PWR) projects in India, the official said.

Jewellery retailers expect 22-28 pc growth in Q2 despite festive calendar shift

MUMBAI, OCT 18: Leading listed jewellery retailers reported revenue growth of 22-28 per cent in the September quarter, supported by healthy consumer demand, strong same-store sales and increased spending by customers, despite the shift of Navratri festivities to the December quarter this year.

Companies such as P N Gadgil Jewellers, Titan, Kalyan Jewellers and PC Jeweller reported double-digit year-on-year growth in their respective quarterly business updates to the bourses, reflecting sustained demand for gold and studded jewellery amid a change in the festive calendar to the third quarter of FY27.

Kalyan Jewellers reported approximately 27 per cent revenue growth in its India operations in the second quarter of FY27, supported by around a 20 per cent rise in same-store sales. Its international operations grew 18 per cent, while its lifestyle jewellery brand Candere recorded a 64 per cent increase in revenue.

"The recently concluded quarter has been a very satisfying one, recording consolidated revenue growth in excess of 26 per cent



when compared to the same period in the previous financial year," it said.

The company said its India business maintained strong operating momentum across key markets despite a high base in the year-ago quarter, when all nine days of Navratri fell within the September quarter.

P N Gadgil Jewellers also said it witnessed a "healthy performance in Q2 FY27" with a revenue growth of 22.4 per cent year-on-year.

"The Retail segment grew 31.1 per cent YoY, with robust same-store sales growth (SSSG) of 25.5 per cent YoY as the primary driver, indicating that the growth was substantially organic in nature, driven by deeper customer engagement at existing stores," it said.

The company's franchise business grew 34.7 per cent, while e-commerce revenue declined 83.6 per

cent following a strategic shift away from low-margin gold coin sales towards higher-margin jewellery products.

"The share of gold coin and bar sales in retail revenue normalised to 15.8 per cent, compared with 23.3 per cent in the same quarter of the previous year. The continued moderation in the lower-margin gold coin business, coupled with the increasing contribution from retail and studded jewellery, is driving a sustained improvement in the overall quality and profitability of the revenue mix," it said.

Titan, which operates jewellery brands including Tanishq, Mia, Zoya, beYon and CaratLane, reported around 21 per cent growth in its jewellery portfolio.

Studded jewellery sales grew in the early thirties, while plain gold jewellery registered approximately 20 per cent growth. In-

vestment-led demand for gold coins, however, declined by a high single-digit percentage from a high base.

Titan said buyer growth was in the mid-single digits, while average ticket sizes recorded double-digit growth. Its digital-first jewellery brand CaratLane continued to outperform, posting 32 per cent growth during the quarter.

Delhi-based PC Jeweller reported approximately 28 per cent growth in consolidated revenue, citing healthy consumer demand and strong business momentum.

"Backed by a healthy consumer demand, the company continued to deliver a strong performance, concluding Q2 FY27 with a consolidated revenue growth of approximately 28 per cent YoY, reflecting a strong business momentum," said PC Jeweller in its quarterly business update.

The quarterly updates come against the backdrop of a shift in the festive calendar, with Navratri falling in October this year compared to September in 2025.

The shift is expected to move a larger portion of festive purchases into the December quarter.

India bars sugar-based ethanol in 2026-27 tender, cuts maize incentive

MUMBAI, OCT 18: State-run oil marketing companies have barred ethanol made from sugarcane juice, sugar syrup and B-heavy molasses from their latest procurement tender for the 2026-27 supply year for blending in petrol, as the government seeks to protect domestic sugar supplies while sustaining its nationwide petrol-blending programme.

The tender, issued on October 16 by Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) on behalf of oil marketing companies (OMCs), seeks bids for around 11 billion litres of ethanol for the supply year beginning November to meet the requirement of doping 20 per cent ethanol in petrol. It also cuts the incentive for maize-based ethanol, lowering the procurement price to Rs 68.86 per litre from Rs 71.86.

"The Government of India has issued directions that sugar diversion for ethanol be reduced to zero for ethanol supply year 2026-27," the tender document said.

"No offers have been sought for ethanol pro-



duced from sugarcane juice, sugar or sugar syrup and B-heavy molasses in this quantity bid tender," it added.

The restrictions mark a shift in feedstock sourcing for the ethanol-blended petrol programme, which has relied on both grain-based and sugarcane-based ethanol to reduce crude oil imports and cut vehicle emissions.

The tender allows bids for ethanol produced from maize, broken rice, surplus rice procured by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and C-heavy molasses, according to the document.

The reduction in the maize incentive to Rs 2.79 per litre from Rs 5.79 is expected to lower returns for producers supplying ethanol from the grain, even as the exclusion of

sugar-based feedstocks increases the importance of alternative raw materials.

The move comes amid concerns over domestic sugar availability and rising prices after poor rainfall in key sugar-producing states, including Maharashtra and Karnataka, raised the risk of lower output.

India, the world's largest sugar consumer, has increasingly used ethanol blending to reduce its dependence on imported crude oil. However, diverting sugarcane and sugar for fuel production can compete with supplies available for food consumption, particularly when output is constrained.

The latest tender underscores the government's effort to balance its en-

ergy-security objectives with the need to maintain adequate sugar supplies and contain domestic prices.

India has adopted petrol containing up to 20 per cent ethanol, known as E20, as the nationwide standard as part of efforts to reduce oil import dependence and emissions.

Ethanol is produced from agricultural feedstocks, including sugarcane and grains, and blended with petrol to displace a portion of fossil fuel consumption. The programme has created a substantial market for domestic distilleries while offering farmers an additional source of demand for agricultural produce.

The shift away from sugar-based ethanol in the 2026-27 procurement cycle is likely to increase the importance of grain-based production and make feedstock availability, procurement prices and distillery capacity key factors in meeting blending requirements.

The procurement tender covers the ethanol supply year from November 2026 to October 2027.

DP World CEO urges India to rethink port concessions, calls for joint ventures to spur investment

MUMBAI, OCT 18: DP World Group CEO Yuvraj Narayan has called for a fundamental rethink of India's port development model, arguing that traditional time-bound concessions discourage long-term investment and that joint ventures between governments and private operators could deliver more sustained infrastructure development.

"A 30-year concession means what? Just look at the life cycle," Narayan said, contending that it can take years to build a port and stabilise operations, leaving operators with a relatively short period of high utilisation in which to recover their investments and modernise facilities.

"Why not JVs? Become a landlord. You have an operator, you agree on KPIs. It's forever, till I break your trust. What's the problem?" he said.

Under the model he advocates, the government would retain ownership of the underlying port infrastructure while partnering with private operators through longer-term joint ventures, with performance measured against agreed targets.

Narayan argued that such arrangements could encourage operators to invest in capacity upgrades and technology without the uncertainty of repeated tenders and contract renewals.

His comments come as DP World seeks to expand its presence in India, where it has pledged an additional USD 5 billion in investment to strengthen its ports, rail and logistics network. The company has already invested about USD 3 billion in the country over three decades.

Dubai-based DP World's Indian operations span five container terminals

with a combined annual capacity of 6 million TEUs, warehousing, freight forwarding, container freight stations, free trade warehousing zones and inland rail terminals.

The company is also expanding its integrated logistics network, including through the second phase of Nhava Sheva Business Park in Maharashtra, backed by an investment of about Rs 500 crore, and is exploring further opportunities in port infrastructure, including Vadhavan.

The investments are aimed at improving connectivity between ports and inland markets, facilitating trade and strengthening India's role in global supply chains.

Narayan said the company was prepared to invest a further USD 3 billion to USD 5 billion as opportunities emerged, but called for faster project execution and more

predictable frameworks for private participation.

He criticised arrangements in which operators invest in infrastructure while facing revenue-sharing demands, tariff controls and the prospect of competing facilities being developed nearby.

"If you have your own stake, would you do that? You are destroying value immediately," he said.

India also needed a clearer assessment of existing port capacity and utilisation before committing to further expansion, Narayan said, adding that DP World's own ports were operating at full capacity, unlike parts of the wider Indian port industry.

He said India should focus on becoming a gateway for its own exports and imports rather than pursuing transshipment volumes as an end in themselves.