iQOO launches 15R; Co sees demand spike in Indian youth

It has been six years for iQOO in India and the company has been launching flagship products

The current price range of Rs40K-Rs 45K, the new variant is expected to receive sound response
- **Nipun Marya, CEO of iQOO**

As the markets get more premium-focussed, iQOO phones will continue to receive good response from users

BIZZ BUZZ BUREAU
BENGALURU

iQOO, the specialised mobile brand from Vivo stable, on Tuesday launched iQOO 15R in India as it eyes more young professionals' user base in the country.

The iQOO 15R has several innovative features that enable young professionals to seamlessly switch between work, gaming, and entertainment, the company said at the launch event in Bengaluru.

The new variant of the brand is powered by the Snapdragon 8 Gen 5, ensuring higher processing power, speed and efficiency.

iQOO 15R is India's slimmest smartphone with a 7600 mAh battery. It also used the company's proprietary SuperComputing Chip Q2 with the 144 FPS gaming. It is also equipped with a Sony LYT-700V OIS camera, a 1.5K 144Hz AMOLED EyeCare Display, along with IP68 & IP69 dust and water resistance, the company said.

"The new launch is the second one in the iQOO 15 series. We already have the flagship product iQOO 15, which has received good response. Given the kind of features in the new phone and the pricing, we believe that the new variant is also going to get a very good response," Nipun Marya, CEO of iQOO told the BizzBuzz on the sidelines of the launch event.

"This is fastest smartphone in the market. It has a Snapdragon 8 Gen 5 processor. So, it is very fast and powerful. On the battery side, this is India's slimmest phone with 7600 mAh battery. It means, you can use your phone all day, do heavy tasks the whole day and there will be no issues with the phone at all. All of this, along with the camera, we believe that the price range of Rs40,000 to Rs45,000 for iQOO 15R is an amazing offer for our Indian users," Marya added.

He said that it has been six years for iQOO in India and the company has been launching flagship products in the country. "As the markets get more premium-focussed, we believe that iQOO phones will continue to receive good response from users," the CEO of iQOO said.

According to the company, it is leveraging AI across different features like camera, gaming and daily office stack in its mobile phone brands.

On the issue of supply chain issues that may arise for all mobile manufacturers globally due to rising protectionist policies among nation states, he said that the concern is on memory side, which is same for all manufacturers.

Will comply with CCI directions on data sharing, WhatsApp tells SC

NEW DELHI: Messaging platform WhatsApp on has informed the Supreme Court that it will comply with the directions issued by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) requiring the platform to provide users greater control over whether their data is shared with other Meta companies.

A special bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M. Pancholi permitted WhatsApp and its parent company Meta Platforms to withdraw their interim applications against the CCI penalty after the companies undertook to implement the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) order, which extended CCI's privacy and consent safeguards to advertising-related data sharing.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for WhatsApp and Meta, informed the apex court that the companies had filed an affidavit explaining their data-sharing practices and had decided not to press their plea seeking a stay of the NCLAT order.

GRSE lays foundation for 3rd German multi-purpose vessel

The project involves the designing and building of a modern series of high-performance vessels under the CORAL 7500 DWT MPV series

KOLKATA

IN keeping with the Centre's vision to develop India into a global shipbuilding hub, Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Limited -- a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) under the Ministry of Defence -- has laid the foundation for the third multi-purpose vessel (MPV) it is building for Germany's Carsten Rehder Schiffsmakler und Reederei GmbH & Co. KG GRSE is building 12 MPVs for this client.

While the shipyard's mainstay continues to remain warship building, it has also diversified into commercial shipbuilding, under the Union government's "Make in India, Make for the World" vision.

This is the largest order for commercial vessels it has received so far. The ceremony was attended by senior GRSE officials, as well as those from Carsten Rehder Schiffsmakler und Reederei GmbH & Co KG.

The project involves the designing and building of a modern series of high-performance vessels under the CORAL 7500 DWT MPV series, being developed as a collaborative initiative between GRSE and Germany's Carsten Rehder.

The initial contract for four vessels was signed on June 22, 2024, followed by subsequent agreements bringing the total order to twelve vessels.

The final contracts, including ninth to twelfth Hybrid Propulsion MPVs, were signed on September 19, 2025.

Each MPV will have an overall length of 120 metres and a beam of 17 metres, with a draught of 5.85 metres.

With a capacity to carry 7,500 metric tonnes of cargo, these vessels are equipped with a single, large cargo hold designed for bulk, general and project cargoes.

A key feature of the design is the capability to carry containers on hatch covers and multiple large windmill blades on deck, thereby enhancing operational flexibility.

The project is being developed in close collaboration with German firms, including F.H. Bertling, Forest-Wave Navigation/Schulte and Bruns, and Delft Shipping.

Technical design expertise has been provided by Students for the Exploration and Development of Space (SEDS), in partnership with GRSE. These ships would be certified by the classification society -- Det Norske Veritas.

Resilient subsea networks critical to AI, digital growth: TRAI chief

NEW DELHI: Submarine cable systems face significant challenges from natural disasters to pressures from geopolitical tensions and growing data demand, TRAI Chairman Anil Kumar Lahoti said on Tuesday, calling for a multi-pronged approach involving technical innovation, operational resilience, and policy solutions to address issues.

Describing submarine cable systems as the backbone of the digital economy in the AI era, Lahoti said that improving route planning, placing cables in low-risk areas, deploying real-time monitoring systems and building redundant routes can reduce the impact of physical damage and outages.

International cooperation and stronger regulatory frameworks are key to enhancing security and resilience, Lahoti said while addressing a conference on 'Subsea Cables and Digital Cloud Infrastructure' organised by industry body Broadband India Forum.

Lahoti noted that submarine cable systems face "significant challenges" being vulnerable to natural disasters, as well as to human activities.

"...geopolitical tensions and growing data demand also add pressure, making security, reliability and capacity upgrades ongoing concerns for operators," he said.

Similarly, cloud infrastructure faces issues including data security threats, privacy concerns, service outages, operational costs, energy requirement and environmental impact. Also, they need to constantly scale to meet growing demand. "Together, these challenges highlight the complexity of maintaining reliable, secure and resilient global digital infrastructure. Addressing these challenges requires a mix of technical, operational and policy solutions," Lahoti emphasised.

For cloud infrastructure, adopting robust cyber security measures and continuous threat monitoring is essential.

Kanpur, Prayagraj at risk of severe damage if powerful quake strikes: IIT study

KANPUR

The IIT-K research team analysed soil samples collected over nearly two decades from Gujarat, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar

A 17-year study by the Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur (IIT-K) has warned that parts of Kanpur and Prayagraj could face severe damage if an earthquake of magnitude 6.5 or higher strikes the region.

The research led by Dr Nihar Ranjan Patra, a professor at IIT-K's civil engineering department, highlights the high liquefaction potential of the alluvial soil along the Ganga river belt -- a factor that can sharply amplify ground shaking and destabilise buildings.

The IIT-K research team analysed soil samples collected over nearly two decades from Gujarat, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Samples were taken from 43 locations, with boreholes drilled up to 30 to 40 metres and 80 metres deep at two locations in Kanpur and Prayagraj in select areas — far deeper than the usual 10–30 metres used elsewhere.

In several parts of Kanpur and Prayagraj, the top 8–10 metres of soil is loose, sandy and water-saturated — conditions highly prone to liquefaction during strong tremors. The findings are concerning as in some pockets, the effect could extend as deep as 30-40 metres.

Liquefaction occurs when intense shaking causes waterlogged soil to temporarily lose strength and behave like a liquid, Patra told PTI.

Buildings can tilt or sink, roads and railway tracks may crack, and underground utilities can rupture. Riverbank and low-lying areas are particularly vulnerable, he added. Localities identified for detailed soil analysis include Bithoor, Mandhana, Panki, Barra, Chakeri, Ratanlal Nagar, Naramao and areas around IIT-K, among others.

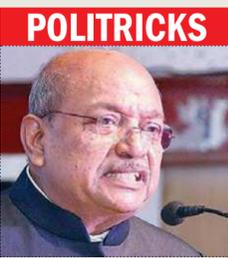## PhonePe's numbers show shift towards margin improvement

NEW DELHI: Financial disclosures filed by PhonePe indicate a marked improvement in revenue scale, profitability metrics, and cash generation over the last three fiscal years, signalling a shift in the company's financial trajectory amid India's evolving fintech landscape.

According to the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP), PhonePe's revenue from operations increased from Rs29,142.87 million in FY23 to Rs71,148.58 million in FY25, representing a compound annual growth rate of 56.25 per cent. Revenue growth during this period was supported by increased monetisation across multiple business segments, including merchant payments.

From polls to global events, transparency is non-negotiable

THE PoLITICA
Nothing political about it

Andhra Pradesh polling surge and the AI Global Summit fallout stand as stark tests of transparency, institutional standards and democratic credibility

POLITRICKS

BN Kumar

CAESAR'S wife must be above suspicion. The phrase endures because institutions must be seen to act beyond reproach. In India today, where elections unfold with relentless regularity — a state going to the polls, a by-election announced, a local body contest underway — that standard acquires special urgency. We are, in effect, a nation in permanent campaign mode. The Election Commission functions continuously, from Nirvachan Sadan to the booth-level officer. The executive governs in an atmosphere where every summit, speech and administrative decision carry political weight. In such a climate, democratic conduct is not an abstract ideal. It is a daily test. Let us examine this through two recent case studies — not to endorse allegations nor to undermine institutions, but to assess whether our public conduct consistently meets the standard that Caesar's wife demands.

The first concerns electoral transparency.

During the 2024 Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections, held alongside the Lok Sabha polls, political commentator and economist Parakala Prabhakar highlighted official turnout data showing that approximately 17 lakh additional votes were recorded within a roughly 130-minute window late on polling day. In interviews, including one with Karan Thapar, he argued that distributing this increase across the booths concerned implied an extraordinarily high rate of voting during that compressed period — effectively, by his calculation, amounting to a vote every few seconds at certain polling stations. He described such a pace as "humanly impossible" given the time required for voter identification, EVM operation and VVPAT confirmation.

Whether his arithmetic withstands scrutiny is precisely the point that demands institutional clarity. If the surge reflects reconciliation of voters already in queue before the official close of polling, the protocol can be explained. If delayed uploading of booth data created the impression of a compressed spike, time-stamped reporting logs can be published. If the interpretation is flawed, it can be disproved with transparent, booth-wise documentation. But when a defined numerical claim — 17 lakh votes in roughly 130 minutes in a specific election — circulates without comprehensive clarification, doubt lingers longer than data.

This is not an isolated controversy. During the 2024 general elections, Rahul Gandhi alleged that sharp post-5 pm increases in turnout figures in certain phases, when broken down mathematically, appeared to imply voting activity extending well beyond official polling hours. He sought release of CCTV footage to verify the final hours of voting. The Election Commission rejected that demand, citing privacy concerns and maintaining that the increases reflected the clearing of voters already present in queue before closing time.

The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process provides another illustration. Voter list revision is essential to democratic accuracy. Yet when large-scale deletions triggered concern and judicial scrutiny prompted course correction, a broader question arose: could greater transparency at the outset have prevented mistrust and litigation? Why not publish district-wise dashboards detailing additions, deletions, objections filed and objections resolved? Why not institutionalise independent observation during intensive revisions?

Across the political spectrum, concerns have surfaced at various times. The Aam Aadmi Party has questioned voter roll discrepancies. Congress has written letters alleging irregular deletions. Mamata Banerjee has raised objections over electoral rolls. Raj Thackeray has publicly demonstrated what he claimed were EVM malfunctions. Each claim may be contestable, but it merits engagement and a fact-based, transparent rebuttal — not summary dismissal.

The late T.N. Seshan demonstrated that institutional authority is reinforced, not weakened, by clarity. He confronted political power firmly and communicated decisions openly. In an era of constant elections, that spirit of visible accountability remains relevant.

Transparency is not a concession to critics; it is the foundation of legitimacy.

The second case study concerns executive conduct and public optics.

The recent AI summit, intended as a showcase of technological ambition, generated controversy over logistics and messaging. Reports described traffic disruptions that forced delegates to walk considerable distances. There were accounts of halls being vacated ahead of the Prime Minister's arrival for security reasons, disrupting scheduled engagements. An exhibitor reportedly misplaced documents during the reshuffle, which were later recovered.

One episode that drew particular global attention — and caused embarrassment — was the demonstration of what was presented as an indigenous AI-driven robotic dog by Galgotias University, only for reports to suggest that the product closely resembled an existing Chinese model available commercially. International media commentary followed, raising questions about due diligence and screening processes. Whether the lapse was intentional or careless, the procedural issue remains: what verification mechanisms governed the selection of exhibits? Were technical claims independently vetted before being showcased at a global forum? The episode might have prompted deeper reflection on vetting and quality control. Instead, the narrative shifted when a Youth Congress "topless protest" against the government's claims generated dramatic visuals. The debate moved from screening standards to spectacle. In the churn of outrage and counter-outrage, the more substantive issue — the rigour of selection and presentation at an international platform — receded from public focus.

Large gatherings involving global participants inevitably strain logistics. Security around a sitting Prime Minister is non-negotiable. Yet better planning and calibrated movement management could arguably have minimised disruption rather than requiring delegates to vacate halls abruptly. The question, ultimately, is one of standards. When an event designed to project technological competence encounters visible organisational friction, what message does that send? When summit visuals prominently feature political symbolism, does the line between governance platform and campaign theatre blur? In an age where optics shape perception as much as policy, administrative precision becomes part of democratic credibility. Political language further shapes that climate. Expressions such as "vote chori" on one side have been met with terms like "Nanga Party" on the other.

Campaign rhetoric has included references to mutton, buffaloes, mangalsutras, industrialists' alleged bags of money and insinuations about wealth. Electoral politics can be sharp; yet the Prime Minister, by virtue of office, is expected to set the tone of national discourse. Robust debate need not descend into derision. When language becomes caricature, political discourse risks becoming trivialised.

Let us also remember that from Mahatma Gandhi's satyagraha to contemporary demonstrations across parties, public protest has served as a legitimate democratic instrument through which citizens express dissent. It is protected under the constitutional right to freedom of expression. It reflects the opinion of a section of the polity and often compels institutions to introspect. The present ruling party itself rose to national prominence amid the mass mobilisation of the Anna Hazare–led India Against Corruption movement and the political churn surrounding alleged scams during the UPA years. To question protest as such would be to disregard democratic history.

Questions do not weaken democracy; unanswered questions do. Transparency does not diminish power; it dignifies it. And if India is to remain a republic beyond suspicion, every institution must continually strive to meet that unforgiving but necessary standard

The issue, therefore, is not dissent. It is whether both protest and power are exercised with responsibility. When protest becomes theatrical spectacle without substantive engagement, it risks diluting its own message. When authority responds with rhetorical escalation rather than institutional explanation, democratic maturity suffers.

Caesar's wife must be above suspicion. That principle applies equally to the Election Commission and to the executive. It applies to the counting of votes and to the conduct of national events. It applies to statistical reconciliation and to political rhetoric.

If allegations are unfounded, rebut them comprehensively and publicly. If procedures are sound, demonstrate them repeatedly through accessible data. If logistical lapses occurred, acknowledge and correct them transparently. If language has crossed lines, recalibrate it. Institutions grow stronger when they treat scrutiny as an opportunity to reinforce trust rather than as an affront to authority.

In a nation of immense scale and diversity, democratic legitimacy rests not only on outcomes but on confidence in process and tone. Questions do not weaken democracy; unanswered questions do. Transparency does not diminish power; it dignifies it. And if India is to remain a republic beyond suspicion, every institution must continually strive to meet that unforgiving but necessary standard.

(The columnist is a Mumbai-based author and independent media veteran, running websites and a youtube channel known for his thought-provoking messaging)