UPI payments will remain free for consumers, PhonePe CEO Sameer Nigam assures

NEW DELHI, AUG 8: UPI payments will continue to remain free for consumers, PhonePe CEO Sameer Nigam said on X, amid renewed discussion over transaction charges following the passage of a new tax amendment bill in the Lok Sabha.

"UPI is and will remain free for all Indian consumers!" Nigam said in a post on Saturday afternoon, adding that consumers "will NOT BE CHARGED anything for making UPI payments.

The PhonePe founder's clarification comes amid a debate over the proposed Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on certain UPI transactions. The move has raised questions over whether consumers could eventually be charged for using UPI, India's most widely used digital payments platform.

The Payments Council of India (PCI), on Friday, said UPI would remain free for consumers and that small merchants would not be required to pay MDR for accepting UPI payments.

"Merchant service charges, where applicable, are commercial arrangements between merchants and payment service providers. They do not mean that consumers pay to use digital payments," the industry body said in a post on X.

The council said any charges that may apply would be imposed at the merchant end under commercial arrangements with payment service providers, rather than being collected directly from consumers.

For consumers, the answer is no, according to Nigam and the PCI.The current discussion centres on whether an MDR could be applied to certain business-directed electronic payments.

Under the Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, the government has been empowered to levy MDR on select electronic payment modes.For certain business-directed UPI transactions above Rs 2,000, the potential MDR has been indicated at 0.25% to 0.4%.

Person-to-person payments would not be covered by the proposed levy.

This means the proposed framework is aimed at the merchant or business side of eligible transactions, rather than individuals sending money to one another.

Merchant Discount Rate, or MDR, is a fee associated with accepting digital payments. It is generally paid by the merchant to entities involved in processing a transaction.

For UPI, most transactions have historically been processed without MDR being charged to merchants. The cost of running the ecosystem has instead been absorbed by banks, payment service providers and other participants.

The possibility of introducing charges for some business transactions has therefore triggered a wider debate over how India's rapidly expanding digital payments infrastructure should be funded.

The PCI said small merchants and kirana stores would remain protected from MDR charges for accepting UPI payments. "Small merchants are not required to pay any charges (MDR) to accept UPI payments," the council said.

The industry body said keeping digital payments accessible to small businesses was central to UPI's inclusive growth. The clarification is significant because small retailers, local shops and other small businesses are among the biggest users of UPI for low-value transactions.

UPI has grown from a payment platform launched in 2016 into a major piece of India's digital infrastructure.The PCI said operating the system requires continuous investment in technology, cybersecurity, fraud prevention, regulatory compliance, customer support and innovation. "For nearly 10 years, banks, payment companies, fintechs, NPCI and RBI have collectively invested in technology, cybersecurity, fraud prevention, innovation and customer support," the council said.

These costs are currently borne by participants across the payments ecosystem, allowing consumers to use UPI without paying a transaction fee.The industry is now discussing how that model can remain financially sustainable as transaction volumes continue to rise.

The Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, moved by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, was passed by the Lok Sabha through a voice vote without discussion. The legislation amends the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, along with provisions of the Income-tax Act, 2025 and Finance Act, 2026.

Its provisions allow the government to impose MDR on selected electronic payment modes. The potential charge of 0.25%-0.4% on eligible business-directed UPI transactions above Rs 2,000 has brought the question of who ultimately pays for digital payments back into focus.

However, the PCI has stressed that merchant-side charges, where applicable, should not be confused with a consumer fee. For consumers, everyday UPI payments will remain free, according to the clarification from Nigam and the PCI. The expected change is on the merchant side, particularly for eligible business transactions above the specified threshold.

The PCI said UPI has become "critical national digital infrastructure" used by hundreds of millions of Indians every day and that its expansion needs a sustainable financial model without compromising access for consumers and small businesses.

Flipkart Minutes enters gourmet grocery, launches private label Pykd as quick commerce rivals step up premium play

NEW DELHI, AUG 8: Flipkart has entered the gourmet grocery market through its quick commerce arm Minutes, adding premium and specialty food products as it looks to capture a share of a category that is gaining traction among its rivals.

Flipkart is entering a category that Bengaluru-based FirstClub helped pioneer and that its rivals have rapidly embraced. Blinkit has already launched 'Gourmet', while Moneycontrol had exclusively reported last month that Zepto was launching 'Select', its premium grocery service offering imported and gourmet products.

FirstClub is founded by former Flipkart SVP Ayyappan R.

Flipkart is also launching a private label alongside its gourmet offering, similar to Swiggy Instamart's Noice. Pykd gives Minutes its own range of products within the category, rather than relying entirely on third-party brands.

The Gourmet offering on Minutes spans categories including cheese, coffee, wood-pressed oils and ghee, ramen and noodles, chocolates, kombucha and boba. Pykd, meanwhile, has products including namkeen and chips.

Minutes also plans to bring other premium brands to expand gourmet.Flipkart did not immediately respond to queries sent by Moneycontrol.

The attraction is straightforward. Premium products such as speciality coffee, imported cheese, chocolates and premium oils typically command higher price points than everyday staples, giving quick commerce platforms an opportunity to lift basket values.

That is particularly relevant as the sector matures and players look for ways to increase spending from their existing customer base rather than relying only on higher order volumes. For platforms that have built their businesses around frequent, everyday purchases, premium grocery offers a way to add higher-value items to the same customer relationship and broaden the range of products bought through the app.

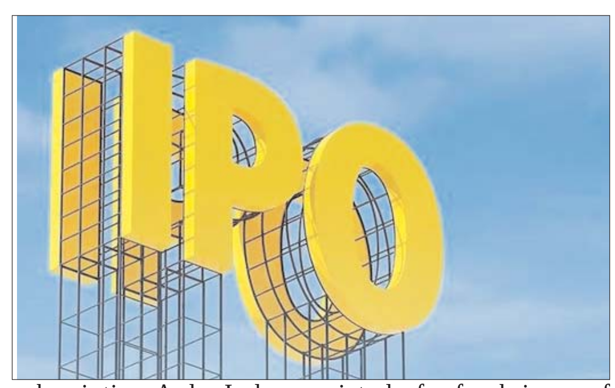
Pykd gives Flipkart a private-label play within gourmet grocery, allowing it to sell products under a brand it owns alongside the third-party brands on Minutes. That gives the company greater control over pricing, sourcing and margins, while also allowing it to develop products specifically for its quick commerce customer base.

The move is similar to Swiggy's approach with Noice, which it has been building out across food and beverage categories on Instamart. For Flipkart, Pykd could help differentiate Minutes' gourmet assortment at a time when the same premium brands are increasingly available across rival quick commerce platforms.

The premium push also comes amid rising demand for premium consumer products across food, beauty and lifestyle, as consumers increasingly spend on products differentiated by quality and provenance.

Ardee Industries IPO subscribed nearly 139 times; fourth-highest of CY26 in number of applications

NEW DELHI, AUG 8: The initial public offer (IPO) of Ardee Industries, which closed on Friday, garnered huge subscriptions, with the issue getting subscribed 138.83 times. More importantly, the IPO became the fourth highest in terms of number of applications in the current calendar year till date and the fifth best in terms of overall subscription.



The IPO with an issue size of Rs 425.87 crore received a total of 41.18 lakh applications, making it the fourth-highest in 2026 till date – behind Bharat Coking Coal, SBI Funds Management and Indi-MIM Ltd. Incidentally, all the other three IPOs were in excess of Rs 1,000 crore in size with SBI Funds Management pegged at nearly Rs 9,813 crore.

Data from Chittorgarh, a primary market tracking portal, further showed that in terms of overall subscription, Ardee Industries IPO has become the fifth-most subscribed issue of 2026 till date at 138.28 times. Only Advit Jewels (212.63 times), MV Electrosystems (200.66 times), Caliber Mining & Logistics (154.66 times) and Bharat Coking Coal (143.85 times) managed a higher subscription number than Ardee Industries.

Pantomath Capital Advisors was the sole book running lead manager for the IPO of Ardee Industries, a lead recycling company.The IPO consisted of a fresh issue of shares worth Rs 320 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of 1.99 crore equity shares aggregating Rs 105.9 crore by existing promoters. The price band for the IPO was between Rs 50 and Rs 53 per equity share.

Ahead of the issue opening, the company raised funds from anchor investors. In a regulatory filing dated August 4, Ardee Industries said it allotted 2.41 crore equity shares to anchor investors at the upper price band of Rs 53 per share.Among the anchor investors, Bank of India Small Cap Fund, Ashish Kacholia-backed Bengal Finance & Investment, and the Ashwin Kumar Kothari Group's Winro Commercial emerged as the largest participants, with each receiving 47.17 lakh shares worth Rs 25 crore.

The Wealth Company Alternates Trust's Bharat Value Fund and India Max Investment Fund were each allotted 37.73 lakh shares valued at Rs 20 crore. Cognizant Capital Dynamic Opportunities Fund and IMAP India Capital Investment Trust's Catalyst.

The company plans to utilise Rs 220 crore from the net proceeds of the fresh issue towards incremental working capital requirements. It will also use Rs 20 crore for repayment of certain borrowings, while the remaining funds will be deployed for general corporate purposes.

Fujiyama commissions 2 GW power electronics mfg facility at Ratlam

NEW DELHI, AUG 8: Fujiyama Power Systems Limited (Fujiyama) has commissioned a 2 GW power electronics manufacturing facility at Ratlam in Madhya Pradesh.

The facility will manufacture a wide range of power electronics products, including solar inverters, UPS systems and other related solutions, the company said in an exchange filing on Friday.

The Ratlam facility is a key part of the company's large-scale greenfield manufacturing expansion project aimed at strengthening its integrated manufacturing capabilities across the rooftop solar value chain, it said.

With the commissioning of this facility, Fujiyama's total power electronics manufacturing capacity has increased to 4.2 GW, further strengthening its ability to capture the rapidly growing rooftop solar market.

"As demand for rooftop solar solutions continues to grow across India, strengthening our manufacturing capabilities in power electronics enables us to deliver reliable, high quality products while improving operational efficiencies and supply chain integration," Chairman and Joint Managing Director, Pawan Kumar Garg said.

With the battery manufacturing facility also progressing as planned, the Ratlam complex will further strengthen the company's integrated manufacturing platform and support long-term growth strategy, he said.

In May, the company commissioned a 2 gigawatt (GW) solar panel manufacturing facility at the Ratlam complex.

Fujiyama Power is one of India's leading providers of rooftop solar solutions, offering an extensive portfolio across solar panels, solar inverters, lithium-ion and tubular batteries.

Reach of handloom products in global mkts can be expanded through e-comm platforms: President

NEW DELHI, AUG 8: The country's handloom sector offers significant employment opportunities, and the reach of these products in global markets can be expanded through e-commerce platforms, President Droupadi Murmu said on Friday.

Speaking at the 12th National Handloom Day celebrations here, she said about 35 lakh people are engaged in the sector and out of that over 25 lakh are women.Industrial & Product Design

The President also exuded confidence that the sector will serve as a robust foundation for the country's inclusive growth and self-reliance.

She also conferred the prestigious Sant Kabir Handloom Awards and National Handloom Awards 2025 at the Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre.

The President also said the appropriate use of new technologies is essential for the sustainable development of this sector.

Market access can be made more effective through modern digital solutions, she said. The reach of Indian handloom products to global markets can be significantly strengthened through e-commerce platforms," she said adding many talented young entrepreneurs, equipped with technology and innovative designs, are entering this sector.

She said that there should be proactive handholding of the youth through government schemes and institutions so that their enthusiasm and skills can ensure long-term, multifaceted success of this sector.

Young entrepreneurs, designers, and startups can create new opportunities in this field by linking traditional crafts with modern trends, brands, and global value chains, the President added. (PTI)

Gold rises for fourth day to Rs 1.54 lakh/10g in Delhi; silver remains flat

NEW DELHI, AUG 8 : Gold prices rose by Rs 200 to Rs 1.54 lakh per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, tracking a sharp rally in overseas markets as a weaker US dollar and softer crude oil prices lifted bullion demand.

Rising for the fourth consecutive session, the yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity increased by Rs 200 to Rs 1,54,000 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) from Thursday's closing level of Rs 1,53,800 per 10 grams, according to local traders.

However, silver remained unchanged at Rs 2,34,800 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) after witnessing a sharp rise in the previous session, according to local traders.

Gold extended its gains for the fourth consecutive session, with the precious metal heading for its strongest weekly performance since January, said Gaurav Garg, Head of Research, Lemonn Markets Desk.

He attributed the rally to a weak dollar, easing inflation expectations and continued demand for bullion ahead of the US non-farm payrolls report, which could influence the Federal Reserve's next policy decision.

Garg said silver prices also advanced on the back of improving sentiment among investors.

In the international markets, spot gold rose USD 84.74, or 2 per cent, to USD 4,325.43 per ounce, while silver gained strength by advancing more than 4 per cent to USD 64.17 per ounce.

Spot gold edged higher in the overseas markets to near USD 4,350 per ounce on Friday, while silver climbed over 4 per cent to around USD 64 an ounce, Kaynat Chainwala, AVP Commodity Research, Kotak Securities, said.

She said both metals were on course for their strongest weekly performance since January, supported by softer crude oil prices and a weak US dollar as hopes of a shipping arrangement through the Strait of Hormuz eased concerns over supply disruptions. Chainwala further said renewed institutional demand remained supportive, with global gold exchange-traded funds recording inflows of 23.5 tonnes in July after two consecutive months of outflows. Market participants are awaiting the US non-farm payrolls report later in the day, which is expected to provide fresh cues on the Federal Reserve's interest rate outlook, she added. (PTI)