



# THE MILEAGE

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## BRIEF NEWS

### Thackeray-Fadnavis meet

**Mumbai:** Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday met Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis with Aaditya Thackeray.

### BJP new Chief in 2025

**New Delhi:** The new BJP president, who will succeed incumbent JP Nadda, is likely to be elected by the end of February, according to a senior party functionary.

### TMC to oppose One Nation One Election bill

**New Delhi:** The Trinamool Congress will oppose the introduction of the constitutional amendment bill in the lower house for holding Lok Sabha and assembly elections simultaneously, party leader Saugata Roy said on Tuesday.

## NTA Excludes Recruitment Exams; Prioritizes Entrance Tests: Dharmendra Pradhan

**New Delhi:** The National Testing Agency (NTA) will not conduct any recruitment exams starting 2025 and will focus on only higher education entrance exams, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Tuesday.

The move is part of examination reforms based on recommendation of a high-level panel set up earlier this year following an alleged leak of medical entrance NEET exam and series of cancellations of other exams due to suspected leaks and other glitches.

The Ministry is also in conversation with the Health Ministry about whether the exam should be conducted in traditional pen and paper based mode or switch to a Computer Based Test (CBT).

"NTA will be limited to conducting only entrance exams for higher education and will not conduct any recruitment exams from



Speaker Om Birla conducts proceedings in the Lok Sabha during the Winter session of Parliament in New Delhi, on Tuesday, Dec 17, 2024 - (PTI)

## 'One Nation, One Election' bill introduced in Lok Sabha, Opposition demands Retreat

**New Delhi:** Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal on Tuesday introduced two bills, including a constitutional amendment, to implement 'One Nation, One Election' (ONOE), a proposal seeking the simultaneous conduct of Lok Sabha and state assembly elections.

Meghwal moved for introduction the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth Amendment) Bill, 2024, popularly being re-

ferred to as the Bill on 'one nation, one election' and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, which seeks to align the elections of the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, Puducherry and the NCT of Delhi.

The bills were introduced after the opposition sought a division of votes.

After electronic voting and a subsequent count by paper slips, the bills were in-

troduced with 269 members in favour and 198 against.

This was the first time that the electronic voting system was used in the Lok Sabha in the new Parliament House.

The proceedings were later adjourned for a little over an hour till 3 pm.

This paves the way for the BJP's push for sweeping electoral reform a core pledge since it came to power in 2014.

## Omar Abdullah echoes Amit Shah on Congress and EVMs

**New Delhi:** Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah when asked during an interview if he sounded "like a BJP spokesman" as he slammed the Congress's claims on the reliability of EVMs. However, a closer look at Abdullah's remarks shows a stark similarity to the language being used by the BJP against the Congress over its EVM tampering claims.

In fact, just a day before Abdullah set the cat among the pigeons by dismissing his ally Congress's objection to EVMs, Union Home Minister Amit Shah used a similar line of attack to deflate the opposition party's charge.

Amit Shah mocked Rahul Gandhi for "celebrating" Congress's Lok Sabha performance after the party won 100 seats -- its best performance in a decade.

## Priyanka asks govt to take steps for safety of minorities in Bangladesh

■ Raising the issue during the Zero Hour, Priyanka said the picture had been removed on Monday, which also happens to be Vijay Diwas

**New Delhi:** Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Monday claimed in the Lok Sabha that a photograph of Pakistan surrendering before the Indian Army in Dhaka, had been removed from the Army headquarters.

Raising the issue during the Zero Hour, Priyanka said the picture had been removed on Monday, which also happens to be Vijay Diwas.

Exerting that the removal of the iconic picture was an insult to the memory of Field Marshal Manekshaw, General Arora and Brigadier KS Chandpuri, Vadra sought its immediate restoration at the original place.

The Wayanad MP remembered the role of soldiers and martyrs who fought the war of 1971 between India and Pakistan. The war also resulted in the liberation of Bangladesh. Speaking to reporters out-

## Delhi Schools Receive Repeated Bomb Threats

■ At least 44 schools had received similar emails on Dec 9

**New Delhi:** Bomb threats were received by a few schools in Delhi on Tuesday, making it the second such incident this week and the fifth in nine days in the national capital, officials said.

On Monday, around 20 schools including DPS RK Puram had received threat emails.

According to an official from the Delhi Fire Service (DFS), a call regarding a bomb threat was received from Crescent Public School in Saraswati Vihar, northwest Delhi.

The official said that personnel from the fire department, local police, bomb detection team and dog squad conducted a search, but nothing suspicious was found so far. Some more schools have also received similar threat emails and

checks are ongoing, the official added. However, schools in Delhi-NCR switched to hybrid mode for conducting classes on Tuesday, following the re-imposition of anti-pollution measures under Stage 4 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). Under the revised GRAP schedule, classes for students in grades 6-9 and 11 in Delhi, Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Gautam Buddh Nagar must operate in hybrid mode (physical and online) under Stage 4 but students in classes 10 and 12 are required to attend school in person.

On December 14, eight schools, including the same DPS RK Puram, had received a similar email, in which the sender threatened to carry out an explosion using "bomb vests"



Dharmendra Pradhan

next year," Pradhan told reporters. The Minister also clarified that the Common University Entrance Test (CUET)-UG will continue to be conducted once a year.

"The government is looking at moving to computer adaptive test and technology-driven entrance exams in the near future," he said.

Pradhan said that NTA will be restructured in 2025.

"The agency will be restructured in 2025, at least ten new posts are being created and there will be many changes in functioning of NTA to ensure there is zero-error testing," he added. NTA to collaborate with institutions for seamless exam process. Dharmendra Said



Congress leaders Deepender Hooda, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and KC Venugopal take part in a protest in the Parliament House Complex, in New Delhi on Monday.

side Parliament, Priyanka said she wanted to speak on the Vijay Diwas, but was not allowed to complete her statement. She further asked the Union government to ensure the safety and security of the minorities in Bangladesh.

The Wayanad MP said she wanted to tell how the Indira Gandhi government had led the country during the Bangladesh war. She said it was a war of princi-

ples then. She observed that a similar situation had emerged in Bangladesh today, where minorities like the Hindus and the Christians were being targeted. She said she wanted to tell the government to ensure their safety and speak with the Bangladesh government on the matter.

Priyanka's attire, showing solidarity with war-torn Palestine, also caused a political row.



## Central Government Allocates Rs 777 Crore for Manipur Road Widening

**Imphal:** With a view to enhancing connectivity, the Centre has approved Rs 777.61 crore for the widening and upgrading of the Shangshak-Tengnoupal Road (Package-3) section of National Highway-102A in Manipur.

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, shared the development on social media platform X, stating, "In Manipur, we have



sanctioned a budget of Rs 777.61 crore for the widening and improvement of the Shangshak-Tengnoupal Road (Package-3) section of National Highway-102A." The project, announced under the Annual Plan for 2024-25, involves expand-

ing the existing single-lane road into a two-lane configuration with a hard shoulder.

The upgrade is anticipated to enhance road capacity, reduce vehicle operating costs, and provide improved services for commuters. The road's upgrade will not only facilitate seamless travel between the two districts but also serve as a catalyst for economic and social development in the region.

## Assam mulling to provide pulses, sugar through ration cards: CM

**Guwahati:** The Assam government is mulling to provide pulses and sugar through ration cards to help stabilise the prices of these items whenever there is a spike, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Sunday.

During the day, Sarma launched the first phase of distribution of new ration cards, covering 49 newly delimited assembly constituencies.

The chief minister, who participated in a launch programme covering Jalukbari and Central Guwahati constituencies, affirmed the government's commitment to working for an inclusive society.

"Today, HCM Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma inaugurated



the first phase of new ration card distribution in 49 newly designated assembly constituencies, reaffirming the government's commitment to uplifting vulnerable sections of society," the chief minister's office (CMO) said in a post on X. It said that by December, each beneficiary will receive 5 kg of free rice, ensuring food security for

those in need.

"HCM emphasised that the collective support and cooperation will continue to inspire the government's efforts to build a prosperous and inclusive society for all," the CMO added. Sarma said the state government had decided in September to provide new ration cards to 20 lakh beneficiaries.

## Tripura IT Directorate bags national award for digital transformation

**Agartala:** Tripura's Directorate of Information Technology (DIT) has won the "Initiative in IT" award at the 15th National Digital Transformation Awards 2024 for its Beneficiary Management System (BMS). The accolade highlights the state's commitment to innovation, transparency, and efficient governance.

The award, presented by Gov-Connect in collaboration with the Department of IT, Government of Assam, recognizes Tripura's pioneering efforts in digital transformation. The Beneficiary Management System, launched in 2020-21, integrates 100 welfare schemes across 23 depart-



ments, enabling seamless, paperless processing and eliminating fake beneficiaries. To date, it has covered over 11.6 lakh beneficiaries and disbursed ₹1,594.30 crore via Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). Director of IT, Raghul Jeya Ragul Geshan B., IFS, attributed the success to the team's dedication and the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Manik Saha and IT Minister Pranajit Singh Roy.

## Huge Arms Cache Seized in Kangpokpi

**Imphal:** Security forces on Sunday recovered a huge cache of arms, ammunition, explosives and other combat materials from Kangpokpi district of Manipur. The weapons were recovered by a joint team of the Manipur police and Assam Rifles during a search operation targeting the hideouts of miscreants.

Based on intelligence inputs regarding armed miscreants planning attacks on rival groups, the joint team launched a search operation in the hill ranges of L Jangnomphai and Freedom villages in the district.

## 5 arrested for allegedly raping minor girl in Tripura

**Agartala:** Tripura Police have arrested five youths for allegedly gang raping a minor girl at Santirbazar under South District. Speaking with reporters, Santirbazar police station OC Ashutosh Sharma said that the incident came to light after the victim's family filed a written complaint on Saturday.

"As per complaint, one of the accused youth among five, have reportedly kidnapped the minor girl from her house and gang raped her along with four more youths who were present inside a rubber plantation already.

The next morning, the traumatized girl returned home and narrated the incident to her mother, who immediately filed a complaint at Manpathar outpost", he said.

The accused, identified as Shaktiya Reang (18), Nibhas Tripura (19), Subhash Reang (19), Lakshmidhan Tripura (18), and Jiban Tripura (21), were arrested and taken into custody.

After completing all legal procedures, the five accused were forwarded before the Belonia District and Sessions Court.



Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma in Bhutan on official visit

## Assam CM Promotes Investment in Bhutan

**Guwahati:** Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, along with Bhutan Prime Minister Dasho Tshering Tobgay, attended the roadshow and business session for the 'Advantage Assam 2.0: Investment and Infrastructure Summit 2025' in Thimphu on Sunday.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "Bharat and Bhutan are bound by shared civilizational heritage. Proud that our relationship over the years has evolved and cemented and we've continued our forward march as strong partners in growth."

Speaking during the event, CM Sarma highlighted Assam's rapid infrastructural progress and emphasized the state's pivotal role in furthering India's Act East Policy. He announced that

the 'Advantage Assam 2.0' summit will take place in Guwahati on February 25-26, 2025, and will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He said that starting the roadshow from Bhutan is a testament to Assam and Bhutan's enduring bond, a relationship nurtured over centuries through cultural, historical, and economic exchanges. CM Sarma also extended a formal invitation to Prime Minister Tobgay to attend the summit in 2025. The upcoming summit will showcase how Assam is engineering its growth in different sectors to become a driver of the success of the Act East Policy. The chief minister said that the event aims at catalyzing investments and fostering partnerships across South Asia.

## Manipur CM Biren Singh condemns brutal killing of Bihar workers

■ **CM also announces Rs 10 lakh ex-gratia**

**Imphal:** The Manipur government on Sunday announced an ex-gratia of Rs 10 lakh each for the next of kin of two teenagers from Bihar who were shot dead by unidentified persons on Saturday.

Chief Minister N Biren Singh said the incident could be part of a larger conspiracy to destabilise the state.

"I strongly condemn the brutal killing of young brothers, Sunalal Kumar (18) and Dasharat Kumar (17), from Bihar in Kakching district, Manipur. This act of terrorism is a direct assault on our values, and my deepest condolences go out to their grieving fam-



ilies," Singh posted on X.

"In this crucial juncture, we cannot ignore the possibility that this horrific crime is part of a larger conspiracy to destabilise our state and push it further towards chaos. We must stand together against these destructive forces and ensure that they do not succeed in creating fear and insecurity," he further wrote.

Stating that an ex-gratia of Rs 10 lakh would be provided to each bereaved family, the CM said every

possible effort was being made to identify, apprehend, and prosecute those responsible.

"If required, the case will be transferred to the National Investigation Agency to ensure a fair and thorough inquiry," he added.

The two youths from Bihar's Gopalganj, both construction workers, were fired upon by unidentified persons on the Kakching-Wabagai Road as they were returning to their rented accommodation at Kakching Bazar on bicycles.

Both were grievously injured and succumbed to their injuries while being taken to a hospital by the police.



## EON Reality and NSDC partner to accelerate skill development with XR and AI in India

**Guwahati:** The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has partnered with Unstop, a leading community engagement and hiring platform, to revolutionize skill-based employment opportunities for India's youth. This strategic collaboration aims to bridge the skill gap by offering an integrated ecosystem of career opportunities, mentorships, and next-gen assessments that align talent with industry demands.

The partnership will create a pool of pre-assessed candidates, making hiring easier for employers while providing students with the chance to showcase and enhance their skills. "This collaboration will empower India's youth to thrive in



the job market, contributing significantly to the nation's workforce," said ShriVed Mani Tiwari, CEO of NSDC.

In Guwahati, this initiative is a game-changer. The city, with its growing demand for skilled professionals, will benefit significantly as local youth gain access to skill development platforms and career opportunities with national employers. This

partnership will help bridge the employment gap in the region, providing students in Guwahati with the necessary tools to secure meaningful, skill-based jobs, thus driving economic growth in the city. With Unstop's reach across 20,000 colleges and 5,000+ employers, this collaboration is poised to make a lasting impact on India's employability landscape.

## SWITCH Mobility launches groundbreaking E-buses, pioneers sustainable urban transport



**Chennai:** SWITCH Mobility Ltd, the electric vehicle arm of Ashok Leyland, is making waves in the sustainable transportation sector with the launch of its two innovative electric city buses—the SWITCH Eiv12 for India and the SWITCH E1 for Europe. The SWITCH Eiv12, India's first low-floor city bus with chassis-mounted batteries, offers an

impressive 400+ kWh scalable battery capacity, tailored for urban commutes. This game-changing bus was unveiled by Shri Nitin Gadkari, India's Minister for Road Transport and Highways, and promises to deliver superior safety, comfort, and accessibility, featuring a design focused on women's safety, CCTV cameras, and

spaces for differently-abled passengers. Meanwhile, the SWITCH E1, engineered for the European market, stands out with its in-wheel motors and a triple-door design for smooth passenger flow. With the Indian electric bus market set to grow at a CAGR of 21% by 2030, SWITCH Mobility is poised to become a market leader in the transition to eco-friendly public transportation.

The SWITCH Eiv12 holds significant potential. As the city looks to address its growing environmental challenges and urban congestion, the introduction of electric buses could provide a solution for cleaner, more efficient public transport, improving both air quality and mobility in the region.

## Vi dominates 4G network experience in Assam and North East circles: Opensignal Report

**Guwahati:** Vodafone Idea (Vi) has emerged as the leader in 4G network experience across Assam and North East Circles, according to Opensignal's 4G Network Experience Report for November 2024. The report, which evaluates mobile network performance, ranks Vi at the top in delivering superior data, voice, video, and gaming experiences across the region.

Vi's performance stands out across the challenging terrains of the Seven Sis-



ters—Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura. The company boasts the highest data speeds, offering an unmatched video and gaming experience, and leads in voice call quality. With over 8,000 sites in operation, Vi ensures seamless connec-

tivity through its extensive 4G coverage and higher internet speeds, supported by the L1800, L2100, and L2500 spectrum bands.

Naveen Singhvi, Business Head, Assam & North East Circle, Vi, said, "This recognition reflects our continued investments in strengthening our network and delivering the best experience to our customers." Vi's commitment to expanding its network is also supported by its recent ₹18,000 crore FPO raise.

## Toyota brings trusted mobility to the Northeast with Guwahati TUCO facility

**Bangalore:** Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) has unveiled its first Company Owned Toyota Used Car Outlet (TUCO) in Guwahati, Northeast India, offering customers a trusted platform for buying and selling pre-owned Toyota vehicles. This facility, spanning 4,000 square feet, marks TKM's third TUCO outlet in India after Bengaluru and Delhi, reflecting its commitment to delivering high-quality, reliable mobility solutions. Each vehicle at TUCO undergoes a rigorous 203-point inspection by Toyota-trained technicians, ensuring safe-



ty, reliability, and transparency. Customers also benefit from online vehicle valuation, warranties up to 30,000 kilometers or two years, and three complimentary services, offering peace of mind for every purchase. Toyota's

expansion into the Northeast aligns with the region's growing aspirations for better mobility options, showcasing the company's vision of "Happiness for All" while strengthening its foothold in India's thriving used car market.

## Network18 accelerates green mobility with 'Green Bharat' conclave

**New Delhi:** Network18, in partnership with Ola Electric, concluded the first edition of the 'Green Bharat' conclave, aimed at positioning India as a global leader in electric mobility. The event brought together policymakers, manufacturers, and sustainability experts to chart a unified roadmap for EV adoption.

Union Ministers Nitin-Gadkari and PiyushGoyal headlined the conclave, advocating for policies like 'One Nation, One EV Policy.' ShriGadkari expressed confidence in India's future as a manufacturing hub, stating, "With Prime Minister NarendraModi's vi-



sion and young innovators driving progress, India will emerge as the largest EV manufacturing hub within five years." ShriPiyush-Goyal highlighted transformative programs such as FAME I and II, adding, "India's EV transition holds unmatched opportunities to lead the global market

while ensuring sustainability."

Avinash Kaul, CEO of Network18, underscored the event's significance, stating, "Green Bharat is a collaborative effort to accelerate EV adoption, overcome challenges, and shape India's sustainable mobility ecosystem."

## IndiaFirst Life launches 18 new agency branches, eyes growth in Guwahati

**Guwahati:** IndiaFirst Life Insurance Company Limited (IndiaFirst Life) has launched 18 new agency branches within three months as part of its #AgencyNirmaan initiative. The strategic move aims to expand the company's footprint across India and provide comprehensive life insurance solutions to underserved regions.

Rushabh Gandhi, Managing Director & CEO, IndiaFirst Life, said, "The expansion of our Agency channel fortifies our presence and complements our Bancassurance business. With plans to establish ~100 agency branches over the



next two to three years, we are transforming into a multi-channel distribution organization." SumeetSahni, President – Agency Channel, added, "#AgencyNirmaan allows us to strengthen our distribution network, offer employment opportunities, and cater to the last-mile customer with need-based insurance solutions."

The newly launched Guwahati branch is a focal point for IndiaFirst Life's expansion in the Northeast. Guwahati, a key economic hub, is witnessing rising demand for personalized financial products as urbanization and financial awareness grow. By recruiting local advisors and offering state-of-the-art services, IndiaFirst Life aims to deepen its market presence and drive insurance penetration in the region. With its customer-centric approach, IndiaFirst Life is poised to support financial planning and contribute to the regulator's vision of "Insurance for All by 2047."



## Durex's 'The Birds and Bees Talk' launches Asia's first Consent Café at Hornbill Festival

**Kohima:** Reckitt's Durex The Birds and Bees Talk (TBBT), a transformative life skills program, marked a significant milestone at the 25th Hornbill Festival in Nagaland by introducing Asia's first-ever Consent Café. Drawing over 2.5 lakh visitors to Kisama Heritage Village, the initiative promoted impactful conversations around consent, equity, and inclusivity.

Inaugurated by ShriAnoopKhinchi (IAS) and



ShriThavaseelan K (IAS), the Consent Café provided an immersive experience

featuring art, light installations, and music, creating a safe space to address the importance of consent in modern society. The event also saw the launch of the Durex TBBT Rap Album, spotlighting five local rap artists whose tracks focused on the program's core pillars—consent, awareness, and

inclusion. ShriTemjenImna Along, Minister of Tourism and Higher Education, commended Reckitt for blending cultural engagement with social awareness. Gaurav Jain, EVP, Reckitt South Asia, stated, "The Hornbill Festival has been a powerful platform to inspire meaningful change. Through initiatives like the Consent Café and Rap Album, we aim to empower youth with the knowledge and skills for a responsible future."

## NE Tech Summit 2024 announces new growth prospects for Northeast India's tech ecosystem

**Kohima:** The NE Tech Summit 2024, held at RCEMPA, Jotsoma, Kohima, has set the stage for a technological revolution in Northeast India.

Organized by the Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) in collaboration with the Nagaland Industrial Development Corporation (NIDC), the summit focused on exploring the untapped potential of the region to foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and the rise of deep-tech startups. Key industry leaders, including Shri. Sethrongkyu Sangtam, Advisor, Department of IT &



Communication, Government of Nagaland, and Shri. Arvind Kumar, Director General of STPI, highlighted the transformative role of AI and digital tech-

nologies in shaping the future. The summit underscored the opportunities for the region to capitalize on India's growing digital infrastructure, especially

through initiatives like the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, which is designed to boost the manufacturing sector.

Kohima is increasingly emerging as a focal point for digital innovation. The growing interest from local entrepreneurs in launching tech-driven businesses is a key indicator of the region's evolving market dynamics. With support from government initiatives and a young, dynamic workforce, Kohima is positioned to become a thriving hub for startups, offering a fertile environment for technology-driven growth.

## Nissan stays committed to Indian market expansion amid global restructuring plans

**Guwahati:** Despite facing global turbulence, Nissan is reinforcing its commitment to India, with plans to increase headcount and ramp up production at its Chennai plant. The company recently added 600 new jobs, including a third shift at the plant, as part of its strategy to introduce two new models and enhance production capacity.

Frank Torres, President of Nissan India Operations, emphasized that while Nissan is cutting 9,000 jobs and reducing global production by 20%, India remains a key focus for the company.

"Our plans for India remain intact. We are strengthening our workforce, growing production, and introducing new models," he stated, assuring that the global restructuring will not affect the company's operations

in India. Nissan's target is to triple its domestic and export volumes to 1 lakh units annually by FY26. This includes expanding its manufacturing capacity to full utilization, supported by the Tamil Nadu government's cooperation. The company is also investing in new technology, particularly electric vehicles, as part of its growth strategy. In the Guwahati market, Nissan is looking to strengthen its position as part of its nationwide expansion. With the growing demand for modern and fuel-efficient vehicles in the region, the company is optimistic about maintaining its competitive edge. The local market has seen increased interest in compact SUVs like the Magnite, contributing to Nissan's expanding presence in Assam.

## NEHHDC drives growth for Northeast's handloom and handicraft sector



**New Delhi:** The Northeast Handlooms and Handicrafts Development Corporation (NEHHDC) is scaling up its efforts to spotlight the region's rich cultural heritage through initiatives like Vividhta Ka Amrit Mahotsav and Bharatiya Kala Mahotsav. These events are creating new opportunities for artisans to showcase their skills and access wider markets. Products like Assam's Majuli masks, Mizoram's Punchei cloth, and Tripura's bamboo crafts are finding a growing consumer base, driven by NEHHDC's commitment to promoting GI-tagged items.

The corporation's emphasis on building strong supply chains and increasing brand visibility is paying off. Artisan communities are reporting higher demand

for their products, while consumers across India are recognizing the value of handmade, culturally significant crafts. NEHHDC's vision for the Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav as an annual event aims to provide artisans with consistent opportunities for growth. Business activity regions like Guwahati and Shillong is also picking up, with retailers observing a steady rise in consumer interest in authentic Northeast crafts. As NEHHDC continues to drive this momentum, it's not just artisans who benefit; consumers gain access to heritage-rich products that blend traditional artistry with modern market demands, fostering sustainable growth in the region's handloom and handicraft sectors.

## Bhaichung Bhutia Football Schools to conduct trials in Dimapur on Dec 20th

**Dimapur:** Bhaichung Bhutia Football Schools (BBFS), in partnership with EnJogo, will host trials for its Residential Academy on December 20th, 2024, at The Greenwood School, Khelo India Center, Dimapur. The trials are open to young football talent aged between U13 and U17, specifically for players born between 2009 and 2016. This initiative provides an exciting opportunity for aspiring footballers to secure a spot in the renowned BBFS Residential Academy, where they will undergo world-class training and development under experienced coaches. BBFS offers a comprehensive program aimed at nurturing young athletes, preparing them for a future in professional football, and po-

**FOOTBALL TRIALS 2024 - 25 | BOYS**

**DIMPUR, NAGALAND**  
Greenwood School  
Khelo India Centre

**20<sup>th</sup> December**  
Friday | 09:00

**Call Us at : 8448 020 010**  
Players born from 2009 to 2016

Registration Fees : ₹100

From BBFS Residential Academy Trials to Indian National Team

enjogo India's First Sports Learning App

tentially earning a place on the Indian National Team. Football legend Bhaichung Bhutia shared, "Football should be accessible to every young talent, regardless of their background. These trials give players a chance to realize their dreams and develop their

skills." Dimapur has seen growing interest in football, with local communities becoming increasingly engaged in sports development. This initiative is expected to foster further growth in the region's football ecosystem, providing young athletes with more opportunities to succeed professionally. The trials represent a significant step toward strengthening the football infrastructure in Dimapur and beyond.

## Sensex, Nifty plunge on third day



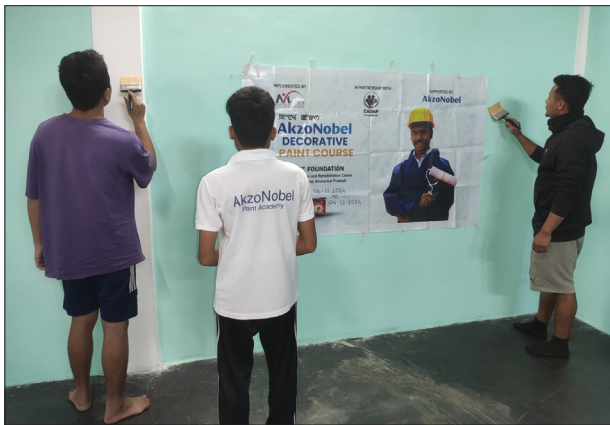
**Mumbai:** Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty stayed on the back foot for the third straight session on Wednesday as investors offloaded utility, capital goods and metal stocks amid foreign fund outflows. The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex tumbled 502.25 points or 0.62 per cent to settle at 80,182.20, taking its downtrend to the third day.

During the day, it tanked 634.38 points or 0.78 per cent to 80,050.07. The NSE Nifty declined 137.15 points or 0.56 per cent to 24,198.85.



## AkzoNobel India celebrates the milestone of three years of Project Revive

**Guwahati:** AkzoNobel India, the makers of Dulux paints and Coatings, has celebrated the milestone three years of Project Revive – its skill building program in decorative painting that has transformed the lives of over 800 drug-rehabilitated youth in Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh. Project Revive was piloted by AkzoNobel in Manipur in December 2021 in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare (Government of Manipur) and its NGO partner Makers Foundation. Here, identified vulnerable youth in 21 Drug Rehabilitation Centers (DRCs) across five districts of Manipur participated in AkzoNobel's vocational skill training course in decorative painting.



Rohit Totla, Executive Director of AkzoNobel India, shares how the power of paint is transforming lives and communities, "By empowering drug-rehabilitated youth in the North-East with livelihood-oriented skills, Project Revive is helping these vulnerable youth unlock a meaningful life with

new possibilities and confidence." AkzoNobel India received a Special Mention for 'Project Revive: Skill Building in Decorative Painting for Substance Users in the North East Region,' recognizing the initiative's notable efforts in driving sustainable development in the North East.

## NSDC and Unstop join forces to boost employability and skill development across India

**Guwahati:** The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has partnered with Unstop, a leading community engagement and hiring platform, to revolutionize skill-based employment opportunities for India's youth. This strategic collaboration aims to bridge the skill gap by offering an integrated ecosystem of career opportunities, mentorships, and next-gen assessments that align talent with industry demands.

The partnership will create a pool of pre-assessed candidates, making hiring easier for employers while providing students with the chance to showcase and enhance their skills. "This collaboration will empower India's youth to thrive in the job market, contributing



significantly to the nation's workforce," said ShriVed Mani Tiwari, CEO of NSDC. In Guwahati, this initiative is a game-changer. The city, with its growing demand for skilled professionals, will benefit significantly as local youth gain access to skill development platforms and career opportunities with national employers. This partnership will help

bridge the employment gap in the region, providing students in Guwahati with the necessary tools to secure meaningful, skill-based jobs, thus driving economic growth in the city. With Unstop's reach across 20,000 colleges and 5,000+ employers, this collaboration is poised to make a lasting impact on India's employability landscape.

## Kingfisher boosts Bryan Adams concert in Shillong with spectacular drone show

**Shillong:** Kingfisher Premium Packaged Drinking Water, known as the "King of Good Times," elevated Bryan Adams' So Happy It Hurts Tour 2024 at the Polo Grounds in Shillong with a remarkable drone show. The sky above the concert venue lit up with the words, "These are the best times of our lives," blending Kingfisher's brand essence of "Good Times" with the iconic line from Bryan Adams' Summer of '69. The breath-

taking display captivated the audience and amplified the celebration of joy, music, and togetherness. This high-tech spectacle added a unique touch to the concert, making it a night to remember for fans of all ages. The collaboration between Kingfisher and Bryan Adams not only enriched the concert experience but also highlighted Kingfisher's commitment to creating memorable moments for consumers. In Shillong, the event high-

lights the region's increasing prominence as a hub for major cultural and entertainment events. Local businesses benefitted from the influx of attendees, and the visibility provided by such large-scale events is expected to further boost Shillong's appeal as a key destination for tourism and entertainment. Kingfisher's innovative drone show also reinforced its position as a leading brand in creating unforgettable experiences.

## LEAD Group introduces 'Pinnacle'

**Guwahati:** LEAD Group, India's leading school edtech pioneer, has announced the launch of Pinnacle — a first-of-its-kind, modern curriculum solution that combines deeply researched curriculum, pedagogy, and content — to address the unmet needs of more than 60,000 high-fee schools across India. Pinnacle not only combines deeply researched, NCF-aligned curriculum, pedagogy, and content, but also blends AI and other advanced education technologies to enable a truly multi-modal, personalised and adaptive learning experience for students. Over the next 3 years, Pinnacle is expected to contribute 40% of LEAD Group's total revenue, underscoring its importance in the compa-



ny's growth strategy. Parental spend in the high-fee school segment is projected to reach Rs. 4,300 billion by 2030, reflecting a growing demand for quality education. Pinnacle's deeply researched solutions will meet this rising parental demand for propulsive education. Sumeet Mehta, CEO and Co-Founder, LEAD Group, said, "Designed and developed in India, Pinnacle is built on more than two years of research and insights from collaborations with schools nationwide." Pinnacle's flagship innovation, the TECHBOOK, introduces India's first AI-enabled intelligent books, personalising learning through data-driven insights and AR-enhanced experiences to boost student learning outcomes.

## Toyota Camry Hybrid: A strategic move towards sustainable luxury in India's auto market

**Bangalore:** Toyota Kirloskar Motor's launch of the All-New Camry Hybrid Electric Vehicle marks a significant step towards integrating luxury with sustainability in the Indian automotive market. Powered by Toyota's 5th Generation Hybrid Technology, the Camry offers exceptional fuel efficiency of 25.49 km/l, setting a new standard in the luxury sedan segment. The 2.5L Dynamic Force Engine, paired with an e-CVT transmission, delivers a robust 230 PS, combining performance with eco-friendliness. The sedan's design and features, including a rede-



signed front bumper, LED DRLs, yellow-brown leather upholstery, and a 12.3-inch multimedia system, make it a premium offering for discerning buyers. Toyota Safety Sense 3.0 and a 360-degree panoramic

view monitor enhance its safety credentials, appealing to a growing segment of safety-conscious consumers. The Camry Hybrid is expected to attract a niche yet affluent customer base, with growing de-

mand for hybrid vehicles. The region's increasing awareness of sustainability and luxury is aligned with the vehicle's eco-friendly features and premium positioning. Dealers anticipate a positive reception from high-income professionals and business leaders in the region. Masakazu Yoshimura, Chairman of Toyota Kirloskar Motor, commented, "The All-New Camry reflects our commitment to providing sustainable and luxurious mobility solutions." Priced at ₹48,00,000 (ex-showroom), the vehicle aims to redefine the luxury sedan market in India.

## RBI removes restrictions on ECL Finance and Edelweiss ARC

**Mumbai:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday said that it has lifted business restrictions imposed on ECL Finance and Edelweiss Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC) both part of the Edelweiss Group – in May this year, after being satisfied with the remedial measures undertaken by the companies to address the central bank's concerns.

The companies engaged with RBI on the remedial measures to address the supervisory concerns. Now, having satisfied itself based on submissions and remedial measures put in place by these companies to address the concerns of RBI and



their commitment to ensure adherence to the regulatory guidelines at all times and on an ongoing basis, RBI has decided to lift the restrictions placed on ECL Finance and Edelweiss ARC, with immediate effect," RBI said in a statement. RBI, in May this year, imposed business restrictions on the ECL Finance and Edelweiss ARC. ECL Finance was directed to cease and desist from undertaking any structured transactions in respect of its wholesale



## Rahul's Gritty Fifty Keeps India Alive

**Brisbane:** KL Rahul displayed admirable technical nous to withstand the stern test posed by the Australian bowlers, making a resolute fifty that formed the backbone of India's still underwhelming 167 for six at lunch on the fourth day of the third Test here on Tuesday.

A nine toes down Rahul (84, 139b, 8x4) and an equally feisty Ravindra Jadeja (41, 77b, 4x4) raised 67 runs for the sixth wicket before the former fell to a remarkably athletic catch by Steve Smith at first slip off Nathan Lyon, as the home side regained the momentum.

Nitish Kumar Reddy (7) is the other not out batter at the end of the first session that was impeded by a short spell of rain an hour into the play.

India still trail Australia by 278 runs. Resuming from their wafer-thin overnight 51 for four, India needed someone to put his hands up and show some fight, and Rahul rose to the occasion.

## Djokovic and Kyrgios Partner for Brisbane International



**Brisbane:** Nick Kyrgios has hinted at a potential doubles partnership with Novak Djokovic at the Brisbane International next year. Kyrgios, who is making his long-awaited return to competitive tennis, took to social media to share the news, posting: "Doubles at Brisbane. See y'all there," alongside a picture of himself and Djokovic from the 2022 Wimbledon final.

The Brisbane International is scheduled to take place from December 29, 2024, to January 5, 2025, which will serve as a key lead-up event to the Australian Open. Both Kyrgios and Djokovic have confirmed their participation.



KL Rahul Walks Off After Falling to Australian Attack

## Barcelona forward Lamine Yamal out for up to a month because of ankle injury

■ An injury that prevented him from representing Spain internationally

**Barcelona:** Barcelona forward Lamine Yamal is expected to be sidelined for three to four weeks because of an ankle injury, the club said Monday.

Barcelona said the 17-year-old Yamal has a grade-one injury to his right ankle. He sustained the injury in the team's 1-0 loss to Leganes at home in the Spanish league on Sunday, when he had to be replaced in the 75th minute.

He is set to miss Barcelona's match against Atletico Madrid in the Spanish league on Saturday and against fourth-division club



Barbastro in the Copa del Rey in January. He is also unlikely to be fit for team's game against Athletic Bilbao in the Spanish Super Cup in Saudi Arabia, also in January. Yamal has already missed time because of a right ankle injury earlier this season.

## Josh Hazlewood set to miss rest of the series against India



**Brisbane:** In what comes as a big blow, Australia might miss the services of Josh Hazlewood not just for the rest of the third Test, but also the remainder of the series.

According to a Cricket Australia statement, the pacer who walked off the field in the morning of day four at The Gabba is likely to be ruled out of the next two matches due to calf strain. The veteran pacer, who missed the second Test due to side strain, evidently pulled up his right calf muscle during warm-ups ahead of day four. He bowled one over in the first

hour but just after drinks walked off the field. Medical scans revealed that the pacer had strained his calf and is likely to miss the rest of the series. "A replacement will be made in due course," said a CA spokesperson on Cricket.com.au.

Even as Australia missed their frontline pacer, Pat Cummins and Co reduced India to 141/6 before getting to 194/7. India captain Sharma failed once again leaving the lower order susceptible to relatively newer ball. However, KL Rahul revived the batting with Ravindra Jadeja before getting out for 84.

## Kerala Blasters Part Ways with Struggling Coach Stahre

**Kochi:** Vociferous fans creating an intimidating atmosphere at the imposing Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Kochi for the home matches of Kerala Blasters FC has long been a key selling point for the Indian Super League overseas. And various coaches and players have expressed a fair share of interest to be in a position to soak it all in from the Blasters dugout. It was no different with Mikael Stahre.

"I have never seen anything like it before," Stahre had told TNIE in an interview early in the season. But the Swede had huge 'asan' shoes to fill, that of the hugely popular Ivan Vu-



kumanovic. Under the Serbian, the Blasters qualified for three successive playoffs, including a runners-up finish in his maiden season. The club also recorded its highest points and goals tally in a single season, in 2022, under him. And the fans were the team's proverbial 12th man. Twelve matches into the new season, though, the Blasters have cut a sorry figure. Seven defeats, four of them at home, left the fans enraged.

## SCOREBOARD

**Australia 1st Innings: 445**

**India First Innings (Overnight : (51/4):** Yashasvi Jaiswal c Mitchell Marsh b Mitchell Starc 4, KL Rahul c Steven Smith b Lyon 84, Shubhman Gill c Mitchell Marsh b Mitchell Starc 1, Virat Kohli c Alex Carey b Hazlewood 3, Rishabh Pant c Alex Carey b Cummins 10, Ravindra Jadeja c Mitchell Marsh b Cummins 77, Nitish Kumar Reddy b Cummins 16, Mohammed Siraj c Alex Carey b Mitchell Starc 1, Jasprit Bumrah batting 10, Alex Deep batting 27, Extras (b-4, lbw -2, w-1, nb-3) 10. Total **(For 9 wickets in 74.5 overs)**. 252

**Fall of wickets:** 1-4, 2-6, 3-22, 4-44, 5-74, 6 - 141, 7-194, 8-201, 9-213

## Persistent rain forces a likely draw in third test at The Gabba

■ India Dominates First Test in Perth, Australia Rebounds in Adelaide

**Brisbane:** It was another day of rain at the Gabba in Brisbane on Tuesday, almost ensuring the third cricket test between Australia and India would end in a soggy draw.

After four days of play, India was 252-9 in its first innings, trailing Australia by 193 runs, which scored 445 in its first innings.

More importantly, India avoided having to follow-on with a late flurry of tail-end runs in fading light Tuesday, forcing Australia to bat again and almost ensuring a draw by the end of the fifth day on Wednesday.

With the five-test series level at 1-1 and Brisbane touted as being a pivotal test in the series, it has turned out to be anything but. Rain delay after rain delay has spoiled the Gabba match and forced Cricket Australia to refund tickets to about 35,000 spectators



who attended the first day because not enough overs were bowled.

KL Rahul top-scored for India with 84 runs before being caught by Steve Smith off Nathan Lyon's bowling.

Only 13 overs were bowled on the first day Saturday and after there were eight stoppages of play due to rain on the third day Monday. That continued Tuesday morning and rain returned to delay the start of play after lunch, then again after only two overs

were bowled. Bad light finally stopped play Tuesday.

Australia could be a bowler down for the remainder of the test after Josh Hazlewood suffered calf soreness ahead of the fourth day's play and was only able to send down one over before leaving the field.

Hazlewood, who missed the second Adelaide test due to side soreness, was late entering the field at the start of play and then looked labored when he came into the attack.