



Countdown Begins for ISRO's 100th Mission

Sriharikota: The 27-hour countdown for ISRO's historic 100th mission from this spaceport, launch of a Navigation satellite onboard a GSLV rocket commenced on Tuesday, sources in the space agency said.

Also, this would be the first mission for ISRO Chairman V Narayanan, who assumed office on January 13.

The Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) with indigenous Cryogenic upper stage in its 17th flight, carrying the navigation satellite NVS-02 is scheduled for lift-off at 6.23 am on January 29 from the second launch pad here. The navigation satellite is the second in the series of the Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC) aimed to provide accurate position, deliver velocity & timing globally.

Modi to visit US in February; India to address Illegal immigration: Trump

White House: Trump and Modi Discuss Fair Trade and US-India Cooperation



Washington: US President Donald Trump has said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will do "what is right" on illegal immigrants, underlining that discussions are going on with India.

President Trump made these remarks on Monday while talking to reporters aboard Air Force One on his way back to Joint Base Andrews from Florida.

He also mentioned that Prime Minister Modi is likely to visit the White House

in February.

Separately, in a readout of a phone call between both leaders, the White House said that Trump had a "productive" phone call with Modi and sought a move towards a "fair" bilateral trading relationship and deeper India-US cooperation.

While talking to House Republicans at a Florida retreat on Monday, President Trump said that the US would impose tariffs on the countries that "harm" Amer-

ica as he named China, India and Brazil as high-tariff countries.

"We're going to put tariffs on outside countries and outside people that really mean harm to us. Look at what others do. China is a tremendous tariff maker, and India and Brazil and so many other countries.

So we're not going to let that happen any longer because we're going to put America first," he said. Meanwhile, during their phone call, the two leaders also discussed plans for Modi to visit the US, the White House said in the readout.

While talking to reporters aboard Air Force One, Trump was asked "Did he (Modi) agree to take illegal immigrants. "He (Modi) will do what's right. We are discussing," said the president.



Rescue operation underway after a stampede occurred on 'Mauni Amavasya' during the ongoing 'Maha Kumbh Mela' festival.

U'khand becomes first state to roll out UCC into force

Dehradun: Uttarakhand has become the first state in India to adopt a Uniform Civil Code (UCC), a groundbreaking decision designed to guarantee equal rights for all citizens, irrespective of their religious backgrounds.

CM Pushkar Singh Dhama inaugurated the UCC portal on Monday, marking the beginning of a new era of legal uniformity in the Himalayan state. "This



initiative is a significant step towards ensuring justice and equality for every citizen," Dhama said.

The UCC aims to replace outdated personal laws that have long perpetuated inequality, fostering a more inclusive society.

Ahead of Budget, govt calls all-party meeting tomorrow

The Budget session will be in two phases

New Delhi: The Centre has called an all-party meeting on January 30 ahead of the Budget Session of the Parliament, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju informed on Tuesday.

He also appealed for the cooperation of Opposition leaders in holding smooth discussions in both the Houses of Parliament during the upcoming session.

Rijiju expressed hope that Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman would present a good and balanced budget. On the upcoming Budget session of Parliament, Rijiju told a news agency, "On 31st January, the Budget session of Parliament will start. Before it, on 30th January, we have called an all-party meeting."

"Everyone is hopeful that a good Budget will be presented. On 31st January, President Droupadi Mur-



mu will address a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament. On 1st February, the Union Budget will be presented," he added.

"In the last two sessions, there was some 'hungama' in the Parliament which created a poor image of our Parliament. I want to appeal to Opposition leaders and other MPs to take part and hold discussions in Parliament during the session. If the Opposition allows the Parliament to run, then discussions can happen easily," he added.

The President will address both Houses of Parliament on January 31 at 11 am in the Lok Sabha Chamber in the Parliament House ahead of the Budget Session.

Stampede at Maha Kumbh Mela: 15 feared dead, dozens injured on 'Mauni Amavasya'

PM Modi Urges Immediate Support After Stampede speaks with CM

Lucknow: Many devotees are feared as a stampede took place at the Sangam amid the ongoing Maha Kumbh, as millions of pilgrims turned up to take part in second Amrit Snan on the occasion of Mauni Amavasya on early Wednesday morning.

The Mela administration had not confirmed the casualties till the filing of this report. However, sources said at least 15 people have died in the stampede. Ambulances were quickly dispatched and the injured were rushed to central hospital inside the Mela premises for medical intervention.

According to local sources, some women devotees got suffocated in the massive crowd and fell to the ground when a barricade was broken leading to the stampede.

In light of the recent incident, the Akharas have decided to postpone the Amrit



Snan programme.

Ravindra Puri, the chief of the Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad (ABAP), confirmed that the Mauni Amavasya Snan will be rescheduled, with the third Amrit Snan now set to take place on Basant Panchami, February 3.

Speaking from the Niranjani Akhara, Puri stated that in response to the stampede, the Akharas have opted to refrain from taking the holy dip and will instead return to their camps, as the movement of the Akhara procession could

potentially exacerbate the situation.

After the announcement by the Akhara Parishad chief, the Nirwani Akhara recalled its procession of seers back to the camp. Similarly, the Juna Akhara also decided not to allow its procession to proceed following the decision to cancel the Snan Owing to the pressure of the swelling crowd, the mela and Prayagraj district administrations halted the entry of devotees into the Mela premises and sent them back.

Coldplay's India success shows Concert Potential: PM

Bhubneswar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that India has immense potential for live concerts, citing the success of the Coldplay concerts in Mumbai and Ahmedabad.

Speaking at the Make in Odisha Conclave 2025 in Bhubaneswar, PM Modi urged the state and private sector to focus on improving infrastructure and skills to tap into India's potential for live concerts. "In the past few days, you must have seen the amazing pictures of Coldplay concerts in Mumbai and Ahmedabad. This is proof of how much scope India has for live concerts," said Prime Minister Modi.

"Big artists from around the world are also being attracted towards India. Concert economy boosts tourism and creates large-scale employment. PM Modi added.

Mizoram students' body calls on Centre to revoke Indo-Myanmar border fencing

Leaders of the MZP also called on V.K. Singh on Monday, urging him to intervene in the matter

Aizawl: Mizoram's apex student body, Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP), has written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah urging the Centre to reconsider its decision to 'scrap' the Free Movement Regime (FMR) and fence the Indo-Myanmar border.



The letter, sent through governor VK Singh, said the FMR with Myanmar has played a vital role in preserving and fostering the Mizo way of life as well as cultural ties between ethnic Mizos of the two countries by facilitating cross-border

contact, economic activities, sharing of resources and participation in each other's cultural, religious ceremonies and community events. "The proposed termination of the FMR

and the fencing of the Indo-Myanmar border threaten to sever these bonds, depriving us of our cultural rights and access to essential resources. This decision disregards the geograph-

ical, historical, and economic interconnectedness of our communities, which have long transcended political boundaries," the letter said. "Such actions would not only infringe upon the rights of indigenous communities but also jeopardise the cultural and economic fabric of our lives," it said.

The letter also said India was a signatory to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), 2007 and is bound by Article 36 of the UNDRIP.

CM launches four flyover projects in Dibrugarh

Dibrugarh: Continuing the drive for development, with a project cost of Rs. 377 crore, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma laid the foundation stone for four two-lane flyovers on the auspicious occasion of Republic Day. The project is aimed at easing traffic congestion in key areas of Dibrugarh district.



The flyover includes Mancotta Road Over Bridge, Amolapatty Junction Flyover, Road Over Bridge at Lahowal-Bordubi-Tinsukia & Old NH-37, and Lezai Kalakhowa Road Flyover.

During his three-day visit to Dibrugarh, the Chief

Minister also reviewed the progress of various Central and State Government schemes in the Naharkatia Co-District. He directed officials to complete ongoing projects within set timelines and emphasized the importance of defining agricultural field boundaries through tree planting. The Chief Minister also discussed plans to enhance sports infrastructure in the region.

Farmers Attacked by Bangladeshi Nationals

Tripura: Two Indian farmers were reportedly attacked by a group of Bangladeshi nationals along the India-Bangladesh border near the zero point in Tripura's Unakoti district on Republic Day.

The victims, identified as Karim Ali and Zamir Ali, both residents of Hirachhara ADC village under Irani Police Station, were allegedly assaulted by 10-12 individuals from the Murui Chhara area in Moulvibazar district, Bangladesh.

The attack took place near Heerachhara under Kailashahar Sub-division of Unakoti district, where the duo was inspecting their farmland.

According to sources, the brothers were attacked with sharp weapons and an iron rod. Karim sustained serious injuries, including deep wounds to his left hand and back, potentially requiring amputation, while Zamir suffered head injuries.

The victims had earlier visited their land, located near Gate No. 44 of Border Pillar No. 1843, and discovered significant damage to their crops.

After notifying Border Security Force (BSF) personnel stationed at the site, they were allegedly threatened and assaulted while returning home later in the evening.

Peaceful Co-existence urged for Manipur-Assam border residents

Imphal: Jiribam district officials in Manipur have called for a return to peaceful co-existence and communal harmony along the Assam border.

Deputy Commissioner Krishna Kumar emphasized the need to restore the earlier harmonious environment in the district, urging all stakeholders to contribute positively.

The 2024 communal violence in Jiribam resulted in the deaths of nine people, including women and children. Six women and three children were abducted and killed by extremists.

DC Kumar said the district administration is providing assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs), in-



cluding ex-gratia payments to the families of the deceased and compensation for farmers unable to cultivate their land.

Deputy Commissioner Kumar highlighted the importance of leveraging the district's agricultural, horticultural, and sericultural potential to contribute to the goal of "Atmanirbhar

Bharat" (self-reliant India).

To improve public service delivery, the district has re-activated the "District Meeyamgi Numit" (Peoples' Day) to address public grievances directly.

DC Kumar said the district administration is providing assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs), including ex-gratia payments.

SC to review probe plea against Manipur CM

Imphal: Controversy sparked following the leaked audio tapes, which included telephonic conversations involving Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh. The audio tape has raised allegations that Chief Minister N. Biren Singh was involved in inciting violence in the state. The leaked tape has led to the matter being brought before the Supreme Court, seeking an in-depth investigation.

Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna intervened and addressed the matter on Tuesday, indicating an advance hearing of the plea filed by the Kuki Organization for Human Rights Trust.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, who represented the plea, called for a Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe into the leaked tapes.

The advocate requested an urgent hearing, arguing that the petitioner had already complied with the earlier Supreme Court's directive on November 11, which instructed the submission of evidence, including the audio tapes. However, CJI Khanna advised Bhushan to submit a written application and said, "We will examine. Please give a request in writing. In case of extreme urgency, we will advance the hearing." In response, Bhushan claimed that the petitioner is being 'hounded,' on behalf of the Kuki Organization.

Nagaland deputy CM Y Patton condemns shooting at DFO office

The incident took place on January 24 shooting at the Zunheboto DFO office

Kohima: Nagaland Deputy Chief Minister Y. Patton and the Zunheboto Town GB Association (ZTGBA) have strongly condemned the shooting incident that occurred on January 24 inside the premises of the District Forest Officer's office in Zunheboto. The incident resulted in damage to a government vehicle belonging to an officer.



demnation from all citizens and urged law enforcement agencies to swiftly apprehend the culprits and ensure they receive appropriate punishment.

The ZTGBA, led by president Kiyexu Chishi, echoed Patton's condemnation, describing the shooting as a deplorable and unlawful act that undermines the principles of a peaceful and

orderly society. The association demanded strict legal action against those responsible, emphasizing the need for justice and a strong deterrent to prevent future violence.

The association further appealed to the citizens to uphold the values of peace, unity, and respect for law and order, which they believe are essential for the progress of Zunheboto.

In a positive development, Nagaland police sources have confirmed the apprehension of a suspect in his twenties.

Manipur Woman Arrested in Chennai for Illegal Painkillers

Imphal: Chennai police has arrested a woman from Manipur for illegally selling painkiller tablets, said an official.

According to Chennai police, the accused, identified as Vungliaching alias Rebekka, 30, a resident of Singhat in Manipur's Churachandpur district, was apprehended on Friday near Thiruvanniyur bus stand.

Police recovered 8,100 tablets of "tapentadol hydrochloride," Rs 1,650 in cash, and an iPhone from her possession, said the police official. He said investigations revealed

that Vungliaching sourced the painkillers online, received them through courier, and distributed them across Chennai.

The arrest comes amidst ongoing ethnic violence in Manipur, where Churachandpur district, a Kuki tribes-dominated area, has been significantly impacted.

The police said Vungliaching bought the tablets online, got them via courier, and sold them across Chennai. She was taken to a local court on Friday. The police said they have taken her into custody and an investigation is on.

NSDC and NAS College partner to skill youth in Meerut

Guwahati: The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and Nanak Chand Anglo Sanskrit College (NAS) have joined forces to establish a state-of-the-art skill development center in Meerut.

This collaboration aims to empower youth with industry-relevant skills in high-growth sectors like BFSI and Tourism & Hospitality, enhancing their employability prospects. The center will provide access to a



high-end skill lab and offer industry-recognized certifications, making students more competitive in the job market.

This initiative highlights

the critical need for skill development initiatives in cities like Guwahati. With a growing economy and a focus on emerging sectors, Guwahati requires a

skilled workforce to drive its growth. By fostering collaborations between educational institutions and industry players, Guwahati can effectively address the skill gap and empower its youth with the necessary skills to succeed in the dynamic job market.

This will not only contribute to individual economic prosperity but also boost the city's overall economic growth and competitiveness.

Bajaj Finance Q3: PAT rises 18% to ₹4,308 Cr on strong loan growth

Mumbai: India's Bajaj Finance posted a rise in third-quarter profit on Wednesday, helped by strong loan growth during the holiday season.

The non-banking financial company (NBFC) reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 4,308 crore (\$497.84 million) for the quarter ended Dec. 31, up around 18% from a year ago.

Consolidated numbers include the businesses of the lender's subsidiaries, Bajaj Housing Finance and Bajaj Financial Securities.

Indians celebrate a string of festivals during the October-December period, spending heavily on items ranging from apparels to electronics, which prop up demand for credit. Bajaj Finance booked 12.06 million



new loans during the quarter, a 22% increase from last year, while net interest income grew 23% to Rs 9,382 crore.

Its assets under management grew about 28% to Rs 3.98 trillion, which analysts said was above their expectations.

However, the company's provisions, or money set aside to cover potential bad loans, grew 64% to Rs 2,043 crore. Indian lenders have been grappling with asset quality stress led by unsecured segments such as credit cards and personal loans.

Blenders Pride Fashion Tour 2025: A bold leap into global fashion

New Delhi: The Blenders Pride Fashion Tour 2025 is set to redefine the future of fashion with its iconic 'The One and Only' edition, blending fashion, music, and entertainment into a cutting-edge experience. In collaboration with the Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI), the tour will travel to six major cities, showcasing the creative genius of top Indian designers and Bollywood stars.

The 2025 edition kicks off in Gurugram with Rohit Bal's grand celebration, followed by Mumbai's spectacular presentation by Tarun Tahiliani. Other cities, including Chandigarh, Guwahati, and Vizag, will see fashion spectacles from Kanika Goyal, Jaywalking, and Bloni, featuring stars like Jacqueline Fernandez, Tiger Shroff, and Tamannaah Bhatia.

Kartik Mohindra, Chief Marketing Officer, Pernod Ricard India, expressed the brand's ambition to offer a unique fashion experience, targeting the growing youth demographic. FDCI Chairman Sunil Sethi emphasized the importance of the collaboration in shaping the future of Indian fashion.

Tata AIA Life unveils 'Shubh Muhurat' to help families achieve dream weddings

Guwahati: In a move to address the growing financial burden associated with Indian weddings, Tata AIA Life Insurance, a leading life insurer, has introduced 'Shubh Muhurat,' a novel life insurance solution.

This product is designed to assist parents in systematically saving for their children's dream weddings while also providing financial security in unforeseen circumstances.

Traditionally, Indian families have relied on gold, fixed deposits, and other conventional saving meth-

ods to accumulate funds for weddings. However, these options often lack flexibility or the potential for substantial wealth growth over time. Shubh Muhurat emerges as a solution, promoting goal-based saving through life insurance.

The Indian wedding industry is a booming one, with an estimated market value of INR 10.7 lakh crore and over 80 lakh weddings held in 2024 alone. Weddings in India are more than just ceremonies; they are grand celebrations of family, love,

and the beginning of a new chapter. The pressure to deliver a lavish wedding can cause significant financial strain on families.

Guwahati, the largest city in Assam, is likely to benefit from Shubh Muhurat. Guwahati's vibrant culture places a significant emphasis on weddings, often leading to high expenses. This new life insurance solution can potentially help Guwahati residents plan their dream weddings more methodically and achieve their financial goals.

Air India introduces AI-driven eZ booking for seamless reservations

Guwahati: Air India has launched its groundbreaking AI-powered eZ Booking feature, promising a faster and more intuitive reservation experience for Maharaja Club loyalty program members.

The feature, available on Air India's website, eliminates complex navigation, allowing users to book tickets effortlessly by speaking or typing their travel needs. The innovative eZ Booking employs 'Agentic AI,' mimicking human travel agents by understanding natural language inputs and generating customized itineraries. Users can modify or finalize their plans with minimal commands, making the process seamless. "eZ Booking showcases our commitment to enhancing customer experience with intelligent digital solutions," said Dr. Satya Ramaswamy, Chief Digital and Technology Of-

ficer, Air India. The feature allows travelers to book tickets using voice commands, a first in the airline industry. The patent-pending design, recognized with the prestigious Red Dot Design Award, underscores Air India's leadership in AI innovation. In Guwahati, a key hub for air travel in the Northeast, the feature is expected to attract tech-savvy travelers seeking quick bookings. With rising air traffic from the region, eZ Booking offers convenience, particularly for frequent flyers balancing tight schedules.

As part of its transformation program, Vihaan.AI, Air India plans to expand eZBooking to mobile platforms, ensuring broader accessibility. The airline continues to set benchmarks in the aviation industry, blending technology with India's rich legacy of hospitality.

Tata Soufull feeds millions at Mahakumbh, targets Guwahati growth

Guwahati: Tata Soufull, a leading player in the healthy snacking segment, is making its presence felt at the ongoing Mahakumbh Mela. The brand is leveraging the massive gathering to showcase its diverse range of wholesome and nutritious offerings, including Hot Masala Oats+, No Maida Rusk, and Ragi

Bites for children.

"We are committed to providing wholesome and delicious options to consumers across India," said Prashant Parameswaran, President, Soufull at Tata Consumer Products.

"The MahakumbhMela provides an ideal platform to connect with a vast audience and share our vi-

sion of accessible, healthy snacking."

Guwahati presents a significant growth opportunity for Tata Soufull. With a growing young population and increasing health consciousness, the demand for healthy and convenient snacking options is on the rise.

The Mahakumbh Mela,

with its massive footfall, provides an excellent platform to showcase the brand's offerings to a large segment of the Guwahati population. By engaging with the diverse audience at the Mela, Tata Soufull aims to strengthen its brand presence and drive consumer adoption in the Guwahati market.

Keeway India launches K300 SF Street Fighter at aggressive introductory price

Aizawl: Keeway India, a subsidiary of Adishwar Auto Ride India (AARI), has launched the K300 SF Street Fighter, a special edition of its popular K300 motorcycle series. To drive sales, the company is offering the first 100 units at an introductory price of ₹1.69 lakhs (ex-showroom), making it a compelling proposition in the competitive 300cc segment. The K300 SF boasts a powerful 292.4cc engine, aggressive styling, and advanced features like USD forks and dual-channel ABS. Aizawl, with its growing demand for premium motorcycles and a preference for sporty designs, is expected to be a key market for the K300 SF. The aggressive pricing and exclusive launch offer are likely to attract a significant number of buyers in the region, particularly among young riders and enthusiasts. Keeway India aims to capitalize on this growing demand and establish a strong presence in the Aizawl market through strategic marketing and dealership expansion.

Godrej Agrovet launches ArgoRid to combat fish lice in aquaculture

Guwahati: Godrej Agrovet Limited (Godrej Agrovet), in collaboration with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) – Central Institute of Fisheries Education (CIFE), has unveiled ArgoRid, an innovative fish lice controller. Designed to address Argulus infections, which impact 48% of Indian aquaculture ponds and result in annual losses of USD 62.5 million, ArgoRid promises a farmer-friendly, easy-to-use solution that enhances fish health and productivity.

Balram Singh Yadav, Managing Director of Godrej Agrovet, emphasized the product's role in empowering fish farmers. "ArgoRid is a reliable, research-driven solution to

one of the aquaculture industry's biggest challenges. This public-private partnership with ICAR-CIFE will strengthen India's fisheries sector and contribute to the nation's Blue Revolution," he stated. Dr. Mohammad Aklakur of ICAR-CIFE hailed ArgoRid as a scientific breakthrough, highlighting its dual benefits of eliminating fish lice and boosting immunity. The product's launch is expected to benefit fish farmers in Guwahati and across Assam, where aquaculture is integral to local economies. By enhancing fish survival rates and productivity, ArgoRid could boost incomes and strengthen Guwahati's fish market, a critical hub for regional trade.

India celebrates 100 entrepreneurs on R-Day, highlights global demand for skilled workforce

Guwahati: Marking the 76th Republic Day, Jayant Chaudhary, Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, honored 100 entrepreneurs at KaushalBhawan for their contributions to India's economic growth under the Skill India Mission. These entrepreneurs, hailing from diverse regions, were also invited as special guests to the Republic Day parade.

Fresh from the World Economic Forum 2025 in Davos, Chaudhary emphasized India's emergence



as a global skill hub. "Our skilled workforce is gaining immense global recognition, strengthening India's position as a global skill

capital," he said, citing discussions on sustainability, AI, and women-led development.

Entrepreneurs from the

Northeast shone brightly, with 16 trailblazers, including nine women, recognized for their achievements. Among them, Assam's Namita M. Marak and Mandira Baglary exemplify the transformative power of skill development in underserved areas.

In Guwahati, local ventures will increasingly benefit from skilling programs, contributing to Assam's robust MSME sector. These initiatives are driving job creation, innovation, and sustainable development in the region.

Lenovo expands retail footprint with 25+ new stores across North and East India



Guwahati: Lenovo, a global leader in technology, has significantly bolstered its retail presence by inaugurating over 25 exclusive stores across North and East India. This expansion brings Lenovo's total retail footprint to more than 480 exclusive stores nationwide, reinforcing its market leadership and commitment to accessible technology.

The new stores, strategically located in regions like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan,

Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Haryana, aim to meet the rising demand for cutting-edge devices. With a strong focus on Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities, these outlets feature AI-enabled gaming, consumer, and commercial products, catering to diverse customer needs. Notably, a hybrid store in Faridabad, Haryana, introduces a dedicated gaming zone, offering immersive experiences for enthusiasts. In Guwahati,

Lenovo's retail expansion is expected to further boost the city's growing tech market. The new store aims to serve as a hub for innovation, enabling students, gamers, and professionals to explore Lenovo's AI-driven technology while enjoying express delivery services, with delivery times as short as four hours.

"Expanding our retail footprint reinforces our commitment to bringing smarter technology closer to consumers," said Raghavendra Araveeti, Sales Head, North and East – Consumer Business, Lenovo India. Lenovo remains focused on enhancing customer experiences with interactive displays, product demos, and technical support, bridging the gap between technology and consumers nationwide.

Mahindra Trucks & Buses drives innovation in Assam with new Lakhimpur dealership

Lakhimpur: Mahindra Truck and Bus Division (MTBD) has opened its 87th dealership in Lakhimpur, Assam, offering a state-of-the-art facility designed to make life easier for transporters and drivers.

With four service bays, the dealership can service over 10 vehicles daily and provides driver lodging, 24-hour breakdown assistance, and AdBlue, a fluid that enhances fuel efficiency and reduces emissions.

Speaking at the launch, Dr. VenkatSrinivas, Business Head – MTBD, em-



phasized the company's customer-first approach, backed by its "Mileage Guarantee" promise for BS6 OBD II trucks, ensuring "more mileage or return the truck." MTBD's vehicles also feature iMAXX, an advanced telematics system that provides real-time in-

sights into fuel use, driver behavior, and vehicle health. With a growing network of 87 dealerships, 2000+ spare retailers, and 200+ mobile service vans, Mahindra Truck and Bus continues to empower India's transporters with innovation and reliability, making every journey a step towards success.

SEBI Rejects Gaekwad's Offer for Religare Stake



Mumbai: Sebi has rejected the competing open offer for Religare Enterprises by Florida, US-based investor Digvijay 'Danny' Gaekwad.

Market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) responding to the Gaekwad's letter has said: "The letters submitted by Digvijay Laxmansinh Gaekwad are being returned since the same is not an exemption application in terms of Regulation 11 of SEBI (SAST) Regulations, 2011." The content of the letter was part of an exchange filing by the New Delhi-headquartered company. Gaekwad on January 24 had made a counter offer in cash for the company at Rs 275 a share as against Rs 235 apiece made by the Burman Family of the FMCG major Dabur group.

The offer was made in a letter addressed to the Chairperson of the market regulator, according to a filing made by Religare to the BSE. Gaekwad, in the letter, had said its offer of Rs 275 per equity share represents a 17% premium to the open offer price offered by the Burmans and a 24% premium to the 60-day volume weighted average price of Religare's share.

LIC Mutual Fund Launches Multi-Asset Allocation Fund



Guwahati: LIC Mutual Fund has launched its new scheme, the LIC MF Multi Asset Allocation Fund, aiming to offer investors a diversified investment option across equity, debt, and gold. The open-ended fund will be available for subscription through a New Fund Offer (NFO) from January 24 to February 7, 2025.

The primary objective of the scheme is to generate long-term capital appreciation by investing in a mix of equity and equity-related instruments, debt and money market instruments, and units of gold Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs). The benchmark for the scheme combines 65% Nifty 500 TRI, 25% Nifty Composite Debt Index, and 10% domestic gold prices. The fund will reopen for continuous

sale and repurchase on February 18, 2025.

Mr. R.K. Jha, MD & CEO of LIC Mutual Fund Asset Management Ltd., highlighted the growing popularity of multi-asset allocation funds, which provide better diversification and reduce concentration risks. The hybrid mutual fund category saw a significant 27% surge in assets under management (AUM) in 2024, indicating investor interest in such products.

Guwahati has shown increasing awareness of hybrid funds, with many investors seeking safer and diversified options in the current volatile market. This trend is expected to align well with the launch of LIC's new fund, which offers balanced exposure to equities, debt, and gold.

Royal Enfield Hunter 350 hits 500,000 sales milestone

Shillong: Royal Enfield's Hunter 350 has crossed a significant milestone, with over 500,000 units sold globally since its launch in August 2022. The compact roadster has become one of the fastest-growing models in the midsize motorcycle segment (250cc-750cc), winning over riders worldwide with its agility, style, and modern-retro charm.

The Hunter 350, designed for urban and adventurous riders, excels in both city commutes and open-road journeys. Its agile handling and confident maneuverability make it a popular choice for young motorcyclists. Speaking on the achievement, Yadvinder Singh Guleria, Chief Commercial Officer of Royal Enfield, stated, "Reaching the 500,000 sales milestone in such a short span is a testament to the immense love and trust our customers



have for the Hunter 350. It has redefined riding in urban environments, inspiring exploration and self-expression."

In Shillong, The Hunter 350 has gained popularity appealing to young riders with its agile handling for navigating the city's challenging terrain. Its stylish design has made it a fashion statement, while its global availability across diverse markets underscores its wide appeal.

Sensex, Nifty gain 1% as IT stocks lead market recovery; ITC Hotels fall 4%

Mumbai: Benchmark stock market indices added almost 1%, extending their run for the second consecutive day, fuelled by a rise in information technology (IT) sector stocks.

The S&P BSE Sensex surged 631.55 points to end at 76,532.96, while the NSE Nifty50 gained 205.85 points to close at 23,163.10.

Aditya Gaggar, Director of Progressive Shares, said that after a long duration, Bulls have shown their power right from the word go; the Index seen compounding its gains, which was well-supported by the strong performance of Mid and Smallcap stocks.

In today's session, leading the gainers was Shriram Finance with a surge of 3.98%, while Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) climbed by 3.72%.

Tata Motors continued



its strong run, advancing 3.65%, followed by SBI Life Insurance which gained 3.27%. Trent Limited completed the top gainers list with a solid rise of 3.11%.

On the flip side, Indian Hotels Company faced the steepest decline, dropping 3.53%. Maruti Suzuki India fell by 1.41%, while Asian Paints slipped 0.81%. Bharati Airtel shares declined by 0.76%, and Britannia Industries dipped 0.60%.

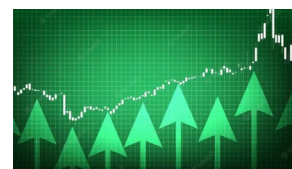
Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking

Ltd, said, "Markets managed to inch higher despite volatility, gaining nearly 1% amid mixed cues. Nifty saw sharp fluctuations in early trade but gradually strengthened, closing near the day's high at 23,163.10. Most key sectors contributed to the recovery, with realty, IT, and energy leading the gains. However, the highlight of the session was the strong rebound in broader indices, which surged between 2.3% and 3.4%."

Bajaj Auto Shares Up 5% Post Q3 Results

New Delhi: Shares of Bajaj Auto shares rose sharply in early trade on Wednesday as investors reacted positively to the company's Q3FY25 results. The two-wheeler company's stock rose over 5% to hit a day's high of Rs 8,803.70 on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). At around 12:27 pm, shares of the company were trading 3.70% higher at Rs 8,702.90.

Bajaj Auto posted a 3% year-on-year (YoY) increase in standalone net profit for the December quarter. Net profit stood at Rs 2,109 crore, while revenue from operations grew 6% YoY to Rs 12,807 crore. On a sequential basis, profit after tax (PAT) rose 5% from Rs 2,005 crore in the September quarter, though revenue fell 2% quarter-on-quarter. It may be noted that the YoY revenue growth was sup-



ported by strong exports and gains from the domestic green energy segment. Earnings before interest, tax, depreciation, and amortization (EBITDA) rose 6% YoY to Rs 2,581 crore, with operating margins improving 10 basis points to 20.2%.

Overall, Bajaj Auto's volumes grew 2% YoY to 12.24 lakh units, with exports playing a key role in offsetting domestic market weakness.

Brokerage firm Nuvama maintained a 'Buy' rating on the stock with a target price of Rs 10,700. The brokerage highlighted better-than-expected EBITDA, supported by pricing, scale, PLI incentives, and cost management.

Indian Bank's Net Profit Soars 32% to ₹2,910 Crore in Q3 FY25

Chennai: Indian Bank on Wednesday posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 2909.73 crore in the third quarter of the financial year (Q3 FY25), up 32 per cent from the same time last year after improving asset quality and "efficiency parameters".

The Chennai-based lender



made Rs 2205.63 crore in consolidated net profit in Q3 FY24. Total income rose 11 per cent to Rs 18,167.54 crore in Q3 FY25, compared to Rs 16,315.35 crore the year before.

"In terms of asset quality and efficiency parameters, the bank has done really good. We have grown by 8 per cent and for the first time, the bank has crossed a business figure of Rs 12.5 trillion, which is an achievement in itself. Total business growth was 8 per cent, deposit was 7 per cent and advance growth was 10 per cent," said Binod Kumar, managing director and chief executive officer of the bank, in a media briefing. Gross non-performing assets (NPA) decreased by 121 basis points (bps) to 3.26 per cent in December 2024, from 4.47 per cent in December 2024. Net NPA reduced by 32 bps to 0.21 per cent, from 0.53 per cent. "Our asset quality is one of the best in the industry," he said.

India requires fiscal policy reforms for 6.4% GDP growth in 2025: Moody's

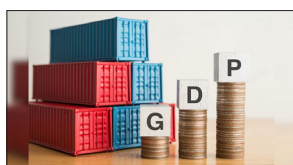
Inflation to Cool to 4.7% in 2025 from 4.8% in 2024

New Delhi: India needs to change its fiscal and monetary policy to achieve a 6.4 per cent GDP growth in 2025 amid a weak rupee, declining foreign investment and volatile inflation, Moody's Analytics said on Wednesday.

Moody's Analytics said it expects the 2025-26 Union Budget to support domestic demand, particularly investment while aiming for a fiscal deficit of less than 4.5 per cent of GDP for the next fiscal.

In 2023-24, the fiscal deficit was 5.6 per cent of GDP, which is estimated to come down to 4.9 per cent in the current fiscal.

"India is facing a bumpy road in 2025. A weakening rupee, declining foreign investment, and volatile inflation are the areas of greatest economic risk. Changes in fiscal and monetary policy, likely in the first half of the year, is needed if India is to achieve 6.4 per cent growth," Moody's Analytics Associate Economist Aditi Raman said. Moody's said that while India had one of



the fastest-growing economies in Asia in 2024, GDP growth waned over the first three quarters.

GDP growth likely picked up in the December quarter, resulting in an overall expansion of 6.8 per cent in 2024. That compares with 7.8 per cent in 2023.

"The slowdown versus 2023 sets a cautious tone for 2025. With interest rates staying higher for long, domestic demand will moderate.

"Potential US tariffs on Indian imports will make for a challenging export environment that hampers growth. However, that won't be too influential, given India's relatively closed economy. Our baseline has GDP growth slowing to 6.4 per cent in 2025," Raman said. Moody's Analytics said the rupee has weakened significantly since the start of the US Federal Reserve's easing cycle in September.

DGT partners with BITS Pilani to boost entrepreneurship

Guwahati: The Directorate General of Training (DGT), under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Pilani Innovation & Entrepreneurship Development Society (PIEDS) of BITS Pilani to boost entrepreneurship and skilling among students of National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs).

The collaboration focuses on fostering innovation, creating start-up opportunities, and aligning skill training with industry needs. The partnership introduc-

es two key programs: the Innovation Challenge and the Open Incubation Program.

The Innovation Challenge targets NSTI trainees and alumni, with special provisions for women to bridge the gender gap in innovation. The Open Incubation Program, a six-month grant-based initiative, offers ideation, incubation, mentorship, workshops, and funding to help participants transform their ideas into scalable ventures.

The Guwahati market, a hub for aspiring entrepreneurs in Northeast India,

is poised to benefit significantly from this initiative. The region's growing demand for skilled professionals in technology and green innovation aligns with the program's goals, offering opportunities for local youth to launch start-ups and access mentorship under the partnership.

DGT Director General Trishaljit Sethi remarked, "This partnership bridges the gap between education and industry, fostering a future-ready workforce." Prof. Arya Kumar of BITS Pilani highlighted its potential to drive employment and wealth creation.

Skill India gets AI boost; Meta's Llama powers new assistant

Guwahati: In a move that could significantly impact India's workforce, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) announced the development of the Skill India Assistant (SIA), an AI-powered platform leveraging Meta's open-source Llama model.

The collaboration, unveiled during a meeting between Minister Jayant Chaudhary and Meta's Nick Clegg at the World Eco-



nomics Forum, aims to personalize skilling journeys for millions of Indians.

SIA, integrated with the

Skill India Digital Hub, will offer tailored recommendations on courses, training resources, and career paths. Users can expect a more interactive experience with multimodal interaction methods. The beta version is currently undergoing testing, with a public launch slated for February 2025. The launch of SIA has the potential to significantly impact Guwahati. By providing personalized guidance and connecting individuals with

relevant training opportunities, SIA can help bridge the skills gap in the region. This can lead to increased employability, fostering a more skilled workforce that can contribute to the growth of local businesses and industries. Moreover, by empowering individuals with the knowledge and skills to navigate the digital economy, SIA can contribute to the development of a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem in Guwahati.



India's Trisha hits historic first-ever century in U19 Women's T20 World Cup.

Neymar, Al Hilal end contract; return to Santos imminent

Rio De Janeiro: Saudi Arabia club Al-Hilal said Monday it reached an agreement with striker Neymar to terminate his contract by mutual consent.

Neither side confirmed details of the termination after the 32-year-old Brazilian, once hailed as one of the world's best players, played only seven matches for the club, with only one goal and two assists.

Despite being sidelined since October 2023 due to an ACL injury, former Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain star Neymar was part of the squad that won last season's Saudi league.

Their deal was due to expire after Al-Hilal's participation in this year's FIFA Club World Cup, which will be played between June 15 and July 13 in the United States.

The club said in a statement published on its social media channels that it "expresses its thanks and appreciation to Neymar



for what he has provided throughout his career with Al-Hilal."

The striker joined the Saudi club from Paris Saint-Germain in August 2023 for 90 million euros (\$94 million), in one of many transactions that placed the Arab country as one of the new big soccer markets in the world. But Neymar picked up his ACL injury, the most serious of his career, playing for Brazil only months after he joined Al-Hilal.

Neymar returned in October and had his most recent appearance for the Saudi club in November. The Brazilian said in different interviews there were doubts on whether coach Jorge Jesus would count on him for the rest of the season.

Manchester United must improve after 'lucky' Fulham win: Amorim

London: Ruben Amorim welcomed a rare clean sheet in Manchester United's 1-0 win at Fulham on Sunday but did not gloss over his side's need to improve despite a vital three points.

Lisandro Martinez's deflected winner offered some respite to Amorim, who has won just four of his 12 Premier League games in charge. United climb to 12th in the table, now a comfortable 13 points above the bottom three. But their performance was in keeping with many oth-



ers under two different managers this season, against sides with a fraction of their budget.

There was little to get United co-owner Jim Ratcliffe excited as he watched

PARAG RETURNS!

Riyan to Lead Assam in Ranji Trophy

Guwahati: Assam's star all-rounder Riyan Parag is all set to return to cricket after a three-month break due to a shoulder injury. Parag underwent surgery and completed his recovery during this time. He will now lead the Assam team in an important Ranji Trophy match against Saurashtra, starting on January 30.

Parag last played in the T20I series against Bangladesh but missed the South Africa T20Is in November due to an injury. He was not selected for India's Champions Trophy squad, but his good performances in limited-overs cricket shows that he is a skilled player. With the final squad still undecided, Parag has a chance to impress selectors by performing well in domestic cricket.

Parag's return is a big help for Assam, who have had a tough season in Group D with two losses and four draws. Last season, Parag performed very well, with an average of 75.60, and played an important role in Assam's improvement.

The Assam squad for the Saurashtra clash includes Riyan Parag (captain), Denish Das (vice-captain), Mukhtar Hussain, Mrinmoy Dutta, Rahul Singh, Dipjyoti Saikia, Parvez Musaraf, Sumit Ghadigaonkar (wk), Rishav Das, Anurag Talukdar (wk), Avinav Choudhury, Sibsankar Roy, Akash Sengupta, Pradyun Saikia, and Amlanjyoti Das.



Bumrah Named ICC Test Cricketer of the Year

Dubai: Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah was on Monday named ICC men's Test Cricketer of the Year for amassing 71 wickets in just 13 matches at a jaw-dropping sub-15 average, statistics that placed him heads and shoulders above his contemporaries during a phenomenal 2024.

Returning to the longest format in late 2023 after recovering from a back injury, world number one Bumrah averaged a "ridiculous" 14.92 through the year while also setting multiple records.

He played a pivotal role in keeping India in contention for the ICC World Test Championship before the team fell short.

"Bumrah was the stand-out bowler in the world in 2024, excelling in both home and away conditions and proving a key contributor in keeping India in contention in the ICC World Test Championship standings," the ICC stated in a press release.

Bumrah pipped fellow



nominees England's Harry Brook and Joe Root, and ICC's Emerging Cricketer of the Year Kamindu Mendis to win the award, becoming the first Indian cricketer since Virat Kohli in 2018 to do so.

Before Kohli, legendary off-spinner R Ashwin had been named the Test Cricketer and Cricketer of the Year in 2016.

"I am deeply honoured to receive the ICC men's Test Cricketer of the Year award. Test cricket has always been a format I hold close to my heart, and to be recognized on this platform is truly special," Bumrah said in a media release. "This award is not just a reflection of my individual efforts but also of the unwavering support of my teammates, coaches, and fans who continue to believe and inspire me every day." Bumrah added

Modi Reaffirms Commitment to Olympic Ambitions



Dehradun: The current dispensation will move heaven and earth to win the right to host the 2036 Olympics. This much was confirmed by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, during the Opening Ceremony of the 38th National Games.

"We are pushing for hosting rights of the 2036 Olympics, it will take Indian sport to new heights," Modi, guest of honour, announced. This, of course, is not anything new. Ever since the Centre made its intentions clear in 2023, there have been periodical reminders about the ambition to become the first south Asian country to host the quadrennial bash.

"Olympics is not just a sporting event," Modi said. "Wherever Olympics happen, all sectors gain. It creates better facilities for athletes, it spurs construction, creates new connectivity

Steve Smith Reaches 10,000 Test Runs, Joins Cricket Legends

Galle: Australia's Steve Smith joined a select group of batsmen to reach 10,000 Test runs on Wednesday during the first morning of the opening Test against Sri Lanka.

Smith started the match on 9,999 runs and on his first ball pushed for a single off Prabath Jayasuriya in Galle to be the 15th player and fourth Australian to the milestone. The stand-in skipper raised his bat to acknowledge the applause from the crowd.

"Fortunately hit that one in the gap so nice to get that one away," the 35-year-old told Australia's 7Cricket. "Nice to tick that off," he added. Smith joined fellow Australians Ricky Ponting, Allan Border and Steve Waugh in a list led by India's Sachin Tendulkar, who made 15,921 runs in his red-ball career.