



THE MILEAGE

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Siddaramaiah cleared in MUDA Case

Bengaluru: Lokayukta police on Wednesday said that there is no evidence found against Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah, his wife and others in MUDA (Mysore Urban Development Authority) case.

The case pertains to allotment of 14 sites to Parvathi, Siddaramaiah's wife, by MUDA as compensation for acquiring her 3.16 acres of land at Kesare to develop a residential layout.

"The Lokayukta police probing the MUDA site allotment case on Wednesday said that the charges against Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his wife Parvathi could not be proved for want of evidence," news agency PTI reported.

Gyanesh Kr assumes charge as CEC



New Delhi: The newly appointed Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar took charge on Wednesday, replacing Rajiv Kumar, who demitted office on Tuesday, as head of the poll panel.

Vivek Singh Joshi, a former Haryana cadre IAS officer, assumed charge as an Election Commissioner. In his message to voters after assuming charge, Kumar said, "First step for nation building is voting. Therefore, every citizen of India who has completed 18 years of age should become an elector and should always vote."

Kumar asserted that the "Election Commission was, is and will always be with the voters." An election commissioner since March 2024, Kumar was elevated as the CEC on Monday. Kumar is the first CEC appointed under a new law.

Trump threatening existence of India's GST: Congress

New Delhi: Congress on Wednesday claimed that the talk of reciprocal tariffs by U.S. President Donald Trump is calling into question a consumption tax like GST, and wondered whether his "good friend in New Delhi" would stand up to it when national sovereignty is at stake.

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh questioned whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi would defend India's

national sovereignty in response to these threats

Ramesh also highlighted the Congress party's long-standing call for a reformed GST system, termed "GST 2.0," which would simplify the tax structure and improve compliance. The Congress party believes that Trump's reciprocal tariffs could undermine the GST system, which is designed to tax imports but not exports.



Qatar's Sheikh Tamim meets PM Modi and President Murmur in Hyderabad House

Rekha Gupta will be sworn in as the Chief Minister of Delhi tomorrow

■ Pravesh Verma to be Dy CM; Grand swearing-in ceremony at Ramlila Maidan

New Delhi: Delhi's wait for its new chief minister ended today as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) announced Rekha Gupta as the leader of the House. Rekha Gupta will take oath on February 20 in a grand ceremony at the Ramlila Maidan.

The decision was made at a meeting of all newly-elected BJP MLAs at the party headquarters in New Delhi on Wednesday evening. BJP leaders have said that the entire cabinet will also be sworn in along with the chief minister on Thursday.

The ceremony is expected to begin at 11 am. Lt Governor VK Saxena



will administer the oath of office to Rekha Gupta and the cabinet at 12.35 pm.

A huge crowd is expected at the event and around 40 celebrities have been invited, people familiar with the matter said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Minister Amit Shah and chief ministers of sev-

eral BJP-ruled states will also be present at Ramlila Maidan. "Around 50,000 people, including party workers, RWA, sections of society and saints, will be invited. It will be a grand event in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Cabinet ministers will be present.

Congress, BJP spar over Doge election funding claims

New Delhi: The political row over the alleged US Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) funding in Indian elections escalated on Monday, with the BJP and the Congress trading barbs over the allegations.

The BJP's attack came after a statement from DOGE, led by billionaire Elon Musk, that it had cancelled a series of international funding projects, including \$21 million allocated for voter turnout in India. Targeting the Congress, BJP IT cell head Amit Malviya hinted that the previous Congress-led UPA government had gained from the funding. "\$486m to the 'Consortium for Elections and Political



Process Strengthening', including \$22m for 'inclusive and participatory political process' in Moldova and \$21m for voter turnout in India. \$21m for voter turnout? This definitely is external interference in India's electoral process. Who gains from this? Not the ruling party, for sure," Malviya fired.

Responding to the allegation, senior Congress leader Pawan Khera asked the ruling party how Congress could sabotage its electoral prospects by getting this so-called "external interference."

J&K Governor: Indian Army responds strongly on border

Srinagar: Amid several incidents of cross-border firing and an IED attack along the LoC recently, Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said the Indian Army is fully capable of dealing with any type of situation on the borders and is giving a befitting response to enemy forces.

He also asserted that there will be no pause in anti-terror operations as clear directions have been given to security agencies to wipe out the menace and ensure peace and tranquility in the region. "Indian Army is fully capable and giving a befitting response



on the border," Sinha told reporters on the sidelines of a sports event here.

He was responding to a question on the recent incidents on the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu region where two army personnel, including a captain, were killed in an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attack carried out by suspected terrorists in Akhnoor sector of Jammu region on February 11.

PM Modi scheduled to address School of Ultimate Leadership conclave on Feb 21

■ SOUL conclave, Leaders from politics, business, and the arts to feature

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the first edition of the SOUL Leadership Conclave on Friday at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. He will also address the gathering on the occasion. Prime Minister of Bhutan Dasho Tshering Tobgay will deliver the Keynote Address as the Guest of Honor.

The two-day SOUL Leadership Conclave on February 21-22 will serve as a premier platform where leaders from diverse domains like politics, sports, arts and media, the spiritual world, public policy, busi-



ness and the social sector will share their inspiring life journeys and discuss aspects relating to leadership. The conclave will foster an ecosystem of collaboration and thought leadership, facilitating learning from both

failures and successes, to inspire young audiences. SOUL Upcoming Gujarat institution to foster authentic leaders for public good. The aim is to broaden the landscape of political leadership in India.

Manipur CS holds discussions with civil society orgs. to understand and address local concerns

Manipur's CS seeks input from civil society groups to understand community needs

Imphal: Manipur Chief Secretary Prashant Kumar Singh on Monday held discussions with representatives of major civil society organisations (CSOs) of tribal-inhabited Churachandpur and Pherzawl districts to understand locals' concerns, officials said.

An official said that the Chief Secretary accompanied by Director General of Police Rajiv Singh and Inspector General of Police NK Ujjwal visited Churachandpur to assess public life and review the



district's civic administration. Besides meeting with the CSOs, Chief Secretary

Singh also held a meeting with Deputy Commissioner, Dharun Kumar S, at the

Conference Hall of the Mini Secretariat, Tuibong.

The senior IAS officer also engaged with security officials to review the prevailing situation in the district to address issues affecting the people. Singh also interacted with displaced civil officers and medical students. This is Chief Secretary's first meeting with CSOs outside state capital since President's Rule. Meanwhile, Manipur's Rajya Sabha member Leishemba and family met Governor Bhalla.

Assam House holds first session outside Guwahati



Guwahati: Assam made history on Monday by holding an Assembly session outside the state's seat of power – Guwahati, for the first time. Ministers and MLAs woke up early as they took a bus ride to the Bodo heartland Kokrajhar,

210 km away from Guwahati, to be a part of history. Excitement was writ large on their faces.

Businesses on the inaugural day of the Budget session were conducted at the secretariat of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) with Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya delivering the customary speech.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma tabled the report of Justice (Retd) Biplob Sarma regarding irregularities committed in the Combined Competitive Examinations of 2013 and 2014 before the Assembly. He termed the session "historic". The session from Tuesday will be held at the Assembly building in Guwahati.

Assam police file FIR against Pakistani national linked to Gaurav Gogoi's wife

CM flagged Sheikh's Pakistani government ties as a concern

Guwahati: Assam Police's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) registered a case against Pakistani national Ali Tauqeer Sheikh and others under multiple sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced today, February 17.

The case, registered as CID PS Case No 05/2025, follows yesterday's state cabinet decision amid escalating concerns over alleged foreign interference in India's domestic affairs.

The investigation cen-



tres on Sheikh's reported connections to Elizabeth Gogoi, wife of Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi. According to Chief Minister Sarma, Gogoi, a British national, worked with 'Lead

Pakistan' during her time in Islamabad and maintained contact with Sheikh through climate change organisations operating across India and Pakistan. The chief minister pointed.

New private placement bill to be introduced in Mizoram

Aizawl: A fresh Mizoram Private Placement Agencies (Regulation) Bill, 2025 will be introduced in the upcoming budget session of the state legislature commencing on February 19 to facilitate legal employment in the country and abroad, an official said on Sunday.

The bill, if enacted, will empower private placement agencies to recruit and send youths, particularly domestic workers, to outside the state and foreign countries legally, he said. Under this bill, the government will provide licenses to private agencies to execute such

tasks, he said. The bill was conceived following legal issues faced by domestic workers from Mizoram in foreign countries, particularly in Syria, UAE and other Gulf countries last year, the official said. Last year, the state government and generous individuals in collaboration with the Centre had rescued several Mizo women engaged as housemaids from Syria and other Arab countries after they faced legal problems.

Although the Mizoram Private Placement Agencies (Regulation) Bill was previously enacted in 2015.

Mizoram to host first Int'l half marathon



Aizawl: In a bid to promote health, fitness, and tourism, Mizoram will host its first international half marathon in Aizawl, stated sports minister Lalnginglova Hmar said on Tuesday.

The event, the schedule for which is yet to be announced after approval from the Athletics Federation of India (AFI), is expected to attract about 2,000 runners from across the country and abroad, he said.

For the successful organization of the proposed international event, the state sports and youth service department signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Innovations India on Wednesday, in the presence of Hmar. The agreement is valid for 3 years.

Assam duo arrested for abducting baby in Kerala

Guwahati: Two migrants from Assam, including a transgender person, were arrested by Aluva police near Kochi, Kerala, late Friday night for allegedly abducting a one-month-old baby.

According to police, the accused, identified as 20-year-old Rinki (a transgender woman) and her friend Rashidul Haq, 29, both from Assam, were apprehended following an investigation. The baby boy of another migrant woman from Bihar was the one allegedly abducted. It is alleged that after abducting the child, they demanded a ransom of Rs. 70,000. The police were notified about



the abduction at around 8pm on February 14 and swiftly launched an investigation. The mother identified the suspects from photographs of transgender individuals at the Aluva East Police Station. Police immediately rushed at Rinki's rented house, but Rinki had reportedly fled with the baby.

A hunt supervised by District Police Chief (Ernakulam Rural) Vaibhav Saxena was quickly launched.

CM Pema Khandu unveils key border infra and tourism projects in Anjaw

The projects aim to improve connectivity and boost tourism in the region

Itanagar: Strategic development projects worth millions have been unveiled in the sensitive border district of Anjaw in Arunachal Pradesh marking a significant push to strengthen infrastructure along the Indo-China border.

Chief Minister Pema Khandu inaugurated multiple key projects including the Mishmi Tourist Resort at Chandun Village, positioning the remote region as an emerging tourist destination. The resort, offering panoramic views of the surrounding mountains, aims to boost local employment and showcase the unique Mishmi cultural her-



itage. "War tourism sites like Kibitho and Walong are already drawing visitors, while Dong's first sunrise viewpoint has untapped potential," Khandu told. He emphasised the region's transformation under the Vibrant Village Programme,

launched by Home Minister Amit Shah in 2021.

The development package includes critical infrastructure upgrades to the district headquarters at Hawaii under CMCSRDP-2. New roads will boost connectivity, DC Office stated.

IndusInd Bank and BFIL partner with Tripura govt to launch 1962 helpline for livestock care

Agartala: IndusInd Bank Limited (IBL) and its subsidiary Bharat Financial Inclusion Limited (BFIL) have signed an MoU with the Government of Tripura to roll out a dedicated 1962 livestock care helpline under BFIL's Bharat Sanjeevani program.

This marks the expansion of the nationally recognized CSR initiative to its tenth state, covering 875

villages across Tripura's eight districts. The 1962 toll-free helpline will offer veterinary services, artificial insemination, vaccinations, and expert advice on animal husbandry. A centralized emergency response center will be set up at Tripura's Animal Resources Development Department (ARDD) in Agartala, supported by BFIL and IBL. Farmers can connect di-

rectly with veterinarians for assistance, with GPS-enabled Mobile Veterinary Units (MVUs) deployed by the state's Animal Husbandry Department for on-site care.

BFIL will provide the infrastructure, field experts, and technological resources to streamline operations. Dr. Neeraj Kumar Chanchal, Addl. Secretary & Director of ARDD, highlighted the

partnership's potential to enhance farmer livelihoods and agricultural productivity. J Sridharan, Executive Vice Chairman of BFIL, and Srinivas Bonam, Head of Inclusive Banking at IBL, reiterated their commitment to rural development. The Bharat Sanjeevani program has previously benefited over 16 lakh livestock farmers and treated 29 lakh livestock across nine states.

Fenesta expands footprint with new showroom in Guwahati



Guwahati: Fenesta, India's leading windows and doors brand, has expanded its retail presence with the launch of a new showroom, The Home Story, at Saraswati Tower, Beside Beharbari Flyover, N.H.-37, Guwahati. The showroom features a range of aluminum windows, uPVC windows and doors, and solid panel doors, aimed at enhancing customer experience with hands-on product displays. Saket Jain, Business Head of Fenesta, said, "Each new showroom reflects our commitment to quality and customer satisfaction. We aim to offer customers an immersive experience to help them make informed choices."

He emphasized Fenesta's focus on expanding into smaller cities and maintaining leadership with its

innovative products. Guwahati is witnessing a rise in demand for high-quality home infrastructure solutions, driven by increased urbanization and housing developments. Fenesta's new showroom in the city is expected to meet this growing demand, offering solutions with noise insulation, dust-proofing, and rain resistance—critical features for the region's climate.

Fenesta now operates in over 900 locations, showcasing its control over the entire supply chain, from manufacturing to installation and after-sales service. With its expansion in Guwahati, Fenesta aims to strengthen its hold on the Northeast market and reinforce its leadership in the windows and doors segment.

NSDC expands skilling with 50 new future skill centres, eyes global job markets

Guwahati: The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has announced plans to establish 50 Future Skill Centres and 10 International Academies across India. NSDC CEO Ved Mani Tiwari shared that the new centres will offer over 300 industry-aligned programs, targeting the training of over 2 lakh candidates in emerging technologies like aerospace and automotive. NSDC International has aggregated 88,924 overseas jobs across 22 countries and trained over 64,000 candidates for sectors like healthcare and construction.

Additionally, international language labs will offer training in Russian, Italian, Korean, and French, aiming to enhance global employability. Partnerships with countries such as



Israel, Germany, and Japan are driving further opportunities for healthcare workers. In Guwahati, the expanding skilling network is expected to address rising demand for technology-trained candidates across key industries. NSDC's focus on tier 2 and 3 cities will help strengthen the job market by offering specialized training in digital technologies and

creating new pathways to employment. The Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH) has reached 1.3 crore candidates and 42,000 training centres. NSDC's apprenticeship programs have engaged over 3.5 million apprentices and facilitated financial disbursements of over ₹100,250 million, ensuring a robust, inclusive skilling ecosystem nationwide.

Uber unveils Uber zero-fee for auto drivers



Bengaluru: Ride hailing service provider Uber has brought in a software-as-a-service (SaaS)-based zero commission model for auto drivers in India, the company announced in a blog post on Monday, February 17, 2025. Under this model, auto drivers will pay a fixed subscription fee to Uber rather than paying a commission per trip. This comes a year after rival Rapido expanded its subscription fee-based model to autos and was announced as a notification on the app on Tuesday, February 18, 2025. All of this comes at a time when Driver strikes over ride-hailing fees.

DSP Mutual Fund introduces Nifty Private Bank Index Fund to tap into India's banking growth

Guwahati: DSP Mutual Fund has launched the DSP Nifty Private Bank Index Fund, providing investors with a focused opportunity to invest in India's private banking sector. The fund replicates the Nifty Private Bank Index, offering exposure to the four largest private banks that constitute approximately 80% of the index.

DSP believes the concentration on larger banks provides a distinct advantage, as these institutions benefit from customer trust, economies of scale, and better access to capital, enabling sustained growth. Over the last two



decades, the market share of Indian private banks has doubled, with these institutions maintaining strong balance sheets and profitability. Despite a recent underperformance compared to the broader Nifty 50,

current valuations of the sector are below their 10-year average, presenting a potential opportunity for a market recovery. Anil Ghelani, CFA, Head of Passive Investments & Products at DSP Mutual Fund, empha-

sized, "The concentration of larger banks can drive sustainable growth due to customer trust and operational advantages." In Guwahati, local investors are increasingly inclined towards financial products like this fund, which target growth sectors.

With rising interest in banking stocks, the DSP Nifty Private Bank Index Fund aligns well with the city's growing investor confidence in targeted market segments. The New Fund Offer (NFO) runs from February 14 to February 28, 2025, offering both lump-sum and SIP investment options.

HCL Tech invites applications for TechBee early career program

Noida: HCLTech, a leading global technology company, has announced the launch of applications for its TechBee early career program. The initiative, now in its eighth year, is open to students who completed Class 12 in 2023, 2024, or will graduate in 2025. Designed to provide a head start in the tech industry, TechBee offers a 12-month training program, followed by full-time employment at HCLTech.

Participants can also pursue part-time higher education from institutions like BITS Pilani, IIT Kottayam, SASTRA University, and Amity University Online. Eligible students with a background in mathematics or business mathematics will

be trained for roles in digital engineering, cloud, data science, and AI. HCLTech's TechBee program is expected to gain traction among aspiring students. The city, with its rising focus on digital learning and career advancement, presents a growing pool of talent ready to benefit from this innovative program.

The initiative offers a unique opportunity for students to gain industry-ready skills and secure jobs in high-demand tech roles. HCLTech has partnered with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and state-level skill development bodies to ensure broader access to students from diverse backgrounds.

Sterlite Power strengthens NE Energy Grid with Nangalbibra-Bongaigaon line

Guwahati: Sterlite Power has commissioned the Nangalbibra-Bongaigaon transmission line, a 400kV double-circuit Inter-State Transmission System (ISTS) project aimed at bolstering energy infrastructure across Assam and Meghalaya.

The project spans 300 circuit kilometers and includes a 123 km transmission line crossing the Brahmaputra River and connecting Bongaigaon to a greenfield substation at Nangalbibra. The substation, with 300 MW transformation capacity, is

designed for future 400kV expansion. Arun Sharma, CEO of Infrastructure Business at Sterlite Power, said, "This project enables seamless transfer of over 1000 MW, improving power reliability in Meghalaya and Assam while supporting industrial and socio-economic growth." Completed ahead of schedule, the project ensures stable power transmission and decongests downstream networks. A 132kV D/C line also connects Hatsinghmari, Assam, to Ampati, Meghalaya, for added power

stability. The improved power infrastructure is expected to enhance Guwahati's market by supporting industrial growth, ensuring uninterrupted electricity for businesses, and attracting new investments.

This will improve operational efficiency and bolster the city's competitiveness as a regional trade hub. Sterlite Grid 32 Ltd, with a footprint across eight states, continues to focus on integrating renewable energy into India's transmission grid, advancing the country's sustainable energy landscape.

NSDC International advances India's skilling to meet global care workforce demand

Guwahati: NSDC International is driving India's ambition to become a global care capital by enhancing workforce skilling to meet rising national and international healthcare demands. At the summit "Transforming the Future of the Skilled Workforce in the Care Sector" in Chandigarh, Shri V.K. Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog, underscored the critical role of evolving curriculum and private sector collaboration. Paul highlighted NSDC International's efforts to ensure Indian care profes-



sionals are globally employable through improved regulatory frameworks and expanded skill-based training, especially in areas like geriatric care.

"Structured policies and industry-academia partnerships are vital for India to strengthen its healthcare skilling ecosystem," he noted. Alok Kumar, CEO,

NSDC International, emphasized the global caregiver shortage, citing a projected demand for 15 million professionals by 2030. "We are aligning skilling programs with international standards to position India as a trusted provider of skilled care professionals," he added.

In Guwahati, this initiative holds potential for bolstering the local healthcare market by addressing workforce shortages and creating employment opportunities for skilled youth in Assam's growing healthcare sector.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor introduces road safety initiative for 1,250 drivers in Mizoram

Aizawl: Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) has launched a comprehensive road safety and health initiative for over 1,250 drivers in Mizoram during Road Safety Month (January 18 – February 17, 2025). The program addresses rising road accidents, with Mizoram recording 124 incidents and 112 fatalities in 2024.

The initiative, inaugurated by Senior Superintendent of Police, Traffic, Aizawl, Mr. Stephen Lalrinawma, and attended by Zote Toyota officials, focuses on educating commercial drivers on responsible driving practices, traffic regulations, penalties, vehicle compliance, and health awareness. Health check-ups for conditions like blood pressure, sugar levels, and eyesight are also provided, with referrals to healthcare centers for further treatment. In Aizawl, safer driving is expected



to enhance the reliability of commercial transport, improving timely deliveries and supporting local business growth by minimizing road disruptions.

Additionally, Toyota is installing 34 ANPR systems and 20 CCTV cameras at key traffic points to enhance enforcement and monitoring. Vikram Gulati, TKM's Country Head, emphasized Toyota's mission

to ensure road safety. "Our goal is to empower drivers with the right knowledge and health support, fostering safer roads for all," he stated.

Toyota also celebrated the successful completion of its Annual Toyota Safety Education Program and a road safety hackathon in Delhi, Mumbai, and Bangalore to further innovation in safe mobility.

Google to pay ₹3,000 crore to settle Italy tax case

Bangalore: Milan prosecutors plan to drop a case brought against the European division of Google after the company agreed to pay 326 million euros (nearly ₹3,000 crore) to settle a tax claim, they said on Wednesday.

The agreement covers the period between 2015 and 2019 and the covers sanctions, penalties and interest, prosecutors said in a statement.

Last year Reuters reported that Italy asked Google to pay 1 billion euros in unpaid taxes and penalties, seven years after the US company settled a previous landmark tax dispute with Rome authorities. The Milan prosecutors alleged that Google did not file and pay taxes on revenue generated in Italy, basing its claim on the digital infrastructure Google has in the country.

Essencemediacom wins Godrej Consumer Products' media mandate

Guwahati: Essencemediacom has been awarded the media mandate for Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL), one of India's largest FMCG companies. Starting April 2025, the agency will oversee GCPL's media strategy, planning, buying, and execution across traditional and digital platforms. The mandate was secured after a competitive four-month pitch, with Essencemediacom succeeding Madison World, GCPL's media partner for over 20 years. Harshdeep Chhabra, Head of Global Media at GCPL, stated, "We are delighted to have Essencemediacom as our new media agency partner to drive innovation and expand our presence across new categories. Madison World

has played a vital role in our growth journey, and we thank them for their contribution." Essencemediacom's CEO for South Asia, Navin Khemka, expressed excitement about the partnership, saying, "We are privileged to partner with Godrej Consumer Products and look forward to delivering best-in-class media solutions through efficiency, effectiveness, and innovation."

"In Guwahati, GCPL's expanded media strategy is expected to boost product visibility and consumer engagement across personal care and home care segments. Retailers anticipate that targeted campaigns will strengthen brand recognition and drive local sales in the growing FMCG market."

JEE Main 2025 opens doors for North East students; registration underway, special quotas highlighted

Aizawl: The Central Seat Allocation Board (CSAB) 2025 has launched a dedicated initiative to encourage North East (NE) students to register for JEE Main 2025. Registration for Session 2, set for April 2025, began on 31st January and closes on 24th February 2025. Nearly 24,000 seats are available across NITs in India,

with 2,000 reserved under the state quota for NE students and 740 seats under the CSAB-NEUT round.

During a press conference at Aizawl Press Club, CSAB Chair Prof. K. Umamaheshwar Rao urged Mizoram students to register, emphasizing JEE's potential as a gateway to India's top engineering institutions. "With prop-

er preparation and support, students can secure admission in prestigious NIT+ institutions," Rao stated.

Aizawl has shown growing interest in engineering careers, with many students opting for technical education to meet increasing regional demands for skilled professionals in manufacturing, infra-

structure, and technology sectors. Graduates from NIT+ institutions often secure roles in top organizations like ISRO, Amazon, and NTPC. CSAB 2025's support includes multilingual counselling and a local counseling centre in Mizoram. Eligible candidates can visit JEE Main Website for registration details.

Indian economy to grow 6.2-6.3% in Q4 FY25 on capex, demand revival

New Delhi: India's GDP grew 6.2-6.3 per cent in the October-December quarter of 2024-25, estimates SBI Research on Wednesday in a report. The official data is scheduled to be released on February 28.

The Indian economy grew by 5.4 per cent in real terms in the July-September quarter of the current financial year 2024-25. The quarterly growth was much lower than RBI's forecast of 7 per cent. In the April-June quarter too, India's GDP grew at a slower pace than was



estimated by the central bank. According to the SBI Research report, authored by Soumya Kanti Ghosh, Group Chief Economic Adviser, State Bank of India said July-September GDP growth numbers were a blip. "Q3 (Oct-Dec) shows strong demand and capex trends. India Inc. posts improved EBIDTA and GVA."

AirAsia announces 15 million FREE seats sale, aiming for a surge in ASEAN travel

Guwahati: AirAsia has launched its much-anticipated FREE* Seats campaign, offering 15 million seats across 130 destinations. This move aims to boost affordable travel from India to ASEAN destinations, including Malaysia and Thailand, at fares starting from INR 6,599 one-way.

Travel options include direct flights from Visakhapatnam to Kuala Lumpur, Tiruchirappalli and Guwahati to Bangkok, and Kolkata to Phuket. The airline also offers Fly-Thru



connections from Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok to cities like Singapore, Krabi, and Da Lat. Amanda Woo, Group Chief Commercial Officer of AirAsia Aviation Group, highlighted the airline's efforts to strengthen connectivity, saying, "This campaign reflects our commitment to affordable travel and tourism growth from India." Guwahati is ex-

pected to see a significant boost, with travelers benefiting from direct routes to Bangkok and seamless connections to other ASEAN cities.

With visa-free entry for Indian citizens to both Malaysia and Thailand, the campaign is likely to increase outbound travel from the Northeast region. The sale runs until 23 February 2025 for travel from 1 July 2025 to 15 June 2026. Tickets can be booked via airasia.com or the AirAsia MOVE app. Terms and conditions apply.

Make your daily routine with Tata Coffee Gold Hazelnut Flavored Instant Coffee

Guwahati: If you're the kind of coffee drinker who appreciates a little extra flair in your cup, Tata Coffee Gold Hazelnut Flavoured Instant Coffee is here to upgrade your daily brew. This premium blend combines high-quality coffee beans with the warm, nutty essence of hazelnut, delivering an aromatic and indulgent experience—no barista required.

Why It's Worth a Sip: 1) Smooth & Nutty—The rich coffee base gets a flavor boost with a subtle yet satisfying hazelnut twist,



making it a perfect pick for those who enjoy a touch of sweetness without the sugar. 2) Instant, But Make It Fancy—Forget bland, one-note instant coffee. This freeze-dried blend is designed for both convenience and taste, so you

get a velvety, well-rounded cup in seconds. 3)

For Coffee Lovers, By Coffee Lovers— Made from carefully selected beans, this blend balances boldness with a smooth finish—ideal for sipping solo or upgrading your at-home coffee game. Tata Coffee Gold Hazelnut Flavoured Instant Coffee comes in a sleek 50g jar, keeping things fresh while adding a little indulgence to your everyday routine. Price: ₹375/- for 50 gms, Availability: GT, MT, E-commerce & Q-commerce.

NSDC International pushes ethical migration, expands global skilling opportunities

Guwahati: NSDC CEO and NSDC International MD Shri Ved Mani Tiwari has called on Indian youth to avoid illegal migration routes and instead enroll in NSDC International's skilling programs for ethical migration. Tiwari highlighted that NSDC International, in partnership with various governments, is creating structured pathways to meet global demand for skilled workers.

Israel has sought 5,000 healthcare workers and 20,000 construction workers, while Germany and Japan continue to require trained healthcare profes-



sionals. NSDC has established 100 skill assessment centers across India to certify candidates for work visas. "Skilled youth can build long-term careers abroad through proper cer-

tifications and ethical channels," Tiwari said. NSDC International is also setting up 10 new academies for foreign languages and soft skills. The first academy, launched in Greater

Noida, provides specialized language training and certifications like IELTS and JLPT. In Guwahati, job seekers are encouraged to utilize these initiatives to gain certifications and skills in demand globally. Leveraging these opportunities could boost local employment and stimulate economic growth in the region. Since October 2021, NSDC International has placed over 64,000 candidates across 22 countries and 19 industries, including construction, MEP, and facility management, ensuring a brighter future for India's skilled workforce.

Tata Tea Premium promises a delightful tea experience

Guwahati: Tata Tea Premium, Desh ki chai, flagship brand of Tata Consumer Products. Carefully crafted blend has been designed to capture the hearts of chai lovers across the nation. With its rich flavor and aromatic profile, Tata Tea Premium promises a delightful tea experience that resonates with regional taste preferences.

Tata Tea Premium, known as "Desh Ki Chai," acknowledges India's diverse palate by offering regionally inspired blends. The variants under Tata Tea Premium include blends tailored for specific regions: Delhi ke liye Rich



Assam Chai, Haryana ke liye Kadak Assam Chai, Odisha ke liye Kadak Assam Chai, Punjab ke liye Badi Danedar Chai, Uttar Pradesh ke liye Dumdaar Chai, and West Bengal ke liye Swad Bhari Chai.

TKM announces the commencement of bookings of the Land Cruiser 300

Bangalore: Toyota Kirloskar Motor has announced the commencement of bookings of the Land Cruiser 300, an icon of prestige, power, and rugged capability. Built upon a legacy of over 70 years, the Land Cruiser 300 is the ultimate expression of Toyota's engineering excellence, designed to meet the expectations of luxury seekers and off-road enthusiasts. Renowned for its unmatched reliability, commanding presence, and superior performance, the Land Cruiser 300 is the flagship SUV of Toyota's global lineup.

The latest iteration combines a revolutionary new platform, advanced



powertrain, cutting-edge safety features, and opulent interiors, ensuring a seamless blend of luxury, strength, and off-road dominance.

The Land Cruiser 300 is available in two distinct grades—ZX and GR-S, powered by a twin-turbocharged V6 engine, offering improved efficiency, higher torque output, and enhanced fuel economy compared to its predeces-

sor. Expressing his views, Mr. Varinder Wadhwa, Vice President – Sales-Service-Used Car Business of Toyota Kirloskar Motor, said, "The Land Cruiser 300 is the ultimate expression of strength, sophistication, and off-road prowess." From the inside, the Land Cruiser 300 delivers an uncompromising level of comfort, space, and premium craftsmanship. The Land Cruiser 300 is equipped with state-of-the-art technology that enhances both connectivity and convenience.

Global crypto market surges to \$3.76 tn in January: Report

Bengaluru: Potential policy initiatives such as national crypto reserve and stablecoin regulations have contributed to the growth of the cryptocurrency market in January 2025 as it peaked at \$3.76 trillion, a 4.3% monthly increase in market capitalisation.

Binance Research, the research arm of the leading cryptocurrency exchange Binance, in its report said this positive momentum has strengthened investor confidence, leading to increased institutional interest and broader adoption.

"The policy shift has also sparked hopes for a more favourable regulatory environment, potentially paving the way for innovation and mainstream acceptance.



As a result, the market is witnessing heightened activity, with key crypto assets reaching new highs," it said. Bitcoin (BTC) surged 11.7%, driven by pro-crypto policies and speculation about its potential inclusion in the Czech National Bank's reserves, signaling growing institutional interest, it said. The research points out that however, momentum stalled in late January when DeepSeek reportedly developed an AI model at a fraction of the cost and with significantly fewer resources than its competitors.

Indian pharma stocks fall on Trump's 25% tariff plan

Mumbai: An index of Indian pharmaceutical company shares slid 2% to its lowest level in seven months on Wednesday after U.S. President Donald Trump said he intends to impose tariffs of about 25% or higher on pharma imports.

Twelve of the 20 stocks on the sub-index traded lower. Sun Pharma, India's top drugmaker by revenue, fell 2%, and Dr Reddy's slipped 4% to its lowest level since June. Aurobindo Pharma tumbled 6% to its lowest level in nearly a year, and Cipla, India's no. 3 drugmaker, shed 2.2%. The Indian drugmakers rely heavily on US market.

Barcelona tops La Liga with 1-0 win over Rayo Vallecano



Barcelona: Barcelona returned to the top of the Spanish league on goal difference on Monday after Robert Lewandowski's first-half penalty secured a 1-0 win over Rayo Vallecano.

The Catalan club took advantage of weekend slip-ups by Real Madrid and Atlético Madrid to move onto 51 points, the same as Madrid and a point clear of Atlético. Madrid drew 1-1 at Osasuna on Saturday and Atletico was held by the same score at home by Celta Vigo. Barcelona took the lead after 27 minutes when Pathe Ciss brought down Íñigo Martínez in the box, and a penalty was

awarded after a video review. Lewandowski sent the keeper the wrong way from the spot. Both sides had chances to score after that.

Augusto Batalla saved well from Lamine Yamal, who was playing the 100th game of his career, while at the other end Jorge De Frutos had the ball in the net for Rayo only to see it ruled out for offside.

De Frutos was always dangerous for Rayo but as the game went on the home side took control as it extended its unbeaten run to 12 matches. The defeat ended Rayo nine-game unbeaten streak that stretched back to Dec 7.

Germany defeats India 4-1 in FIH Pro League



Berlin: Reigning World Champions, Germany beat India 4-1 in a high-octane encounter at the FIH Hockey Pro League 2024-25 (Men) at the iconic Kalinga Hockey Stadium in Bhubaneswar on Tuesday. Goals by Florian Sperling (7'), Thies Prinz (14'), Michel Struthoff (48'), and Raphael Hartkopf (55') helped Germany clinch the winning points, while Gurjant Singh (13') was India's lone goal scorer.

Though India looked like they held better possession in the first five minutes of the opening quarter, the tactically-driven attack by the Germans landed a field

goal in the 7th minute of the game. It was a brilliant assist by Eric Kleinlein to Florian Sperling who finished the job with great finesse. India were quick to respond, when Rajinder Singh - often compared to former India captain and midfield maestro Sardar Singh for his skillful play, set up Gurjant Singh with a classy cross-pass to equalise with Germany in the 13th minute.

The high-octane opening quarter continued to bring edge-of-the-seat action with Germany scoring another goal to extend their lead to 2-1 in the 14th minute.

BUMRAH-LESS INDIA

Shami's Magic: India's Champions Trophy Hope



Bengaluru: Mohammed Shami's right hand has more sleight than a magician. A simple cock of his wrist can outfox the best batters in the world.

But can he unlock the sorcery and help India reclaim the ICC Champions Trophy after 12 years? The fans will certainly expect Shami to hit his strides straightaway in the marquee event because India's primary strike weapon Jasprit Bumrah has been ruled out due to an injury.

But there are multiple concerns as well about Shami's readiness for an event of this magnitude. India start their Champions Trophy campaign on February 20 against Bangladesh in Dubai.

The 34-year-old is coming back from an injury. Even though he has played a few matches at various levels and formats since his re-entry into cricket late last year, delivering in a high-pressure tournament is an altogether different proposition. Another reason for the trepidation surrounding Shami is the absence of Bumrah, his trusted ally in the last six years or so at the other end.

In the Champions Trophy, Shami is all set to partner Arshdeep Singh. But for all his skills and promise, Arshdeep is not yet at Bumrah's level. So, can Shami drag the train forward all by himself? Former India pacer Laxmipathy Balaji found no reason to believe otherwise.

BCCI unveils full match schedule for TATA IPL 2025

Match No	Match Day	Date	Day	Start	Home	Away	Venue
1	1	22-Mar-25	Sat	7:30 PM	Kolkata Knight Riders	Royal Challengers Bengaluru	Kolkata
2	2	23-Mar-25	Sun	3:30 PM	Sunrisers Hyderabad	Rajasthan Royals	Hyderabad
3	2	23-Mar-25	Sun	7:30 PM	Mumbai Indians	Chennai Super Kings	Chennai
4	3	24-Mar-25	Mon	7:30 PM	Delhi Capitals	Lucknow Super Giants	Vizagapatnam
5	4	25-Mar-25	Tue	7:30 PM	Gujarat Titans	Punjab Kings	Ahmedabad
6	5	26-Mar-25	Wed	7:30 PM	Rajasthan Royals	Kolkata Knight Riders	Guwahati
7	6	27-Mar-25	Thu	7:30 PM	Sunrisers Hyderabad	Lucknow Super Giants	Hyderabad
8	7	28-Mar-25	Fri	7:30 PM	Chennai Super Kings	Royal Challengers Bengaluru	Chennai
9	8	29-Mar-25	Sat	7:30 PM	Gujarat Titans	Mumbai Indians	Ahmedabad
10	9	30-Mar-25	Sun	3:30 PM	Delhi Capitals	Sunrisers Hyderabad	Vizagapatnam
11	9	30-Mar-25	Sun	7:30 PM	Rajasthan Royals	Chennai Super Kings	Guwahati
12	10	31-Mar-25	Mon	7:30 PM	Mumbai Indians	Kolkata Knight Riders	Mumbai
13	11	01-Apr-25	Tue	7:30 PM	Lucknow Super Giants	Punjab Kings	Lucknow
14	12	02-Apr-25	Wed	7:30 PM	Royal Challengers Bengaluru	Gujarat Titans	Bengaluru
15	13	03-Apr-25	Thu	7:30 PM	Kolkata Knight Riders	Sunrisers Hyderabad	Kolkata
16	14	04-Apr-25	Fri	7:30 PM	Lucknow Super Giants	Mumbai Indians	Lucknow
17	15	05-Apr-25	Sat	3:30 PM	Chennai Super Kings	Delhi Capitals	Chennai
18	15	05-Apr-25	Sat	7:30 PM	Punjab Kings	Rajasthan Royals	New Chandigarh
19	16	06-Apr-25	Sun	3:30 PM	Kolkata Knight Riders	Lucknow Super Giants	Kolkata
20	16	06-Apr-25	Sun	7:30 PM	Sunrisers Hyderabad	Gujarat Titans	Hyderabad
21	17	07-Apr-25	Mon	7:30 PM	Mumbai Indians	Royal Challengers Bengaluru	Mumbai
22	18	08-Apr-25	Tue	7:30 PM	Punjab Kings	Chennai Super Kings	New Chandigarh
23	19	09-Apr-25	Wed	7:30 PM	Gujarat Titans	Rajasthan Royals	Ahmedabad
24	20	10-Apr-25	Thu	7:30 PM	Royal Challengers Bengaluru	Delhi Capitals	Bengaluru
25	21	11-Apr-25	Fri	7:30 PM	Chennai Super Kings	Kolkata Knight Riders	Chennai
26	22	12-Apr-25	Sat	3:30 PM	Lucknow Super Giants	Gujarat Titans	Lucknow
27	22	12-Apr-25	Sat	7:30 PM	Sunrisers Hyderabad	Punjab Kings	Hyderabad
28	23	13-Apr-25	Sun	3:30 PM	Rajasthan Royals	Royal Challengers Bengaluru	Jaisalmer
29	23	13-Apr-25	Sun	7:30 PM	Delhi Capitals	Mumbai Indians	Delhi

Mumbai: The Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 schedule has been announced. The 18th edition of the cash-rich league will get underway on March 22 with the opening fixture between Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) at the Eden Gardens.

The final will be played on May 25 in Kolkata, while Qualifier 1 and Eliminator will go ahead in Hyderabad.

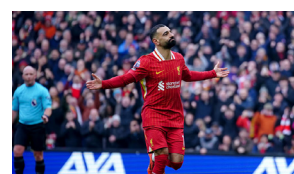
Rajasthan Royals will

open their campaign on March 23 against last year's finalists, Sunrisers Hyderabad, at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium. Mumbai Indians and Chennai Super Kings will play their first match of the season against each other on March 23 in Chennai.

Gujarat Titans will play their opening match of the tournament on March 25 against Punjab Kings while Delhi Capitals will square off against Lucknow Super Giants on March 24.

Liverpool pushes for Premier League title as Manchester United struggles

England: Liverpool continued its charge toward the Premier League title on Sunday with a 2-1 win against Wolverhampton. For Manchester United, it just keeps getting worse after a 1-0 loss at Tottenham. The fortunes of England's two most successful teams could hardly be more contrasting. Victory for Liverpool saw the club restore



its seven-point lead over Arsenal at the top of the table and move ever closer to equaling Man United's record haul of 20 league crowns. United, meanwhile, lost for the 12th time in the

No pressure on Pak vs NZ match: Babar



Islamabad: Pakistan star batter Babar Azam has claimed that the team is under no pressure and will be aiming to ensure they don't repeat the mistakes from the past during the Champions Trophy 2023. Pakistan enter the competition as defending champions, but things haven't been great for the side in ICC events. The ODI World Cup 2023 saw Pakistan finish 5th on the points table and they were eliminated from the T20 World Cup 2024 in the group stages.

Ahead of the opening match against New Zealand on Wednesday, February 19, Babar told ICC that what has happened in the past is beyond them. The 30-year-old said that the Pakistan players have discussed the mistakes from the past and have worked on them. "There is no pressure of anything," Babar said. "What has happened in the past is beyond us. We have discussed mistakes we have made and we have worked on them. So we will try not to do what we have done in the past." Babar was just 22 when he was part of the Pakistan squad that defeated India to win the Champions Trophy last time. But this time, the star batter has extra responsibility on him as a senior member. He embraces the challenge of being a senior and aims to help the team win.