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## Army foils infiltration bid, neutralizes Pakistani intruder in Pathankot, Punjab

**Pathankot, Feb 26:** Alert Border Security Force (BSF) troops successfully foiled an infiltration attempt along the International Border (IB) in Pathankot, Punjab, during the early hours of February 26.

According to officials, BSF personnel stationed at the BOP Tashpatan border area observed suspicious movement across the IB. An unidentified intruder



was spotted attempting to cross into Indian territory.

Despite being challenged by the alert troops, the in-

truder continued advancing, ignoring repeated warnings. Sensing a potential threat, BSF troops took action and neutralised the infiltrator.

Authorities are working to ascertain the identity and motive of the intruder. Meanwhile, BSF has confirmed that a strong protest will be lodged with the Pakistan Rangers over the attempted infiltration.

## Maha Kumbh's final 'snan' on Mahashivratri



Pilgrims take a holy dip at Sangam, the confluence of Ganges, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati rivers, on the occasion of Maha Shivaratri during the Maha Kumbh Mela festival in Prayagraj on February 26, 2025.

## Delhi govt incurred losses of ₹2,000 cr due to liquor policy

**New Delhi, Feb 25:** The Delhi government suffered cumulative losses of over Rs 2,000 crore due to the 2021-2022 excise policy for reasons ranging from weak policy framework to deficient implementation, according to a CAG report tabled in the assembly on Tuesday.

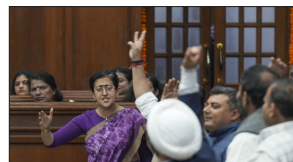
The report, one of 14 on the previous Aam Aadmi Party government's performance to be tabled by the new Rekha Gup-

ta-led dispensation, has also flagged violations in the process of issuing licences. It has pointed out that recommendations of an expert panel, formed to suggest changes for the formation of the now scrapped policy, were ignored by then deputy chief minister and excise minister Manish Sisodia. The report on the alleged liquor scam, a hot button issue in the run-up to the elections. (PTI)

## Atishi and 11 AAP MLAs suspended from Delhi Assembly for creating uproar

**New Delhi, Feb 25:** Delhi Speaker Vijender Gupta on Tuesday expelled 12 Aam Aadmi Party MLAs, including Leader of Opposition Atishi and Gopal Rai, for the day from the assembly for raising slogans during Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena's address.

Veer Singh Dhingan, Mukesh Ahlawat, Chaudhary Zubair Ahmed, Anil Jha, Vishesh Ravi and Jarnail Singh are among the other AAP leaders expelled



from the assembly. Atishi alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party had disrespected BR Ambedkar by removing his portrait from the chief minister's office.

"The BJP has shown its true colours by removing Babasaheb Ambedkar's portrait. Does it believe

Modi can replace Babasaheb?" Atishi said at a press conference. The former chief minister alleged that the BJP-led administration had removed Ambedkar's portraits from the chief minister's office in both the Delhi Secretariat and the assembly. The development comes even as the New BJP-led Delhi government to present 14 Comptroller and Auditor General reports in the 2nd session of the assembly

## ED raids in ₹600 crore crypto scam

**New Delhi, Feb 25:** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has conducted raids in several cities, including Delhi, Jaipur, and Mumbai, under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) in connection with a Rs 600 crore cryptocurrency conversion case. So far, bank accounts containing Rs 2.18 crore belonging to the accused have been frozen.

## 13 FIRs filed against 140 social media accounts for spreading misinformation

**Prayagraj, Feb 24** More than a dozen First Information Reports (FIRs) have been filed against 140 social media handles for spreading 'misleading content' about the ongoing Maha Kumbh in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj, police said.

"13 FIRs have been registered against 140 social media handles that shared misleading content," Maha Kumbh DIG Vaibhav Krishna told. The Uttar Pradesh Police's social media cell has been keeping a close eye on social media platforms, particularly after objectionable videos of women pilgrims taking bath in the Triveni Sangam, were shared there.

Meanwhile, with a massive influx of devotees expected on February 26, the Maha Kumbh's last day, due to the festival of Maha



Shivratri, DIG Krishna said 'complete arrangements' have been made for the festival.

"Efforts will be made to ensure that there is no traffic jam anywhere in the Maha Kumbh area. All arrangements should run smoothly. No matter how big the crowd is, we are fully prepared," he said.

Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath said 62 crore pilgrims have already taken a holy dip in

the Triveni Sangam (meeting point of rivers Ganga, Yamuna and the legendary Saraswati) in Prayagraj.

The information department of the Uttar Pradesh government reported that on Sunday, nearly 8.7 million (87 lakh) people had taken the holy dip. The Maha Kumbh began on January 13. Authorities managing the Maha Kumbh crowd at the Ayodhya Dham railway station in Ayodhya.

## US avoids blaming Russia for Ukraine, causing rift with EU allies in UN votes

U.S. stance on Russia sparks discord with European allies at U.N.

**United Nations, Feb 25:** In a dramatic shift in transatlantic relations under President Donald Trump, the United States split with its European allies by refusing to blame Russia for its invasion of Ukraine in votes on three UN resolutions Monday seeking an end to the three-year war.

The growing divide follows Trump's decision to open direct negotiations with Russia on ending the war, dimming Ukraine and its European supporters by excluding them from the preliminary talks last week.

In the UN General Assembly, the US joined Russia in voting against a Europe-backed Ukrainian resolution that calls out Moscow's aggression and demands an imme-



mediate withdrawal of Russian troops. The US then abstained from voting on its own competing resolution after Europeans, led by France, succeeded in amending it to make clear Russia was the aggressor. The voting was taking place on the third anniversary of Russia's invasion and as Trump was hosting French President Emmanuel Macron in Washington.

It was a major setback for the Trump administration in the 193-member world body, whose resolutions are not legally binding but are seen as a barometer of world opinion. The US then pushed for a vote on its original draft in the more powerful UN Security Council, where resolutions are legally binding and it has veto power along with Russia, China and France.



## Mizoram Gov. calls for swift NH-306 repairs

**Aizawl, Feb 24:** Mizoram Governor General (Retired) Vijay Kumar Singh has urged a Centrally-owned construction company to expedite the widening work of NH-306, the state's primary lifeline linking Assam, official sources said.

Singh embarked on his maiden tour to other districts of the state and on Saturday visited Kolasib district, which shares a border with Assam.

During a meeting with officials, local leaders and representatives of organisations in Kolasib, Singh expressed concern about repairing work of the national highway being at a snail's pace in Kolasib district, which according to him, has greatly affected the public, the sources said.

Citing that many issues relating to compensation and forest clearance for the widening of the national highway have been settled, the Governor urged the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (NHIDCL), which is entrusted with the widening task.

## Assam's economy projected to reach \$143 billion by 2030, says CM Sarma

■ Sarma said the Modi government encourages states to attract investments

**Guwahati, Feb 25:** Assam will have a USD 143 billion economy by 2030, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma claimed on Tuesday, urging investors to join the state's growth trajectory.

Speaking at the inaugural function of the two-day 'Advantage Assam 2.0 Investment and Infrastructure Summit' here, Sarma emphasised that the state has emerged from being the "most disturbed" to the "most peaceful" now. "The state's GDP growth this year will be 15.2 per cent.



The economy will reach USD 143 billion by 2030," he claimed. "I can assure you today that we will ensure the best working and congenial atmosphere for

establishing industries in Assam. Please come and invest here," Sarma said, in the presence of heads of missions and ambassadors of over 60 nations,

## Explosive cache neutralized at Manipur-Myanmar border

**Imphal, Feb 26:** The mine bomb experts of the Indian paramilitary and state police jointly detected several explosive items planted by the armed miscreants along the Indo-Myanmar border in the Tengnoupal district of Manipur on Tuesday.

The explosive devices were destroyed in situ in a series of operations conducted as a part of the search and area domination operations in the fringe and vulnerable areas of hill and valley districts, the police said. A joint team from the Bomb Detection and

Disposal squad and the Assam Rifles and Manipur police, based on intelligence inputs from different sources rushed to H Mongjang village under the Moreh police station in the jurisdiction of Tengnoupal district with Myanmar on the south.

The team uncovered one pompi with 10 ft in length (84mm), a Pompi (51mm improvised Mortar), and three Pompi bombs. These bombs were neutralized in situ averting a potential major disaster in the district. Further, the team also destroyed three Improvised Explosive.

## Illegal checkpoint and bunker dismantled in Kangpokpi

**Imphal, Feb 24:** Joint security forces comprising state police and central paramilitary personnel have dismantled an illegal checkpoint and a bunker in the Kangpokpi district, Manipur.



in over 250 deaths and displaced thousands of people. The removal of these checkpoints is expected to ensure the free movement of vehicles and people in the region.

The joint operation is seen as a significant step towards restoring peace and normalcy in the region.

## Ahead of business summit, Jaishankar leads ambassadors in Kaziranga safari

**Guwahati, Feb 24:** External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar, accompanied by High Commissioners and Ambassadors from 45 nations, embarked on an elephant safari at the renowned Kaziranga National Park, marking the beginning of a high-profile diplomatic and investment-focused visit to Assam.

The delegation touched down at Jorhat Airport earlier today and is set to attend the grand cultural spectacle, Jhumoir Binondini, at



Sarusajai Stadium tomorrow. The event will highlight Assam's vibrant Jhumur dance tradition, offering international representatives



an immersive experience of the state's rich cultural heritage. The Investment Summit will take place at Khanapara on Feb 25-26.

## 16th Finance Commission arrives in Aizawl for a 4-day official visit

■ Mizoram's development funding focus of FC visit

**Aizawl, Feb 24:** A delegation of the 16th Finance Commission led by its chairman Arvind Panagariya, arrived in Mizoram on Sunday for a four-day visit to assess the state's fiscal needs and development priorities, official sources said.

Soon after their arrival, the members paid a courtesy visit to state Governor Vijay Kumar Singh, who apprised the members of the needs of the state, the sources said.

Singh also urged the Finance Commission to have some understanding of the state because of its low revenue generation when it submits its recommendation and proposals to the Centre, it said. During the meeting, the Governor



pointed out several issues, including challenges in infrastructural development in the state due to the hilly terrain, the influx of refugees from neighbouring countries and the state and the challenges in handling them, the menace of drug trafficking and abuse, and empowerment of law and enforcement agencies, the sources said.

He also stressed the

need for the upgradation of the state's lone airport in Lengpui and the generation of employment for youths, the sources said.

During their four-day stay in Aizawl, the members will meet Chief Minister Lalduhoma, officials, political parties, representatives of three ADCs, local bodies and village councils, among others, officials said.

## SDSA accuses Assam Rifles of aiding militants

**Guwahati, Feb 24:** The Senapati District Students' Association (SDSA) has accused Assam Rifles of facilitating militant movement in Manipur.

SDSA president, Saloni Tony, levelled the allegations against the Assam Rifles and accused the para-military force of facilitating the movement of militants in Naga-inhabited regions on February 22.

According to Tony, SDSA officials personally witnessed Assam Rifles personnel escorting cadres of the United People's Front (UPF), a Kuki militant group operating under the Suspension of Operations (SOO) agreement. Tony said that this collusion has raised concerns about the paramilitary force's intentions, questioning whether they are attempting to dis-



rupt the peace and create distrust among the people of Senapati.

The SDSA has also expressed concerns over the Assam Rifles' Director General engaging in dialogue with top Kuki militant leaders, urging the paramilitary force to maintain neutrality and expedite the peace process without favouring any particular armed faction.

Questioning the intention of the Director General of the Assam Rifles for inviting top Kuki militant leaders for a dialogue amidst the challenging times, he said.

## Adani Group to invest Rs 50,000 crore in Assam

**Guwahati, Feb 25:** In a boost to Assam's infrastructure landscape, the Adani Group, a diversified conglomerate, has unveiled plans to invest a substantial Rs 50,000 crore in the state.

This significant investment will be channeled into a range of critical sectors, including airports, aero cities, city gas distribution networks, power transmission infrastructure, cement production, and road development projects.

The announcement was made by Gautam Adani, Chairman of the Adani Group, during his address at the Advantage Assam 2.0 Investment & Infrastructure Summit 2025 held in Guwahati. Adani pledges Assam partnership..



## Tata AIA launches Multicap Momentum Quality Index Pension Fund for strategic retirement planning

**Guwahati:** Tata AIA Life Insurance has launched the Multicap Momentum Quality Index Pension Fund, a market-linked pension solution designed to enhance long-term wealth creation for retirement planning.

The fund is available under Tata AIA's Smart Pension Secure plan. The fund is benchmarked against the Multicap Momentum Qual-

ity 50 Index and follows a disciplined investment strategy, selecting high-quality, momentum-driven stocks across large, mid, and small-cap segments.

This diversified approach aims to deliver high risk-adjusted returns while ensuring capital growth. The New Fund Offer (NFO) opens on February 21, 2025, and closes on February 28,

2025. Investors can subscribe through Tata AIA's digital platforms, including Policybazaar, Tata Neu, and PhonePe. Harshad Patil, CIO of Tata AIA, stated, "This fund integrates quality and momentum investing, ensuring superior returns for policyholders seeking financial independence in retirement." With growing financial awareness in Gu-

wahati, demand for structured pension solutions is rising.

Investors in the region are keen on market-linked retirement plans to counter inflation and secure their future. Tata AIA's latest offering aligns with this trend, providing an efficient investment avenue with tax benefits under Section 80CCC.

## MS Dhoni's hair secrets boost Garnier Black Naturals' appeal

**Shillong:** Garnier Black Naturals has unveiled its latest campaign featuring cricket icon MS Dhoni and his wife, Sakshi, highlighting the brand's role in Dhoni's timeless look. The playful teaser showcases the couple's banter, with Sakshi teasing Dhoni about a recent interviewer who said he still looks like he's in his 30s at 43. Dhoni attributed his youthful appearance to his hair and beard color, but Sakshi was quick to claim credit for coloring his hair.

When Sakshi pressed Dhoni on which color he uses, he responded with his signature smile, saying, "I can't reveal all my secrets just yet." The teaser hints at Dhoni's well-guarded grooming routine, leaving fans intrigued by the brand's role in his ageless appearance.

## Sajjan Jindal named 'Business Leader of the Decade' at AIMA Managing India Awards

**New Delhi:** JSW Group Chairman Sajjan Jindal has been honored with the 'Business Leader of the Decade' award at the 15th AIMA Managing India Awards, recognizing his strategic leadership in transforming JSW Group into a global conglomerate.

The award was presented at a grand ceremony attended by Union Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan as the Chief Guest and Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada as the Guest of Honour. Yezdi Nagporewalla, CEO of KPMG India, delivered the award citation.

Under Jindal's leadership, JSW Group has expanded significantly, doubling its revenues to \$24



billion and nearly tripling its steel production capacity to 39 million tonnes. The company has strengthened its foothold in renewable energy, cement, and infrastructure, emerging as the second-largest private player in India's ports sector. JSW has also entered future-focused sectors like electric vehicles and military drones through global

partnerships. In Guwahati, JSW's growing influence is reshaping the industrial landscape. The region's demand for high-quality steel and cement is rising, driven by infrastructure projects and urban expansion. JSW's expansion is expected to enhance supply chains, benefiting construction and allied sectors in the region.

## Micromax announces new solar panel venture in India

**New Delhi:** Micromax Informatics, India's consumer electronics brand, announced its entry into the energy sector on Wednesday with the launch of a solar panel manufacturing venture.

The company has established a new entity, "Startup Energy", to focus on producing high-efficiency solar panels for residential, commercial, and industrial applications. Micromax Solar aims to provide affordable and scalable solar power solutions across India.

"With Startup Energy, we are extending this vision to the renewable energy sector, bringing our expertise in cutting-edge solutions to solar power. Our goal is to make clean energy more accessible, reliable, and cost-effective, ensuring that



individuals and businesses alike can benefit from sustainable power solutions," said Rajesh Agarwal, Managing Director, Micromax Informatics.

As part of its expansion, Micromax has signed a strategic contract with Jincheng for the phased deployment of a 5-gigawatt (GW) advanced solar module manufacturing line.

This project will be executed in multiple phases, integrating state-of-the-art automation and high-efficiency module production technologies to deliver world-class solar solutions.

## RBI eases loan rules for micro credit

**Mumbai:** The Reserve Bank of India has partially reversed tighter rules for bank loans to small borrowers and non-bank lenders, according to two separate circulars issued on Tuesday.

The reversal of rules follows the central bank's decision to defer proposals to increase the capital that banks set aside for new project loans and liquidity they hold for digital deposits.

The actions come after a change of guard at the central bank, with Sanjay Malhotra taking over as governor amid a slowdown in economic growth. RBI trimmed lowers risk weight for microfinance loans to 100%.

## Tata Tea Premium introduces 'Tata Tea Premium Care' with natural ingredients to tap wellness market

**Guwahati:** Tata Consumer Products Limited (TCPL) has expanded its premium tea portfolio with the launch of Tata Tea Premium Care, a wellness-focused blend infused with Tulsi, Ginger, Brahmi, Elaichi, and Mulethi.

The new offering aims to cater to evolving consumer preferences for taste and health benefits in their daily cup of tea. With India's growing demand for wellness products, TCPL is strategically positioning Tata Tea Premium Care as a superior blend for consumers who enjoy strong chai while seeking natural ingredients. "With this extension, we are reinforcing our commitment to providing purposeful and high-quality beverage



choices," said Puneet Das, President - Packaged Beverages (India & South Asia), TCPL.

The brand is leveraging

an innovative print campaign across key markets to drive awareness, featuring a unique ad design shaped like the Tata Tea

Premium Care pack. In Guwahati, a crucial market for premium tea, retailers expect strong traction for the product.

Assam's tea culture and the city's increasing interest in health-conscious options make it a strategic location for TCPL's expansion. Consumers are likely to embrace this new blend as a balance of tradition and wellness.

## ELECRAMA 2025 reinforces India's commitment to the power sector

**Shillong:** ELECRAMA 2025 has continued to serve as a powerhouse for shaping the future of India's power and energy sector, with strategic discussions, policy insights, and industry collaboration taking center stage. The CEO Roundtable, held on Day 1, set a dynamic precedent with participation from 120+ industry leaders, policymakers, and global experts, who deliberated on critical themes such as energy transition, smart grids, clean mobility, and AI-driven power management.

The discussions underscored India's commitment to strengthening its power infrastructure, fostering innovation, and achieving its net-zero ambitions through strategic industry-government collaboration. Building on this momentum, Day 2 at ELECRAMA 2025 witnessed the presence of Shri Pankaj Agarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Power, and Gurdeep Singh, CMD, NTPC, further reinforcing the government's commitment to accelerating India's energy transformation.

Shri Pankaj Agarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Power, Speaking about India's evolving energy landscape, he remarked, "India is on the path to becoming a major exporter of power equipment, with global players showing strong interest in our domestic manufacturing capabilities."

"With high-level participation from policymakers, technology leaders, and industry veterans, Day 2 at ELECRAMA 2025 reinforced India's commitment to digitalization, clean energy adoption, and a future-ready power sector."



## DGT partners with Subros Ltd. to enhance automotive air-conditioning skilling

**Guwahati:** The Directorate General of Training (DGT), under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), has signed a Flexi-MoU with Subros Limited to enhance skill development in the automotive air-conditioning manufacturing sector. The agreement, signed in the presence of Minister of State (I/C) Jayant Chaudhary, aims to bridge skill gaps and boost employment in the automotive and manufacturing industries. As the Industry Training Partner (ITP), Subros Ltd. will develop industry-aligned curricula, provide training infrastructure, and facilitate hands-on learning through workshops and industry exposure. The company will also oversee trainee selection, while DGT will manage assessments and



certification. At least 50% of successful trainees will be placed in relevant jobs under this initiative. The program follows a 'Learn and Earn' model, integrating theoretical and on-the-job training. Highlighting the initiative, Minister Jayant Chaudhary stated, "This collaboration will equip our youth with future-ready skills, ensuring alignment with evolving industry needs and strengthening India's position in

the global manufacturing sector. "The automotive sector in Guwahati, a growing hub for vehicle sales and servicing in Northeast India, is set to benefit significantly. The availability of skilled professionals trained in air-conditioning manufacturing and maintenance will improve service quality and efficiency, catering to the increasing demand for reliable automotive solutions in the region. growth.

## udaan closes 2024 with record growth, 70% surge in daily buyers

**Guwahati:** udaan, India's leading eB2B platform, has reported its highest-ever daily buyer growth in 2024, achieving a 70% increase in buyer run rate and a 65% rise in revenue run rate. The platform shipped over 2.45 billion units of products, with total food product deliveries exceeding 7 lakh metric tonnes. The FMCG category recorded an 85% YoY growth, supported by a 50% increase in product orders from retailers. Private label brands saw an impressive 250% surge in revenue, reflecting growing demand for high-quality, value-driven products. Additionally, udaan strengthened its logistics by deploying electric vehicles (EVs) for last-mile delivery in Bengaluru, promoting sustainability. Vaibhav Gupta, Co-Founder and CEO of udaan, said,



"With 85%+ growth in FMCG and 250% growth in staples private labels, we are actively leading kirana commerce transformation. Our focus remains on innovation, efficiency, and strengthening Bharat's kirana ecosystem." In Guwahati, kirana retailers are increasingly relying on udaan's wide product portfolio and efficient distribution network. The platform's deep market penetration has enabled local stores to stock a diverse range of FMCG, personal care, and staple products, strengthening their competitiveness in the fast-evolving retail sector.

## ELECRAMA 2025 sparks growth in India's electrical market

**Agartala:** ELECRAMA 2025, the world's largest electrical exhibition, has commenced at India Expo Mart, Greater Noida, highlighting India's accelerating role in the global energy transition. Organized by the Indian Electrical & Electronics Manufacturers' Association (IEEMA), the event showcases advancements in renewable energy, electric mobility, and smart grid technology. Union Minister of Power and Minister of Housing & Urban Affairs, Shri Manohar Lal Khattar, inaugurated the event, reinforcing the government's focus on expanding India's energy infrastructure. "India aims for 800 GW of power generation by 2030, with 50% from renewables. Strengthening EV charging networks and digital grid solutions is pivotal for our clean energy future," Khattar stated.

## Tata Tea Gold expands premium offerings in Eastern India

**Guwahati:** Tata Tea Gold, a premium blend combining the rich fullness of valley-grown Assam tea with the irresistible aroma of highland long leaves, is set to strengthen Tata Tea's presence in Eastern India's growing premium tea segment. Crafted by Tata Tea's master blenders, this offering caters to discerning consumers who seek both taste and aroma in their daily cup. Priced at ₹300 for a 500-gram pack, Tata Tea Gold positions itself as a luxurious yet accessible choice for tea lovers. With a focus on quality, the brand aims to tap into the region's evolving preference for premium teas, offering an ideal beverage for a refreshing start to the day or a revitalizing break during work hours. In Guwahati,



a major center for tea trade and consumption, Tata Tea Gold's introduction is expected to boost demand for high-end blends. Given Assam's dominance in the tea industry, local consumers are inclined toward superior quality teas. The blend's unique combination of strong valley-grown teas and aromatic long leaves is likely to resonate well with Guwahati's tea enthusiasts, reinforcing the city's reputation as a key market for premium tea.

## Škoda Auto India names Ranveer Singh as first brand superstar to drive new era

**Guwahati:** Škoda Auto India has appointed Bollywood star Ranveer Singh as its first-ever "Brand Superstar" as part of its 25th-anniversary celebrations and its strategy to deepen customer engagement in India. This partnership aligns with the company's recent launch of the Kylaq, its first sub-4-metre SUV, and ongoing plans for market expansion. Petr Janeba, Brand Director, Škoda Auto India, stated, "As we celebrate 25 years, we are entering a new era beyond launching world-class products. Ranveer Singh's dynamic energy mirrors our passion and ethos, driving us closer to our customers." Ranveer Singh said, "Škoda Auto India's diverse and exciting



product portfolio reflects a strong legacy. I'm thrilled to contribute to its growth in the evolving Indian market." In Guwahati, Škoda's new launches, including the Kylaq, are expected to boost local sales, with demand for feature-packed SUVs and EVs rising in the region. Škoda's focus on innovation, design, and performance aligns well

with the market's evolving preferences. Škoda plans to expand its Indian sales and service touchpoints from 277 to 350 by 2025, aiming for annual sales of 100,000 cars by 2026. The company showcased its ICE and EV models at Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025, further solidifying its commitment to the Indian market's dynamic growth.

## Bajaj Allianz Life & ICICI Lombard strengthen insurance awareness in Tripura

**Agartala:** Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance and ICICI Lombard General Insurance are driving financial inclusion in Tripura through targeted insurance awareness initiatives under the State Insurance Plan. The recently concluded fourth State Level Insurance Committee (SLIC) meeting highlighted their efforts

in bridging the insurance gap and expanding coverage across the state. SLIC, established to oversee insurance-related activities, is actively implementing IRDAI's 'Insurance for All by 2047' vision. The meeting, attended by Tripura Finance Secretary Apurva Roy, Director (Institutional Finance) Rakhi Biswas,

TRLM CEO Ajit Sukla Das, and IRDAI GM A.V. Rao, reaffirmed the insurers' commitment to financial literacy and insurance accessibility. Anil PM, Head of Legal, Compliance & FPU at Bajaj Allianz Life, emphasized the company's role in making insurance more accessible and understandable across Tripura. Anand

Singhi, Chief of Retail & Government Business at ICICI Lombard, highlighted their engagement with local communities, CSR initiatives in road safety, health, and education, and efforts to strengthen insurance penetration. In Agartala, increased insurance awareness is expected to enhance financial security

for traders and small businesses, encouraging wider adoption of insurance products to mitigate risks and ensure business stability. Both insurers will continue expanding awareness programs and participating in District Level Insurance Committee (DLIC) meetings to strengthen their outreach across Tripura.

ELECRAMA 2025 also features the World Utility Summit, CEO Summit, and Innovation Awards, fostering discussions on digital transformation, energy efficiency, and skill development. As India positions itself as a global energy leader, the event serves as a catalyst for business collaborations and technological advancements in the electrical sector.



## CES Foundation to strengthen Meghalaya's Eri Silk industry with Silk Link Workshop in Shillong

**Shillong:** The Customized Energy Solutions Foundation (CESF) is set to host a state-level Silk Link workshop in Shillong on February 26, 2025, at Vivanta Meghalaya, focusing on expanding Meghalaya's Eri silk value chain.

The state contributes 22.6% of India's total Eri silk production, yet the industry remains concentrated in only four districts. With Ri-Bhoi district and Umden-Diwon as key hubs, the workshop aims to scale production to 5,000 machines across Meghalaya, creating significant livelihood opportunities. Ms. Netra Walawalkar, Director, CESF, emphasized the sector's importance, stating, "Expanding Eri silk



**A State-Level Workshop**  
**Leveraging Innovation, Networking, and Knowledge for Eri Silk Value Chain**

Eri silk sustains 159,500 artisans and contributes ₹3,559.5 crore to Meghalaya's economy. But its potential is three times more! To achieve this SILK LINK will bring key stakeholders together to:

- Scaling across 6 districts
- Unlock ₹100 crore in investments
- Power the value chain with 100% renewable energy
- Upskill 1,00,000 artisans
- Enabling market access for premium positioning

26TH FEBRUARY 2025 | START AT 9:30 AM | VIVANTA, SHILLOHG

To register: 

production across all districts will drive economic growth, empower artisans, and enhance Meghalaya's

rural economy." Mr. Nitin Akhade, leading CESF's livelihood projects, added that the sector could

engage 438,625 people, making it a major economic driver. The workshop will bring together government agencies, private sector players, banks, and civil society organizations to address skill gaps, market access, and mobilize ₹100 crore for financial and technological advancements.

A key focus will be integrating 100% decentralized renewable energy (DRE) technologies for efficiency. Shillong plays a crucial role in Eri silk retail and exports. With growing demand for eco-friendly, high-value textiles, Shillong's markets stand to benefit from an expanded supply chain, offering new business opportunities for traders, designers, and entrepreneurs.

## Bajaj Allianz Announces Global Insurance Excellence Awards 2025

**Pune:** Bajaj Allianz General Insurance has announced the Global Insurance Excellence Awards (GIEA) 2025, aiming to honor outstanding contributions from general and health insurance advisors across Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa.

Asia Insurance Review will serve as the Award Partner, enhancing the event's credibility.

The GIEA will recognize exceptional advisors in eleven categories, evaluated by a panel of international experts, including leaders from insurance associations in Singapore, Egypt, and Malaysia.

The nomination period opens today and closes on



20th March 2025.

Mr. Tapan Singhel, MD & CEO of Bajaj Allianz, emphasized the importance of insurance advisors as the backbone of the industry, stating, "It's time to celebrate their incredible efforts." Asia Insurance Review CEO, Sheela Suppiah, echoed this sentiment, highlighting the awards' broader geographic reach.

## Bajaj Allianz Life launches pension plan with industry-first 30-year deferment

**Guwahati:** Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance has introduced Bajaj Allianz Life Guaranteed Pension Goal II, a new-age annuity plan featuring an industry-first 30-year deferment option. This non-linked, non-participating plan aims to help individuals as young as 35 begin their retirement journey with flexible payout options and lifelong income security.

The plan offers multiple annuity choices, including life annuity, joint life annuity, and customizable

Return of Purchase Price (ROP) options ranging from 50% to 100%. It also guarantees lifelong income and provides exclusive benefits for NPS subscribers with a specialized Family Pension option. "With rising life expectancy and limited social security options in India, retirement planning has never been more crucial," said Tarun Chugh, MD & CEO of Bajaj Allianz Life. "This product empowers customers with financial independence and flexibility to meet their life goals

with confidence." In Guwahati, this plan could cater to young professionals and entrepreneurs looking for long-term financial stability. With the city's growing workforce, such a product can drive financial literacy and structured retirement planning awareness.

A Bajaj Allianz Life survey revealed that 77% of Indians prefer life insurance for retirement, signaling increasing demand for innovative financial solutions. Visit the company's website for further details.

## PMI India calls for stronger measures against illicit tobacco trade

**New Delhi:** On Anti-Smuggling Day 2025, IPM India, the Indian affiliate of Philip Morris International Inc. (PMI), has highlighted the urgent need for cross-sector and international collaboration to combat the illicit tobacco trade. The company emphasized that addressing this issue is crucial for protecting India's economic stability, national security, and public health.

The FICCI Cascade report underscores the impact of the global illegal trade, which contributes to a shadow economy valued at \$2 trillion annually, over 3% of global GDP. Approximately 11.6% of cigarettes consumed worldwide are illicit, leading to \$40.5 billion in tax losses. In India, illicit tobacco trade cost the government ₹13,331 crore in 2022, with illegal cigarette volumes reaching 30.2 billion sticks, positioning India as one of the most affected nations after China and Brazil, according to Euromonitor International's 2023 report.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control identifies India as both a transit hub and a key market for illicit tobacco. Smuggling networks span across borders, making this a global concern that demands coordinated international efforts. While Indian enforcement agencies, including the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) and Customs, have stepped up crackdowns, illicit trade remains a persistent issue. The DRI report 'Smuggling in India 2023-24' states that approximately 91 million sticks of smuggled foreign-origin cigarettes, worth ₹179.82 crores, were seized in the country.

Navaneel Kar, Managing Director of IPM India, stressed the importance of immediate action, stating, "Illicit tobacco trade threatens economic growth and security. Protecting consumers from counterfeit products and preventing smuggling is essential. PMI continues to combat illicit tobacco trade through research, supply chain protection, partnerships, law enforcement cooperation, and awareness campaigns." Industry experts highlight the need for a comprehensive strategy that includes stringent enforcement, public awareness initiatives, intelligence sharing, and robust public-private partnerships. A predictable regulatory and fiscal environment is essential to dismantling the black market and safeguarding legitimate businesses.

## Banks warn of hidden credit risk in EU's ESG retreat



**Mumbai:** The European Banking Federation is warning that the sheer scale of a proposed rollback of the bloc's ESG rules will make it harder for lenders to analyze credit risk.

Banks in Europe have been waiting for years for their clients to start providing hundreds of data points under new ESG reporting rules. But as the European Union now looks set to dramatically water down planned regulations, banks fear they'll be left without the necessary tools to conduct proper credit risk analyses, according to the EBF, whose members include BNP Paribas SA, UniCredit SpA and Deutsche Bank AG.

The EBF's warning comes as the European Commission prepares to unveil its long-awaited omnibus proposal on Wednesday. The EU's executive arm is proposing that key ESG rules, including the Corporate Sustainability,

## Tata AIA expands financial inclusion efforts in Mizoram on 38th Statehood Day

**Aizawl:** As Mizoram celebrates 38 years of statehood, Tata AIA Life Insurance has reinforced its commitment to financial inclusion in the state. Despite a high literacy rate of 92% and a strong economic growth rate of 10.14% in FY 2022-23, insurance penetration remains low, with only 64,142 policies sold in FY23, generating an annualized premium of ₹269.15 crore. As Mizoram's designated Lead Insurer, Tata AIA has been driving financial awareness through on-ground initiatives and digital outreach, reaching over

8 lakh people. To mark Statehood Day, Tata AIA supported key events, including the Youth Festival at Govt. T. Romana College and a Health Camp in Sialsuk. The Bimarath van covered 750 km across Aizawl, Champhai, Serchhip, and Lunglei, engaging over 10,000 people. A social media campaign featuring Mizo influencer Adeline Pachuau has reached 20 lakh users. In Aizawl, financial security remains a priority for traders and small business owners who often rely on informal savings.

Tata AIA's initiatives aim

to bridge this gap by promoting structured financial planning with insurance solutions, ensuring economic resilience. Mizoram's Secretary, Shri Lalram-sanga Sailo, stated, "On Mizoram Statehood Day, let us celebrate progress, unity, and security. Just as the state has flourished with resilience, life insurance ensures financial stability and protection for every family." Through sustained efforts like Masik Bima Diwas and strategic awareness campaigns, Tata AIA is working towards making insurance more accessible across Mizoram.



**Bajaj Allianz life is first insurer to use Bima-ASBA facility**

**Guwahati:** Bajaj Allianz Life, one of India's leading private life insurers, has become the first insurer to go live with the BIMA-Application Supported by Blocked Amount facility (Bima-ASBA). This milestone aligns with the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India's (IRDAI) initiative to bring operational ease, enhance policyholder convenience, ensure greater transparency, and simplify the insurance premium payment process. Bima-ASBA is a significant step forward in making premium payments smoother and customer friendly. Bajaj Allianz Life, in partnership with its payment partners, has successfully launched this process. Speaking on the development, Tarun Chugh, MD & CEO, Bajaj Allianz Life, said, "In line with the vision of 'Insurance for All by 2047,' IRDAI is taking commendable steps toward enhancing transparency, trust, and digitization for customer convenience. These measures are designed to further benefit customers by strengthening the insurance ecosystem. We welcome Bima-ASBA as a significant step in this direction." With this launch, Bajaj Allianz Life continues to reinforce its position as a customer-centric insurer, driving digital-first innovations for a seamless insurance journey.

**Moto Morini Seiemmezzo 650 sees major price drop; now starts at ₹4.99 lakh**

**Hyderabad:** Adishwar Auto Ride India (AARI) has announced a significant price revision for the Moto Morini Seiemmezzo 650 range. The MY-2025 Seiemmezzo 650 Retro Street and Scrambler models have received price cuts of ₹2 lakh and ₹1.90 lakh, respectively, making them more accessible to Indian buyers. With the new ex-showroom prices effective from February 20, 2025, the Seiemmezzo 650 Retro Street is now available at ₹4,99,000, while the Seiemmezzo 650 Scrambler is priced at ₹5,20,000. These

reductions apply to all available color variants, reinforcing the models' value proposition in the mid-premium motorcycle category. AARI Managing Director Vikas Jhabakh commented, "Moto Morini has a rich Italian legacy, and we are excited to make these exceptional motorcycles more accessible. This price revision strengthens our commitment to offering premium products with unbeatable value." Moto Vault dealerships nationwide are now offering the Seiemmezzo 650 range at these revised prices.

**India eyes global leadership in electrical industry with unified exposition**

**Agartala:** India's electrical industry is poised for a major transformation as Union Commerce & Industry Minister Piyush Goyal called for a unified, large-scale exposition to position the country as the global hub for electrical and energy solutions. Speaking at ELECRAMA 2025, Goyal stressed that merging industry-led exhibitions into one grand platform would attract top investors, enhance exports, and strengthen India's leadership in the power sector. The event also witnessed Vimal Anand, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, announcing that India is set to become the world's third-largest economy by 2026, ahead of previous estimates. Meanwhile, a key MoU signed at the Reverse Buyer Seller Meet (RBSM) is expected to boost international collaborations in the power sector. The eTECHnxt conference further explored clean energy, digitalization, and smart grid advancements, highlighting the importance of workforce upskilling. With a focus on scaling up manufacturing, expanding exports, and fostering innovation, ELECRAMA 2025 reinforces India's vision of becoming a global powerhouse in electrical solutions.

**Perfetti Van Melle expands jelly lineup with Alpenliebe Juzt Jelly 'Jungle Land' and 'Fruity Salad'**

**Imphal:** Perfetti Van Melle India has strengthened its position in the jelly segment with the launch of Alpenliebe Juzt Jelly Jungle Land and Fruity Salad, introducing playful shapes like monkey, banana, pineapple, strawberry, orange, and green apple. Priced at ₹10 per pack, the new offerings combine fun and flavor to drive consumer engagement.



With real fruit juice and a unique dual-layer texture—jelly with a soft foamy layer—these products cater to India's evolving confectionery market, where shape, texture, and

taste influence purchasing decisions. "We continue to push category innovation, offering exciting experiences that resonate with young consumers," said Gunjan Khetan, Marketing Director, Perfetti Van Melle India. Since its launch in 2012, Alpenliebe Juzt Jelly has led India's jelly category. With this latest innovation, Perfetti Van Melle aims to reinforce its market leadership while expanding its reach across urban and rural markets.

**SMFG India Credit sets Guinness World Record for largest cattle welfare lesson**

**Dibrugarh:** SMFG India Credit has achieved a Guinness World Record for the Largest Cattle Welfare Lesson (Multiple Venues) with 517 participants across six locations in India. This milestone was part of the company's 7th edition of Pashu Vikas Day (PVD)—the country's largest one-day cattle care camp—held in 500 locations across 16 states, benefiting approximately 1,50,000 cattle and 40,000 cattle owners. Pashu Vikas Day 2025, themed "Mera Pashu Mera Parivar," underscored the crucial role of livestock in rural livelihoods. With nearly 70% of India's rural population dependent on agriculture and related activities, SMFG India Credit's initiative reinforced its commitment to financial inclusion and rural welfare. Over 6,000 employees participated in the event, ensuring widespread engagement. Dibrugarh Market Perspective: The initiative has resonated strongly particularly in the



Dibrugarh region, where livestock plays a pivotal role in the agrarian economy. Farmers and cattle owners in Dibrugarh have welcomed PVD's specialized welfare lessons, which are expected to enhance productivity and financial security. With access to better cattle care, the region is likely to see an uptick in dairy production and rural financing opportunities. Shantanu Mitra, CEO & MD of SMFG India Credit, emphasized the company's focus on Tier-2+ locations, with nearly 90% of its branches in these regions. "Our goal is to drive financial inclusion by providing

the right products and financial solutions to communities at every stage of their life cycle," he stated. Swaminathan Subramanian, COO, called the Guinness World Record a "defining moment," reaffirming SMFG India Credit's commitment to rural development. Previously, PVD has been recognized by the World Records Union, Limca Book of Records, and World Book of Records. SMFG India Credit, a subsidiary of Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group (SMFG), operates across 670+ towns and 70,000+ villages, offering financial solutions for small businesses and rural entrepreneurs.

**Flipkart strengthens commitment to Assam's digital growth at Advantage Assam 2.0**

**Guwahati/Silchar:** Flipkart has reaffirmed its commitment to empowering local businesses, artisans, and MSMEs in Assam by expanding its digital commerce ecosystem. Participating in the Advantage Assam 2.0 Investment & Infrastructure Summit 2025, Flipkart announced strategic initiatives aimed at boosting market access, logistics efficiency, and economic inclusion. Rajneesh Kumar, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Flipkart Group, stated, "Assam's strong entrepreneurial foundation, coupled with the state's vision for digital and economic growth under Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, presents vast opportunities. Flipkart is dedicated to equipping local businesses with technology, infra-

structure, and market access to scale their ventures." Currently, Flipkart supports over 1 lakh sellers from Assam, with 100% year-on-year growth in seller participation. The top-selling categories include women's ethnic wear, grooming products, men's footwear, kids' clothing, and home furnishings. To enhance its supply chain, Flipkart operates fulfillment centers in Palasbari, Balashidhi, and Kochpara, with upcoming hubs in Kamrup and Jalukbari. By investing in supply chain infrastructure, workforce development, and local partnerships, Flipkart continues to drive Assam's digital transformation and long-term economic growth.

**Insurers brace for ₹5,500 crore GST demands following HDFC Life scrutiny**

**Mumbai:** The Indian insurance industry is bracing for extended legal scrutiny from tax authorities after the goods and services tax (GST) Adjudicating Authority upheld a tax demand of Rs 2,400 crore against HDFC Life Insurance. The ruling, stemming from allegations of wrongful claims on input tax credit (ITC) related to agent commissions, could set a



precedent that pushes the industry's total tax liability beyond Rs 5,500 crore, according to a report by The Economic Times. The Directorate General

of GST Intelligence (DGGI) has been investigating nearly 30 insurance companies for allegedly misusing ITC, a mechanism that allows businesses to reduce their GST liability by claiming credit on taxes paid for input services or goods. The probe led to the issuance of multiple show cause notices, questioning tax credits amounting to over Rs 5,500 crore.





## Kunal Kemmu shares his reaction to knife attack on SAIF ALI KHAN

*Kunal Kemmu recalled receiving a call at 6 am about the incident 'Am I supposed to send my daughter to school now'*

Actor Kunal Kemmu has recalled the knife attack on his brother-in-law, Saif Ali Khan, at his Bandra residence. Speaking with news agency ANI, he said that the most important thing for the family at that time was Saif Ali Khan's safety and well-being.

Kunal recalled how he was informed about the episode with a call at 6 am and what a peculiar experience it was for him to break it to his wife-actor Soha Ali Khan while they were getting their daughter In-naya Naumi Kemmu ready for school.

He said, "You know, honestly, the first thing was, is he (Saif Ali Khan) okay? And once we knew that he was okay and he was out of danger,

none of the chatter made any sense again because that's the only thing that mattered."

"I woke up to a call at like about 6, and there was no information...It's very weird how fear works. I had to break this to her. We were getting our daughter ready to go to school and you just had this information and nothing else. So to kind of how to put this across, am I supposed to send my daughter to school right now or not? All of those things were kind of playing on my mind. So we did send her to school, and then I said we need to go there, and that's when slowly we started to find out what had kind of transpired," the actor added. He Said Saif addressed the attack and all questions, putting it well.

## Parineeti Chopra to lead Netflix mystery thriller



Actor Parineeti Chopra is set to star in an upcoming mystery thriller series on Netflix. The yet untitled project, to be directed by Rensil D'Silva, marks another collaboration of Parineeti with the streaming platform after her 2024 film Amar Singh Chamkila with Diljit Dosanjh. The series is produced by Siddharth P Malhotra and also stars Tahir Raj Bhasin, Anup Soni, Jennifer Winget and Chaitannya Choudhry.

## Bengaluru Cops Give Ed Sheeran the Sha Rukh But He Takes it in Stride

British singer Ed Sheeran captured the highlights of his recent visit to India - including one unsavoury one - in a fun video he posted on social media on Friday evening. Ed posted a Reel on Instagram with the caption, "India, that was fun! til next time." It included his concerts, meeting fans and celebs, and even being accosted by Bengaluru Police in the middle of his street gig.



stopped by cops in Bengaluru. The singer even mocked the fiasco by including a meme on the issue with a video of Ranbir Kapoor's Jordan from Rockstar being similarly accosted by the police.

Fans expressed shock and delight at the singer making light of the incident and being aware of the meme. "OMG, you included the Bengaluru cops incident," one wrote. Another commented, "You gotta be kidding!! The Bengaluru incident meme !! Like what!! You saw that too." Earlier this month, Ed Sheeran was busking at Bengaluru's Church Street when police personnel interrupted and halted his performance, unplugging his equipment.



## Allu Arjun praised Ranbir Kapoor's performance in Animal

Actor Allu Arjun has praised Ranbir Kapoor's hit yet controversial film Animal. Speaking with Hollywood Reporter India, Arjun also responded if he would have liked to star in it. Arjun also said that he enjoys all genres—"sci-fi, romantic drama, drama, comedy I like everything".

Arjun was asked if there is a film that he watched recently which made him say that he would have liked to do that. He replied, "No. There's no film that I would say I'd like to have done. But there are films that I really liked. Performances... I loved Animal. Phenomenal performance. That's one movie I really liked. There are some nice Telugu films that have come out."

The actor also spoke about what kind of films he likes to watch. "Everything — top to bottom, high to low. I have a wide spectrum. I can watch a niche film. I can watch a shal-low film. I can watch a wide film. I can watch a small film. I can watch all genres. If it's well-made, I'll watch it. I'm not into horror or dark murder



mysteries, but if they are really well-made, I'll watch them. I enjoy all genres. Sci-fi, romantic drama, drama, comedy I like everything," he added.

Animal, which released in 2023, is action drama film directed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga. The film stars Ranbir Kapoor, Anil Kapoor, Bobby Deol, Rashmika Mandanna and Triptii Dimri. It received mixed reviews. The film faced criticism for glorifying toxic masculinity and misogyny.. It however did extremely well commercially. Arjun was last seen in Sukumar's Pushpa 2: The Rule. Released on December 5, the sequel continues Pushpa's saga.



## Justin Bieber wants son Jack to start ice hockey ASAP



Canadian popstar Justin Bieber has expressed a keen desire for his six-month-old son, Jack Blues Bieber, to embark on ice hockey training "as soon as possible." "It's never too early," said the 30-year-old singer as he spoke about this aspiration during the star-studded 'Skate For LA Strong' charity ice hockey match on Feb 23, aimed at raising funds for Los Angeles wildfire relief efforts. During a halftime interview, Bieber conveyed the significance of participating in the charity game, stating, "It means everything. We're just looking to have a good

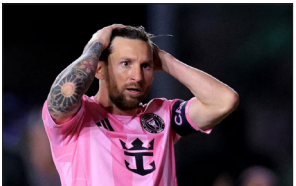
time and show that when we all come together, big things can happen," he added. The event featured notable personalities such as Steve Carell and Ross Lynch, with Snoopy Dogg, Will Ferrell, and Vince Vaughn serving as coaches. Bieber, a devoted supporter of the Toronto Maple Leafs, expressed his enthusiasm to emulate his favourite NHL team during the game's second half, exclaiming, "I love those guys, man. Let's go, baby. Let's go, Leafs!" In recent times, the Biebers have been the subject of public speculation regarding their personal lives.



## ICC accused of favoring India in Champions Trophy

Dubai, Feb 25: The ongoing Champions Trophy 2025 is being played in the 'Hybrid Model'. India are scheduled to play all their CT 2025 matches in Dubai. The first semi-final of the tournament will be played in Dubai, and the summit clash too might be played in the UAE if India qualify for it. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) had been firmly against sending the Indian team to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy. The BCCI had cited security issues as the main reason behind not sending the Indian team to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy. This is the first time that two venues have been decided for the final of an ICC event, and only Pakistan are to be blamed for it. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) never had any concrete answers to the security issues that their country has seen over the years. Pakistan did try their very best to convince the BCCI to send the Indian team to Pakistan.

## Messi fined for grabbing NYC coach's neck



New York, Feb 26: Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi has been fined an undisclosed amount for grabbing one of New York City FC's coaching staff on the neck after Saturday's MLS opener, the league said.

Video footage showed Messi approach the coach and grab the back of his neck, causing him to pull away from the eight-times Ballon d'Or winner after the 2-2 draw in Miami. The fine was imposed by the MLS' Disciplinary Committee on Tuesday.

The top-flight North American league also fined Messi's teammate Luis Suarez on Tuesday for violating the same "face/head/neck of an opponent policy" during halftime, when he pinched the back of Norwegian defender Birk Risa's neck.

# KOHLI DOMINATES

## India beat Pakistan with VK's 51st ODI Century



Dubai, 23 Feb: Virat Kohli brought up his 51st ODI century as he guided India to a win over Pakistan in the Champions Trophy in Dubai on Sunday. This defeat puts Pakistan on the brink of elimination as they'll have to pray that Bangladesh defeat New Zealand on Monday and then they themselves have to defeat Bangladesh in their last group match with the net run rate likely to come in play.

Kohli who looked in inspired form got to his milestone in 111 deliveries in an innings studded with 7 fours. It was a typical photo finish to the contest as Kohli got to his century in the last ball of the match, slamming a boundary. He was ably supported in the middle by Shreyas Iyer who scored a half century in 63 deliveries after an uncharacteristic slow start before shifting gears.

Earlier, Kohli had become the fastest batter to reach 14,000 ODI runs during the match against Pakistan at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium. The 36-year-old Kohli surpassed Sachin Tendulkar (350 innings), by achieving the feat in only 287 innings. Kohli got to the landmark when he reached 15 runs in the chase against Pakistan. Kohli is only the third batter ever to reach the milestone after Tendulkar and Sri Lanka's Kumar Sangakkara who crossed the milestone in 378 innings in 2015.

he former India captain only took 10 innings to cross from 13,000 to 14,000.

## Kohli, Rohit still have a lot of cricket left: Dhawan

Dubai, Feb 24: Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma have "a lot of cricket left in them", former India opener and Champions Trophy winner Shikhar Dhawan says, adding that the mere presence of the veteran duo can unsettle any opposition.

Kohli hit an unbeaten 100 on Sunday, his 51st ODI century, as India swept aside Pakistan by six wickets in Dubai to stand on the cusp of the ICC Champions Trophy semi-finals. Pakistan, who are hosting all of the games except those involving India, are on the brink of elimination after their second defeat of the tournament. Rohit made a quickfire 20 at the top of the innings as India went after 242 for victory

and Kohli took charge after the captain's exit to steer the team home with 45 balls to spare.

Kohli, 36, and Rohit, 37, have struggled for form since retiring from T20 internationals after last year's World Cup win, with speculation swirling that they could soon retire. But Kohli rolled back the years with his first ODI century since November 2023.

"Virat standing on the crease, his presence is big. The opposition have fear in them," said Dhawan, who is in Dubai as a tournament ambassador. Kohli went past 14,000 ODI runs early in his innings, becoming only the third batsman to achieve the landmark after Sachin Tendulkar and Kumar Sangakkara.

## IOA forms ad-hoc panel to oversee boxing affairs

Chennai, Feb 25: Indian boxing seems to be in soup at the moment. In a dramatic turn of events, the Indian Olympic Association formed a five-member ad-hoc committee on Monday to run the day-to-day affairs of the Boxing Federation of India (BFI). The IOA, in a letter to all the stakeholders, alleged administrative issues surrounding BFI and said that the boxing federation's inability to hold elections on time compelled them to take this extreme step.

Responding to this development, the BFI said this move is against the constitution of the IOA itself and PT Usha, as the president of the organisation, cannot form an ad-hoc committee without the approval of the

executive committee. Additionally, they are set to challenge the decision in court. As things stand, the IOA is divided between two warring factions — Usha on one side and some eight to ten executive members on the other. Whether or not IOA's ad-hoc committee can continue also depends on other factors like the sports ministry and its recognition. As of now, the sports ministry has not reacted to this. Interestingly, the sports ministry has not spoken about de-affiliation which means the funding and other support will not stop. Going by the IOA letter, Madukant Pathak has been named the chairman of the aforementioned committee.



Paris 2024 Olympics - Basketball - Women's Victory Ceremony - Bercy Arena, Paris, France - August 11, 2024. Diana Taurasi of United States celebrates her sixth Olympic gold medal after 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016 and 2020, the most Olympic gold medals by a United States basketball player. (Reuters)

## Modric stunner keeps Real Madrid in title race

### Modric's goal and Vinicius' strike secure vital win for Real Madrid

Barcelona, Feb 24: Luka Modric scored a brilliant goal from long range to help Real Madrid secure a 2-0 win against Girona on Sunday which took them back level with Barcelona at the top of La Liga.

Vinicius Junior wrapped up the win late on as Carlo Ancelotti's side produced a solid display at the Santiago Bernabeu.

After rivals Barcelona and Atletico Madrid, now third, both won on Saturday, the pressure was on for the champions in the extremely tight title race. Madrid had not won in their



prior three league games but flexed their muscles by thrashing Man City in the Champions League in midweek. "It's a very important win, we have to stay in the fight," Modric told Real Ma-

drid TV. "We can't let our level slip and consider ourselves satisfied, we can still grow as a team." The Croatian's goal was the highlight of the match.

"I was by myself, I con-

trolled the ball, I hit it well and it went in," Modric added. "I don't know if it's one of the most spectacular I've scored, it was really nice, it's always special to score at the Bernabeu." Madrid were without suspended England international Jude Bellingham after his red card last weekend.

Last year's surprise title contenders Girona were hard for Madrid to break down but far less threatening in attack than at their fluent best. Gazzaniga saves from Mbappe; Vinicius misses chance with French partner.