



Fadnavis reveals that the BJP-Sena alliance broke in 2014 due to a dispute over four assembly seats

■ *Seat dispute's lasting impact* ■ *Coalition volatility endures in Maharashtra*

Mumbai: A decade after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Shiv Sena (then undivided) parted ways ahead of the 2014 Maharashtra Assembly elections, Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has shed light on the primary cause: a bitter dispute over seat allocation. Fadnavis's revelation comes amidst renewed political discourse surrounding past alliances



and their impact on Maharashtra's political land-

scape. Speaking to reporters, Fadnavis stated that the breakdown in negotiations stemmed from irreconcilable differences regarding the number of seats each party would contest. "The alliance broke because of disagreements over seat sharing. We attempted to find a middle ground, but it proved impossible," he said.

BJP, Congress spar over K'taka Dy CM's Constitution remark

Bengaluru: A political firestorm has erupted in Karnataka following remarks made by Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, with the BJP demanding clarification and accusing the Congress leader of suggesting alterations to the Indian Constitution. Shivakumar's comments, made during a recent public address, have triggered a sharp exchange of accusations between the two parties, escalating tensions



within the state's political landscape. The controversy stems from Shivakumar's statements regarding the need for societal changes and adjustments within the framework of the Constitution. BJP has interpreted these remarks as a veiled suggestion.

CPI(M) leader's kin joins Hind Aikya Vedi in Kerala

Kerala: A relative of a prominent Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] leader has reportedly joined the Hind Aikya Vedi, a Hindu nationalist organization, in Kerala, sparking political discussion and raising questions about shifting political affiliations within the state.



cal contrast between the two groups. The CPI(M) is a left-wing, secular political party, while the Hind Aikya Vedi advocates for Hindu unity and promotes a Hindu nationalist agenda. The CPI(M) leader's kin sparks political speculation in Kerala.

The defection of the CPI(M) leader's family member to the Hind Aikya Vedi has drawn attention due to the stark ideologi-

Devendra Fadnavis seeks apology from Kunal Kamra over comments against Eknath Shinde

Mumbai: Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has demanded a public apology from comedian Kunal Kamra over remarks made against Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. The demand stems from a social media post and stand-up routine by Kamra, in which he allegedly made derogatory and offensive comments about Shinde. Fadnavis, addressing the media, stated that Kamra's comments were unaccept-



able and crossed the line of acceptable satire. He emphasized that criticism of political figures is permissible, but personal attacks and disparaging remarks are not. He asserted that Kamra's comments were not merely humorous but aimed at deliberately insult-

ing the Chief Minister.

"There is a difference between criticism and personal attacks," Fadnavis stated. "Kunal Kamra's comments were not humorous, they were derogatory. He must apologize. The demand for an apology has ignited a debate regarding freedom of speech and the boundaries of satire. Kamra, known for his acerbic political commentary, has often faced criticism from political figures and their supporters.

Delhi CM presents ₹1 lakh crore budget



New Delhi: Finance Minister Rekha Gupta presented a ₹1 lakh crore budget for the fiscal year 2025-26 in the Delhi Legislative Assembly today, hailing it as a "historic" step towards the city's development. The budget focuses on key sectors including education, healthcare, infrastructure, and social welfare, aiming to accelerate Delhi's progress and improve the quality of life for its residents.

Delhi budget session starts with 'kheer' ceremony, BJP leaders say progress

Opposition scrutinizes AAP's development claims during budget opening

New Delhi: The five-day Budget session of the Delhi Assembly began on Monday with a 'Kheer' ceremony with BJP leaders saying that "sweetness symbolises progress".



Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, who also holds the finance portfolio, will table the first budget of a BJP government in Delhi in more than 26 years. At the ceremony, Minister Kapil Mishra said the budget session holds a historical significance.

"Today, people from diverse backgrounds, including businessmen, auto drivers, Dalit brothers and sisters, will share 'Kheer' (pudding) together. The budget will be presented tomorrow," he said. BJP leader Satish Upadhyay extended his wishes the

chief minister, and said budget represents a message of progress for Delhi. He emphasised that CM Gupta has engaged with a broad spectrum of people, from women and youths to business owners and residents of colonies, gathering suggestions to shape the budget. "Sweetness symbolises progress. The CM is sending a message that Delhi's development

is on track. This budget reflects the voices of women, youngsters, businessmen and even colony residents, ensuring that their opinions are part of the process. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we are committed to inclusive progress," he said. The BJP returned to power in Delhi after 26 years, defeating AAP in the Assembly polls held last month.

Delhi HC halts Justice Varma's judicial duties amid cash row

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court has suspended Justice Girish Kathpalia, also known as Justice Varma, from his judicial duties following allegations of impropriety related to a cash transaction. The suspension comes amidst an ongoing investigation into the circumstances surrounding the alleged cash row, which has raised serious concerns about judicial integrity.



The administrative decision to suspend Justice Varma was taken after preliminary inquiries indicated the need for a thorough investigation. The precise details of the cash row have not been publicly disclosed, but sources within the High Court suggest it involves a significant sum of money and raises questions about potential ethical breaches. The suspension

is an interim measure, pending the outcome of the investigation.

A committee has been formed to examine the allegations and submit a report to the Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court. The findings of this investigation will determine the future course of action, which could include further disciplinary measures.

This development has sent ripples through the legal fraternity in Delhi, with many expressing concern about the potential impact on public trust in the judiciary. The High Court has emphasized its commitment to upholding the highest standards of judicial.

Gupta emphasized the government's commitment to inclusive growth and sustainable development, outlining specific allocations for various initiatives. "This budget reflects our vision for a prosperous and equitable Delhi," she stated during her address. "We have prioritized investments that will create jobs, enhance public services, and strengthen our infrastructure." A significant portion of the funds will be allocated to improve school infrastructure, enhance teacher training programs, and expand access to higher education. Investments in road development, public transportation, and water management projects are planned to address.



Assam assembly passes ambitious ₹2.63 lakh crore budget for 2025-26 fiscal year

Guwahati: The Assam Assembly has approved the Rs 2.63 lakh crore budget for the fiscal year 2025-26 on Monday, following the presentation of the Assam Appropriation Bill, 2025.

The budget was initially tabled by Finance Minister Ajanta Neog on March 10, highlighting a range of initiatives designed to expand welfare programs targeting students, youth and women, while also focusing on



the improvement of the state's infrastructure. This budget is significant as it is the last detailed financial

plan to be presented by the incumbent government, led by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, prior to the assembly elections scheduled to be held in late March or early April 2026. The budget proposals are focused towards solving multiple socio-economic issues and improving the welfare of citizens all over Assam. The budget focuses on education, skill and women empowerment initiatives.

Tripura bridge collapses; alleged corruption probed

Agartala: Government projects in Tripura, especially in major departments such as the Public Works Department (PWD), Drinking Water & Sanitation (DWS), and the Agartala Smart City project, are reeling under serious problems of a lack of oversight and widespread corruption.

There are reports that contractor agencies are being compelled to give a 10-20% commission as bribes to local tender

mafias, political brokers, and corrupt officials, including the engineering personnel. Consequently, the quality of projects has greatly declined, and the majority of projects are not being finished on schedule.

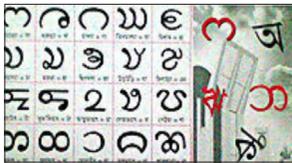
Despite transparency regulations, many projects still lack signboards displaying essential details like costs, executing agencies, timelines and date of completion.

Mizoram: CNCI reaffirms demand for official recognition of Chakma

Aizawl: The Mizoram State Committee of the Chakma National Council of India (CNCI) has again appealed to the state government to acknowledge the Chakma language officially.

The organization again placed the demand in a statement released on Sunday after a two-day general conference at Kamalanagar (Chawngte) in Lawngtlai district.

At the conference, CNCI showed profound concern regarding the persistent non-inclusion of the Chakma language in Mizoram's list of officially recognized languages. The council pointed out that the Chakma community, which forms close to one-tenth of



Mizoram's population, has suffered for a long time regarding linguistic recognition. Moreover, the council denounced the continued mislabeling of Chakmas as Bengalis in the Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities' annual reports to the President of India. CNCI pointed out that such misrepresentation serves to dissolve the separate identity of the Chakma people and causes unnecessary obstacles in their struggle for linguistic and cultural rights.

Manipur marks Int'l Day of Forests 2025 with a focus on sustainability

emphasizing forests' role in food security and community livelihoods

Imphal: The Manipur Forest Department commemorated International Day of Forests 2025 in a festive way at the Imperial Hall, Classic Grande in Chingmeirong, Imphal, following the theme "Celebrating Forests and Foods."

The celebration emphasized the importance of forests in maintaining ecosystem sustainability, food security, and environmental conservation.

Prominent officials in attendance included Anurag Bajpai, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Head of Forest Force, Arun Kumar Sinha, Principal Sec-



retary for Forest, Environment & Climate Change, and Soreiphy Vashum, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Administration & Planning). The festivities started with a ceremonial watering of the Heirengoi plant, sym-

bolizing a commitment to forest conservation. Key attendees included Anurag Bajpai, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Arun Kumar Sinha, Principal Secretary Principal Chief Conservator of Forests.

Meghalaya CM flags rail project unrest



Shillong: The MDA 2.0 Government finds itself in a difficult position over the controversial railway projects in the state.

While the government seeks to introduce railways in Khasi-Jaintia Hills to foster economic growth, it risks igniting law-and-order issues, with anti-railway groups determined to block any attempt by the state or Centre to advance the project.

At the Network18 Group India Diamond States Summit on Sunday, Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma stated that expanding the railway network remains a critical developmental goal.

However, he cautioned that pursuing the project without public approval could lead to law-and-order problems and undermine the state's broader development vision.

He stressed that pushing the railway expansion against public sentiment or without securing their trust would create significant challenges for the state's development goals.

Sangma explained that the community-based system in the state complicates the situation because traditional systems govern land ownership, and the public holds the land. Additionally, he raised concerns over illegal immigration and the protection of local identity.

Arunachal Pradesh minister Ojing Tasing inaugurates 'The Ponrung' cave in Sian

Siang: Arunachal Pradesh Panchayat and Rural Development Minister Ojing Tasing on Friday inaugurated 'The Ponrung,' an ancient bat roost cave near Lokpeng village in Siang district.

A collaborative effort by State Minister Ojing Tasing and Siang Deputy Commissioner P. N. Thungon has enhanced access to the geological marvel, Ponrung. The duo facilitated the construction of concrete steps, which now provide easier access to the cave.

The development marks a pivotal move toward positioning 'The Ponrung' as a key tourist attraction in the region. Speaking on the occasion, the minister said that developing the site as



a tourist destination would not only showcase the region's rich natural heritage but also generate new livelihood opportunities for the people.

Emphasizing environmental conservation, Tasing urged the community to abandon hunting and actively protect the region's biodiversity. He announced an allocation of Rs 20 lakh for further beautification of

the cave.

"This funding will be used to upgrade infrastructure, lighting, and other visitor-friendly facilities, ensuring 'The Ponrung' becomes a well-maintained and attractive destination for tourists," he added.

The Lokpeng Welfare Society (LWS), spearheaded by its president, Talo Pajing has played a crucial role as tourist spot.

Three police officers arrested for alleged bribery in Assam

Lakhimpur: Three police officers of Panigaon Police Station in Lakhimpur district of Assam have been arrested on a charge of taking a bribe. The arrested officers are Constable Hiranya Kumar Patgiri and Home Guards Dilip Kalita and Dipak Mili.

Reports indicate that the trio allegedly extorted a sum of Rs 21,000 from a local resident, Rajkumar Doley, whom they accused of involvement in cattle smuggling activities. The case has led to serious corruption charges against the police force and has triggered immediate action by top authorities.

After the complaint, the then Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Panigaon Police Station, Satyajit Borah,

and Sub-Inspector Khiroda Saikia were suspended on suspicion of involvement in the case. Suspensions are an indication of how serious the Assam police administration is, as they would like to keep their ranks clean and accountable.

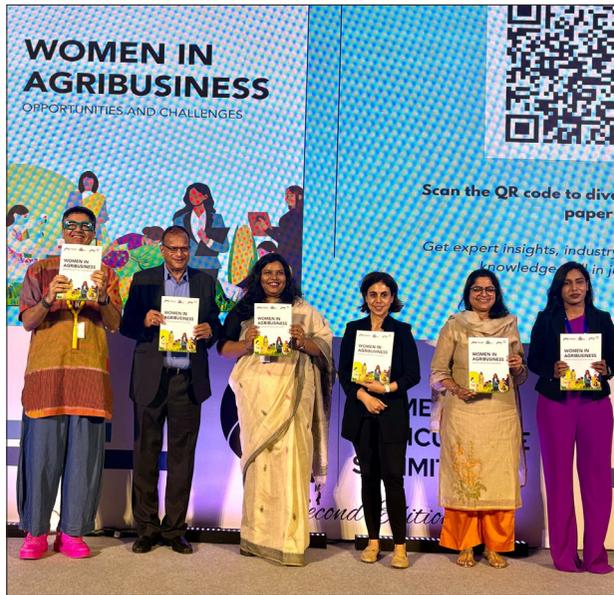
Days ago, the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption in Assam has apprehended two education officials in a bribery case involving a demand of Rs. 50,000. The accused, Padmeswar Bora, the Block Elementary Education Officer (BEEO) and Mahim Debjit Saikia, Head Teacher of Rongpur Betani LP School, were arrested following a complaint lodged by a Senior Assistant in the BEEO's office in Narayanpur, Lakhimpur district.



Women constitute 64.4% of agri workforce but only 6-10% in top agri firms: Godrej Agrovet-IIMA Report

Guwahati: A new report by Godrej Agrovet Limited, in collaboration with IIM Ahmedabad (IIMA) and Godrej DEI Lab, has highlighted a stark gender gap in India's agribusiness sector. Despite comprising 64.4% of the agricultural workforce, women hold only 6-10% of jobs in top agribusiness companies, the report titled Women in Agribusiness – Opportunities and Challenges reveals.

Launching the report at the Women in Agriculture Summit, Balram Singh Yadav, MD, Godrej Agrovet, emphasized the need for gender inclusivity. "By championing mentorship, aligning skills with industry needs, and fostering inclusive ecosystems, we aim to



drive meaningful change," he said.

The company also announced the Godrej Agrovet Women in Agricul-

ture Scholarship to support female students in the field. The report calls for gender-responsive training, leadership representation,

and inclusive workplace reforms to bridge disparities. Godrej Agrovet has already increased women's representation from 8% to 12% in FY25, with a target of 32% by FY28. In Guwahati, a major agricultural trade hub, industry experts believe bridging gender disparities could enhance efficiency and sustainability in agribusiness.

Greater female representation in leadership could drive better market access, technology adoption, and supply chain resilience, benefiting both producers and consumers. The summit also featured industry leaders discussing strategies for empowering women in agriculture and strengthening their role in business leadership.

Digital-first strategies to expand life insurance access in rural India

Guwahati: Despite advancements in digital infrastructure, India's life insurance penetration remains at 2.8%, leaving a significant coverage gap in low-income and rural areas. While digital payments and OTT subscriptions have gained popularity, life insurance adoption lags behind. Insurers are now shifting towards digital-first strategies to align with IRDAI's vision of "Insurance for All by 2047." Limited agent availability and financial literacy hinder insurance adoption in remote areas. To bridge this gap, insurers are leveraging AI-powered CRM platforms and mobile apps to offer real-time services. Collaborations with fintech firms and NGOs are helping drive financial awareness through WhatsApp-based campaigns, videos, and in-

fographics in local languages. Microinsurance and seasonal plans, tailored to rural income patterns, are also being introduced. A hybrid distribution approach is emerging, where digital tools streamline processes while human agents handle claims and customer support. Partnering with panchayats under the State Insurance Plan is fostering trust at the grassroots level. As the financial hub of Northeast India, Guwahati presents strong growth potential for life insurers. With rising fintech adoption, insurers can pilot AI-driven solutions and hybrid models in the city before expanding into rural Assam. By focusing on Insurers aim to double penetration rates and boost financial security by 2047.

Godrej Jersey unveils 3x3 strategy, targets Rs 1,000 cr revenue in Andhra & Telangana

Guwahati: Godrej Jersey has launched its ambitious 3x3 Leapfrog Strategy for FY26, aiming to strengthen its presence in the South Indian dairy market with a focus on three key products—Badam Milk, Paneer, and Curd. The company plans to drive growth through household penetration, market expansion, and product innovation, targeting ₹1,000 crore in topline revenue in Telangana within two years. CEO Bhubendra

Suri emphasized that the strategy would accelerate market expansion and reinforce leadership in the value-added products (VAP) segment. The brand is leveraging celebrity endorsements, featuring Rana Daggubati for Badam Milk and Chef Teja of Vismai Foods for Paneer, to boost market presence. With premium dairy demand rising in Guwahati, Godrej Jersey could explore this growing market by expanding its modern trade and quick

commerce channels. The city's evolving consumer preferences align with the brand's high-quality dairy offerings.

Godrej Jersey is also enhancing R&D spending by 50%, expanding its distribution to 20,000 outlets in Telangana, and aiming for Badam Milk to become a ₹100 crore brand within two years. The company's innovation-driven approach positions it for long-term growth in India's competitive dairy sector.

Enjoy non-stop cricket action with Vi's new JioHotstar bundled prepaid plans

Mumbai: For cricket lovers, missing a match due to slow internet or data exhaustion is frustrating. To ensure seamless streaming, Vi has launched new prepaid plans that come with high-speed data and a JioHotstar subscription, allowing fans to enjoy every moment of the action.

Whether you need a short-term boost or a long-term plan, Vi offers multiple options:

₹101 Pack: 5GB data



and a three-month JioHotstar (Mobile) subscription, valid for 30 days. ₹239 Pack: Unlimited calls, 2GB data, 100 SMS/day, and a one-month JioHotstar subscription, valid for 28 days. ₹399 Pack: Unlimited calls,

unlimited data from 12 AM to 12 PM, an additional 2GB daily data, 100 SMS/day, and a one-month JioHotstar subscription, valid for 28 days.

For heavy data users, Vi also offers:

₹469 Pack: 2.5GB/day, three-month JioHotstar subscription. ₹994 Pack: 2GB/day, three-month JioHotstar subscription. ₹3,699 Pack: 2GB/day, one-year JioHotstar subscription. ₹399 Pack: Unlimited calls,

Toyota Kirloskar Motor reaffirms sustainability efforts on World Forest Day & World Water Day

Bangalore: Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) has reiterated its commitment to environmental stewardship on World Forest Day and World Water Day, aligning with the Toyota Environmental Challenge 2050 (TEC 2050). Through extensive water conservation and afforestation initiatives, the company continues to drive sustainable development while strengthening its long-term business strategy.

At its Karnataka facility, TKM follows a '4R' water strategy—Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Recharge—ensuring that 89.3% of its total water requirement is met through rainwater har-



vesting and recycled water. With 51,000 cubic meters of rainwater storage and 18 groundwater recharge pits, TKM is progressing towards Zero Liquid Discharge. The Toyota Greenwave Project has led to the plantation of over 328,000 saplings, enhancing carbon sequestration and biodiversity.

Sharing his thoughts, Mr.

B. Padmanabha, Executive Vice President & Director – Manufacturing at Toyota Kirloskar Motor, said, "For us, sustainability is deeply woven into every aspect of our business. Over these 26 remarkable years of our successful operations in India, our journey has always been driven by a commitment to creating lasting value

through innovation, corporate responsibility, and meaningful relationships with the communities. Guided by TEC 2050, we integrate pioneering sustainability practices not only in our plant operations but across the entire value chain, driving real change in the society. Our vision is clear—to create a future where sustainability and well-being thrive together, enriching lives, while protecting our planet. We take pride in the impact we have made and remain committed to driving lasting, sustainable change. Our work continues, building a brighter, happier future for all."

Beating the Heat: Panasonic launches 2025 AC lineup in East India

Guwahati: With summers getting hotter each year, staying cool is no longer a luxury but a necessity. To help consumers beat the heat, Panasonic Life Solutions India has launched its 2025 range of residential air conditioners (RACs) in East India, featuring 61 new models designed to withstand temperatures up to 55°C. These ACs come equipped with advanced technology, including the IoT-enabled Miraie platform, AI-driven adaptive cooling, and India's first Matter-enabled inverter 3-star models starting at ₹33,990. Abhishek Verma, Business Head, Air Conditioners Group, Pana-



sonic Life Solutions India, shared, "India's AC market is growing rapidly, and Panasonic has outpaced industry growth with a 45% increase in sales this year. East India, contributing 19% to the total market, remains a key region for us, and we expect a 30% sales boost in 2025." The launch is backed by a 360-degree marketing campaign, including a new television commercial, ensuring widespread consumer engagement.



India's apprenticeship drive gains momentum, with over 41 lakh engaged under PM-NAPS

Guwahati: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has strengthened India's apprenticeship ecosystem, engaging over 41.2 lakh apprentices under the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS). At a Zonal Review Meeting held at the World Skill Centre in Bhubaneswar, stakeholders from 18 states and Union Territories strategized on achieving the target of 46 lakh apprentices by March 2026. MSDE Secretary Atul Kumar Tiwari emphasized the scheme's role in workforce development, stating, "NAPS is a transformative initiative, equipping youth with industry-relevant skills. With advancements in AI and electric vehicles, we are ensuring a future-ready workforce while fostering inclusivity." The meeting featured industry leaders like Toyota Kirloskar, Tata Group, and Bharat Electronics Limited. Tam-



il Nadu, Karnataka, and Telangana led in apprenticeship participation in the South, while West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Odisha dominated in the East. MSMEs, now comprising 38% of active establishments under NAPS, remain a crucial growth driver. Guwahati's growing industrial and service sectors stand to benefit from the increased apprenticeship push. With MSMEs forming a significant part of its economy, skill development initiatives will create a steady pipe-

line of trained professionals, particularly in logistics, IT, and manufacturing. The financial inclusion aspect, with ₹1,550 crore disbursed through Direct Benefit Transfer, ensures transparency and efficiency in stipend payments, attracting more youth to the program. With over 4,988 job fairs and 219 awareness workshops conducted, NAPS-2 continues to drive India's ambition of a globally competitive workforce, fostering economic growth and industry collaboration.

PMI urges stronger cross-border collaboration to tackle illicit cigarette trade

Aizawl: Philip Morris International (PMI) has reaffirmed its commitment to combating the illicit tobacco trade, emphasizing the need for cross-border collaboration and stringent enforcement across ASEAN. Speaking at a session titled Switching Off Illicit Cigarettes, Rodney Van Dooren, Head of Illicit Trade Prevention Asia Pacific, PMI, said, "Loopholes in ASEAN fuel the illicit cigarette market, causing IPR violations, tax losses, weak enforcement, and normalized corruption. Origin countries profit, while destination countries suffer."

Illicit cigarette exports in ASEAN do not match imports in consuming markets, avoiding import duties and excise taxes, leading to economic sabotage. Further, international agreements-World Trade Organisation (WTO), World Customs Organisation (WCO) and Free Trade Agreement (FTA), call for



cooperation but lack legal instruments to hold parties accountable. Solving this problem does not depend on the speed of economic development between countries, but on law enforcement. PMI's strategy to counter illicit trade focuses on leveraging research and intelligence, securing supply chains, partnering with law enforcement, and raising public awareness". India and Thailand are key transit hubs for smuggled tobacco, with India's illicit cigarette market accounting for 26.1% of total consumption, resulting in an estimated \$2.4 billion in

annual tax revenue losses. Van Dooren stressed that loopholes in ASEAN regulations, weak enforcement, and corruption are fueling the black market, urging governments to harmonize tax policies, strengthen border security, and enforce stricter penalties. Aizawl, a key trading hub near India's borders, has seen an influx of illicit cigarettes, affecting local businesses and government revenues. Smuggled tobacco products, often cheaper than legal alternatives, pose a challenge for legitimate traders while enabling large-scale tax evasion. PMI's strategy includes research, securing supply chains, partnering with law enforcement, and public awareness initiatives. With illicit cigarette trade costing ASEAN economies over \$3.7 billion annually, PMI is advocating for stronger international cooperation and stricter enforcement measures.

Fortis Bengaluru conducts robotic gallbladder surgery for Nagaland patient, highlighting healthcare advances

Kohima: Fortis Hospital Bannerghatta Road, Bengaluru, successfully conducted a robotic-assisted gallbladder removal surgery on a 65-year-old male patient from Nagaland, highlighting the growing adoption of robotic technology in India's healthcare sector. The procedure, performed by a team led by Dr. Sreedhara V, Director of GI, Minimal Access & Bariatric Surgery, was completed in under 25 minutes, ensuring

minimal discomfort and a faster recovery for the patient. The patient, Mr. Danny (name changed), had been suffering from gallbladder stones for over four months and was diagnosed with Acute Calculous Cholecystitis (ACC) at Fortis. Robotic-assisted surgery, still relatively uncommon in India, provided a minimally invasive alternative with reduced post-operative risks, smaller incisions, and quicker recovery. "Ro-

botic surgery allows for greater precision, significantly lowering the chances of complications," said Dr. Sreedhara V. The patient was discharged within a day. From a business perspective, the demand for advanced healthcare solutions is rising in Nagaland. With limited access to high-end medical technology, many patients seek treatment in metros like Bengaluru. Strengthening healthcare infrastructure in

Nagaland, including potential collaborations with institutions like Fortis, could reduce outbound medical travel and enhance local healthcare capabilities. Fortis Hospitals Bengaluru continues to lead in medical advancements. "We remain committed to providing world-class healthcare by integrating cutting-edge technology for superior patient outcomes," said Akshay Oleti, Business Head, Fortis Hospitals Bengaluru.

ICICI Prudential launches GIFT Select to combat inflation and drive wealth growth

Imphal: ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has introduced ICICI Pru GIFT Select, a long-term savings product aimed at ensuring wealth preservation and guaranteed income. As individuals seek investment options that balance capital safety and growth, this product provides a structured financial plan to manage inflation and achieve financial stability. According to Mr. Amit Palta, Chief Product and Distribution Officer, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance, the plan offers flexibility in income duration, a 5% annual compounding income feature, and a tax-efficient lump sum payout on maturity. The initiative aligns with the growing demand for stable income sources amid economic uncertainties.

Additionally, the company is driving digital transformation in insurance distribution through the IPRU Edge mobile app. This platform equips agents with business leads, social media marketing tools, and a paperless sales process, leading to a 25% surge in



agent productivity. Between April and December 2024, 98% of eligible agents received commissions on the same day, and AI-powered solutions enabled 50% of savings policies to be issued within a day. In Imphal's growing financial sector, there is an increasing demand for reliable investment instruments that offer inflation-proof returns. With a rising middle-class population seeking long-term financial security, ICICI Pru GIFT Select provides an attractive option to help investors build a steady income stream and safeguard wealth. ICICI Prudential further reinforces its industry leadership with a 99.3% claim settlement ratio and 1.2-day average claim processing time, solidifying its reputation as a trusted financial partner.

NSDC partners with Axim Collaborative to boost open edX, transform skill development

Guwahati: The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has partnered with Axim Collaborative, a non-profit organization, to enhance the Open edX open-source platform and drive innovation in digital education and vocational training. The collaboration aims to strengthen India's skill development ecosystem by leveraging cutting-edge technology and expanding global learning opportunities. The Memorandum of Understanding



(MoU) was signed on March 20, 2025, by Shri Ved Mani Tiwari, CEO of NSDC and MD of NSDC International, and Ms. Stephanie Khura-

na, CEO of Axim Collaborative. Under this partnership, NSDC will contribute leadership and technical expertise to the Open edX Project, supporting advancements in AI-enhanced teaching, credential recognition, digital wallets, mobile learning, and workforce development. NSDC will also join the Open edX Technical Oversight Committee to further refine platform capabilities. The initiative is set to impact Guwahati significantly, providing local youth with

access to advanced digital learning resources. With industries in Assam seeking skilled professionals in IT, healthcare, and manufacturing, this collaboration will bridge skill gaps and enhance job prospects in the region. "This partnership will help us build a future-ready workforce by expanding digital education," said Tiwari. Khurana added, "Our collaboration will create stronger education-to-work pipelines, ensuring global workforce preparedness."



Johnson's Baby eyes market growth with new campaign featuring Anil & Sonam Kapoor

Aizawl: Johnson's Baby has launched a new digital campaign featuring Bollywood's Anil and Sonam Kapoor, emphasizing the science behind baby eye care. The campaign highlights that babies blink less frequently than adults, making their eyes more vulnerable to irritants. Conceptualized

by DDB Mudra, the ad film showcases a playful staring contest between Anil Kapoor and a baby, creatively demonstrating the importance of using gentle, tear-free products. Johnson's Baby, a market leader in baby skincare, pioneered its No More Tears® formula to ensure irritation-free

cleansing. The company will drive engagement through influencer partnerships and retail activations.

Manoj Gadgil, VP Marketing at Kenvue, stated, "For 130 years, we have led the baby skincare category with science-backed innovations. This campaign reinforces our commitment

to safe and gentle baby care." Anil and Sonam Kapoor also expressed their trust in Johnson's Baby products. With a strategic mix of digital promotions and on-ground activations, Johnson's Baby aims to strengthen its foothold in India's expanding baby care market.

NSDC, PayPal join hands to bridge skill gap in BFSI sector



Guwahati: The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has partnered with PayPal to equip youth, especially women from low-income families, with industry-relevant skills in the Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance (BFSI) sector. This initiative, launched under PayPal's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program, was formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by Dr. Rishikesh Patankar, Vice President, NSDC, and Srini Venkatesan, Global Chief Technology Officer, PayPal. The program will offer NSQF-aligned training across key fintech domains, including Bancassurance Relationship Associate, Customer Service Associate, and GST Assistant. Training courses will range from 420 to 480 hours, ensuring participants gain

specialized expertise. "By providing industry-specific skills, we are creating pathways for meaningful careers and entrepreneurial ventures," said Dr. Patankar. The initiative will be implemented across Chennai, Patna, Hyderabad, Surat, Indore, Bengaluru, Mumbai, and Ranchi. NSDC aims to ensure 70% of participants engage in job fairs and interviews while also exploring self-employment avenues. In Guwahati, the program is set to enhance the BFSI talent pool, benefiting financial institutions and startups. As a growing commercial hub in the Northeast, Guwahati's market will see increased job-ready professionals, boosting the city's financial ecosystem. This collaboration marks a significant step toward empowering India's workforce and strengthening the BFSI sector.

Rupee dips 17 paise to 85.77/\$, ending nine-day rally



Mumbai: The Indian rupee ended its nine-day winning streak on Tuesday as a slight increase in the dollar index and crude oil prices limited gains, even as foreign inflows into equities showed signs of revival.

The domestic currency closed 17 paise weaker at 85.77 against the greenback after closing at 85.63 on Monday, according to Bloomberg data. The nine consecutive days of gains for the currency marked the best winning streak since January 2024.

The Rupee has appreciated by 2.2 per cent in March so far, tracking the fall in the dollar index. Meanwhile, during the current financial year, it witnessed a 2 per cent fall.

The bullish momentum in the Rupee is largely driven by strong foreign portfolio inflows, fuelled by the FTSE March review and robust domestic fundraising activity, according to Amit Pabari, managing director at CR Forex Advisors. "Adding to the momentum, Indian states are set to borrow 566.21 billion rupees (\$6.59 billion) through a sale of bonds on Tuesday." Given the current market dynamics, the currency is likely to find strong support around 85.40-85.50, with a potential rebound towards 86.50 levels, Pabari said. Meanwhile, FIIs remained net buyers of ₹3,055.76 crore from Indian equities on Monday.

MSDE hosts workshop on PMKVY 4.0, highlights on industry collaboration

Guwahati: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) organized a high-level workshop under its Kaushal Manthan initiative to review the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY 4.0). Held at Kaushal Bhavan, New Delhi, the workshop brought together officials from NCVET, NSDC, NIEL-IT, CIPET, IITs, and IIMs to discuss performance, challenges, and future strategies. Chaired by MSDE Secretary Shri Atul Kumar Tiwari, the discussions focused on enhancing the quality of skill certification, improving industry alignment, and strengthening the Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH). "India's skilling ecosystem has evolved



significantly. To drive economic growth, we must integrate skill development with mainstream education and industry demands," Tiwari said.

Key takeaways included expanding the assessor pool, incorporating gamification in training, and linking Awarding Bodies to the Academic Bank of Credit.

In Guwahati, industry representatives emphasized the need for targeted skill programs in IT, tourism, and agro-processing to meet local employment demands. With PMKVY 4.0's focus on industry-led training, businesses in Assam anticipate a skilled workforce aligning with emerging job trends.

HDFC Bank surges 9%, nears record high in CY25

Mumbai: HDFC Bank shares continued at its upward movement for the seventh straight day, up 2 per cent to ₹1,843.90, its highest level in calendar year 2025 (CY25), on the BSE in Tuesday's intra-day trade. In the past one week, the stock has rallied 9 per cent. It is trading close to its record high level of ₹1,880 touched on December 9, 2024.

Meanwhile, in the past one year, HDFC Bank has outperformed the market by surging nearly 30 per cent, as compared to the 8 per cent rise in the BSE Sensex. Today's gain in HDFC Bank shares came after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), on Monday, announced changes in the Priority Sector Lending (PSL)



norms. In a revised circular, RBI has increased the housing loan limits eligible under PSL from ₹35 lakh to ₹50 lakh in metropolitan cities, and from ₹25 lakh to ₹45 lakh in towns with populations between 1.0- 5.0 million, while for towns with populations below 1 million, the limit is set at ₹35 lakh. Loans to bank employees and those backed by long-term bonds are excluded. However, loans to government agencies for slum rehabilitation or projects with at least 50 per cent Floor Space Index (FSI) for units under 60 sq.m carpet areas will qualify.

Luminous Power & Rajasthan Royals expand partnership to drive solar adoption in India

Guwahati: Luminous Power Technologies has strengthened its partnership with Rajasthan Royals as the Title Partner for the 18th season of India's T-20 Premier League, reinforcing its commitment to nationwide solar adoption.

The event saw RR players Sanju Samson, Nitish Rana, and Tushar Deshpande, alongside Luminous leadership, unveil cutting-edge solar and advanced energy solutions, including the EVO Inverter Series, ZELIO S Inverter Series, EON Topcon Solar Panels, and the industry-first AmpBox gel battery technology—designed for superior efficiency and durability in extreme Indian weather. Luminous also launched a 360-degree marketing campaign to es-



establish itself as "India's Solar Expert," addressing cost and trust concerns through digital outreach, on-ground activations, and media engagement. The company's #PinkPromise initiative will power six homes in the Sambhar region for every six-hit in an upcoming match, symbolized by a special all-pink jersey. With rising electricity costs, Guwahati is emerging as a key market for solar energy solutions. Luminous' expansion and aggressive

marketing are expected to accelerate rooftop solar adoption among businesses and homeowners, driving sustainable energy adoption in the region. Luminous CEO Preeti Bajaj emphasized the impact of sports in sustainability, while Rajasthan Royals CEO Jake Lush McCrum highlighted the collaboration's role in driving clean energy awareness. Through innovation and strategic partnerships, Luminous aims to lead India's solar transition.



Natraj Pipes collaborates with cricketing legend Mr. Sourav Ganguly

Guwahati: Natraj Pipes, a leading name in PE & uPVC piping solutions from Prabhu Poly Pipes Limited, has proudly marked a new milestone by collaborating with cricketing legend Mr. Sourav Ganguly on March 22, 2025. This significant announcement, made on 'World Water Day' at an exclusive press conference at Taj Bengal, Kolkata, underscored the brand's commitment to innovation, sustainability, and nation-building. Natraj Pipes, renowned for its cutting-edge technology and stringent quality standards, is poised to play an instrumental role in the country's piping infrastructure development. By leveraging high-tech, non-toxic, lead-free piping systems, the brand is dedicated to providing durable, safe, and reliable water, sewerage, and gas transportation solutions



that support the country's evolving infrastructural landscape.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Sourav Ganguly shared his enthusiasm regarding the association: "I am honored to collaborate with Natraj Pipes, a brand dedicated to pioneering high-quality and innovative piping solutions." Mr. Rohit Agrawal, CEO and com-

pany spokesperson, highlighted the brand's vision: "Our journey has always been about engineering excellence and innovation." Mr. Hari Mohan Marda, Managing Director of Natraj Pipes, emphasized the company's long-term goals: "At Natraj Pipes, we believe that sustainability and infrastructural growth must go hand in hand."

MG Comet EV 2025 launched with smart features and flexible pricing

Guwahati: JSW MG Motor India has launched the MG Comet EV 2025, enhancing its popular city EV with advanced features and a flexible Battery-as-a-Service (BaaS) model. The prices for the different vehicle variants vary based on the model. The Executive variant is priced at ₹4,99,000, with an additional ₹2.5 per kilometer, bringing the total to ₹6,99,800. The Excite variant comes at ₹6,25,000, plus ₹2.5 per kilometer, making the total ₹8,25,800. The Excite FC variant is listed at ₹6,77,000, with a per-kilometer charge of ₹2.5, totaling ₹8,77,800. The Exclusive variant is priced at ₹7,35,000, along with ₹2.5 per kilometer, bringing the final cost to ₹9,35,800. The Exclusive FC variant is available for ₹7,77,000, plus ₹2.5 per kilometer, resulting in a total of ₹9,77,800. The five-variant lineup—Executive, Excite, Excite Fast Charge, Exclusive, and Exclusive Fast Charge—comes with key

upgrades. Excite and Excite FC now feature a Rear Parking Camera and Power-folding ORVMs, while Exclusive and Exclusive FC offer leatherette seats and a 4-speaker audio system.

Fast-charging variants house a 17.4 kWh battery delivering up to 230 km per charge. With growing interest in EVs, Bhubaneswar is emerging as a promising market for electric mobility. The MG Comet EV's affordability and low running costs make it an attractive choice for city commuters and fleet operators. As charging infrastructure expands, MG's flexible BaaS model could boost EV adoption in the region. MG also launched the BLACK-STORM Edition at ₹7.80 lakh, featuring a Starry Black exterior, premium interiors, and advanced infotainment. With competitive pricing and smart ownership benefits, the MG Comet EV 2025 is set to strengthen MG's presence in the EV segment.

Bajaj Finserv climbs, 5-month high



Mumbai: Bajaj Finserv hit an over five-month high of ₹1,955.50, as the stock gained 3 per cent on the BSE in Tuesday's intra-day trade in an otherwise range-bound market. The stock of the non-banking finance company is trading at its highest level since October 3, 2024. It had hit a record high of ₹2,029 on September 27, 2024.

Thus far in the calendar year 2025 (CY25), Bajaj Finserv stock has outperformed the market by surging 25 per cent. In comparison, the BSE Sensex is down 0.22 per cent during the same period.

On March 17, 2025, Bajaj Finserv signed share purchase agreements (SPAs) with Allianz SE to acquire a 26 per cent stake in the two insurance joint ventures—Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company (BAGIC) and Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance Company (BALIC)—for ₹24,180 crore.

FinMin, RBI to meet on Mar 26 for April-Sept borrowing plan

New Delhi: The Ministry of Finance and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) are scheduled to meet on March 26th to deliberate and finalize the government's borrowing plan for the first half of the upcoming fiscal year (April-September), sources familiar with the matter confirmed.



Analysts anticipate that the borrowing plan will be closely scrutinized by market participants, as it will provide insights into the government's fiscal stance and its potential impact on the yield curve. Factors such as inflation, economic growth projections, and global market conditions are expected to play a key role in determining the final borrowing figures. The government's borrowing program is a critical component of its fiscal management, and the outcome of the March 26th meeting will be closely watched by investors and economists alike.

The federal government will borrow a gross amount of Rs 14.82 trillion (\$172.92 billion) from the debt market in fiscal year 2025-26.

7-day Ayurvedic diet plan for seasonal transition that will keep you healthy

Guwahati: As we transition from winter to spring (Sandhi Kala), Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of a balanced diet with a handful of almonds to prevent seasonal imbalances. This period disrupts the Doshas—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha—making the body more vulnerable to illness. Warmer, drier weather aggravates Vata, leading to dryness, instability, and respiratory issues. Meanwhile, fluctuating temperatures weaken digestion, causing toxin buildup and lowering immunity. A well-planned 7-day Ayurvedic diet can help you enjoy nourishing, flavorful meals, like a bowl of almonds, fresh vegetable salad, while keeping seasonal ailments at bay. 7-Day Ayurvedic Diet Plan for Seasonal Transition, Day 1: Methi thepla with curd, Bajra roti with palak-paneer curry, fresh vegetable salad, and a handful of California almonds, Moong dal khichdi cooked with ghee, cumin, and black pepper, served



with steamed beetroot and carrot sabzi. Day 2: Masala oats porridge with roasted almonds and a pinch of ginger and cinnamon, Jeera rice with rajma curry, sautéed leafy greens, Bajra khichdi with warming spices like cloves and pepper, served with beetroot raita. Day 3: Homemade muesli with warm almond milk, almonds, and figs, Whole wheat chapati with chana masala, a plate of seasonal vegetable salad, and a handful of almonds. Day 4: Besan chilla with mint chutney, Steamed rice with drumstick sambar, sautéed leafy greens,

and roasted almonds, Vegetable stew with coconut milk, black pepper, and cardamom, served with string hoppers or whole wheat bread. Day 5: Millet upma with black pepper and ghee, Whole wheat chapati with green moong dal curry, sautéed turnips and carrots, and almonds, Mixed dal khichdi cooked with black pepper, cumin, and ghee, served with lightly spiced beetroot raita. Day 6: Warm ksheera made with ghee, jaggery, almonds, and cardamom, Bajra roti with spicy drumstick curry and almond flour cookies, Besan cheela with sautéed spinach and whole wheat bread. Day 7: Poha cooked with turmeric and black pepper, wheat rotis with methi chana sabzi, and a handful of almonds, Mixed lentil soup with sautéed greens and rice, served hot. This Ayurvedic diet plan aids digestion, boosts immunity, and prevents seasonal imbalances while providing wholesome, nourishing meals.

Paytm gains on direct processing shift



Bengaluru: Shares of One97 Communications, the parent company of Paytm, advanced 3.32 percent to hit their intraday high of ₹790.45 per share on the BSE on Tuesday, March 25, 2025. The northward movement in the Paytm share price came after the company announced that it is shifting to direct transaction processing. According to media reports, Paytm has informed its merchants via email that "Effective from April 1, 2025, onwards, Paytm Payments Services Limited (PPSL) will be facilitating transactions that are routed directly to PPSL."



JOURNALING: YOUR MENTAL WELLNESS BOOST

In today's fast-paced world, mental well-being is often overshadowed by busy schedules and constant digital distractions. Amidst this chaos, journaling emerges as a simple yet powerful tool to promote psychological health. Whether through structured prompts or free-flow writing, the benefits of journaling include offering a safe space to process emotions, reflect on experiences, and cultivate self-awareness.

EMOTIONAL RELEASE AND STRESS REDUCTION

Writing down thoughts and feelings provides an emotional outlet, preventing the build-up of stress and anxiety. Journaling for stress release helps people process difficult emotions by translating abstract feelings into words. Studies suggest that expressive writing can lower cortisol levels, the stress hormone, resulting in a calmer mind, thereby offering one of the psychological benefits



of journaling. This form of release is particularly beneficial for those dealing with trauma, grief, or overwhelming life changes.

ENHANCED SELF-AWARENESS

Journaling fosters introspection by encouraging individuals to reflect on their actions, choices, and emotions. This practice promotes greater self-awareness, helping individuals recognize patterns in their thoughts and behaviors. Over time, journaling can lead to a deeper understanding of personal triggers, strengths, and areas for growth. How journaling helps mental health has been well-documented and tested.

IMPROVED MOOD AND MENTAL HEALTH

Regular journaling has been linked to improved mood and reduced symptoms of depression. By acknowledging and processing negative emotions, individuals can prevent rumination—the tendency to dwell on distressing thoughts. Additionally, gratitude journaling, which involves listing things one is thankful for, has been shown to enhance overall happiness and satisfaction.

BOOSTED PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

Writing allows individuals to organize their thoughts and approach problems from different angles. Journaling helps clarify situations, break down challenges, and brainstorm potential solutions. This structured approach to problem-solving reduces feelings of helplessness and promotes a sense of control over life's obstacles.

Enhanced Memory and Cognitive Function

Therapeutic writing techniques not only benefit emotional health but also improve cognitive function. Writing engages the brain, enhancing memory retention and comprehension. Reflecting on daily events strengthens recall, and documenting goals increases the likelihood of achieving them by reinforcing accountability.

INCREASED RESILIENCE

Expressive writing builds emotional resilience by fostering a sense of coherence in life's narrative. By chronicling experiences, individuals can identify lessons learned and develop a more optimistic outlook. This pro-



cess helps individuals adapt to change, build confidence, and cultivate a growth mindset.

STRENGTHENED EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Through journaling, individuals gain insights into their emotional responses and develop empathy toward themselves and others. This heightened emotional intelligence improves interpersonal relationships and communication skills, fostering healthier social connections as some of the psychological benefits of journaling.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Choose a Medium: Use a physical journal, digital app, or even voice notes.

Set a Routine: Dedicate 5-10 minutes daily or weekly to write.

Write Freely: Let thoughts flow without judgment or editing.

Experiment: Try different formats such as lists, letters, or drawings.

Instead of just recording events or daily activities, focus on exploring your emotions. Ask yourself why you



felt a certain way about an event or interaction. This deeper exploration can provide insights into your emotional triggers and help you manage your emotional responses more effectively.

Connect with what you're actually feeling and practice Labeling Emotions during this episode of the Daily Jay.

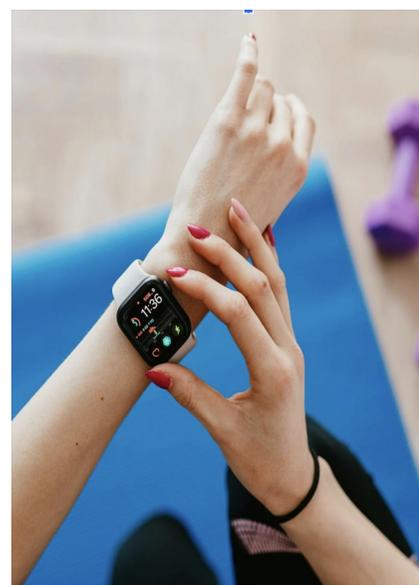
Try to be fully present while journaling. Mindfulness can turn your writing into a meditative practice, helping you center your thoughts and feelings in the moment. Observing your thoughts without judgment can enhance your self-awareness and emotional regulation.

A self-therapy journal is a personal space where you can explore your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors without judgment. To create a self-therapy journal, start by writing about events that affected your mood, describe how you felt, and explore the reasons behind those feelings. Reflect on your reactions and consider alternative ways of handling similar situations in the future. You can also use journaling prompts to explore deeper thoughts and feelings, set personal goals, and monitor your progress. Regularly reviewing your entries can provide insights into patterns and growth over time.

Wearable tech's impact on fitness and health tracking

Wearable fitness technology has revolutionized personal fitness, transforming how individuals monitor, manage, and achieve their health and wellness goals

Wearable fitness technology has become a transformative force in the realm of personal fitness, revolutionizing the way individuals track, manage, and enhance their health and wellness goals. From fitness bands to smartwatches for fitness tracking and advanced biometric trackers, these devices have evolved to become indispensable tools for fitness enthusiasts and health-conscious individuals alike and revolutionized how wearables improve fitness.



MONITORING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
One of the primary functions of wearable health devices is tracking physical activity. Devices like Fitbit, Garmin, and Apple Watch monitor metrics such as steps taken, distance covered, calories burned, and active minutes. This real-time data helps users set and achieve personalized fitness goals, fostering motivation and accountability.

HEART RATE AND CARDIO MONITORING
Modern wearable devices, including the best smartwatch for health monitoring, are equipped with heart rate monitors that provide continuous or on-demand heart rate tracking. This feature is crucial for understanding cardiovascular health, optimizing workout intensity, and ensuring safety during physical activity. Advanced wearables also provide VO2 max estimates, helping users gauge their aerobic fitness levels.

SLEEP ANALYSIS
Quality sleep is a cornerstone of overall health and fitness. Many wearable health devices analyze sleep patterns by tracking parameters like duration, deep sleep, REM cycles, and disturbances. This data helps users identify habits that improve or hinder sleep, leading to better recovery and performance.

ENCOURAGING CONSISTENCY
Wearables often include features like reminders to move, guided workouts, and gamified challenges. These tools encourage users to maintain consistency in their fitness routines, making it easier to integrate physical activity into daily life. Wearable fitness technology has undoubtedly redefined personal fitness by providing tools for self-monitoring, motivation, and improved health outcomes.



Dhoni: Impact Player rule shows T20 evolution

New Delhi: Former India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni was not quite convinced about the need for the Impact Player rule when it was first introduced in the IPL but now sees it as a part of T20 cricket's evolution.

The 43-year-old, who remains a talismanic figure for the Chennai Super Kings despite relinquishing captaincy last year, said he does not consider himself an Impact Player as he remains the first-choice wicket-keeper of his side.

"When this rule was implemented, I felt it wasn't really needed at that time. In a way, it helps me, but at the same time, it doesn't. I still do my wicket-keeping, so I am not an impact player," Dhoni told 'JioStar'. "I have to be involved in the game. A lot of people say the rule has led to more high-scoring games."

Dhoni's "Quick Timing" lauded by Hayden



Chennai: Mahendra Singh Dhoni's lightning-quick reflexes behind the stumps to get rid of Suryakumar Yadav during an IPL match here have left former Australian opener Matthew Hayden gushing about the former Indian captain's abilities, despite not being in his prime.

Dhoni, 43, is nearing the end of his career, having hung up his international boots five years ago and playing just as a player for the Chennai Super Kings after leading the team to five IPL titles.

However, Dhoni showcased his brilliance once again on Sunday when he whipped off the balls in an instant off Noor Ahmad's delivery, sending Suryakumar back to the pavilion.

"He (Dhoni) was on fire," Hayden, the former Australia batter and Dhoni's teammate at CSK till 2010, said.

ASHUTOSH'S BLITZ!

Ashutosh's heroics clinch Capitals' victory

New Delhi: Ashutosh Sharma's calculated assault stunned Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) as the Delhi Capitals all-rounder masterminded a remarkable chase of 210 in their IPL 2025 opener in Visakhapatnam on Monday.

LSG had surged to 209/8 in 20 overs after Australian all-rounder Mitchell Marsh and West Indies wicket-keeper-batter Nicholas Pooran tore into Delhi's attack following DC skipper Axar Patel's decision to field first.

However, Delhi suffered an early collapse, losing three wickets within the first two overs. They were reeling at 113/6 in the 13th over. The chase looked all but over until Ashutosh and debutant Vipraj Nigam sparked an inspired comeback.

DC's chase unraveled quickly as Australian opener Jake Fraser-McGurk fell for 1, and Bengal wicket-keeper-batter Abishek Porel departed for a duck, both dismissed in Shardul Thakur's opening over.

Tamil Nadu spinner Manimaran Siddharth, introduced as LSG's impact substitute, struck in the next over, removing former CSK batter Sameer Rizvi for 4 to leave Delhi in tatters at 8/3.

Axar joined South African veteran Faf du Plessis in an attempt to steady the innings, but their stand was short-lived. DC slipped to 50/4 by the end of the powerplay as debutant mystery spinner Digvesh Singh Rathi dismissed the Capitals' skipper for 22. Du Plessis followed soon after, bowled by leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi for 29, as Delhi slumped to 66/5 in the seventh over. Tristan Stubbs and Ashutosh Sharma, brought in as DC's impact sub, attempted to rebuild the chase. The pair put on a crucial 48-run stand before Stubbs fell for 34 in the 13th over, leaving Delhi in trouble at 113/6.

But the momentum shifted when debutant all-rounder Vipraj Nigam joined Ashutosh. The duo added 50 off just 19 balls, with Nigam injecting fresh energy into the chase with a blistering 15-ball 39.



BCCI retains Harmanpreet, Mandhana in top grade category for women's contracts

Leadership and performance secure highest contract tier

Mumbai: The BCCI has announced its annual player contracts for the women's national team, confirming that captain Harmanpreet Kaur and vice-captain Smriti Mandhana will remain in the highest grade (Grade A) for the upcoming season. This decision underscores the BCCI's continued commitment to recognizing and rewarding the leading performers in Indian women's cricket.

The Grade A contracts, which offer the highest financial remuneration, are reserved for players who have consistently demonstrated exceptional performance and leadership on the international stage. Harmanpreet Kaur's leadership and batting prowess, coupled with Smriti Mandhana's consistent run-scoring, have cemented their positions as pillars of the Indian women's team. The BCCI's decision to maintain their top-grade



status reflects their pivotal roles in the team's success and their importance as role models for aspiring female cricketers across the country. The contracts also serve as a crucial incentive for players to maintain high levels of performance and contribute to the growth of women's cricket in India.

The announcement of the annual contracts is a significant step in ensuring financial stability and professional growth for the women's team. It provides a structured framework for player compensation and

France beat Croatia on Penalties, reach finals

Paris: France secured their place in the UEFA Nations League Final Four after a tense and closely contested match against Croatia, culminating in a dramatic penalty shootout victory. The match, held at [Stadium Name/Location], saw both sides battle fiercely for a spot in the final stage of the competition.

The encounter was a display of tactical prowess and resilience, with both France and Croatia demonstrating their quality on the international stage. The match remained tightly contested throughout regulation and extra time, with neither team able to break the deadlock. Despite numerous scoring opportunities, both goalkeepers displayed exceptional form, denying their opponents with crucial saves.

As the match progressed into a penalty shootout, the tension in the stadium reached fever pitch. Each penalty kick was met with a mix of anticipation and anxiety, with the outcome hanging in the balance. In



the end, it was France who held their nerve, converting their penalties with precision, while Croatia faltered under the pressure.

The victory marked a significant achievement for the French national team, securing their passage to the Nations League Final Four. The result sparked celebrations among French supporters, who lauded their team's determination and composure in the face of adversity. For Croatia, the defeat was a bitter pill to swallow, after a valiant effort throughout the match. However, their performance showcased their competitive spirit and ability to challenge the top teams in Europe.

India kabaddi ban ends next month

New Delhi: In a respite for Indian kabaddi players, the international governing body of the sport is set to lift suspension imposed on the national federation next month after the court-appointed administrator handed over the charge to the 'elected body'.

International Kabaddi Federation (IKF) President Vinod Kumar Tiwari told PTI that the ban will be lifted after an executive council meeting scheduled next month. The IKF had banned the Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India (AKFI) in July last year after the 'elected body' was not allowed to take charge.

"The court-appointed administrator has handed over the charge to the AKFI office bearers who were elected in December 2023. The AKFI office bearers have started functioning from AKFI office at JLN Stadium," Tiwari said in an interview.