



Two drivers killed, 4 injured in head-on collision of goods trains in Jharkhand

The Trains were operated by power major NTPC



Ranchi: The tragic collision occurred between two goods trains operated by NTPC in Jharkhand's Sa-

hebganj district. The accident took place around 3 a.m. near Bhognadih in the Barhait police station area.

Both drivers lost their lives, and four others sustained injuries.

The tracks involved in the accident are privately owned by NTPC and are primarily used for transporting coal to its power plants. This incident is unrelated to Indian Railways.

The line connects NTPC's Kahalgaon Super Thermal Power Station in Bihar to the Farakka Power Plant in West Bengal.



NDRF personnel work under 'Operation Brahma' to provide humanitarian aid and assistance at an earthquake-hit site in Myanmar. - (PTI)

Woman Naxalite shot dead in Chhattisgarh encounter

Raipur: A woman Naxalite, identified as Renuka alias Banu, was killed in an encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region. Renuka, who carried a bounty of ₹25 lakh, was engaged in a gunfight with security personnel during an anti-Naxalite operation near the Dantewada-Bijapur border. The encounter began around 9 a.m. and led to the recovery of an INSAS rifle, ammunition, and other items from the site. The operation is



part of ongoing efforts to curb Naxalite activities in the region. Security forces have reported significant progress this year, with the bodies of 119 Naxalites recovered following various encounters. The operation remains active, with intermittent firing continuing in the area.

Amit Shah vows to make Bihar flood-free in five years following Naxal-free success

Union Home Minister sets five-year target for flood control

Patna: Union Home Minister Amit Shah has pledged to make Bihar flood-free within five years if the NDA government is re-elected in 2025. Speaking at a rally in Gopalganj, Shah highlighted the NDA's success in making Bihar Naxal-free and assured similar efforts to tackle the state's perennial flood issues. He emphasized the importance of choosing a development-oriented gov-



ernment over the previous regime, which he criticized for corruption scandals and lack of progress.

Shah also cited statistics to showcase Bihar's growth under the NDA, noting the significant in-

crease in the state's Annual Plan size over the years. His remarks come ahead of the upcoming assembly elections, where the NDA aims to secure another term to continue its development initiatives. The rally marked the beginning of the BJP's campaign in Bihar, with Shah urging voters to support the party's vision for a prosperous and flood-free state.

Quick bites

Delhi man fakes son's death

New Delhi: A man faked his son's death in a staged accident to claim a Rs 2 crore insurance payout in Delhi's Najafgarh area, an official said on Monday. On March 5, a PCR call regarding an accident was received at the Najafgarh Police Station, he said. According to police, the complainant, Satish Kumar, claimed that his son, Gagan, sustained head injuries in a bike accident and was taken to a local hospital.

Rahul urges PM Modi to halt offshore mining in Kerala, Gujarat, and Andaman

Rahul calls for protection of coastal ecosystems and livelihoods

New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has penned a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging the government to cancel tenders for offshore mining activities in Kerala, Gujarat, and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Citing environmental concerns, Gandhi highlighted the potential damage to marine ecosystems, including coral reefs and fish populations, which he described as critical to the livelihood of coastal communities.



The Congress leader criticized the government for issuing the tenders without consulting local stakeholders or conducting thorough environmental assessments. He pointed out that studies have

shown offshore mining could severely disrupt fish breeding habitats, especially in Kollam, Kerala. Additionally, Gandhi warned of irreversible damage to biodiversity hotspots like the Great Nicobar Islands.

In his letter, Gandhi called for rigorous scientific studies to evaluate the long-term socio-economic

and environmental impacts of offshore mining. He urged the government to prioritize sustainable development and the welfare of coastal communities over short-term economic gains. Coastal protests continue to reflect widespread fears of ecological degradation and threats to traditional livelihoods.

CM Gupta hails BJP's return as start of Ram Rajya in Delhi

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta described the formation of the BJP government in Delhi after 27 years as the beginning of "Ram Rajya" in the capital. Speaking during a procession in Pitampura, she linked the event to the start of the Hindu New Year and Navratri, emphasizing the BJP's commitment to cultural preservation and societal development.



Gupta expressed her vision for Delhi to prosper and shine, drawing inspiration from India's rich Sansatan traditions. She highlighted the BJP's goal of re-establishing India as a "Vishwaguru" (world leader) and noted the global recognition of practices like yoga and Ayurveda. The BJP's victory in the February assembly elections

marked the end of a decade-long rule by the Aam Aadmi Party, with the BJP securing 48 out of 70 seats. The BJP's victory in the February assembly elections ended the decade-long rule of the Aam Aadmi Party, with the BJP securing 48 out of 70 seats. Gupta reiterated the party's commitment to preserving India's cultural legacy, fostering societal development, and fulfilling the vision of making India a global leader. She visited Maa Katyayani Temple, praying for peace and progress in Delhi.

Punjab pastor gets life term

Mohali: A Mohali court on Tuesday awarded life imprisonment to self-styled Punjab pastor Bajinder Singh in the 2018 sexual harassment case, news agency ANI reported. Pastor Bajinder Singh had been booked on sections of the Indian Penal Code pertaining to sexual harassment, based on complaint filed by a woman at Zirakpur police station in Mohali in 2018.

Mining mafia truck attacks officials

Mathura: A truck allegedly linked to the mining mafia attempted to run over authorities when they tried to intercept it in the Nauhjel area here, officials said on Monday. Officials report the truck broke barricades, fleeing to Aligarh.



Tripura CM says BJP's firm stance against corruption

Agartala: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Sunday claimed that the BJP government in Tripura is maintaining zero tolerance against corruption.

The Chief Minister, while addressing a gathering at Baradowali, on the outskirts of the capital city, said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Sunday, in his 120th episode of the 'Mann Ki Baat' programme, highlighted so many things from across the country that people were previously unaware of. "Today, PM Modi mentioned that he

has been receiving greetings for Poila Boishakh in many ways and forms, which showcases unity in diversity," he said.

He further added that in Sunday's episode, PM Modi highlighted the Para Games. "Our state and central governments have always been working for Divyangjans (otherwise abled persons) in ways never seen before. PM Modi also spoke about 'Pariksha Pe Charcha'. A South Tripura student met PM Modi regarding this issue.

Shaping Assam's future: CM Sarma unveils vision for 1000 transformative bridges

Guwahati: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday said that his government has been building at least 1,000 bridges across the state that will overcome the geographical hurdles.

He also became nostalgic while mentioning his childhood memory about riding an elephant decades ago for an Assamese movie at the spot in the Kampur locality in the Nagaon district on Sunday.

The Chief Minister said, "Connecting Assam- one



bridge at a time! We are building 1,000 bridges across the State, cutting across geographic hurdles,

to provide last-mile connectivity to the people." He added, "Kampur Kapili Bridge brings a wave of nostalgia

as it is in this very location, I rode an elephant years back for the film 'Kokadeuta Nati aur Hati'. Today, as I dedicated the new bridge here, a long demand of the people, I couldn't help but recreate the cult scene."

Thousands gathered to see the CM riding an elephant on the newly opened bridge in Kampur. The Chief Minister's bond with the region struck a chord, blending past and present. The recreated film scene added warmth to the inauguration.

Assam Rifles conducts lecture on drug abuse awareness in Mizoram

Aizawl: As part of its ongoing efforts to promote awareness and community well-being, the Assam Rifles conducted an informative lecture on Drug Abuse: Identification and Counseling at Farkawn, Mizoram. The initiative aimed to educate the local population about the dangers of substance abuse, methods of early identification, and the importance of counseling in rehabilitation. This outreach effort aligns with



Assam Rifles commitment to social responsibility and public health awareness,

reinforcing its role as the Sentinels of the Northeast, stated a press release.

Manipur experiences 3.8-magnitude earthquake; no casualties reported

Imphal: A mild quake, measuring 3.8 on the Richter scale, shook Manipur's Noney district and adjoining areas on Saturday, officials said. State's Disaster Management officials said that there has been no immediate report of loss of life or damage to property due to the earthquake.

As per the National Centre for Seismology (NCS) data, the tremor struck at a depth of 10 km from the surface. Saturday's tremor

is the second earthquake in the mountainous northeastern state within 20 hours. On Friday evening, a similar mild tremor, measuring 3.7 on the Richter scale, struck the state's Chandel district and adjoining areas, which shares a border with Myanmar. On March 5, two consecutive earthquakes, including one of 5.7 magnitude, jolted Manipur's Kamjong district and adjoining northeastern states. There has been no immediate re-

port of loss of life or damage to property due to the two earthquakes.

Manipur shares around 400 international borders with Myanmar, where a powerful 7.7-magnitude earthquake struck on Friday, causing massive destruction of various properties and houses and killing a large number of people. Some northeastern states, which share 1643 km borders with Myanmar, also felt this earthquake.

Mizoram proposes talks with Assam over border dispute

■ Disputed 164.6 km Mizoram-Assam border spans six districts

Aizawl: The government of Mizoram has officially invited the Assam government to hold official-level talks in mid-April over the long-standing border conflict between the two states. This was announced by Mizoram Home Secretary Vanlalmawia on Friday.

In a recent letter sent to Assam, this marks the fourth time Mizoram has requested official-level talks prior to the upcoming ministerial-level discussions scheduled to take place in Guwahati. Vanlalmawia stated that Mizoram is currently awaiting a response from Assam regarding this proposal. The aim of these official-level discussions is to establish the groundwork and modalities for the subsequent ministerial-level talks. The home secre-



tary noted that during the last ministerial-level meeting held in Aizawl on August 9 of the previous year, Mizoram had already suggested official-level talks on three separate occasions before the anticipated fifth round of ministerial discussions.

In response to earlier communications, the Assam government had

proposed to hold these official-level talks in the third week of March; however, Mizoram declined the offer due to the assembly session and the visit of Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Mizoram's Aizawl, Kolasib, and Mamit share a 164.6 km border with Assam's Cachar, Karimganj, and Hailakandi, at the center of the dispute.

Arunachal seeks more funds, cites issues

Itanagar: Arunachal Pradesh Urban Affairs, Civil Aviation, and Land Management Minister Balo Raja on Friday discussed the state's financial constraints with Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, highlighting the impact of alleged Chinese interference in securing international funding.

During a meeting in the national capital, Raja, accompanied by Itanagar Municipal Corporation Mayor Tame Phassang, informed Sitharaman that Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim are the only states unable to access loans from global financial institutions such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank, unlike other states and union territories.

Tripura budget designed for the people, asserts CM Saha

Agartala: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Friday expressed strong support for the state's budget for the financial year 2025-26, calling it a "people-oriented" budget designed to benefit all sections of society. Speaking at the Tripura Legislative Assembly, Saha emphasized that the budget would play a pivotal role in the state's development, aligning with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of building a Viksit Bharat (Developed India).

"This budget is for the welfare of women, students, youth, Divyangjan, tribals, Scheduled Castes, OBCs, minorities, employees, pensioners, ex-servicemen, and above all, the general public. I sincerely thank the entire team of the Finance Department, including the State Fi-



nance Minister, for presenting a people-oriented budget. Today, under the able leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has risen from 11th place to 5th place in terms of economic stability in the world. We are working towards becoming the third-largest economy by 2030. We are working in that direction," he said.

Saha added that the people of Tripura have re-elected the BJP-led government for a second term, demonstrating their trust in the development vision of PM Modi. He mentioned that the state budget has prioritized growth, welfare and accountability.



MSDE unveils DBIM-compliant website to streamline digital skilling services

Guwahati: In a strategic move to enhance India's digital governance, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has launched its DBIM-compliant website, aligning with the Digital Brand Identity Manual (DBIM) Version 3.0 introduced by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). The new platform is designed to improve accessibility, transparency, and user experience in skilling initiatives.



programs such as Skill India Mission, PMKVY, and NAPS, ensuring seamless connectivity to relevant portals and real-time data dashboards.

Launching the website, the Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge), MSDE, stated, "A unified digital ecosystem under DBIM 3.0 enhances governance and ensures efficient delivery of skilling opportunities. This initiative aligns with India's expanding digital economy." As a key eco-

nomie hub in the Northeast, Guwahati stands to benefit from the MSDE's upgraded digital ecosystem. With industries in IT, retail, and logistics witnessing rapid growth, the platform enables entrepreneurs, job seekers, and businesses to access skilled workforce resources, apprenticeship programs, and employment opportunities, driving economic expansion in the region.

MSDE is among the first five ministries to transition to the DBIM framework, reinforcing its commitment to technology-driven public service delivery. The Minister urged all MSDE-operated portals to adopt DBIM standards for standardized governance under the Skill India Mission.

IFFCO hails Tribhuvan Sahkari University Bill as a game-changer for cooperatives

Aizawl: The Tribhuvan Sahkari University Bill, 2025, passed by the Lok Sabha on March 26, is set to transform India's co-operative sector, providing structured education and leadership training. IFFCO, the world's No.1 cooperative, has welcomed the move, highlighting its potential to boost rural economies, entrepreneurship, and global market integration. Union Minister of Co-operation and Home Affairs Amit Shah stated that the university will foster a new generation of cooperative leaders, equipped with modern business strategies and innovation-driven skills. Dr. Udai Shanker Awasthi, Managing Director, IFFCO, called the bill a historic step in strength-



ening the cooperative ecosystem, while IFFCO Chairman Dileep Sanghani emphasized its role in expanding Indian cooperatives to global markets.

With over 8 lakh professionals expected to be trained annually, the university will streamline co-

operative education and research. International Co-operative Alliance Director General Jeroen Douglas praised the initiative, calling it a milestone in advancing the global cooperative movement and strengthening India's cooperative leadership.

Toyota unveils Urban Cruiser Hyryder with hybrid tech, AWD

Dimapur: Toyota has launched the Urban Cruiser Hyryder, a feature-packed SUV available in Neo Drive and Self-Charging Strong Hybrid Electric powertrains, promising best-in-class fuel efficiency of 27.97 kmpl. The SUV, designed with Toyota's global SUV DNA, offers a bold exterior, advanced safety, and cutting-edge connectivity features. The Hyryder's strong hybrid variant comes with a 1.5-litre engine with Toyota Hybrid System (THS) and e-drive transmission, delivering an output of 85 kW. The Neo Drive variant features a 1.5-litre K-series engine with ISG technology, offering 75 kW power and 135 Nm torque. The SUV also introduces a first-in-segment All-Wheel Drive (AWD) option with 5-speed manual and 6-speed automatic transmissions. The model boasts premium features such as a panoramic sunroof, 360-degree camera, wireless charger, Head-Up Display (HUD), and Toyota i-Connect with 55+ features, including smartwatch connectivity and remote vehicle control. It comes in seven monotone and four dual-tone colors. As one of Nagaland's key automotive hubs, Dimapur's growing demand for fuel-efficient SUVs makes the Hyryder a strategic launch. Dealers anticipate strong interest, particularly in the hybrid variant, as consumers shift towards sustainable mobility solutions. Toyota offers a three-year/100,000 km standard warranty, extendable to five years/220,000 km, with an eight-year/160,000 km warranty on the hybrid battery.

Centre and UP strengthen skilling ties: ₹60,000 cr ITI revamp to boost workforce

Guwahati: The Centre and Uttar Pradesh have intensified their collaboration on skill development, focusing on the ₹60,000 crore National ITI Upgradation Scheme to modernize 1,000 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) across India. The initiative, financed through ₹30,000 crore from the Centre, ₹20,000 crore from states, and ₹10,000 crore from industry, aims to create a highly skilled workforce aligned with evolving market needs. In a high-level meeting at Kaushal Bhawan, Shri Jayant Chaudhary, Union Minister of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (I/C), and Shri Kapil Dev Agrawal, Skill Development Minister, discussed key programs such as PMKVY, PM Vishwakar-



ma, and NAPS. Officials noted that has trained over 24.73 lakh candidates under PMKVY, with 93,000 enrolling in emerging roles like AI engineers and EV service technicians under PMKVY 4.0. The initiative is expected to impact key industrial hubs, including Guwahati, where demand for a tech-savvy workforce is rising. Upgraded ITIs can

provide skilled professionals growing logistics, manufacturing, and solar energy sectors, bridging the supply-demand gap in the job market. Both ministers emphasized industry-driven curricula, AI-driven skilling, and stronger Centre-State collaboration to position as a premier hub for skilled workforce development.

UCO Bank stock drops 14%



New Delhi: Uco Bank share price witnessed heavy selling pressure on Tuesday, April 1, 2025, pressured by massive volumes on the counter. The stock of Uco Bank crashed 13.5 per cent on the BSE in today's intraday trade, hitting a fresh 52-week low of ₹30.9 per share.

At 2:20 PM, the stock of the state-owned lender was quoting 11.8 per cent lower at ₹31.53 per share as against a 1,400-point (1.8 per cent) fall in the benchmark BSE Sensex index.

NIESBUD boosts digital market access for entrepreneurs at capacity building workshop

Guwahati: The National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD) hosted its second Capacity Building Workshop, focusing on financial inclusion, market access, and digital growth. Over 100 entrepreneurs from Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh, trained under the SANKALP program, participated in the two-day event.



Experts from IIM Lucknow, IIIT Delhi, SIDBI, and leading startups discussed strategies for digital expansion, leveraging GeM, ONDC, and Meta. Entrepreneurs in Guwahati, a growing business hub, can

utilize such digital platforms to enhance market penetration, boost e-commerce, and drive regional economic growth.

Nissan records 99,000+ sales in FY25, restructures India operations for growth

Guwahati: Nissan Motor India Pvt. Ltd. (NMIPL) has reported its highest single-year sales in seven years, achieving over 99,000 units in FY 2024-25. This marks a 35% year-on-year (YoY) growth, fueled by the New Nissan Magnite B-SUV, which led both domestic and export markets. Nissan's domestic sales stood at 28,000+ units, despite shifting consumer preferences toward alternate fuel vehicles in the B-SUV segment. The company's export business reached a historic 71,000+ units, expanding from 20 to 65+ international markets, reinforcing India's role as a global manufacturing hub. As part of its global turnaround strategy, Nissan is restructuring its India operations, offloading its stake in the Chennai JV plant to its Alliance partner. The company plans to introduce a 7-seater B-MPV in FY25 and a 5-seater C-SUV in FY26 to strengthen its portfolio. In Guwahati, Nissan dealers have reported a strong demand for the Magnite, with customers appreciating its affordability and segment-first features. The upcoming models are expected to further drive sales in the Northeast. From April 1, 2025, Nissan will increase the price of the New Magnite by up to 3%, citing rising input costs. The brand remains committed to growth, innovation, and expanding its dealer network.



Jindal (India) Limited strengthens foothold in Northeast with 'Milaap' Retailer Meet in Sivasagar

Sivasagar: Jindal (India) Limited, a leading downstream steel products manufacturer and part of the B.C. Jindal Group, hosted its retailer meet, 'Milaap,' in Sivasagar. Organized in collaboration with its authorized dealer, Gautam Industries, the event saw participation from around 60 retailers and senior company officials. The meet underscored Jindal (India) Limited's commitment to expanding its presence in the Northeast.

The company showcased its advanced



coated steel products, including Jindal Sabrang, a vibrant color-coated range with exceptional corrosion resistance, and Jindal NeuColor+, a premium offering engineered for durability and

aesthetic versatility. Retailers were also briefed on the company's strategic expansion plan, which includes a 60% capacity increase with a ₹1,500 crore investment to cater to solar,

home appliances, and infrastructure sectors. Sivasagar, a key hub for steel and infrastructure materials, stands to benefit from Jindal's growing distribution network.

Local retailers welcomed the company's focus on premium steel solutions, expecting enhanced supply chains and competitive pricing to boost demand. Jindal (India) Limited remains committed to nation-building initiatives, reinforcing its position as a trusted leader in the coated steel industry.

UPI transactions reach ₹24.77 trillion in March, set FY25 record

New Delhi: Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions reached record highs in both value and volume in March 2025, clocking Rs 24.77 trillion and 19.78 billion transactions, respectively. This marked a rise of 13 per cent in value and 14 per cent in volume over February, driven by a surge in year-end transactions, according to data from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). This is the first time UPI value has crossed Rs 24 trillion and transactions have surpassed 19 billion since the system became operational in April 2016. For the financial year 2024-25 (FY25), UPI



transactions rose 30 per cent in value to Rs 260.56 trillion, up from Rs 199.96 trillion in FY24. Volume increased 42 per cent to 131.14 billion transactions compared with 92.48 billion in the previous year. March saw a rebound after February's 5% drop in transaction volume and 6.5% decline in value.

SBI General Insurance disburses Rs 1.06 crore to NSDMA, strengthens disaster resilience

Mumbai: SBI General Insurance has settled a ₹1.06 crore claim for the Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority (NSDMA) under its Disaster Risk Transfer Parametric Insurance Solutions (DRTPI). This marks a significant step in disaster risk financing, ensuring swift financial relief to communities affected by extreme weather.

The settlement, triggered by excess rainfall during the monsoon season, is part of a three-year partnership formalized in August 2024 between SBI General Insurance and NSDMA. Leading reinsurers—GIC Re, Munich Re, Hannover Re, and SCOR—have played a crucial role in supporting this initiative. By leveraging parametric insurance, which relies on weather data rather than individual claims, funds are disbursed efficiently to aid recovery efforts. "Our commitment to disaster resili-



ence is reinforced through this settlement," said Naveen Chandra Jha, MD & CEO of SBI General Insurance. "Parametric insurance is a game-changer, ensuring faster financial aid to communities in need."

SBI General Insurance continues to drive financial resilience through innovative risk solutions, ensuring economic stability in vulnerable regions.

JICA extends ₹209 crore loan to boost Assam's aquaculture and livelihoods

Guwahati: The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has signed a loan agreement worth 3,580 million Japanese Yen (approximately ₹209 crores) for the Aquaculture Promotion and Livelihood Improvement Project. The initiative aims to enhance aquaculture production, develop sustainable fishery supply chains, and improve the livelihoods of fisheries stakeholders.

The agreement was signed between Ms. Manisha Sinha, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, and Mr. TAKEUCHI Tak-

uro, Chief Representative of JICA India. "The fisheries sector in India plays a vital role in food security, employment, and economic growth. This project will help Assam strengthen its fisheries industry through sustainable practices, better supply chains, and improved technical capacities," said Mr. Takuro.

The project will directly benefit 15,600 fish farmers and stakeholders while indirectly impacting over 10.84 million consumers. By 2031, aquaculture production is expected to rise from 2.9 tons/ha to 5.0 tons/ha, significantly

boosting farmer incomes and fisheries infrastructure. Guwahati, as a major commercial hub, stands to gain from the project's improved supply chains and increased fish production. With enhanced infrastructure, including cold storage and efficient transportation, local markets will see better quality fish at stable prices, reducing dependency on imports from other states. The Directorate of Fisheries, Government of Assam, will oversee implementation, ensuring alignment with India's Act East Policy and Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) vision.

Halder Venture grows market presence with acquisition of KS Oil's Haldia unit

Guwahati: Halder Venture Limited (HVL) has completed the acquisition of KS Oil Ltd's manufacturing unit in Haldia, marking a significant expansion in its refining and distribution capabilities. The deal, approved by the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) on March 20, 2025, was finalized with physical possession on March 28, 2025.

The acquisition includes a state-of-the-art 500 TPD (tonnes per day) physical and chemical refining facility, a modern packaging unit, and 33,000 MT storage tanks. This five-fold capacity increase is expected to drive HVL's annual revenue growth by over ₹1,500 crore. The facility's direct port access enables HVL to efficiently source imported crude edible oil, reducing logistics costs and eliminating reliance on tanker transportation. HVL aims to strengthen its market



presence across West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, and the Northeast, along with exports to Nepal and Bangladesh. "This acquisition is a strategic milestone, allowing us to scale operations, enhance efficiency, and deliver high-quality edible oils," said Keshab Kumar Halder, Managing Director of HVL. The expansion is set to generate over 500 jobs and drive regional industrial growth. HVL is collaborating with regulatory authorities, including the Haldia Development Authority and Haldia Port Trust, to ensure a smooth transition.

RBI targets inflation-growth balance: Guv

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will work closely with the government in refining its inflation targeting framework, said Governor Sanjay Malhotra in an opinion piece in the Times of India. The initiative is aimed at achieving 'Goldilocks conditions' for inflation and economic growth, he added.

The term 'Goldilocks conditions' refers to an economic environment that is neither too hot with high inflation nor too cold with slow growth, but just right to foster stable and sustainable development.

India first implemented the flexible inflation targeting (FIT) framework in 2016. RBI aims to control inflation at 4%, with a tolerance range of ±2%.

Tata AIA unveils tax bonanza funds to tap India's rising consumption

Guwahati: Tata AIA Life Insurance has launched two new fund offerings (NFOs) to capitalize on India's booming consumption sector, driven by tax reforms and rising disposable incomes. The Tata AIA Life Tax Bonanza Consumption Fund and Tata AIA Life Tax Bonanza Consumption Pension Fund aim to generate long-term growth by investing in companies benefiting from increased consumer spending. The NFOs are open for subscription from March 24 to 31, 2025, with units priced at ₹10 each. These funds will focus on sectors such as FMCG, retail, e-commerce, automobiles, and premium lifestyle brands, all of which are witnessing strong growth post-Budget 2025 tax reductions. India's young population, with over 50% under 25, is driving demand for digital-first products and aspirational



brands, making the consumption sector a key investment theme. The retail landscape in Guwahati is set to benefit from increased disposable incomes and urban expansion. Rising demand for premium products, e-commerce services, and investment opportunities is likely to boost market sentiment, making Tata AIA's funds an attractive proposition for investors in the region. Harshad Patil, CIO of Tata AIA said that these funds provide a diversified and balanced investment approach, aligning with India's evolving consumption patterns.



NSDC, IIT Mandi and NCU Gurugram to launch B.Tech in Semiconductor Design and Technology

Guwahati: In a strategic collaboration, the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), IIT Mandi, and The NorthCap University (NCU), have signed an MoU to launch a B.Tech. ECE in Semiconductor Design and Technology. This new program aims to address the growing global demand for skilled semiconductor professionals by providing students with specialized training and hands-on experience in semiconductor engineering, covering key areas such as nanotechnology, fabrication, and semiconductor equipment design. The four-year program integrates 25 credits



of practical learning, developed jointly by the partners. IIT Mandi will provide faculty support and immersive lab training, while NCU will award the degree. NSDC will oversee the program's

implementation, driving enrolments via its digital platform, offering financial aid, and supporting internships and placements. This collaboration holds significant potential for the

Guwahati market, with increasing demand for technical education and skilled professionals in the region. Guwahati's growing tech landscape, along with its expanding educational infrastructure, positions it as a key player for such initiatives, attracting more students to specialized programs in semiconductor technology. Prof. Nupur Prakash, Vice Chancellor of NCU, expressed that the program will equip students with both academic knowledge and practical experience, helping them meet the demands of India's expanding semiconductor sector.

BofA predicts gold price may hit \$3500 in 18 months

New Delhi: Gold prices could hit the \$3500 an ounce (oz) mark in the next 18 months – up around 13 per cent from the current levels – given the global uncertainties and aided by investment demand, said analysts at BofA Securities in a recent note.



Uncertainty around Trump Administration trade policies, BofA said, could continue to push the US dollar (USD) lower, further supporting gold prices near-term. A broad rebalancing of America's twin deficits could be bullish gold, too.

"China's insurance industry can invest 1 per cent of its assets in gold, equivalent

to around 6 per cent of the annual gold market. Central banks currently hold about 10 per cent of their reserves in gold, and could raise this figure to 30 per cent to make their portfolios more efficient. Retail investors have also been increasing their exposure to gold, with assets under management (AUM) at physically backed ETFs increasing by 4 per cent YoY year-to-date (YTD) in the Americas, Europe and Asia," BofA said.

Bandhan Bank partners with Indian Air Force to offer Shaurya Salary Account

Agartala: Bandhan Bank has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Air Force (IAF) to introduce the Shaurya Salary Account, a specialized corporate salary account designed for defence personnel. The account offers a zero-balance feature, attractive interest rates, and exclusive benefits for IAF personnel and their families.



The MoU was signed by Air Vice Marshal Updesh Sharma VSM, Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Accounts & Air Veterans), Ministry of Defence, and Debraj Saha, Head – Government Business Group, Bandhan Bank. The event was attended by senior officials, including Sujoy Roy, Head - Branch Banking, and Swati Dutt, Head - Central Government Business. Bandhan Bank, which also serves as a SPARSH Service Centre for defence pension-

ers, is expanding its presence in cities like Agartala.

The city, known for its strong defence community and growing financial sector, stands to benefit significantly from the initiative. With Bandhan Bank's extensive branch network. With over 6,300 banking outlets across 35 states and a deposit base of ₹1.41 lakh crore, Bandhan Bank continues to strengthen its role in financial inclusion while supporting key government institutions.

Nissan broadens India lineup with new 7-seater B-MPV and 5-seater C-SUV

Gurugram: Nissan Motor India has announced the addition of an all-new 7-seater B-MPV to its expanding product portfolio, further solidifying its presence in high-growth segments. This new model will launch in FY25, followed by a 5-seater C-SUV in early FY26. The announcement was made at Nissan's Global Product Showcase Event in Yokohama, Japan.



The 7-seater B-MPV will feature a bold C-shaped grille and muscular SUV-inspired design, aligning with Nissan's distinct design philosophy.

Meanwhile, the new 5-seater C-SUV draws inspiration from the iconic Nissan Pa-

rol, offering advanced technology and rugged reliability tailored for Indian road conditions. These additions will complement Nissan's existing line-up, including the Nissan Magnite, the Nissan X-TRAIL, and an upcoming

affordable EV.

With a strategic push to enhance its domestic presence and exports, Nissan aims to have four key models in India by FY26, strengthening its foothold in the competitive B/C and D-SUV segments.

Bajaj Allianz Life survey reveals 81% of Indians underestimate life cover needs

Guwahati: A new survey by Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance, in collaboration with NielsenIQ, has revealed alarming findings regarding life insurance coverage in India. The 'Underinsurance Survey 2025' found that 81% of Indians believe life cover of less than 10 times their annual income is sufficient for financial security. However, the actual coverage is much lower, averaging just 3.1 times their income—well below the industry-recommended benchmark of 10x. The survey, conducted with 2,000



respondents from metro, tier 1, and tier 2 cities, also highlighted that over a third of Indians have never reviewed their life insurance coverage, even after significant life changes like marriage or childbirth.

Despite this underinsur-

ance, 82% of Indians remain confident that their current coverage will protect their family's financial future. Tarun Chugh, MD & CEO of Bajaj Allianz Life, emphasized that India's total sum assured stands at just 70% of GDP, much

lower than global standards, leaving families financially vulnerable. He urged Indians to reassess their life cover needs, recommending at least 10 times their annual income. In Guwahati, residents are increasingly aware of the need for life insurance, but many still lack adequate coverage.

Bajaj Allianz aims to address this gap by educating the market on the importance of comprehensive life insurance, ensuring greater financial security for families in the region.

Sensex, Nifty sink over 1.5% amid rising US tariff fears

Mumbai: Indian equity markets witnessed a massive sell-off on Tuesday amid heightened global volatility ahead of the anticipated US reciprocal tariff announcement on April 2. The benchmark indices, Sensex and Nifty50, ended lower by over 1.5 per cent each in the first trading session of the financial year 2025-26 (FY26). The Sensex settled at 76,024.51, down 1,390.41 points or 1.80 per cent, and the Nifty50 ended at 23,165.70, down 353.65 points or 1.5 per cent. From the broader basket, the



Midcap and Smallcap indices settled down by about 0.86 per cent. The sell-off was more pronounced across the sectoral front, as barring media and oil & gas, all other sectoral indices on the NSE settled in the red. The IT sector suffered due to US exposure, while Maharashtra's rate hike impacted real estate stocks.

Blenders Pride Fashion Tour concludes with a spectacular showcase in Guwahati

Guwahati: Blenders Pride Fashion Tour has wrapped up this edition with an unforgettable showcase in Guwahati, transforming the city into a playground of high fashion with its innovative "Play En-Vogue" concept. The event reimaged AT-LEISURE with a refined edge against the stunning backdrop of Guwahati's vibrant and scenic Greenwood Resort, featuring bold, experimental collections from designers Nitin Bal Chauhan, Abhishek Patni of NoughtOne, and Pawan Sachdeva, with the charismatic Ishaan Khatter as the showstopper. In collaboration with the Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI), Blenders Pride Fashion Tour redefined India's fashion landscape with groundbreaking showcases.

Kartik Mohindra, Chief Market Officer and Head of Global



Business Development at Pernod Ricard India said, "With Guwahati, we concluded the most iconic edition of Blenders Pride Fashion Tour yet." Designer Nitin Bal Chauhan, sharing his thoughts on the show, said, "Blenders Pride Fashion Tour

proved to be a powerful platform for storytelling through fashion." Showstopper Ishaan Khatter said, "Fashion is about confidence, expression, and making a statement." Rapper KR\$NA expressed, "Blenders Pride Fashion Tour wasn't just a fashion event—it was a dynamic celebration of music, music, energy, and self-expression." Rapper K A R M A said, "It was an honor to have performed on such a prestigious platform that celebrates innovation in every form." "As curator for Blenders Pride Fashion Tour, it was exciting to witness how it took shape as 'The One and Only' platform of iconic and en vogue experiences." says Ashish Soni. Sunil Sethi, Chairman, FDCI expressed, "We created an impressive new edition that caught the ever-evolving pulse of global fashion and fascinated audiences nationwide."

JSW Group plans Rs 60 K cr capex in FY26; including Rs 15 K cr for EV biz

New Delhi: The JSW Group plans to invest Rs 60,000 crore (\$7 billion) for capacity expansion in FY26, spending Rs 15,000 crore of the amount on its electric vehicle (EV) business and the rest on core steel and energy operations, said a senior official of the conglomerate.

JSW Greentech Ltd, the group's automotive arm, will set up a greenfield factory in Maharashtra's Aurangabad (Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar) to manufacture electric buses and trucks. The factory will operate independently of the group's EV partnership with MG Motor, which is owned by SAIC Motor of China. "Total investment in the EV project will exceed Rs 15,000 crore, and we are actively seeking a Chinese partner and an announcement is expected soon," said the group official, who requested anonymity. The Aurangabad factory, spread across 636 acres, is expected to produce 10,000 electric buses and 5,000 electric trucks annually. Its initial funding will comprise Rs 1,487.5 crore in debt and the remain-



der infused as equity by the JSW Group, which is led by billionaire Sajjan Jindal. Jindal is driving the Aurangabad project and it reflects the group's optimism about India's EV market.

JSW's investment comes amid BYD of China planning to invest \$10 billion in Telangana to make electric cars and American EV maker Tesla setting up a dealership in Mumbai.

In January, the JSW Group signed an agreement to invest \$35 billion in Maharashtra to set up new facilities for EV and lithium-ion battery production, expanding steel manufacturing, and renewable energy projects, including solar modules.

GST collections top ₹1.96 trillion



New Delhi: Gross GST collection in March grew 9.9 per cent to over Rs 1.96 lakh crore, government data showed on Tuesday.

GST revenue from domestic transactions rose 8.8 per cent to Rs 1.49 lakh crore, while revenue from imported goods was higher 13.56 per cent to Rs 46,919 crore. Total refunds during March rose 41 per cent to Rs 19,615 crore. After adjusting refunds, net GST revenue stood at over Rs 1.76 lakh crore in March 2025, a 7.3 per cent growth over the year-ago period.

ICICI Bank to exit IMSPL with 19% stake sale, deal expected to close by June 2025

Mumbai: ICICI Bank has announced its decision to divest its entire 19 per cent stake in ICICI Merchant Services Private Limited (IMSPL).

The bank has entered into a share purchase agreement with First Data Holding I (Netherlands) BV, its nominee First Data (India) Private Limited, and Fiserv Merchant Solutions Private Limited (formerly IMSPL) for the sale



of its stake in the company, it said in a regulatory filing. ICICI Bank further said that the completion of necessary procedures and the transfer of shares would be communicated in due course. This de-

cision follows the bank's earlier announcement in December 2024, when its board approved the proposal to sell its 19 per cent stake in IMSPL. Once the transaction is finalised, IMSPL will cease to be an

associate entity of ICICI Bank. The sale is subject to required regulatory and statutory approvals and is expected to be completed by June 30, 2025, news agency PTI reported. On Tuesday, shares of ICICI Bank closed at Rs 1,318.15 on the BSE. Last week, a group of employees, who claimed to have been unfairly dismissed by ICICI Bank, met Congress leader Rahul Gandhi.

Tata Neu HDFC Bank Card reaches 2 million milestone

Guwahati: Tata Neu and HDFC Bank have announced a significant milestone: the Tata Neu HDFC Bank Credit Card has surpassed 2 million cards issued, solidifying its position as one of India's preferred rewards credit cards. This achievement underscores the card's remarkable success in delivering value and a seamless rewards ecosystem to customers across the country. Since its launch in August 2022, the Tata Neu HDFC Bank Credit Card has made significant strides, loved by its users for offering the most simple and transparent rewards ecosystem in the Indian credit card market.

"At Tata Digital, we are dedicated to revolutionizing the credit card experience

by making benefits more rewarding and transparent for our customers," said Gaurav Hazrati, Chief Business Officer, Financial Services, Tata Digital. Every transaction with the Tata Neu HDFC Bank Credit Card unlocks a universe of rewards, including up to 10% savings, accelerated NeuCoin earnings, and exclusive privileges across travel, fashion, electronics, groceries, and more. Mr. Parag Rao, Country Head—Payments, Liability Products, Consumer Finance, and Marketing, HDFC Bank, "As India's leading card issuer, it is our endeavour to create a customised offering for every customer segment, providing best-in-class payment solutions."

VI soars 20% on govt aid, remains a high-risk stock

New Delhi: Skyrocketed 19.6 per cent to ₹8.15 share on the BSE on Tuesday, April 1, 2025, as investors cheered government support to the debt-laden telecom services provider.

At 12:05 PM, Vodafone Idea share price was trading 18 per cent higher at ₹8.04 per share as against a 1,267-point (1.6 per cent) slide in the benchmark BSE Sensex index. Around 1,326.54 million shares have already changed hands on the BSE and National Stock Exchange (NSE), so far, in trade.

On Sunday, March 30, 2025, Vodafone Idea informed the stock exchanges that the Ministry of Communications has decided to convert the outstanding spectrum auction dues into equity shares, to be issued in the name of the Government of India.

"The company has been directed to issue 36.95 billion equity shares of the face value of Rs 10 each, at an issue price of Rs 10 each, within a period of 30 days af-



ter issuing necessary orders from relevant authorities, including from Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi)," Vodafone Idea said in its statement.

Post the conversion of Vodafone Idea's dues, owed to the Centre, into equity shares, the Government will hold approximately 48.99 per cent stake in the telco. At present, the Government holds around 22.60 per cent stake, while Vi's existing combined promoter stake would be diluted from around 38.7 per cent, at present, to 25.5 per cent, public shareholders' stake would be diluted from 34 per cent to 23.8 per cent. The promoters, however, will continue to have operational control of the company, Vi clarified.



WHERE INDIA BLOOMS: GLOBAL STORIES OF HERITAGE AND HOME

India, a land of rich history and culture, offers a wealth of ancient sites from rock-cut caves and hillside forts to the ruins of ancient temples



India's rich tapestry of culture, history, and heritage extends far beyond its borders, resonating with people across the globe. From architectural wonders to festive celebrations, the essence of India has become a cherished part of communities worldwide.

Indian temples and monuments abroad stand as proud symbols of cultural identity. Iconic structures like the Swaminarayan Akshardham in New Jersey and the Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago showcase intricate craftsmanship and traditional architectural styles, providing spiritual sanctuaries and cultural hubs for Indian diasporas and visitors alike.

Festivals such as Diwali and Holi have gained international recognition, with vibrant celebrations lighting up cities from London to Sydney. These events offer a glimpse into India's traditions, with colorful decorations, dance performances, and authentic culinary experiences creating unforgettable moments.

Indian cuisine has long been a global favorite, with restaurants offering everything from flavorful curries to sweet treats like gulab jamun. Renowned chefs

and culinary events continue to bring India's diverse food culture to new audiences, enriching taste buds everywhere.

Beyond food and architecture, Indian cinema, literature, and music have made their mark worldwide. Bollywood films draw audiences from different cultural backgrounds, while authors like Jhumpa Lahiri and Salman Rushdie captivate readers with their stories of Indian experiences. Classical music, as well as modern beats inspired by India, have inspired artistic collaborations and performances across continents.

India's global influence is a testament to its ability to connect people through shared stories, vibrant traditions, and timeless heritage. Whether through festivals, art, or flavors, India's essence continues to be celebrated and embraced by diverse communities around the world.

India's cultural legacy transcends geographical boundaries, becoming an integral part of the global landscape. Through its vibrant festivals, timeless architecture, delectable cuisine, and influential arts, India builds connections that honor unity in diversity.



Marmoush propels Man City into semis

London: Manchester City secured their spot in the FA Cup semifinals with a hard-fought 2-1 victory over Bournemouth at the Vitality Stadium on March 30, 2025. The match saw City come from behind, showcasing resilience and tactical brilliance under manager Pep Guardiola.

The game began with Bournemouth taking an early lead in the 21st minute. Evanilson capitalized on a defensive error, bundling the ball into the net



from close range. Manchester City struggled to find their rhythm in the first half, with Erling Haaland missing a penalty and several other opportunities to equalize. Bournemouth's goalkeeper, Kefa Arrizabalaga, was instrumental in keeping City at bay during the opening period.

Rashford says he feels fitter and better at Villa

Manchester: Marcus Rashford, the England forward, has found a new lease of life since joining Aston Villa on loan from Manchester United. Rashford, who had been struggling for form and fitness at United, showcased his resurgence by scoring his first two goals for Villa in a commanding 3-0 victory over Preston North End in the FA Cup quarterfinals on Sunday.

Rashford's brace against Preston marked a turning point in his career. He opened the scoring in the 58th minute with a tap-in from Lucas Digne's cross and added a second goal from the penalty spot just



five minutes later. His performance not only helped Villa secure a place in the FA Cup semifinals but also demonstrated his growing confidence and fitness. Speaking to the BBC after the match, Rashford expressed his satisfaction with his progress at Villa. "It's a great feeling. I feel like I've been getting fitter and playing better football since I've been here. My body feels good, and I'm enjoying my football for now," he said.

ASHWINI SHINES! Kumar's heroic debut powers MI

Mumbai: Mumbai Indians secured a commanding eight-wicket victory over Kolkata Knight Riders, thanks to a stellar performance by debutant Ashwani Kumar and a composed innings by Ryan Rickelton. The match, held on March 31, 2025, saw Ashwani Kumar, a 23-year-old left-arm seamer from Punjab, make history by becoming the first Indian to take four wickets on his IPL debut. His figures of 3-0-24-4 dismantled KKR's batting lineup, which crumbled to a season-low total of 116 in just 16.2 overs.

Ashwani's victims included key players like Ajinkya Rahane, Rinku Singh, Manish Pandey, and Andre Russell. His exceptional bowling was supported by Deepak Chahar (2/19), Trent Boult (1/23), and Hardik Pandya (1/10), who collectively ensured KKR's struggles. KKR's innings started poorly, with openers Quinton de Kock and Sunil Narine dismissed within the first two overs. By the end of the powerplay, KKR was reeling at 41 for four.

In response, Mumbai Indians chased down the target with ease, finishing the game with 7.1 overs to spare. Ryan Rickelton, the left-handed South African, anchored the innings with an unbeaten 62 off 41 balls,



including four boundaries and five sixes. Suryakumar Yadav added a quickfire 27 not out off nine balls, sealing the win with a six. Despite Rohit Sharma's early dismissal for 13, Mumbai's batting lineup remained unshaken.

Ashwani Kumar's debut not only highlighted his potential but also un-

derscored MI's strength in nurturing young talent. His performance has set a high benchmark for future debutants and added a new dimension to MI's bowling attack. The match also showcased Rickelton's ability to handle pressure and deliver in crucial moments, making him a valuable asset for the team.

Quick bites

Gaikwad Blames Slow Starts

Raturaj Gaikwad has attributed his team's recent struggles in the IPL 2025 to poor starts and fielding lapses. Following CSK's narrow six-run defeat to Rajasthan Royals, marking their second consecutive loss, Gaikwad highlighted the team's inability to establish solid opening partnerships as a key issue. He also pointed out that misfields during the match allowed the opposition to score an additional 8-10 runs, which proved costly. Despite his valiant knock of 63 runs, Gaikwad's efforts were not enough to secure a win as wickets fell at regular intervals. He explained that his batting position at No. 3

RCB bowlers aim for victory

Royal Challengers Bengaluru's desire to make their home-coming a memorable occasion pivots around an experienced bowling unit maintaining its excellent form when they face Gujarat Titans in an IPL match here on Wednesday.

The bowlers played a big hand in RCB taming two traditionally tough opponents in Kolkata and Chennai but now they face a different challenge at home against the Titans.

Jakub Mensik defeats Novak Djokovic to win Miami Open title

Miami: Teenager Jakub Mensik achieved a remarkable victory by defeating his childhood idol Novak Djokovic in the Miami Open final. The 19-year-old Czech player, ranked 54th in the world, claimed his maiden ATP title with a score of 7-6 (4), 7-6 (4), denying Djokovic his 100th career title.

Mensik showcased exceptional skill, delivering 14 aces and maintaining composure in crucial moments. Djokovic, the oldest player to reach a Masters 1000 final at 37, struggled with a swollen eye and fatigue during the match. Despite his challenges, Djokovic



praised Mensik's performance and acknowledged his potential for future success.

This victory marks Mensik as the ninth youngest ATP title winner and the first teenager to defeat Djokovic in straight sets at a tour-level match. The

match was delayed due to rain, adding to the drama of the event. Mensik expressed gratitude to Djokovic for inspiring his tennis journey, calling him the "greatest of all time", and crediting him as the inspiration behind his tennis journey.

Riyan Parag fined ₹12 lakh for slow over-rate as RR captain

Guwahati: Rajasthan Royals' stand-in captain Riyan Parag was fined ₹12 lakh for maintaining a slow over-rate during his team's six-run victory against Chennai Super Kings in the IPL 2025 match held in Guwahati. This penalty was imposed under Article 2.22 of the IPL's Code of Conduct, which addresses minimum over-rate offenses.

Despite leading his team to their first win of the season, Parag faced this fine as his team failed to complete their 20 overs within the stipulated time frame. The Royals had posted a competitive score of 182/9 and successfully restricted



CSK to 176/6, securing a narrow victory. This was the team's first offense of the season, and Parag's leadership came under scrutiny for the slow over-rate.

The IPL has introduced new rules this season, exempting captains from bans for repeated slow over-rate

offenses, replacing them with fines and demerit points.

Parag's fine highlights the league's strict enforcement of these regulations to ensure timely gameplay. Rajasthan Royals will next face Punjab Kings in their upcoming match.

