



# THE MILEAGE

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## SC to review pleas challenging Waqf Amendment Act's constitutionality

Congress MP Jawed, AIMIM Chief Owaisi, and Khan have submitted petitions



**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court of India is set to review multiple petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025. This Act, which recently received presidential assent, has sparked significant controversy. Petitioners, including prominent figures like Congress MP Mohammad Jawed, AIMIM

chief Asaduddin Owaisi, and AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan, argue that the Act infringes upon the religious freedoms of the Muslim community and distorts the democratic process in the administration of Waqf properties and boards. The Act has been criticized for centralizing power, taking authority away from state governments

and State Waqf Boards, and placing it in the hands of the Central Government. Critics claim this undermines the federal principles of the Constitution and could lead to the loss of significant Waqf properties. Religious organizations like Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind and Samastha Kerala Jamiathul Ulema have also filed petitions, describing the Act as a "dangerous conspiracy" and a "blatant intrusion" into the rights of religious denominations to manage their own affairs. The SC recognizes the petitions' urgency but will review them later. This legal challenge may reshape Waqf governance and Muslim autonomy.



Kharge, Rahul, Sonia Gandhi pose post-CWC meet in Ahmedabad

## US and India accelerate talks to seal trade pact

**New Delhi:** Amid global uncertainty triggered by reciprocal tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has spoken to his US counterpart Marco Rubio and the two "agreed" on the importance of an early conclusion to the ongoing discussions for a Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)



between the two countries. Jaishankar tonight posted on X about the talk he had with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and added, "Agreed on the importance

of the early conclusion of the Bilateral Trade Agreement." "Good to speak with @SecRubio (Marco Rubio), exchanged perspectives on the Indo-Pacific, the Indian subcontinent, Europe, Middle East/West Asia and the Caribbean...Look forward to remaining in touch," Jaishankar said in a post on X.

## Congress chiefs must plan for 5 years, says Kharge

Kharge urges focus on grassroots strength and sustained engagement beyond polls

**New Delhi:** Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge has issued a strong directive to the party's district chiefs, urging them to adopt a long-term electoral strategy spanning five years, rather than focusing on short-term gains. Speaking at a meeting with key party leaders, Kharge emphasized the need for consistent and sustained efforts to strengthen the

Congress's grassroots presence and build momentum for future elections. Kharge's message comes amidst ongoing discussions within the Congress about the party's electoral performance and the need for a comprehensive revamp of its organizational structure. He stressed that a five-year strategy would allow the party to systematically

address local issues, engage with communities, and cultivate a strong cadre of dedicated workers. "We cannot afford to operate on a six-month or one-year election cycle," Kharge stated. "Our approach must be long-term, focused on building enduring relationships with the people and strengthening our party at the grassroots level." He highlighted the im-

portance of district chiefs playing a pivotal role in this long-term strategy, emphasizing their responsibility to: Kharge urged district leaders to actively engage with communities and understand their specific needs and grievances. He emphasized the need to build robust and efficient party structures at the district and block levels. Kharge stressed the impor-

tance of identifying and nurturing young and dynamic leaders within the party. He called for regular and effective communication with party workers and the public. He specified the need to train party members on the congress ideology, and policies. The Congress President's remarks reflect a growing recognition within the party.

### Quick bites

#### China slams Trump tariffs

**Beijing:** China rejects US 'blackmail' as trade war persists, markets steady. China rebukes Trump's 50% tariff plan after matching 34% duties.

#### Indian Govt hikes fuel prices by ₹2/L

**New Delhi:** Govt hikes excise duty on fuel by ₹2/L, retail prices unaffected due to global price drop. Excise duty raised to ₹13/L on petrol, ₹10/L on diesel.

#### 'Fake' cardiologist booked in MP

**Bhopal:** In Damoh, MP, a fake cardiologist performed cardiac procedures without registration, leading to seven deaths. Investigations found suspicious credentials, including a fake Andhra Pradesh medical certificate.

#### Rahul Gandhi joined Begusarai padyatra

**Patna:** Rahul Gandhi joined the Congress-led 'Palayan Roko, Naukri Do' padyatra in Begusarai, Bihar, highlighting issues like unemployment and migration.

## AIADMK opposes Waqf Bill in Rajya Sabha, signaling resistance to saffron alignment

**New Delhi:** The AIADMK's decision to vote against the Waqf Amendment Bill in the Rajya Sabha is significant for several reasons. The bill, which was passed with a 127-95 vote, has been controversial due to concerns about its impact on minority rights and religious freedoms



The AIADMK, a Tamil Nadu-based party, opposed the bill despite ongoing discussions about a potential alliance with the BJP, which supported the legislation. This move is seen as a statement of the AIADMK's

commitment to minority welfare, as highlighted by their leader M. Thambidurai during the debate. It also reflects the party's strategic positioning, possibly to maintain its appeal among minority commu-

nities in Tamil Nadu while navigating alliance politics. The decision has been interpreted by some as a moral victory for the opposition, showcasing unexpected resistance to the BJP's legislative agenda.

## Pakistani intruder shot dead along IB in Jammu

**Srinagar:** A Pakistani intruder was shot dead along the International Border here, a BSF spokesperson said on Saturday, claiming to have foiled an infiltration attempt from across the b Official sources said the intruder was neutralised in the border outpost Abdulian in the R S Pura sector. "On the intervening night of April 4 and 5, the alert BSF troops saw a suspicious movement in the Jammu border area and an intruder was seen crossing the IB," the spokesperson of

the BSF said. He said the intruder was challenged by the troops, but he paid no heed and kept on moving. "The BSF troops, sensing threat, neutralised the intruder. The identity and motive of the intruder is being ascertained," he said. The BSF spokesperson said a strong protest is being lodged with Pakistani counterpart. Official sources said the BSF informed police, which shifted the body from the scene for postmortem and other legal formalities.



## Manipur forces dismantle militant camp after clash

**Imphal:** Security forces in Manipur successfully dismantled a militant camp belonging to the banned Kangleipak Communist Party (PWC) after a brief encounter in Thoubal district. The operation took place in the Heirok area during a search mission. Upon spotting the security forces, the militants



opened fire, prompting a retaliatory response. The insurgents fled the scene, leaving behind a large camp stocked with weap-

ons and supplies.

From the camp, security forces recovered a self-loading rifle with a magazine, a 12-bore single-barrel gun, 21 cartridges of 7.62mm ammunition, three bulletproof jackets, camouflage clothing, syringes, medicines, and three four-wheelers. This discovery highlights the

scale of the militant group's operations.

In a separate operation in Imphal West, a KCP (PWG) militant involved in extortion activities was arrested. Identified as Waikhom Loveson Singh, the insurgent was apprehended in the Nagamapal area. Another Imphal East operation seized a pistol.

## Arunachal CM attends RGU fest, honors war heroes



**Itanagar:** Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister attended the youth festival at Rajiv Gandhi University (RGU), engaging with young participants and celebrating their creativity, enthusiasm, and potential. The event included various cultural and educational activities designed to empower and inspire the youth. As part of the

program, the CM also paid heartfelt tributes to India's Param Vir Chakra awardees, the brave soldiers recognized for their exemplary courage and sacrifice in defending the nation, highlighting their invaluable contribution to the country's history and security.

He described the memorial as "solemn and inspiring."

## Tripura eye hospital gets ₹100 cr boost

**Agartala:** Chief Minister and Health Minister of Tripura, Prof. Dr. Manik Saha, on Monday announced that the state government has allocated Rs 100 crore for the establishment of a state-of-the-art eye hospital. The announcement was made during a World Health Day event organized by the Hepatitis Foundation of Tripura in Agartala on Monday.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Saha said that the proposed eye hospital will be equipped with modern facilities and is part of the government's broader plan to strengthen healthcare infrastructure in the state. "In this year's budget, we have kept Rs 100 crore for setting up an eye hospital with all necessary facilities," he stated.

He also informed that work has already begun on a Maternal and Child Clinic in the state, backed by over Rs 150 crore in funding from the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER). "Infrastructure development is underway, and more manpower will be added to enhance services. The CM stated.

## Cabinet clears ₹6,839 crore Vibrant Villages Programme-II for Northeast

**Agartala:** The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the Vibrant Villages Programme-II (VVP-II), extending its coverage to Tripura and other North Eastern states. This initiative, with a total outlay of Rs 6,839 crore, aims to

strengthen border villages and ensure their comprehensive development under the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047 for 'Safe, Secured & Vibrant Land Borders.'

The Central Sector Scheme targets villages near international land bor-

ders beyond the Northern region covered by VVP-I. It will run in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura until 2028-29. Additionally, the programme will extend to Bihar, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh and WB.

## Union Home Minister Amit Shah seeks approval to president's rule in Manipur

■ Shah highlights peace efforts amid Manipur violence resolution

**New Delhi:** Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Minister, Amit Shah, moved a statutory resolution in the Lok Sabha for the approval of the imposition of President's Rule in Manipur. The resolution was thereafter adopted by the lower house. The House also expressed its respect, sympathy, and deep sorrow for those who lost their lives in the violence in Manipur.

Introducing the resolution, Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Amit Shah, said that ethnic violence between two communities in Manipur had started due to a decision by the Manipur



High Court regarding a reservation-related dispute. He mentioned that these are neither riots nor terrorism, but ethnic violence between two communities as a result of the interpretation of the High Court's decision. Shah further said that

there has been no violence in Manipur for nearly four months, from December to March, and provisions for food, medicines, and medical facilities have been ensured in the camps. He said that online arrangements for technical and medical

education have been made and for primary education, classes have been set up inside the camps, where arrangements for their studies have been made.

Amit Shah said that there should not be any violence and ethnic violence should not be linked to any political governance. He informed the House that between 1993 and 1998, there was a Naga-Kuki conflict in Manipur for five years, which resulted in 750 deaths, and sporadic incidents continued for a decade.

## NIT-M fest kicks off with maestro



**Shillong:** The National Institute of Technology (NIT) Meghalaya has commenced its annual cultural festival, SHISHIR 2025, with a grand celebration at its permanent campus in Sohra. Held from April 3 to 5, this year's edition is especially significant as it is being hosted at the newly established campus for the first time.

The festival opened with a mesmerizing classical music performance by renowned santoor maestro and Padma Shri awardee, Pandit Satish Vyas, organised under the SPIC MACAY Heritage Club. The event was inaugurated in the presence of A. Wanshai Shynret, Deputy Director of NEIAH Shillong, as Chief Guest, and Anendya Raajshre, IAS, Sub-Divisional Officer of Amlarem Civil Sub-Division, as Guest of Honour. NIT Meghalaya Director, Pinakeswar Mahanta, also graced the occasion.

## Kaziranga sees record tourism, boosting local economy

**Kaziranga:** The Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNPTR) in Assam has set a new record with 406,564 visitors in the fiscal year 2024-25. The total comprises 17,693 foreign tourists, with the number of visitors showing a four-fold increase compared to the last ten years and making Kaziranga one of the top worldwide wildlife destinations.

The rise in tourism is clear from the figures, with

numbers growing from 132,930 in 2014-15 to 406,564 in 2024-25. Significantly, foreign tourists currently make up around 4.5% of total visitors, showing the park's growing international popularity.

The surge in tourism has significantly benefited the local economy, with projected revenue for 2024-25 estimated at Rs. 10.90 crore, a substantial increase from Rs. 2.85 crore in 2014-15. This influx has



stimulated local businesses, enhancing activity in shops, restaurants, and ac-

commodations in surrounding villages.

Kaziranga's status has

been further boosted by the visits of high-profile personalities, such as Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who made history as the first Indian Prime Minister to pay a visit to the park since its declaration as a National Park in 1974.

Moreover, The New York Times has listed Kaziranga as a "Must-See" world destination.



## Skill India Pavilion drives innovation and impact at Startup Mahakumbh 2025

**Guwahati:** The Skill India Pavilion at Startup Mahakumbh 2025 emerged as a powerful catalyst for dialogue, deals, and grassroots innovation, with Jayant Chaudhary, Minister of State (I/C), MSDE and MoE, highlighting the role of young entrepreneurs in solving real community problems. Special Jury Awards went to Government Polytechnic Deoria for Vayuputra, an AI drone for farming, and Rajalakshmi College of Engineering for Jeevitham, a child healthcare platform. In a fireside chat hosted by TIE Global, Chaudhary emphasized, "India's young entrepreneurs aren't chas-



ing success for the sake of it—they're solving real problems rooted in their communities." The pavilion, featuring 15 NIESBUD-supported entrepreneurs, showcased skill-led ventures from In-

dia's heartlands, reinforcing MSDE's vision of an inclusive, future-ready startup ecosystem and solidifying India's global standing among top-three startup nations.

## Toyota Urban Cruiser Taisor debuts in Itanagar with Strong Value Proposition

**Itanagar:** Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) conducted a test drive of the Urban Cruiser Taisor in Itanagar today, positioning the feature-loaded SUV as a compelling choice for Northeast consumers seeking style, performance, and practicality. Available in 1.0L Turbo, 1.2L Petrol, and E-CNG variants, the Urban Cruiser Taisor offers competitive fuel efficiency—up to 28.5 km/kg for CNG and 22.8 km/l for the petrol AMT. The 1.0L Turbo engine delivers 100.06 PS with options for both manual and automatic transmissions. The price range spans from ₹7.74 lakh to ₹13.04 lakh



(ex-showroom), targeting a broad customer base. The SUV features a bold aerodynamic design, twin LED DRLs, connected LED tail lamps, and 16" alloy wheels. Inside, it offers premium dual-tone interiors, a 9" HD infotainment system with Android Auto/Apple CarPlay, wireless charging, ARKAMYS sound, 360° camera, and Toyota iCON-

NECT with smartwatch and voice assistant compatibility. Safety features include 6 airbags, vehicle stability control, hill hold assist, ABS with EBD, ISOFIX anchors, and seatbelt reminders for all passengers. With tailored finance schemes, extended warranties, and complimentary roadside assistance, Toyota aims to strengthen its foothold in fast-growing markets like Itanagar through localized engagement and value-driven offerings.

## NSDC launches 'Sampanna Ghar Abhiyan' to skill 1.5 lakh Nashik families in rural home construction

**Guwahati:** The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), in collaboration with Nashik Zilla Parishad and the Quality Council of India (QCI), has launched Sampanna Ghar Abhiyan, a transformative rural housing initiative aimed at skilling over 1.5 lakh families in Nashik to construct their own homes under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Gramin.



This community-driven initiative unites 18 professional associations, technical bodies, and grassroots institutions to blend access to affordable housing with skill empowerment. NSDC will oversee training stan-

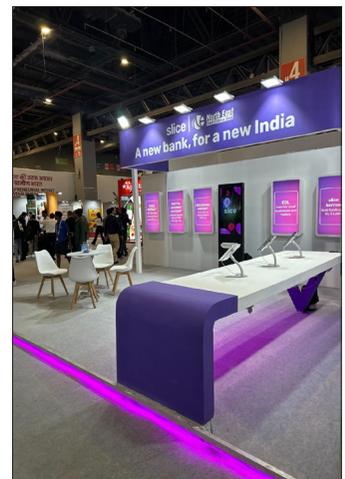
dardisation and mobilisation of certified trainers, while on-ground delivery will be led by Shri Ramkrishna Arogya Sansthan. The project is spearheaded by Nashik Zilla Parishad CEO Mrs Ashima Mittal. Key stakeholders include CREDAI Nashik Metro, Nashik Citizen Forum, and local architects who are

ensuring functional, user-friendly rural home designs. Industry partners are offering building materials at factory prices, solar solutions via the Maharashtra Solar Manufacturers Association, and sanitation systems through the Indian Plumbing Association.

In Guwahati, real estate leaders and vocational institutions have shown interest in replicating the model, viewing it as a scalable solution for rural housing and employment. The initiative is seen as a business case for merging skill-building with infrastructure development in Northeast India.

## NESFB makes waves at Startup Mahakumbh 2025, showcases Assam's rise in fintech arena

**Guwahati:** North East Small Finance Bank (NESFB), Assam's first unicorn and India's pioneering fintech-powered bank, made a remarkable debut at Startup Mahakumbh 2025 held at Bharat Mandapam from April 3–5. Fresh off its merger with fintech unicorn slice, NESFB unveiled a bold vision of AI-led, inclusive banking for a Viksit Bharat by 2047.



At the event, NESFB introduced two new digital-first products—the Digital Savings Account linked directly to the RBI repo rate with daily interest credits, and a Fixed Deposit offering up to 9% returns. Both products feature seamless digital onboarding and app-based accessibility, catering to tech-savvy and value-conscious users. The bank also revealed plans to roll out AI-powered flagship branches across metro cities and tier-2 hubs in the next 12–24 months, while deepening outreach in rural markets. Guwahati, NESFB's home base, has emerged as a key driver in this transformation. The city's rising digital literacy, expanding startup culture, and growing middle-class demand make it a fertile ground for innovation-led financial services, cementing its role as a fintech hotspot in the Northeast.

A slice | NESFB spokesperson said: "The unwavering support of the Government of Assam, under the visionary leadership of the Hon'ble Chief Minister, has been instrumental in NESFB's journey. Their forward-thinking policies and active facilitation have helped us not only scale in the Northeast but position ourselves as a digital-first bank for all of India. NESFB is proud to be Assam's first unicorn—proof that regional excellence can thrive and lead on national and global stages."

He added: "Our mission is clear: to redefine banking with tech-led solutions that are accessible, efficient, and empowering. Whether it's AI-driven branches, high-yield savings, or smart fixed deposits, we're building a bank that works for everyone—from metro millennials to rural entrepreneurs."

## Toyota's urban cruiser Hyryder enhances daily commutes with premium comfort and safety

**Bangalore:** In a move aimed at enhancing everyday driving for Indian families, Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) has introduced a thoughtfully upgraded version of its Urban Cruiser Hyryder. Designed with inputs from customers across the country, the revamped SUV focuses on advanced safety, comfort, and convenience, making daily commutes smoother and safer.



A major highlight is the inclusion of six airbags as standard across all variants, along with structural safety enhancements

and an electronic parking brake in select automatic versions. Performance sees a boost with the new 6-speed automatic transmission replacing the ear-

lier 5-speed manual in the AWD variant. For families and long-distance travelers, Toyota has added ventilated front seats, an 8-way adjustable

power driver seat, ambient lighting, rear door sunshades, and an Air Quality Index display—features that transform the cabin into a more comfortable, connected space. Type-C charging ports, LED cabin lighting, TPMS, and dual-tone colour options further elevate the ownership experience. Prices for the upgraded Urban Cruiser Hyryder start at Rs. 11.34 lakh (ex-showroom).



## NSDC and PDEU launch centre of excellence to power India's skilling in semiconductors, energy

**Guwahati:** The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has partnered with Pandit Deendayal Energy University (PDEU) to establish a state-of-the-art Centre of Excellence for Skill Development. This strategic alliance aims to impart hands-on training across vital sectors such as energy, health, water, and food, with a strong focus on manufacturing skills and emerging technologies.

With over 40 online and hybrid courses, the Centre will train students from ITI to postgraduate levels in areas including VLSI Design, AI, Robotics, IoT, Cloud Computing, and Block-



chain. A dedicated ATMP Semiconductor Packaging Centre will offer in-depth training in back-end packaging and encapsulation, fostering industry-ready talent. NSDC CEO Ved Mani

Tiwari emphasized the initiative's alignment with Make-in-India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat, while PDEU's Dr. S. Sundar Manoharan highlighted experiential learning now integrated into

academic credits under the National Credit Framework. In Guwahati, education institutions and industry stakeholders see this as a catalyst for regional skilling in electronics and renewable energy.

The model is expected to boost demand for certified talent in Assam's fast-evolving tech ecosystem, especially in the Guwahati market where interest in semiconductor and solar manufacturing is on the rise. A jointly owned Section 8 company will manage the CoE, ensuring scalability and long-term impact aligned with key Sustainable Development Goals.

## HMD unveils music-centric feature phones and renews its partnership with Rajasthan Royals

**Guwahati:** Human Mobile Devices (HMD) has unveiled two new feature phones, HMD 130 Music and HMD 150 Music, catering to music enthusiasts with dedicated music controls and superior audio quality. Strengthening its consumer engagement, HMD has also renewed its partnership with Rajasthan Royals as the official smartphone partner for IPL 2025. The new feature phones boast a 2500mAh removable battery, Type-C fast charging, Bluetooth 5.0, and UPI payment capabilities. They offer up to 50 hours of music playback and come in vibrant colors—Blue, Dark Grey, and Red for HMD 130 Music, and Light Blue, Purple, and Grey for HMD 150 Music. Additionally, a text-to-speech feature in Hindi and English enhances accessibility for users. In Guwahati, HMD's feature phones are expected to gain traction, especially among con-



sumers seeking affordable and durable devices with modern features. With an increasing preference for long-lasting battery life and digital payment options, the new models align with the needs of Assam's mobile users, including traders and music lovers. Priced at ₹1,899 and ₹2,399, HMD 130 Music and HMD 150 Music will be available via retail stores, HMD.com, and major e-commerce platforms, reinforcing HMD's commitment to affordable innovation.

## PNB MetLife & Policybazaar launch new pension fund



**New Delhi:** PNB MetLife India Insurance Company Ltd has launched a pension premier multicap fund as part of its unit-linked insurance plans (ULIPs) for which it has tied up with Policybazaar.

The new offering is aimed at helping customers to build a financially secure retirement corpus while ensuring life insurance coverage, the company said in a release on April 8. The fund will be open for subscription from April 1 to April 15 at an initial Net Asset Value (NAV) of Rs 10.

"Retirement planning is not just about saving money, it's about making smart investment choices that ensure long-term financial independence. With this fund, we offer customers a robust opportunity to build wealth through a diversified portfolio," PNB MetLife chief investment officer Sanjay Kumar said.

The product is offered under PNB MetLife Smart Invest Pension Plan combining investment growth with insurance protection, the release said. The fund builds on PNB MetLife's multi-cap strategy.

## NIESBUD training fuels rise of Vijaya Sai Services as rural startup shines on national stage

**Guwahati:** A transformative 15-day Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP) by the National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD) has propelled Vijaya Sai Services, into the national spotlight. Founded by Gummadi Siva Narayana, the business offers organic jaggery, turmeric, and other homegrown products. Initially struggling with limited

direction and poor market visibility, Narayana's journey took a decisive turn after undergoing NIESBUD's structured training. The program equipped him with critical insights into market trends, consumer behavior, digital marketing, and branding. Post-training, Vijaya Sai Services witnessed a swift transformation—streamlined operations, strategic outreach, and positive customer feedback led to rap-

id business growth and a five-member strong team.

In Guwahati, where consumer interest in organic and ethically sourced products is rising, the story of Vijaya Sai Services is being closely watched by local retailers and distributors. The city's expanding organic market is keen to explore collaborations with emerging rural brands, reflecting a shift in consumer priorities towards quality and trust-driven offerings.

## NSDC and WRI India work together to improve the green skilling ecosystem in India

**Guwahati:** National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and WRI India have inked partnership to map green skill gap, implement reskilling and upskilling programmes and strengthen the green skilling ecosystem in India. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in New Delhi in this regard with a vision to transform India into a green-skilled nation.

The agreement focuses on boosting green skills in manufacturing, service, and agriculture sectors. It also aims to promote sustainable development by equipping individuals and businesses, including Micro Small Medium Enterprises (MSME), with market-relevant skills for green jobs.

The initiative combines



skill training with research to help more people build careers in green industries.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Ved Mani Tiwari, CEO, NSDC and MD, NSDC International, said, "India's transition to a green economy presents a remarkable opportunity to empower its workforce with future-ready skills." Madhav Pai, CEO of WRI India,

emphasized, "Our collaboration with NSDC marks a significant step in bridging the green skill gap by integrating research-driven insights with practical strategies and innovative skilling models." NSDC and WRI India will design industry-aligned curriculums to arm individuals with skills for green jobs and self-employment.

## World Health Day spurs demand for California Almonds in India's wellness market

**Guwahati:** As India gears up for World Health Day the spotlight is on nutrition and healthier lifestyle choices. Experts and celebrities emphasize the benefits of incorporating California almonds into daily diets, citing their role in heart health, weight management, and diabetes prevention. With over 200 research studies backing their benefits, almonds have emerged as a preferred health snack. Ritika Samaddar, Regional Head – Dietetics, Max Healthcare, stressed the need for mindful eating amid rising obesity and cardiovascular diseases. "Replacing deep-fried snacks with nutrient-dense options like almonds can significantly improve health outcomes," she said. Wellness expert Sheela Krishnaswamy highlighted almonds' role in satiety and weight control, while nutritionist Dr. Rohini Patil emphasized their benefits in blood sugar management. Celebrity endorsements



have further fueled the almond market. Bollywood actress Soha Ali Khan and South Indian star Shriya Saran swear by almonds as a daily energy booster. "A handful of almonds keeps me energized through long shoots," said Khan. In Guwahati, health-conscious consumers are driving a surge in demand for California almonds. Retailers report an increasing shift from traditional snacks to dry fruits, reflecting growing awareness of wellness trends. With rising disposable incomes and lifestyle shifts, the city's dry fruit market is experiencing steady growth. With rising health trends, California almonds are set to gain ground in India's wellness market



## Polycab's Super ROI fans support India's energy efficiency drive as power costs soar

**Mumbai:** Polycab India has launched its Super ROI range of fans powered by BLDC (Brushless Direct Current) technology. This development is timely, aligning with policy thrusts under the government's push for energy-efficient consumer appliances and Make in India manufacturing.



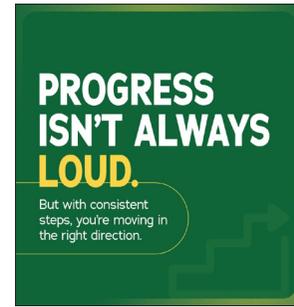
With energy costs climbing and 61% of consumers prioritizing efficiency, the Super ROI fans offer up to 50% electricity savings and 25% higher air delivery in select models. These fans

feature 100% copper winding motors, reverse rotation for winter utility, and over 30 aesthetic colour options, combining technology, comfort, and design. A four-year warranty ensures added consumer assurance. Polycab has invested heavily in

its new manufacturing facility at Halol, Gujarat, which boasts a capacity of over 9 million fans annually. The initiative supports domestic manufacturing capabilities, employment, and innovation—key tenets of India's economic growth strategy.

## Britannia NutriChoice launches NutriPlus app to democratize wellness tracking across India

**Guwahati:** Britannia NutriChoice, one of India's leading health-centric biscuit brands, has announced the launch of NutriPlus, a mobile wellness tracking app developed in partnership with Aktivo Labs. The initiative marks a significant step in the brand's mission to make wellness tracking more accessible, intuitive, and smartphone-driven—eliminating the need for wearables or complex systems. The NutriPlus app, accessible by scanning a NutriChoice biscuit pack, has already garnered over



1.5 lakh user sign-ins within a year. It provides a single, evidence-based NutriScore by tracking steps, sleep quality, fibre and water intake. Over the past year, the app has shown a positive shift in user behavior,

with daily steps increasing by 10%, exercise time by 16%, and sleep duration improving from 6 hours 46 minutes to 7 hours 08 minutes. Archana Balaraman, General Manager – Marketing, Britannia, stated, "NutriPlus has made wellness tracking simpler for everyone. We remain committed to helping individuals embrace healthier habits with ease." NutriPlus now also offers personalized diet charts, positioning itself as a holistic, tech-enabled wellness companion for the modern consumer.

## RBI's 25 bps rate cut eclipsed by trump tariff war worries

**Mumbai:** The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is widely expected to announce a 25 basis points (bps) rate cut on Wednesday that will bring down the repo rate to 6 per cent. But the move is unlikely to stir markets, analysts believe, with investor attention firmly fixed on the broader impact of the escalating US-led trade war.



The RBI's expected rate cut may not significantly impact the markets, as broader global concerns—particularly the fallout from escalating trade tensions led by the United States—continue to dominate investor sentiment, according to Deven Choksey, managing director of DRChoksey

FinServ. As for the market reaction, Choksey said that under normal conditions, a rate cut would have been a positive trigger. "But now, the market is more concerned about the ripple effects of US tariffs. Corporates are being cautious, ensuring their businesses aren't adversely impacted."

Besides the rate cut, the central bank is expected to adopt a more accommodative policy approach. However, reports also suggest that India's overnight indexed swap (OIS) rates signal a bigger reduction or a change in its stance.

## Axis Bank launches in-app OTP to combat frauds

**Mumbai:** Axis Bank, one of the largest private sector banks in India, has introduced an industry-first 'In-App Mobile OTP' feature on its mobile app, 'open', to enhance authentication security and protect customers from rising OTP-related frauds and scams. This feature eliminates dependence on telecom networks by generating time-based one-time passwords (TOTP) directly within the app, instead of sending OTPs via SMS. "This ensures faster, more secure authentication while significantly reducing fraud risks. Mobile OTP key in Axis Bank's fraud prevention.

## Aditya Birla Health Insurance's HealthReturns™ model earns over 1 lakh policyholders rewards

**Guwahati:** On the occasion of World Health Day, Aditya Birla Health Insurance Co. Ltd. ("ABHICL"), the health insurance arm of Aditya Birla Capital, India's leading diversified financial services company, has announced that over 1 lakh policyholders have benefited from their first-of-its-kind HealthReturns™ model for making healthier lifestyle choices and maintaining good heart health, monitored by its Healthy Heart Score™ in FY'25 (April 2024-March 2025). The HealthReturns™ model essentially focuses on regular physical activity, with access to expert health guidance, which helps deliver improved health outcomes for customers. This



commitment to health is evident in their daily habits, with customers having walked over 350 billion steps so far. The company is redefining the industry with its 'Health-First' approach, shifting from reactive coverage to proactive wellness and by integrating wellness and health management into its offerings. A core element of this initiative is Active Dayz™,

which allows customers to earn HealthReturns™ by engaging in fitness activities such as walking 10,000 steps, burning 300 calories in a workout session. Mr. Mayank Bathwal, CEO, Aditya Birla Health Insurance, said, "At Aditya Birla Health Insurance, we have been at the forefront of integrating wellness and preventive care into health insurance."

## Sanskriti University strikes a high note with Palak Muchhal's star performance at Spark 2025

**Guwahati:** Sanskriti University showcased its cultural and creative edge at Spark 2025, a grand musical extravaganza that featured renowned Bollywood playback singer Palak Muchhal. The event, held on the second day of the university's flagship fest, drew massive student participation and stood out as a hallmark of the institution's commitment to holistic development.



The evening began with the ceremonial lamp lighting by Chancellor Sachin Gupta and CEO Dr. Meenakshi Sharma,

officially inaugurating the celebration. Muchhal's enchanting performance captivated the audience, creating a vibrant and unforgettable experience that energized the campus. Chancellor Gupta highlighted the importance of

cultural events in fostering student growth, stating, "Sanskriti University remains committed to organizing programs that nurture creativity and offer a platform for artistic expression beyond academics." CEO Dr. Sharma echoed

this, expressing joy at the overwhelming student response and reaffirming the university's focus on balanced learning and cultural engagement. Spark 2025 reinforced

Sanskriti University's mission to build a dynamic educational ecosystem. By blending academics with enriching cultural experiences, the university continues to position itself as a progressive institution preparing students not just for careers, but for life. The event marks a significant success in the university's annual calendar.

## Samsung profits climb as chips are stockpiled before tariffs

**New Delhi:** Samsung Electronics has posted stronger-than-expected quarterly profits as customers rushed to secure chips and smartphones ahead of impending US tariffs and export restrictions, according to a report by The Financial Times on Tuesday.

The South Korean tech giant projected an operating profit of 6.6 trillion South Korean won or KRW (\$4.5 billion) for the first quarter of 2025, surpassing analysts' expectations of 5.2 trillion KRW, the report said. Sales are estimated to have increased by 10 per cent year-on-year. The



company's stock rose 2.1 per cent in early trading, though it lagged behind local competitor SK Hynix, which saw its shares climb nearly 4 per cent.

Concerns over new US trade policies under President Donald Trump have spurred demand for semiconductors, particularly memory chips and AI-related components.



## GCPL unveils HIT Mosquito Aerosol with thunderbolt technology, strengthens HI market presence

**Guwahati:** Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL) has reinforced its leadership in the ₹7,500+ crore household insecticide (HI) market with the launch of Kala HIT mosquito aerosol featuring Thunderbolt Technology. This latest innovation follows the success of Goodknight Agarbatti and Renofluthrin, India's first patented mosquito control molecule, introduced in 2024. The re-engineered Kala HIT aerosol now comes with Metofluthrin (MFT), delivering 4X faster efficacy, ensuring instant mosquito elimination with



less aerosol usage. The advanced formulation en-

hances cost-effectiveness, allowing consumers to use less spray for longer-lasting protection. As part of the launch, HIT is offering an introductory discount, pricing the 400ml can at ₹180 and the 625ml can at ₹250. The product also features a new fragrance and refreshed packaging. Guwahati, a key region for household insecticides, sees consistent demand for high-performance mosquito repellents, especially during the monsoon. With rising health concerns over Dengue and Malaria, retailers anticipate strong

consumer interest in HIT's latest offering, given its improved efficiency and affordability. Shilpa Suresh, Head of Marketing – Home Care, GCPL, stated, "Mosquito aerosols are a major revenue driver for HIT. With Thunderbolt Technology, we are delivering our most powerful solution to date, meeting the growing need for quick and effective mosquito control." GCPL continues to expand the HI market, leveraging cutting-edge technology to offer safer and more effective solutions for Indian households.

## Tata Motors' Q4 global wholesales dip 3%; JLR mixed trends persist



**Mumbai:** Tata Motors Group reported a 3 per cent year-on-year decline in global wholesales for the fourth quarter of FY25, with total volumes at 3,66,177 units, including its luxury arm Jaguar Land Rover (JLR). The drop was driven by a slowdown in both commercial and passenger vehicle segments, according to a company statement released on Tuesday.

Wholesales of Tata Motors' commercial vehicles, including Tata Daewoo (wholly owned South Korean subsidiary), stood at 1,07,765 units in Q4 FY25, down 3 per cent compared to the same period last year. Passenger vehicle wholesales, which include electric vehicles, also fell 6 per cent year-on-year to 1,46,999 units globally.

However, Jaguar Land Rover provided a contrasting picture, register-

ing a marginal 1 per cent increase in global wholesales to 1,11,413 vehicles in Q4 FY25. Within JLR, Land Rover performed strongly with wholesales of 1,04,343 units, while Jaguar wholesales stood at 7,070 units for the quarter. These JLR figures do not include volumes from CJLR, the joint venture between JLR and Chery Automobiles in China. However, the company's retail performance painted a different picture. Retail sales dropped 5.1 per cent in Q4 to 1,08,232 units, despite the slight uptick in wholesales.

JLR's wholesale volumes in North America saw a significant 14.4 per cent jump in the fourth quarter, with Chinese wholesale volumes falling by 29.4 per cent, Europe by 10.9 per cent, and the United Kingdom remaining flat at 0.8 per cent.

## MSDE showcases 15 startups at Startup Mahakumbh 2025, drive grassroots innovation

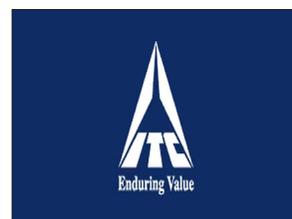
**Guwahati:** The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) is set to highlight 15 home-grown startups at Startup Mahakumbh 2025, India's largest startup and investor summit, from April 3-5 at Bharat Mandapam, Through the Skill India Pavilion (Hall 4), these ventures—nurtured under the National Institute for Entrepreneurship and

Small Business Development (NIESBUD)—will gain national exposure and access to funding opportunities. Among the showcased ventures are Field-X Robotics, specializing in agricultural automation; Dhanna Food Products from with a ₹1 crore turnover; and Geeta Herbal Products, a women-led enterprise.

In Guwahati, the event

presents a significant opportunity for startups particularly in organic farming, sustainable textiles, and tourism, to engage with national and global investors. With over 3,000 startups, 1,000+ investors, and delegations from 50+ countries, Startup Mahakumbh 2025 is poised to be a catalyst for India's inclusive and innovation-driven growth.

## ITC rebounds 6%; analysts stay optimistic



**New Delhi:** Shares of ITC Limited moved higher to ₹ 415, up 2 per cent on the BSE in Tuesday's intra-day trade. The stock has bounced back 6 per cent from its Monday's intra-day low of ₹ 392 on the BSE. In the past one week, ITC stock has outperformed the market by gaining 2 per cent, as compared to 1.7 per cent decline in the BSE Sensex.

ITC is a diversified consumption play with presence in businesses such as cigarettes, fast moving consumer goods (FMCG), agri and paperboard, paper & packaging (PPP) in India. Its strategy tilts towards utilising funds generated from its cash cow cigarette business in improving the growth of FMCG and other businesses.

On March 31, 2025, ITC signed a Business Transfer Agreement to acquire the pulp and paper undertaking of Aditya Birla Real Estate Limited. ITC's paperboards & specialty papers business is a reputable player in the industry offering a wide range of products manufactured at its four world-class facilities with an annual throughput of over 1 million MT.

## Market rebound adds Rs 7.32 lakh crore to investors' wealth

*Ending a t3 slide, BSE Sensex rises 1,089.18 points to close at 74,227.08*

**Mumbai:** Investors' wealth swelled by Rs 7.32 lakh crore on Tuesday as equity markets staged a strong comeback after crumbling in the previous trade.

Snapping its three-day decline, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,089.18 points or 1.49 per cent to settle at 74,227.08. During the day, it climbed 1,721.49 points or 2.35 per cent to 74,859.39.

Thanks to the positive trend in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms surged Rs 7,32,042.69 crore to Rs 3,96,57,703.44 crore (USD 4.62 trillion).

"Markets opened sharply higher following gains in Asia in the morning after another highly volatile overnight session in the US. Af-



ter a brutal sell-off, markets are staging a cautious relief rally on hopes for positive news, in terms of concessions, ahead of deadline for reciprocal tariffs. On the domestic front, we saw strong DII (Domestic Institutional Investors) buying cushioning the market fall yesterday," Satish Chandra Aluri,

Analyst at Lemonn Markets Desk, said.

On Monday, the market cap of BSE-listed firms declined sharply by Rs 14,09,225.71 crore to Rs 3,89,25,660.75 crore (USD 4.54 trillion) in a single day amid a global market meltdown due to recession fears.



## Vishal Dadlani quits 'Indian Idol' after six seasons, cites time constraints

Singer Vishal Dadlani said he is leaving reality show "Indian Idol" after being a judge on it for six years.

Dadlani shared a video on his Instagram handle featuring him alongside his colleagues and judges, Shreya Ghoshal and Badshah. "That's all from me, folks! Six straight seasons later, tonight is my last episode as a judge on Indian Idol. I hope the show will miss me as much as I'll miss it. Thanks Shreya, Badshah, Adi, Aradhana, Chitra, Anand ji, Sonal, Pratibha, Sahil, Saloni, Muskaan, Abisha, the entire production crew, Vilas, Pakya, Kaushik (Pinky), and all the co-judges, singers and musicians down the years! It really has been home!! That stage is pure love," the 51-year-old singer wrote in the video. "Time to get back to making music, playing concerts and



never putting on make-up. Jai Ho," he added.

Known for tracks like "Ik Junoon", "Jhoom Jo Pathaan", "Selfie Le Le Re", "Dhoom Again" and "Balam Pichkari", Dadlani said he can't stay "stuck in Mumbai" for 6 months every year. "Alvida, yaaro. 6 seasons mein jitna mazaa

kiya, uss se bhi zyada yaad aayegi. @shreyaghoshal @badboyshah @adityanarayanofficial #IndianIdol @fremantleindia @sonytvofficial @aradhanabhola @chitralangeh Haq se zyada pyaar milaa hai, iss show ki wajah se. Eternally grateful to everyone involved. I hope the show

will miss me as much as I'll miss it I'm literally only leaving because I want my time back. Can't stay stuck in Mumbai for 6 months each year,"

Dadlani first joined "Indian Idol" as a judge in 2018 and became a beloved figure on the show, known for his candid remarks and strong rapport with contestants. As the curtain falls on his journey with "Indian Idol," Dadlani looks forward to embarking on new musical endeavors and continuing to inspire audiences with his talent and passion.

On his Instagram Stories, Vishal had shared one of the pictures posted by Sonu. He wrote, "You guys pulled off a genuine miracle in the toughest of times! Proud to have been part of the Greatest Season Ever."

Vishal Dadlani had been an Indian Idol judge from season 10 to season 12.

## Tahira Kashyap opens up about breast cancer relapse

Filmmaker Tahira Kashyap, known for her directorial debut *Sharmajee Ki Beti*, has revealed that her breast cancer has relapsed after seven years. Taking to Instagram, Tahira shared a heartfelt note reflecting her determination to fight cancer once again.

In her post, Tahira wrote, "Seven year itch or the power of regular screening—it's a perspective, I'd like to go with the latter and suggest the same for everyone who needs to get regular mammograms. Round 2 for me... I still got this."

She added, "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade. When life becomes too generous and throws them again at you, you squeeze them calmly into your favourite kala khatta drink and sip it with all the good intentions. Because, for one, it's a better drink, and, two, you know



you will give it your best once again." Tahira concluded her note writing, "#regularscreening #mammogram not shying away from saying it #breastcancer #onemoretime #lets-go. Ironically or not, today is #WorldHealthDay. Let's do whatever we can in our capacity to take care of ourselves. #gratitude through and through." Tahira Kashyap was first diagnosed with breast cancer in 2018.

## Randeep Hooda reveals Sunny Deol's off-screen persona



In the lead-up to the release of their upcoming action-packed film "Jaat," actor Randeep Hooda has shared insights into Sunny Deol's off-screen persona, revealing a stark contrast to the actor's powerful on-screen image. During a recent promotional event, Hooda described Deol as "very easy going and soft-spoken" in real life, a revelation that surprised many familiar with Deol's intense cinematic presence. "He is nothing like he looks on screen," Hooda stated, adding a touch of humor by saying, "but when he faces the camera, 'inme mata aajati hai'." Hooda also shared anec-

does from his own admiration for Deol, recalling how he and his friends would put up Sunny Deol posters, and build their muscles, trying to emulate the star. This revelation comes amidst the buzz surrounding "Jaat," where Deol returns to his signature action hero role, and Hooda plays a very formidable villain. The film, directed by Gopichand Malineni, promises a high-octane clash between the two actors. The actors comments have created much media interest, with fans now even more interested in the upcoming film. The film is set to release on April 10th.

## Sunita Ahuja dismisses divorce rumours: 'People are dogs, they'll bark'

Govinda's wife Sunita Ahuja reacted to the divorce rumours, advising fans not to believe anything unless it comes from them.

In February, reports surfaced that Govinda and Sunita Ahuja had filed for divorce after 38 years of marriage. Govinda's lawyer, Lalit Bindal, confirmed that Sunita did file for divorce, but added that the couple were now back together.

Addressing the criticism levelled at their relationship, Sunita said, "Positive hai ya negative hai. Positive hai mujhe pata hai. Mai sochti hu kuttey hai log bhaukenge" (Whether it's positive or negative... I know it's positive. I think people are like dogs — they will bark).

Sunita expressed her appreciation for the love she shares with her husband and two children, despite the rumours. "Jab tak aap mere ya Govinda ke muh se kuch na sun lo toh aap yeh mat socho kya hai kya nahi hai" (Until you hear



it from my mouth or Govinda's, don't believe anything), she remarked.

Govinda's lawyer had previously admitted in an interview with India Today in February that Sunita did file for divorce six months ago, but things were later resolved. He added, "We also travelled to Nepal during the New Year and performed puja together at Pashupatinath Mandir. Everything is fine between them now. These things happen between couples, but they are going strong and will always be together." Govinda and Sunita Ahuja tied the knot in 1987, even before Govinda rose to stardom in Bol-

lywood. The couple kept their marriage a secret and only went public after welcoming their daughter, Tina Ahuja, the following year. They also have a son, Yashvardhan, who was born in 1997.

Govinda's son is now all set to make his Bollywood debut. He will be seen in a romantic drama directed by National Award-winning filmmaker Sai Rajesh, known for Telugu films like *Colour Photo*, *Hrudaya Kaleyam*, and *Baby*. The yet-to-be-titled film is being backed by Madhu Mantena, Allu Aravind, and SKN Films, and is set to hit cinemas later this year. During a conversation with

Hauterrfly, Sunita spoke about varied topics, from her bond with Govinda to going through ups and downs in the relationship.

Sunita said, "I still don't feel like we are husband and wife. I still address him as 'Abbe' and he also addresses me the same way. That's how we talk to each other. Gali-galoch is a part of our conversation... I sometimes ask him 'are you my husband? I still can't believe you are my husband.'"

Sunita also shared her views on men cheating on their wives, mentioning, "I would like to fold my hands and tell women that your partner is innocent (doesn't cheat). If he does it, it will become so bad and no matter how hard you try to get rid of her, she won't leave him for years. Even if you leave him, that woman won't." In 1990, Govinda revealed he ended his engagement with Sunita intending to marry Neelam, but reconciled after Sunita reached out days later.

# CONQUERING MI'S CITADEL

## RCB edge Mumbai in thriller, snap Wankhede losing streak

**Mumbai:** Royal Challengers Bengaluru survived a massive scare from a doughty Mumbai Indians to end their six-match winless streak at the Wankhede Stadium with a 12-run victory in the Indian Premier League on Monday.

Set a daunting target of 222, Mumbai Indians staged a stunning late recovery to turn the tables on their opponents but the task proved too difficult in the end for the hosts, who had not lost a game here against RCB since 2015.

Mumbai Indians were reeling at 99/4 with their pursuit falling apart with the dismissal of Suryakumar Yadav (28), but skipper Hardik Pandya (42 off 15 balls) and Tilak Varma (56 off 29 balls) launched a stunning onslaught to bring them back into the contest.

Hardik went hammer and tongs while hitting three fours and four sixes, while Tilak also fought his way back into form, but the target proved far too much for Mumbai Indians who were again ordinary with the bat for a large part in their chase. Rohit Sharma (17) was cleaned up by Yash Dayal (2/46) while swing-



ing across an in-swinging delivery and MI's best batter Suryakumar struggled during his 26-ball knock.

On the other hand, Tilak brought up his maiden fifty of the season off 26 balls to make a comeback after being retired out in the last

game. The fortunes swung when Hardik clobbered two sixes and as many fours off his first four balls off Krunal Pandya in the 14th over. Before Hardik cut loose, Tilak had raced to 30 off 15 balls to keep MI's faint hopes

alive, which kept improving with every hit that the batters unleashed. The asking rate had zoomed past 15 an over but MI kept clearing the ropes to remain in the hunt. But Tilak fell in the 18th over from Bhuvneshwar Kumar (1/48) and Hardik in the penultimate over from Josh Hazlewood (2/37). In the final over, MI needed 19 runs to win but Krunal (4/45) took three wickets to shut the doors on them.

Earlier, RCB rode on scintillating fifties from Virat Kohli and skipper Rajat Patidar to post 221/5. Kohli ruled the roost with a 42-ball 67 which gave RCB early impetus in Jasprit Bumrah's (0/29) comeback game. Later on, Patidar's 32-ball 64 and Jitesh Sharma's 19-ball 40 ensured RCB ended on a blazing note.

Phil Salt (4) played across the line to an in-swinging Trent Boult (2/57). Unfazed by the early blow, RCB recorded their highest powerplay score against Mumbai Indians by scoring 72/1, as both Kohli and Devdutt Padikkal (37 off 22 balls) went all guns blazing.

## Dream sports football 2025 finals kicks off!



**Panaji:** The Dream Sports Championship Football 2025 National Finals is scheduled to kick off in Goa on April 8. The boys' National Finals will feature eight teams, divided into two groups, battling out for the ultimate glory, and the girls' National Finals--taking place for the first time--will also feature eight teams fighting for the trophy.

The group matches will take place at the SAG Benaulim Football Ground and Utorda Sports Complex, with the grand finale scheduled for the Raia Football Ground on April 15, as per the Dream Sports Foundation (DSF) press release.

In the boys' category, teams are divided into two groups:

Group A: Reliance Foundation Young Champs (RYFC, Mumbai), Chen-

naiyin C (CFC, Bengaluru), Demp Sports Club (DSC, Goa), Mohun Bagan Super Giant (MBSG, Kolkata)

Group B: Punjab FC (PFC, Delhi), Norwich City FC (NCFC, International Invitee), Football 4 Change (F4C, Guwahati), SESA FA (SESA, Goa)

Day 1 of the boys' competition will take place between Reliance Foundation Young Champs and Mohun Bagan Super Giant at Benaulim, while Chennaiyin FC take on Dempo SC at Utorda in the morning matches. In the evening, Punjab FC face off against SESA FA at Benaulim, while Norwich City FC and Football 4 Change take the field in Utorda.

In the girls' category, eight state teams nominated by the All India Football Federation (AIFF) will compete for the prize.

## Arsenal ready to challenge Madrid with all-out attack



**London:** Arsenal have not made it past the Champions League semifinals since 2009, but manager Mikel Arteta wants his side to write their own history when they host Real Madrid for the first leg of their quarterfinal at the Emirates on Tuesday.

Madrid, the record 15-time European champions, have won six Champions League titles since 2009 while Arsenal continue their hunt for a

first crown. Arteta, whose team last year bowed out of the competition after a quarterfinal loss to German side Bayern Munich, urged his side to back themselves.

"It's a club (Madrid) that has set new standards in world football. This is where we want to be, where we want to belong," Arteta said. "It's part of their history. We have to write our own history. We have to focus on our thing.

## Djokovic inspired after Miami run

**Miami:** Novak Djokovic said reaching his first final of the 2025 season at the Miami Open helped him find the motivation to continue his quest for more titles as the 37-year-old looks to win his 100th ATP trophy during the clay season. The 24-time Grand Slam champion has not won a title on the men's tour since his ATP Finals triumph during an extraordinary 2023 although he bagged the Olympics gold medal during the Paris Games at Roland Garros last year.

Despite falling short in his bid to join Connors (109) and Federer (103) in the exclusive 100+ ATP titles club after a loss to Mensik last week, Djokovic remains driven by his performance level in Miami.

## Dhoni's role challenges CSK balance in tough Punjab test

**Mullanpur:** The phrase highlights the challenges Chennai Super Kings (CSK) face due to MS Dhoni's current form and role in the team as they prepare to face Punjab Kings in the IPL. Dhoni, once a powerhouse in the death overs, is now struggling to deliver the same impact. His declining performance, especially in finishing games, has raised concerns about the team's balance and strategy.

CSK has had a tough start to the season, with three consecutive losses, and Dhoni's presence in the lower order, which was once a strength, is now seen as a potential weakness. The team is grappling with combination issues, and Dhoni's aura and legacy make it difficult for any-



one in the team to address these concerns directly.

The upcoming match against Punjab Kings is crucial, as CSK needs to resolve these challenges to improve their performance. Punjab Kings, on the other hand, appear stronger on paper and in form, adding to the pressure on CSK. Dhoni's presence at the back-end, which once was

considered a boon, is turning out into a bane for the 'Yellow Brigade'.

In the recent match against Delhi Capitals, Dhoni managed just 30 runs from 26 balls, as CSK suffered a heavy 50-run defeat. In one of their worst starts to an IPL season, CSK have now completed a hat-trick of defeats, all while chasing.

