



Robert Vadra faces ED in land case



New Delhi: Robert Vadra, businessman and brother-in-law of Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, on Tuesday appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) here after he was summoned by the federal probe agency in a Haryana land deal-linked money laundering case.

Vadra, 56, was first summoned in this case on April 8 but he did not depose. As a result, the agency issued a second notice on Tuesday. "He (Vadra) was asked to appear for questioning as the ED is looking into the alleged financial irregularities concerning his firm, Skylight Hospitality," official sources said.

The probe against Vadra, whose wife Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is the Congress MP from Kerala's Wayanad, pertains to a land deal of February 2008 where Vadra's company purchased a piece of 3.5-acre land in Shikohpur in Gurugram from a firm named Onkareshwar Properties at a price of Rs 7.5 crore.

Government drafts rules to ensure accurate gas meters

New Delhi: The Indian government has introduced draft rules under the Legal Metrology (General) Rules, 2011, aimed at ensuring accuracy and reliability in gas meters used for domestic, commercial, and industrial purposes. These rules mandate that all gas meters undergo testing, verification, and stamping before being deployed for trade or commerce. Additionally, periodic re-verification of meters in use is required to maintain their accuracy and reliability.

The primary objective of these rules is to protect consumers from overcharging, under-measurement, and disputes arising from faulty or manipulated devices. Verified and stamped gas meters will ensure fair

billing, improved energy efficiency, and reduced maintenance costs for consumers. The initiative also seeks to promote transparency, accountability, and standardization in gas measurement practices.

To align with international standards, the draft rules establish a compliance framework for manufacturers and gas distribution companies, adhering to the guidelines of the International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML). This move is expected to enhance India's credibility in global trade and encourage innovation and quality assurance in domestic manufacturing. The draft rules were developed through a consultative process involving the Indian Institute of Legal Metrology.

Kharge: Modi Govt pays Lip service to Ambedkar, BJP-RSS oppose his Ideals

Kharge accuses Modi of betrayal, citing Ambedkar's distrust of Savarkar

New Delhi: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday accused the Modi government of paying only "lip service" to B R Ambedkar's legacy but doing nothing to fulfil his wishes, and claimed the BJP-RSS were "enemies" of the architect of the Constitution.

Hitting out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his criticism of the Congress' treatment of Ambedkar, Kharge cited a letter by Ambedkar in which he blamed S A Dange and V D Savarkar for his defeat in the elections of 1952.

Speaking to reporters on the occasion of Ambedkar's birth anniversary, Kharge stressed the need for a nationwide caste census as well as implementation of



reservation for SCs, STs and OBCs in private educational institutions.

He said the Constitution is a gift from Ambedkar to citizens as it gives them the right of social, economic and political justice.

"In the AICC session, we have taken this forward. We forwarded the ideas of social justice in the AICC

session," he said. Kharge said the Congress wants to forward five issues that it is striving for and asserted that a nationwide caste census is necessary.

"The Centre is making policies on the basis of the 2011 census and nothing is known about the 2021 census that was supposed to happen.

Shiv Sena (UBT): Congress must address I.N.D.I.A. bloc status

The Shiv sena UBT has made it clear that they believe that the focus should be on defeating the BJP

Mumbai: The Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) has publicly called on the Congress party to provide clear answers regarding the current status and future direction of the I.N.D.I.A. (Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance) opposition bloc. The criticism was voiced through an editorial in the Shiv Sena (UBT)'s mouthpiece, "Saamana," which



expressed concerns over the Congress party's recent meeting in Ahmedabad.

According to the editorial, the Congress focused primarily on its internal mat-

ters during the Ahmedabad session, failing to address the pressing questions surrounding the I.N.D.I.A. bloc's cohesion and strategy. The Shiv Sena (UBT) has raised concerns around the question of the I.N.D.I.A. blocs future, and has asked "What happened to the alliance? Did it get buried in the ground or vanish into thin air?" Said Uddhav Thackeray

Quick bites

CDS Chauhan urges defence reforms

New Delhi: Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan emphasizes rapid adaptation as Ministry of Defence declares 2025 the year of reform.

RLJP quits NDA

Patna: The RLJP (Rashtriya Lok Janshakti Party) has decided to leave the NDA (National Democratic Alliance) coalition in Bihar, which is significant given the upcoming elections.

Mehul Choksi detained

New Delhi: Indian fugitive businessman Mehul Choksi has reportedly been arrested in Belgium, marking a significant development in India's pursuit of his extradition.

Nadda starts BJP camp in Puri

Puri: BJP National President J.P. Nadda inaugurated a significant three-day training camp for the party's Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and Members of Parliament (MPs) in Puri, Odisha.

Supreme Court sets 3-month timeline for President's decision on reserved Bills

The SC affirmed judicial review of the President's actions in such cases

New Delhi: In a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court of India has established a three-month timeline for the President to make decisions on bills reserved for their consideration by state governors. This decision marks a significant step towards clarifying and streamlining the process of presidential assent to state legislation. The Supreme court has determined that there is a need for a time limit, where there has been no clear time limit within the constitution. The ruling addresses concerns regarding delays



in the presidential assent process, which have often led to friction between the central government and state governments. The court's decision emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balanced and efficient federal structure.

Specifically the courts have stated that, "the President is required to take a decision on the Bills reserved for his consideration by the Governor within a period of three months from the date on which such reference is received."

Ayodhya Ram temple gets security threat; probe on

Lucknow: The Ram Temple Trust in Ayodhya received a threatening email warning of a security risk to the temple. The email, written in English, was traced to an individual from Tamil Nadu and was received during the night between Sunday and Monday. This alarming development has prompted the Uttar Pradesh police to launch a thorough investigation into the matter.

The police are actively working to assess the credibility of the threat and identify the sender. While the exact content of the email has not been disclosed, its

origin and language have been confirmed. Authorities are likely collaborating with cyber experts to trace the source and understand the motive behind the warning. The investigation is expected to involve coordination with various agencies to ensure the safety of the temple and its visitors.

Given the cultural and religious significance of the Ram Temple, security measures around the site have likely been heightened. The temple, which attracts millions of visitors annually, is a symbol of immense importance.



Aizawl to host Mizoram's first int'l half marathon on April 26

Aizawl: Mizoram will host its first international half marathon on April 26 in Aizawl, with participation expected from athletes across India and abroad. The Aizawl International Half Marathon (AIHM) aims to promote sports in the region and provide a platform

for emerging talent. The event is being jointly organised by the Government of Mizoram and Innovations India, and is accredited by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI). It is supported by the Sports Authority of India (SAI), Northeast Frontier Railway, Mizoram Ath-

letics Association, various government departments, public sector undertakings, and corporate sponsors. State Sports and Youth Services Minister Lainghlova Hmar said the marathon is part of ongoing efforts to encourage youth participation in sports.

SJVN pays Rs 269.98 cr for Etalin land in AP

SJVN acquires Etalin, 4 hydro projects of 5,097 MW

Itanagar: In a major milestone for hydro-power development in Arunachal Pradesh, Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) Limited has released an amount of Rs 269.98 crore as land compensation for the 3,097 mw Etalin hydro-electric project (HEP) in Dibang Valley. The amount was deposited into the joint account of the

deputy commissioner and district land revenue and settlement officer (DLRSO) of the district on March 26 this year.

The key development was confirmed during a review meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pema Khan-du on Thursday in Tawang in presence of Deputy Chief Minister Chowna

Mein, chief secretary Manish Gupta, power commissioner Sonam Chombay, among others, an official communiqué informed here on Friday.

The compensation cheque was formally handed over by Etalin hydro HEO project head Shiraj Swan to Dibang Valley deputy commissioner Pagli Sora.

7 Bangladeshis nabbed at border



Agartala: A major breach in national security has surfaced after seven Bangladeshi nationals were arrested last night for infiltrating India by crossing the star fencing at the Amjad Nagar area near Belonia. This alarming incident has cast serious doubts over the vigilance of the border guards, as the illegal crossing took place despite the presence of three active Border Out Posts (BOPs) at Amjad Nagar, Sarasima and Belonia in South Tripura district.

Acting on a secret tip-off, a team led by IPS officer Hrishabh, Sub-Divisional Police Officer of Belonia and Officer-in-Charge of Belonia police station Shibu Ranjan Dey intercepted a white Maruti at naka check point.

Over 100 dead as severe storms devastate eastern, northern India

Guwahati: A spate of severe weather, including lightning, hailstorms, and heavy rains, has ravaged eastern and northern India, destroying in its wake.



Bihar was the most brutal hit, followed by Uttar Pradesh, with Jharkhand recording injuries and heavy crop damage as officials in all three states remain on high alert.

In Bihar, the fatality count increased dramatically to 80, which is the worst-af-

affected area in this weather disaster. Lightning and hailstorms lashed some districts, wreaking havoc on a large scale.

State Disaster Management Minister Vijay Mandal corroborated the appalling toll, as Chief Minister Nitish

Kumar ordered an ex gratia relief of Rs 4 lakh for the kin of those who were killed.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an 'orange alert' for several districts in Bihar, including Darbhanga, Nalanda, and Patna. All these regions are likely to keep getting heavy showers until Friday and Saturday. Patna received 42.6 mm of rain till Thursday evening, making roads waterlogged and normal life disrupted.

Nagaland leads in national Aadhaar updates for kids

Kohima: Nagaland has achieved a significant milestone by ranking first in mandatory biometric updates (MBU) for children during the Aadhaar Samvaad event held in New Delhi on April 8, 2025

This recognition highlights the state's efforts in ensuring Aadhaar biometric updates for children, which are crucial for accessing various social welfare schemes and services. The Commissioner of Na-

galand, along with Deputy Commissioners, spearheaded intensive enrollment drives across districts, leading to this accomplishment. The initiative reflects the state's commitment to leveraging Aadhaar for inclusive development and better service delivery.

KS Anden Konyak, Aadhaar Registrar for Nagaland, thanked Deputy Commissioners for their dedicated efforts in achieving this milestone.

Tripura set for IPL debut in 2026 as stadium completes

Agartala: The under-construction international cricket stadium at Narsingharh in Agartala is expected to host its first Indian Premier League (IPL) match in 2026, following the completion of ongoing construction work.



Tapan Lodh, President of the Tripura Cricket Association (TCA), confirmed that the stadium's development is on track to be completed by next year. "We are hope-

ful that a real IPL match will take place by next year.

Initially, progress was slow, but work has since

accelerated. Once all rules and requirements are fulfilled, we expect to host matches shortly after com-

pletion," Lodh stated.

Construction of the stadium began in 2017 but faced significant delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019-2020. When completed, the facility will become the second-largest cricket stadium in North-east India, after Guwahati, with a seating capacity of 25,000. Operated by the TCA, the stadium will host Tripura state and Indian national teams.

Manipur forces seize arms, ammo



Imphal: In a major crackdown on insurgent activities, a joint team of Manipur Police and Central security forces arrested five active militants belonging to various valley-based proscribed outfits during multiple operations conducted across Imphal East, Imphal West, and Bishnupur districts on Friday.

According to police reports, an active member of the proscribed Kangleipak Communist Party (PWG), identified as Md. Ashadon alias Talip alias Laingam (22) of Urup Awang Leikai, Imphal East, was arrested from his locality. Another member of the same group, Mangsidam Wanglen Singh alias Thouna (22), was apprehended from Lei Inghol Maning Leikai in Imphal West. He was directly involved in extortion activities, including serving monetary demand letters to shops around Paomei Colony.

Assam remains peaceful amid waqf amendment act protests, says CM

Guwahati: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma confirmed on Saturday that the state remained peaceful despite minor protests against the Waqf (Amendment) Act. He credited the Assam Police for their effective management in maintaining order, while emphasizing the state's unity as it prepares for the Bohag Bihu festival.



In a post on X, Sarma highlighted that despite Assam's Muslim population comprising nearly 40%, the state experienced only isolated protests at three locations, each with fewer than

150 participants. The Chief Minister praised the Assam Police for their preparedness and efforts in preventing larger disturbances. "People across Assam, regardless of their caste, creed, or religion, are united in spirit as

they prepare to celebrate Bohag Bihu with joy and harmony," he added.

The Rongali Bihu festival, marking the Assamese New Year, is set to be celebrated across Assam with great enthusiasm, especially in Guwahati.

Meghalaya Dy CM dismisses foul play in tourist's death

Shillong: Deputy Chief Minister in charge of Home (Police) Prestone Tynsong on Friday ruled out any foul play in the death of the Hungarian tourist who was found dead near Sohra nearly two weeks after he went missing.



He said, "From in fact time to time we used to request the tourists, coming down to Meghalaya, not only the Sohra side but anywhere they go because see the river here in Meghalaya is very very challenging. You cannot treat the water in the plain belt and the hilly area (same) it's totally different, so therefore we re-

quest them to be very careful while swimming or even touring to the river bank."

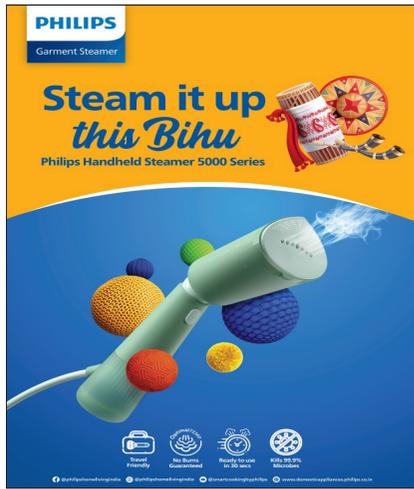
The body of the missing tourist, Puskas Zsolt, was recovered on Thursday afternoon at around 1:30 pm at Ramdait village along the route to Tyna in Shella under the Sohra Civil Sub-Division, concluding a prolonged and intense search operation. Zsolt had been missing since March 29, 2025.



Philips unveils 'Steam It Up' campaign featuring regional icons to enhance festive sales in NE India

Shillong: Philips has announced the launch of its festive 'Steam It Up' campaign across Northeast India, featuring celebrated regional icons Aimee Baruah, Nishita Goswami, and Barsharani Bishaya. The campaign highlights the Philips STH5000 Handheld Steamer as the go-to solution for effortless festive styling during Bihu.

Designed to cater to traditional and contemporary wardrobes alike, the Philips STH5000 heats up in just



30 seconds and delivers 24g/min of continuous steam. It is safe for delicate fabrics and ideal for maintaining the elegance of Meukhela Chadors, silk kurtas, and modern party wear. As part of the campaign rollout, Nishita Goswami visited key retail partners—Electricity

and Maitree—to demonstrate the product's effectiveness in real-time.

Pooja Baid, Chief Marketing Officer, Versuni India, stated, "Bihu is a celebration of tradition, grace, and personal style. With the Philips STH5000, consumers can step into every gathering looking their best with ease and confidence." The Philips STH5000 is now available in major retail outlets and online with special Bihu offers.

JK Tyre's racing festival brings speed and excitement to North-East consumers

New Delhi: JK Tyre & Industries Ltd., a trusted name in the Indian tyre market, is bringing motorsport excitement to consumers across the North-East with the "JK Tyre powered Indian Racing Festival – a carnival of Total Control." The high-adrenaline tour, scheduled from April 12 to 22, will rev up the streets of Kohima, Aizawl, Shillong, Guwahati, and Gangtok with thrilling racing showcases and stunt performances.



The event features a mix of electrifying experiences—international Formula 4 and Wolf cars, drifting in high-performance Lexus and BMW cars, gravity-defying superbike stunts, and

junior karting sensations—all running on JK Tyre's Levitas Ultra range. For consumers, it's not just a spectacle but a demonstration of the brand's commitment to performance, safety, and innovation.

Bajaj Allianz Life unveils 'Superwoman Term' Plan targeting women's holistic protection

Guwahati: Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance has launched Superwoman Term (SWT), a comprehensive term insurance solution exclusively designed for women. Aimed at addressing women's evolving financial and health needs, the plan offers a unique blend of life cover, critical illness protection, childcare benefits, and free health management services worth up to ₹36,500 per annum.

The SWT plan provides coverage against 60 critical illnesses, including women-specific conditions such as breast, cervix, and ovarian cancers. It



also includes an optional child care benefit—offering monthly income to ensure a child's education in the event of the policyholder's demise. In addition, health management services cover annual check-ups, OPD consultations, emotional wellness, and pregnancy-related support. Tarun Chugh, MD & CEO, said, "This solution empowers women with financial confidence while supporting their health and

family goals." In Guwahati, the SWT plan is expected to find strong traction among urban working women and young mothers increasingly seeking holistic financial tools. As awareness around women's health and financial independence grows in the city, SWT's integrated benefits are well-positioned to meet the aspirations of this emerging segment. Bajaj Allianz Life continues to strengthen its portfolio with dedicated plans for salaried, self-employed, and diabetic individuals, backed by a 99.23% claim settlement ratio and 432% solvency ratio.

Rupee jumps 33 paise to 85.77



Mumbai: Rising for the second straight session, the rupee jumped 33 paise to end at 85.77 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday due to a sharp rise in equity markets and continuing weakness in the American currency amid global uncertainties.

Besides, lower global crude prices, favourable domestic inflation numbers and the US administration's latest move to suspend the additional 26 per cent tariffs on India till July 9 also supported the local currency, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 85.85, the day's lowest level, and touched the intra-day peak of 85.59 against the greenback.

Sunrise Spices drives festive consumption surge in Assam with 'Smritir Rongali' initiative

Guwahati: ITC's Sunrise Spices has rolled out its culturally anchored campaign Smritir Rongali to stimulate consumer engagement and regional demand during Rongali Bihu, one of Assam's most significant festivals. From April 14 to 17, the campaign will activate across four major Guwahati locations—Latashil, Chandmari, Khanapara, and Geetanagar—fusing tradition with experiential and tech-enabled marketing.

The campaign's economic significance lies in its multi-pronged strategy: immersive Bihu village set-ups with bamboo huts and

folk music, mobile canters spreading cheer across neighbourhoods, and cultural performances that drive foot traffic. The introduction of an AI-powered selfie filter enables digital participation, broadening market penetration across geographies.

By blending community celebrations with strategic brand presence, Sunrise Spices not only reinforces cultural identity but also drives seasonal consumption patterns, contributing to regional economic activity and strengthening its foothold in Assam's Tier-II and Tier-III markets.

JK Tyre flags off Indian Racing Festival in Kohima, boosts local economy and motorsport culture

Kohima: JK Tyre & Industries Ltd, in partnership with the Nagaland Adventure & Motor Sports Association (NAMSA), kicked off its Indian Racing Festival in Kohima, bringing world-class motorsport to the North-East for the first time. Held at the 4th NAP Battalion Ground in Thizama, the event also launched NAMSA's year-long celebration of 25 years in promoting adventure and motorsport in the region.



The event featured India's premier motorsport talent across generations, from 9-year-old karting prodigies to renowned racing and rally champions. High-performance displays included international Formula 4 and Wolf cars, drifting showcases with Lexus and BMWs, and gravity-defying stunts by Superbikes—all powered by JK Tyre's Levitas Ultra range.

Kohima experienced a notable boost, with local vendors, eateries, and service providers benefiting from increased footfall and tourist inflow. Traders noted a spike in weekend sales, while the buzz around the event added cultural and

commercial momentum to the city's growing urban appeal.

The spectacle opened with addresses by NAMSA's Tovi Chopi and JK Tyre's Hari Singh, followed by a live performance by the DGP Band. The festival now shifts to Aizawl on April 16, continuing its high-octane tour of the North-East.

Nissan India rolls out 'Hattrick Carnival' with festive offers worth Up to Rs 65,000

Guwahati: Nissan Motor India has launched the 'Hattrick Carnival', a nationwide campaign running from April 1 to 30, 2025, aimed at capitalizing on the festive spirit of Navratri and the ongoing cricket season. The campaign offers a hattrick of rewards, including total benefits of up to ₹55,000, additional carnival incentives of up to ₹10,000, and an assured gold coin with every purchase.

The company is supporting the campaign with a

robust 360-degree media strategy across digital platforms, print, outdoor advertising, and influencer engagement. To enhance customer interaction, all Nissan dealerships will host cricket-themed activations, creating a festive and sporty showroom experience.

Guwahati has shown a notable uptick in showroom visits, as the Hattrick Carnival aligns well with consumer sentiments during the festive and IPL season. Local dealers re-

port increased inquiries, particularly for the Nissan Magnite, which continues to gain popularity among SUV enthusiasts in Assam for its affordability and features.

Nissan closed FY2024-25 with a record performance—over 99,000 units sold domestically, driven by the Magnite's strong presence. Exports also soared, with 71,000+ units shipped to over 65 international markets, reinforcing India's role as a key export hub for the brand.



India Skills Accelerator launched; MSDE and WEF join forces to bridge future skill gaps

Guwahati: In a landmark move to address critical skill gaps and future-proof India's workforce, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), in collaboration with the World Economic Forum (WEF), launched the India Skills Accelerator during a high-level roundtable at Kaushal Bhawan, New Delhi.

Designed as a national public-private collaboration platform, the Accelerator aims to drive systemic reform by enhancing awareness of future skill needs, boosting cross-sectoral collaboration, and aligning policy frameworks with evolving market demands. With 65% of organisations citing skill gaps as a major barrier, the initiative will focus on inclusive upskilling, agile career transitions, and scalable training in high-growth sectors such as AI, robotics, and renewable energy.

The governance structure will be co-chaired by Union Ministers Shri Jayant Chaudhary and Dr. Sukanta Majumdar, alongside private sector leaders Ms. Shobana Kamineni and Mr. Sanjiv Bajaj. Shri Chaudhary called the Accelerator a "catalyst for systemic transformation," while Dr. Majumdar



stressed embedding global competitiveness into India's skilling architecture.

Dr. Sukanta Majumdar articulated India's strategic opportunity to position itself as the global epicenter of next-generation talent. He underscored the need to embed competitiveness in India's skills architecture—particularly in fields like artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and cloud computing—so that India is not only skilling for its domestic economy but for the world. The Accelerator, he added, will play a critical role in translating this global ambition into measurable outcomes. "Through the National Education Policy, we have initiated transformative changes—promoting flexibility, vocational pathways, and digital skilling. Our federal model of imple-

mentation, involving both Centre and States, can serve as a valuable learning for global platforms like the WEF as well," he said.

Saadia Zahidi, Managing Director, World Economic Forum (WEF), said, "In the face of rapid technological and labour market changes, India's launch of the Skills Accelerator reflects a strong commitment to equipping its workforce with the skills needed for the future. By strengthening alignment across the skills ecosystem, this initiative will help close critical skills gaps, support the growth of India's digital and innovation-driven economy, and enable more people to thrive in a rapidly evolving world of work. We are pleased to support this important step and look forward to the impact it will deliver at scale."

Adani Green Energy expands 30% in FY25

New Delhi: Adani Green Energy has reported a substantial 30% increase in its operational capacity for the financial year 2025, strengthening its position in India's renewable energy sector.

The company, a key player in sustainable energy solutions, has achieved this growth through continuous expansion in solar and wind power projects across the country. The increase in capacity aligns with India's ambitious clean energy targets, as the nation strives to transition towards greener power sources.

India, US to expand trade ties

New Delhi: India is gearing up to enhance trade liberalisation with the United States, aiming to bolster economic cooperation and ease regulatory barriers for businesses. The initiative aligns with India's broader strategy to strengthen global trade partnerships while fostering a more seamless exchange of goods and services.

Both nations aim to reduce tariffs and trade barriers, fostering investment and cross-border commerce. The move will boost key sectors like technology.

NSDC International delegates visit Germany



Guwahati: NSDC International has delegated a visit to Germany and held deliberation with various stakeholders about the strategic and cross-border skill partnerships to equip the global workforce with relevant, future-oriented capabilities in the context of rapidly evolving industry landscapes. The delegate also participated in the prestigious OAV Conference held in Hamburg, Germany, wherein 100 delegates from various countries, including India, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Malaysia, Indonesia, and others, participated to discuss the critical role of international cooperation in shaping a future-ready and globally competitive workforce. As part of a high-level panel discussion, NSDC International focussed on bridging the gap between industry requirements and

education providers across the globe, with a particular emphasis on Germany's leadership in international workforce development.

During his address, Shri Alok Kumar, CEO, NSDC International, mentioned, "As we navigate the complexities of global workforce demands, NSDC International is committed to fostering robust partnerships that bridge skill gaps and enhance employability worldwide." During the visit, the NSDC International delegation participated in two key roundtable conferences. The first, hosted by iMove, enabled impactful discussions with leading German language and cultural training providers. The visit reinforced the importance of hands-on training and institutional collaboration in workforce development.

Honda India Foundation holds Project Buniyaad's valedictory ceremony in Shillong



Shillong: Honda India Foundation (HIF), the CSR arm of Honda Group Companies in India, has held the valedictory ceremony of Project Buniyaad in Shillong, Meghalaya. The event was held at Don Bosco Technical School, Laitumkhrah, in the presence of Shri Ramkumar Sathurappan, IAS, Executive Director, Meghalaya State Skill Development Society, gracing the ceremony as a chief guest.

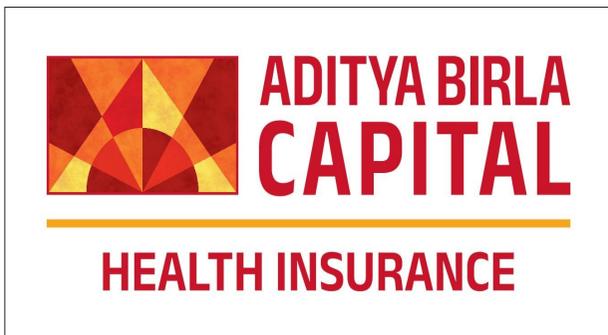
The ceremony marked the successful culmination of the training programme in Shillong, with 30 bene-

ficiaries receiving job letters, paving the way for meaningful employment opportunities. Commenced in December 2024 in the state of Meghalaya, the successful implementation of the project was made possible with the cooperation and valuable support of local government authorities, who helped ensure smooth execution and maximum impact. It is an important chapter in Honda India Foundation's ongoing efforts to promote self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods through industry-relevant skill development.

Aditya Birla Health Insurance rewards 1 lakh+ policyholders as HealthReturns™ drives 350 billion steps

Guwahati: On World Health Day, Aditya Birla Health Insurance Co. Ltd. (ABHICL) announced a significant milestone in its 'Health-First' journey, with over 1 lakh policyholders earning benefits through its pioneering HealthReturns™ model in FY 2024-25. Designed to promote healthier lifestyles, the model recorded more than 350 billion steps walked by users, reflecting a national shift towards preventive healthcare.

The HealthReturns™ initiative encourages policyholders to engage in



daily fitness activities such as 10,000 steps or burning 300 calories. Those who achieve 325 Active Dayz™ and maintain a Green Healthy Heart Score™ can earn up to 100% of their premium as rewards. In FY

25 alone, the company conducted 3.8 lakh health assessments, generated 18 lakh Wellbeing Scores™, and provided coaching to over 1 lakh users.

Guwahati' response to ABHICL's wellness-driven

policies has been encouraging, with rising awareness among urban and semi-urban policyholders. Local insurance agents report increased interest in health tracking features and rewards-based premiums, suggesting a growing preference for integrated wellness offerings.

CEO Mayank Bathwal emphasized the shift from reactive to proactive care, stating, "Our vision is to create a health-first ecosystem where policyholders are financially secure and empowered to lead healthier, longer lives."



TCS secures Vizag land cheaply



Hyderabad: Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has acquired 21.6 acres of land in Visakhapatnam at a strikingly low price of just 99 paise, following approval from the Andhra Pradesh cabinet. The allotment, which is part of the state government's push to attract major investments, signals TCS's commitment to expanding its footprint in the region.

The tech giant is expected to utilize the land for setting up a key facility that will drive employment and technological development in Andhra Pradesh. Officials highlight that the nominal cost is meant to incentivize top-tier companies to establish operations, boosting the state's IT sector and overall economic growth.

UP govt, Foxconn discuss unit setup

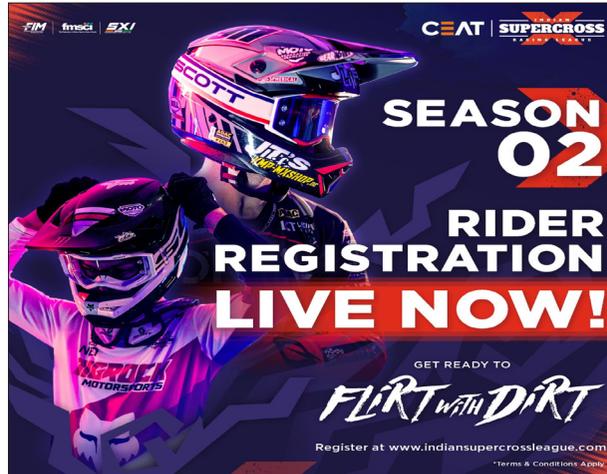


Noida: The Uttar Pradesh government is currently in discussions with Foxconn, the Taiwanese electronics giant, to establish a manufacturing unit in the state. The talks reflect UP's broader push to attract global investments and strengthen its position as a key industrial hub in India. Foxconn, known for assembling Apple products and other electronics, has been actively exploring expansion opportunities in India amid shifting global supply chains. A new facility in Uttar Pradesh could enhance India's electronics manufacturing capabilities.

Rider registration opens for ISRL Season 2 mega auction

Guwahati: The Indian Supercross Racing League (ISRL), the world's first franchise-based Supercross league, is back with a bang! The much-anticipated Season 2 has kicked off with the opening of rider registrations on 24th April, 2025—promising even higher-octane action, new international faces, and the return of celebrated talent from across the globe. Following a phenomenal inaugural run that brought together over 100 elite riders from nine countries and electrified fans across Indian cities, ISRL is rapidly becoming a sought-after destination for global motorsport talent and investors. The season 2 is poised to reach greater heights with enhanced ambition, a bigger format, and added star power—most notably with superstar Salman Khan joining hands with the league as the official brand ambassador to amplify its reach and visibility.

Eeshan Lokhande, Co-Founder, Indian Super-



cross Racing League, said, "ISRL Season 1 was just the beginning. With the kind of global traction and home-grown talent we witnessed, we're entering Season 2 with renewed energy and confidence." Rugved Bargeje, 3-time Indian National Supercross Champion, expressed his enthusiasm, saying, "Racing in Season 1 of ISRL was an unforgettable experience." Jordi Tixer, World Champion MX2 (2014), added, "Season 1 blew my expectations out of the water. The tracks,

the fans, and the constant improvements by the organizers made it truly special." Brendan Sipple, International Rider for Reise Motosports, echoed the excitement: "From the fans to the tracks, everything about Season 1 was world-class." ISRL's inaugural season set new benchmarks for motorsport events in India with a physical attendance of over 30,000 and a viewership of 11.5Mn in just 3 days of broadcast, establishing a new global record for a Supercross event.

Xiaomi India announces the launch of the Redmi A5

Guwahati: Xiaomi India, a global leader in technology and innovation, has announced the launch of the Redmi A5, a breakthrough in the entry-level smartphone space. Featuring a 120Hz high-refresh-rate display, a 32MP AI dual camera system, and a smooth processor, the Redmi A5 delivers an immersive and efficient experience for users seeking advanced features. With a focus on design, reliability, and ease of use, the device elevates everyday smartphone usage without compromise.



Commenting on the launch, Anuj Sharma, Chief Marketing Officer, Xiaomi India, said, "The Redmi A5 reflects our ongoing commitment to pushing the boundaries of what users can expect from an entry-level smartphone." The Redmi A5 is built to deliver an immersive visual experience, featuring a large 6.88-inch HD+ display with Triple TÜV Rheinland certification for reduced eye strain and comfortable viewing, even during ex-

tended use. The Redmi A5 will be available in two storage variants: 3GB + 64GB at INR 6499/- and 4GB + 128GB at INR 7499/-. All variants support up to 8GB RAM and 2TB of expandable storage. The Redmi A5 will go on sale starting 16th April 2025 and will be available on Mi.com, Amazon, Flipkart, and across leading retail outlets.

India's gems, jewellery exports fall 11.72% to \$28.5 bn in FY25

Mumbai: India's gems and jewellery exports witnessed a decline of 11.72% in the financial year 2025, reaching \$28.5 billion, according to the Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC). The drop comes amid global economic uncertainties and fluctuating demand in key export markets. Industry analysts attribute the downturn to subdued consumer demand in major importing nations, rising inflation concerns, and shifting preferences towards lab-grown diamonds and sustainable jewel-

lery options. Additionally, currency fluctuations and geopolitical tensions have contributed to the challenging trade environment for Indian exporters.

Despite the decline, the GJEPC remains optimistic about recovery, citing potential growth opportunities in emerging markets and the sector's adaptability to evolving consumer trends. The council has also emphasized the need for strategic interventions, including policy support and diversification efforts, to regain momentum in exports.

Centre injects Rs 67.77 cr to upgrade maritime education; Dibrugarh eyes skilled workforce boost

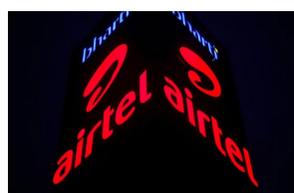
Dibrugarh: In a significant push to modernize maritime education, Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbajit Chatterjee on Tuesday laid the foundation stone for a girls' hostel at Indian Maritime University (IMU), Kochi, and virtually inaugurated infrastructure projects worth ₹67.77 crore across six IMU campuses.

The newly announced girls' hostel at IMU Kochi, estimated at ₹13.11 crore, aims to enhance residential facilities for female maritime students. Alongside, Sonowal remotely unveiled state-of-the-art infrastructure at IMU campuses in Chennai, Kolkata, Navi Mumbai, Mumbai Port, and Visakhapatnam, including

simulators, solar power units, upgraded sports infrastructure, and hostel renovations. "These 17 projects mark a significant step in our mission to strengthen India's maritime education landscape," said Sonowal. The development holds strong relevance for Dibrugarh, where the inland waterways sector along the Brahmaputra is poised for expansion. Industry leaders in the region see the IMU initiatives as a pipeline for skilled professionals who can support logistics, port operations, and inland shipping enterprises in Assam and the Northeast. The event also featured senior officials and maritime stakeholders, ending with a forward-looking discussion on innovation in maritime education.

Airtel, Blinkit partner for 10-minute SIM delivery

New Delhi: Bharti Airtel has teamed up with Blinkit, the instant delivery service, to provide SIM cards to customers' doorsteps within just 10 minutes. This initiative is aimed at enhancing convenience and accessibility for users, ensuring a seamless onboarding experience for new and existing cus-



tomers. Through this collaboration, customers can order Airtel SIM cards via the Blinkit app, complete the necessary Know Your

Customer (KYC) verification upon delivery, and activate their connection instantly. The move reflects Airtel's push to streamline mobile services while leveraging Blinkit's ultra-fast logistics network. Industry experts view this partnership as a significant step toward digitizing telecom distribution.

RBI allows bad loan securitisation to deepen junk debt market

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) plan to allow lenders to bundle bad loans into tradable securities will draw foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) and private credit funds, helping deepen the country's junk debt market, analysts and investors said. RBI said last week it would now permit market-de-



termined securitisation of stressed assets, besides those loans where repayments were on track. The volume of securitised standard loans jumped

25% to 2.3 trillion rupees (\$26.74 billion) in 2024-25, data from India Ratings and Research showed. Pooling together stressed retail and personal loans will allow banks to lighten their balance sheet and give investors high-yield investment options. It will also draw new investors, broadening the market.



Chhorii redefined how audiences see me, says Nushratt Bharuccha

ACTOR NUSHRATT BHARUCCHA CREDITS THE 2021 HORROR FILM CHHORII FOR TRANSFORMING AUDIENCE PERCEPTION OF HER AND OPENING DOORS TO MORE FEMALE-LED PROJECTS

Actor Nushratt Bharuccha says her career took a significant turn with the 2021 horror film Chhorii, which has not only altered the audience perception of her but has also opened opportunities to do more female-led narratives. "After Chhorii, I've had Janhit Mein Jaari and Akelli, and now I've two-three other films, which I don't know how it happened, it's not like I'm going out there and choosing those films, I'm not. I'm very happy doing other films and other parts also.

"But somehow it's (Chhorii) changed audiences and trade perception of me, a mixture of that is bringing more scripts that way," the actress said. Chhorii is the remake of director Vishal Furia's 2017 Marathi film Lapachhapi, which revolves around a pregnant woman named Sakshi, whose unborn child is targeted by evil spirits.

The sequel, which will release on April 11 on Prime Video, will pick up the story of Sakshi from where it left off in the first film and will bring back some key characters as well as introduce new ones.

Known for massy entertainers like Pyaar Ka PUNCHAMA, Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweetie and Dream Girl, Bharuccha said, "Chhorii is the most demanding movie in her career. "For me doing a film like this, I don't

think it's just me headlining it but it's the scope I had as an actor to do in that film which none of the other films before that gave me. It didn't give me so much space, and room. It didn't put me in those situations, which honestly were unreal for me as a person.

The actor says that due to the normalisation of casual sexism, she has been forced to learn to be ok with it. "I don't have a choice but to take it. That is the new oppression. To raise a voice against the old practices, there are agitations and movements. But I can't even voice my opinion against these things," says Nushratt. In fact, she adds that oftentimes, in professional settings, she has learnt not to fight. "If I am being told 'you can't ask this question' or 'we don't have an answer to that' or 'this is not your place', most of the times, because of the nature of the work, honestly, I have to shut up. It's not about being troublesome or problematic. I have to pretend I'm ok with this to co-exist in your world. It's a task," she explains.

Nushratt says that though the success of the first film was a big catalyst for the sequel, part 2 came 'organically'. "We are all aligned to the story coming from the truest form of it wanting to be told, and not from a place where 'karte hain.



"I DON'T KNOW WHAT A GIRL WHO'S PREGNANT WITH EIGHT MONTHS CHILD GOES THROUGH AND WHO'S STUCK LIKE THAT, AND WHO'S BEING TRAUMATISED AND TORTURED BY PEOPLE AND GHOSTS. SO, IT WAS A VERY UNREAL SETTING. IT LET ME AS A PERSON, AS AN ACTOR PUSH BOUNDARIES THAT I"

Neetu Kapoor recalls engagement with Rishi Kapoor

Neetu Kapoor's Instagram page presents a stark contrast of events. On one hand, she shares beautiful glimpses from her work diaries and pictures with her family; on the other, rare memories with her late husband, Rishi Kapoor. On Sunday, April 13, the veteran actor remembered late legendary Rishi Kapoor on 46 years of their engagement. The photo and caption clearly reflect how deeply she misses him today.

Neetu Kapoor honoured her husband by posting a throwback photo from their engagement day in 1979. The Jug Jugg Jeeyo actor flashed the brightest smile as she posed beside her then soon-to-be-husband in the photo. "Was engaged on this day in 1979 time flies," she wrote, followed by a pink heart and 'sad' emoji. Here is the photo:

Neetu Kapoor and Rishi Kapoor first met on the sets of Zehrela Insaan in 1970, which didn't go too well. Later, things started afresh between them with a brief spark. It ended up blossoming into a deep friendship and love during Kabhie Kabhie shoot in 1976. They eventually got married on January 22, 1980, and welcomed Riddhima Ka-



poor and Ranbir Kapoor soon after.

At Annu Kapoor's radio show Suhaana Safar, Neetu recalled her first meet with Rishi Kapoor and said how he was both a bully and a brat. "I had a horrible first meeting with Rishi Kapoor. He had a habit of bullying, so he would comment on my make-up and clothes, and I'd feel so angry. He was actually a brat who would bully everyone, and I was very young at that time," she said. Neetu Kapoor recalls being Rishi Kapoor's only young co-star post Bobby, leading to multiple film collaborations.

Akshay Kumar and Ananya Panday visit Amritsar to promote Kesari 2

Jallianwala Bagh massacre is not just a part of our history but a symbol of how pain and trauma can be felt across the generations. The starkest example of colonial violence and oppression, the massacre and its aftermath serves as a central subject of Kesari 2, a film helmed by Karan Johar's Dharma productions and Akshay Kumar's Cape of Good Hope.

The star cast of the film, including Akshay Kumar, R Madhavan and Ananya Panday, was in Amritsar on a promotional tour.

Akshay, who plays the character based on Sir C Sankaran Nair, distinguished lawyer and nationalist, said that this film is personal. "My grandfather lived in Katra Ahluwalia. He was among those to witness the aftermath of Jallianwala Bagh massacre. I grew up listening to the stories of martyrs from my father. So, bringing out the story of a man, who was no ordinary critic of the British and brought down the empire through law, was really like life coming full circle," said Akshay, who looked sombre as



he talked about his film. Kesari 2 retells the story of Sir C Sankaran Nair, a civil rights advocate from the time of Indian freedom movement, through the lens of the book, The Case That Shook The Empire, written by his great-grandson Raghunath Palat. The film presents a story that was forgotten in history.

Meghna Gulzar directs crime-thriller 'Daayra' with Kareena & Prithviraj

Kareena Kapoor Khan and Prithviraj Sukumaran have boarded the new film by "Talvar" and "Raazi" director Meghna Gulzar.

Titled "Daayra", the film taps into the pulse of the people as it confronts the topical and diabolical realities unfolding in society today. This crime-drama thriller explores the age-old paradox of crime, punishment, and justice, according to a press release by the makers.

"As I celebrate 25 incredible years in Hindi cinema, I'm thrilled to announce my next film, Daayra, with the incredible Meghna Gulzar in the director's chair. I've long



admired her work, from Talvar to Raazi, and to be directed by her is a dream come true. The opportunity to collaborate with the talented Prithviraj is also a highlight, and I'm drawn to the film's bold, thought-provoking narrative," Kareena said in a statement. "Daayra", she said, promises to be a

cinematic experience that would be challenging and inspiring. After "Talvar" and "Raazi", it is the third collaboration between Gulzar and Jungle Pictures. Sukumaran, who last directed and starred in Malayalam superhit "L2: Empuran", said, "When the script was narrated to me, I knew I had to do this.

Modric brings Galactico flair to Swansea ownership twist



London: Ballon d'Or winner Luka Modric has made headlines once again, but this time not for his brilliance on the pitch. In a surprising twist, the Real Madrid star has become involved in Swansea City's ownership, bringing a touch of Galactico glamour to the club.

Modric's unexpected connection to Swansea is generating excitement among fans, who are eager to see how his presence might influence the club's future. While details of his role in the ownership struc-

ture remain unclear, his involvement signals potential changes in the way the club is managed and marketed.

As a celebrated midfield maestro known for his technical skills and leadership, Modric's association with Swansea could open doors for fresh investment, high-profile collaborations, and perhaps even an enhanced footballing philosophy within the club. The development has left football enthusiasts speculating on what this means for Swansea's ambitions, both on and off the pitch.

Karun's brilliance meets divine luck in IPL 2025

New Delhi: Karun Nair delivered a spectacular performance that had fans and cricket pundits alike buzzing. His innings was nothing short of magical, capturing the essence of the sport's unpredictability and excitement.

The cricket Gods, often referenced humorously in the sport when miraculous performances unfold, seemed to acknowledge his efforts, rewarding him with a match-winning display. Karun's innings was marked by powerful shots, strategic decision-making, and an unwavering composure in high-pressure moments. Whether it was rescuing his team from a tough situation or delivering crucial boundaries, his contribution proved pivotal. Fans witnessed a player completely in sync with the moment, seemingly blessed by fate as everything aligned in his favor.

This performance not only reinforced Karun's capabilities as a match-winner but also became an iconic moment in IPL history—one of those rare instances where skill and destiny appear to



shake hands. His heroics ensured his team walked away with a crucial win, further fueling their campaign in the tournament.

Karun displayed an impressive command over his stroke play, mixing classical drives with aggressive improvisations. His ability to pick gaps effectively ensured a steady flow of runs while minimizing risk. His footwork against both pace and spin was precise, allowing him to stay balanced while executing powerful shots.

DHONI'S VINTAGE FINISH

Dhoni's 26 helps CSK end losing streak, beat LSG

Lucknow: It has become a norm nowadays. No matter where they play and how they perform, Chennai Super Kings tend to get the maximum support from the crowd. Monday was no different as there was a sea of yellow at the Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium, Lucknow.

Among the 43,700 spectators in attendance at the stadium, more than 90 per cent were wearing No 7 jerseys and rooting for CSK skipper MS Dhoni. Such vociferous they were in their support that Dhoni's counterpart from the home team, Rishabh Pant, had to say that they will ignore the crowd backing the visitors when asked about it after the toss.

Dhoni, on the other hand, thanked the supporters saying, "I am blessed. Wherever we go, we get this kind of support." Eventually, that support seemed to spur CSK as they recorded a much-needed win over Lucknow Super Giants. And Dhoni, who was adjudged the Man of the Match, had a big hand in CSK's success. Dhoni (26 n.o off 11), along with Shivam Dube (43 n.o off 37), guided the team over the finish line.

After opting to bowl first, the former India skipper even showed glimpses of his prime when he ran out Abdul Samad in the last over.

Matheesa Pathirana's second ball of the 20th over was a full delivery down the leg side and the J&K batter, along with Pant, tried to steal a bye. Dhoni, however, had some other plans as he moved to his left, collected the ball and threw it over the sprinting Samad to hit the stumps at the non-striker's end. The crowd went berserk as the giant screen at the venue confirmed Samad's dismissal. Ironically, the home team had lost the wicket but how does that matter when none other than Dhoni had affected that run out. This has now been a routine scene at the MA Chidambaram Stadium, where the fans celebrate the fall of CSK's wicket than Dhoni.



CSK signs Mhatre for Gaikwad; SRH picks Ravichandran for Zampa swap

Chennai: Chennai Super Kings (CSK) have signed Ayush Mhatre as a replacement for Ruturaj Gaikwad, while Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) have brought in Smaran Ravichandran to take Adam Zampa's spot in their squad. These roster changes come as part of mid-season adjustments aimed at strengthening the teams as they prepare for upcoming matches.

Mhatre, known for his aggressive batting style, is expected to contribute significantly to CSK's top order, providing more depth and flexibility to their lineup.



His inclusion follows Gaikwad's unavailability due to undisclosed reasons. Meanwhile, SRH has opted for Ravichandran to fill Zampa's place, reinforcing their spin attack and adding more tactical options in their bowling unit. These

player signings reflect both franchises' strategies in adapting to challenges mid-season and ensuring they remain competitive in the tournament. Fans will be eager to see how the newcomers perform in their respective teams.

FIFA refs to wear body cams

Geneva: FIFA is set to introduce body cameras for referees at the upcoming Club World Cup, marking a groundbreaking step in officiating transparency. The initiative aims to provide firsthand footage of key on-field decisions, offering fans and analysts a closer look at refereeing perspectives during crucial moments in the game.

The move is expected to improve accountability and potentially reduce controversy surrounding officiating calls, as decisions can be reviewed from a referee's direct viewpoint. Additionally, the body cameras could be used as a training tool, helping officials refine their game management techniques. This development represents FIFA's continued efforts to modernize football officiating with technological advancements, following the successful implementation of VAR in recent years.



FIFA president Gianni Infantino joins referees for a trophy ceremony photo after the Club World Cup final. File image

