



VOL 7, ISSUE 30

## Maharashtra CM's aide urges Jarange-Patil to delay protest Government urges calm during 11-day Ganeshotsav to prevent traffic, security disruptions

**Mumbai:** On August 26, Rajendra Sable Patil, Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, met Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange-Patil at his village in Jalna district. The meeting came ahead of Jarange-Patil's planned march to Mumbai to demand a 10% reservation

for Marathas under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category. With the 11-day Ganesh festival beginning on August 27, the state government expressed concern over potential disruptions to public order and traffic in Mumbai. Patil requested Jarange-Patil to defer the protest, suggesting that



the timing could interfere with the city's festive celebrations. Jarange-Patil, however, remained firm. He stated that the protest would begin on Ganesh Chaturthi as planned, with a peaceful march from Antarwali Sarathi to Azad Maidan in Mumbai. He also announced an indefinite hunger strike starting Au-

gust 29 if the government failed to meet the reservation demand by Tuesday evening. The Bombay High Court weighed in, stating that protests must be held at designated locations with prior permission. It suggested the government could offer an alternative site in Navi Mumbai to avoid disruption in the city.

## Naidu's dairy empire crowns as richest CM

**New Delhi:** Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has been named India's richest serving chief minister, according to the latest report by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). The report, based on affidavits submitted ahead of the last assembly elections, places Naidu's declared assets at ₹931 crore, with the bulk of his wealth linked to his family's stake in Heritage Foods Ltd—a dairy retail company he founded in 1992. Although Naidu himself does not hold shares



in the company, his wife, Bhuvaneshwari Nara, owns a 24.37% stake, which is counted toward his personal wealth. The Nara family collectively owns 41.3% of Heritage Foods, which has grown from modest beginnings to a market capitalization of ₹4,381 crore as of August 2025. In June 2024, valuation hit ₹6,755 crore.

## TMC leaders claim aggressive Ravneet Singh Bittu pushed Abu Taher in LS

### Lawmakers protested bills, felt helpless amid alleged throttling

**New Delhi:** A dramatic confrontation unfolded in the Lok Sabha this week as Trinamool Congress (TMC) leaders accused Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu of physically pushing Murshidabad MP Abu Taher Khan during a protest over the introduction of the Constitution (One Hundred and Twentieth) Amendment Bill, 2025. According to a formal complaint submitted to Speaker Om Birla, TMC MPs Satabdi Roy and Mahua Moitra alleged that Bit-



tu "forcefully and violently" shoved Abu Taher without

provocation while opposition members were protesting near the Well of the House. They emphasized that Taher had recently recovered from a serious illness, making the alleged aggression especially concerning. The protest erupted as Home Minister Amit Shah introduced three contentious bills, including one that proposes automatic disqualification of Prime Ministers, Chief Ministers, and Ministers who remain in custody for 30 consecutive days on serious crimi-

nal charges. TMC MPs tore copies of the bills and flung them in protest, accusing the government of bypassing parliamentary norms. The complaint also named Union Minister Kiren Rijiju, alleging that he incited Treasury bench members to confront opposition MPs. TMC MP Yusuf Pathan reportedly intervened to protect his colleagues from further escalation. Minister Bittu denied the allegations, stating, "It is not my culture to push anyone," Prove it outside.

## J&K FAT schools row: LG, Omar Abdullah govts clash FAT committees expired, flagged post Jamaat ban

**Srinagar:** In a move that has ignited a fresh political controversy in Jammu and Kashmir, the administration led by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has ordered the takeover of 215 schools previously managed by the Falah-e-Aam Trust (FAT), an organization widely believed to be affiliated with the banned Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI). The decision has drawn sharp criticism from the elected government led by Omar Abdullah and triggered concerns among parents and educators about the future of over 51,000 students enrolled in these institutions. The School Education Department, under Commissioner Secretary Ram Niwas



Sharma, issued the directive instructing deputy commissioners across the Union Territory to assume control of the schools and propose new management committees. The order cited intelligence reports that flagged the FAT's expired committees and alleged links to the proscribed Jamaat-e-Islami, which was banned in 2019

by the Union Home Ministry. However, Education Minister Sakina Itoo has publicly objected to the order, claiming it was modified without her knowledge. She stated that her original proposal was to place the schools under the supervision of nearby government school principals, not under the control of district magistrates.

## Judges defend Reddy, caution Shah's impact

**New Delhi:** A group of 18 retired judges, including seven former Supreme Court justices and several High Court judges, have issued a joint statement defending Justice B. Sudershan Reddy, the Opposition's Vice Presidential nominee, following remarks made by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The judges expressed concern that Shah's comments could have a "chilling effect" on judicial independence.

Shah had criticized a 2011 Supreme Court judgment authored by Justice Reddy and Justice S.S. Nijjar, which declared the Chhattisgarh government's Salwa Judum militia unconstitutional. He claimed the verdict "helped Naxalism" and suggested that Left-wing extremism would have ended by 2020

had the judgment not been delivered.

The retired judges called Shah's interpretation "unfortunate" and a "prejudicial misrepresentation" of the ruling. They emphasized that the judgment did not support Naxalism or its ideology in any form.

Signatories included Justices A.K. Patnaik, Madan B. Lokur, J. Chelameswar, Kurien Joseph, Abhay Oka, Gopala Gowda, and Vikramjit Sen, along with former High Court Chief Justices Govind Mathur, S. Muralidhar, and Sanjib Banerjee, and legal scholars Mohan Gopal and Sanjay Hegde. The statement urged political leaders to maintain dignity during constitutional campaigns and avoid personal attacks or ideological labeling.

## Centre shifts Delhi CM's security

**New Delhi:** The Union government has withdrawn the Z-category security cover provided by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) to Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, just days after it was granted in response to an alleged attack on her during a public outreach event. The responsibility for her protection has now been reassigned to the Delhi Police. The decision follows an incident on August 20, when Gupta was attacked during a 'Jan Sunwai' (public grievance hearing) at her Civil Lines camp office. Her office described the assault as a "well-planned conspiracy to kill her." The prime accused, Sakriya Rajeshbhai Khimji, a 41-year-old auto-rickshaw driver from Rajkot, Gujarat, has been arrested along with an accomplice.



## BJP seeks Madani's arrest over remarks

**Guwahati:** Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) president Lurinjyoti Gogoi has alleged that the recent controversy surrounding Maulana Mehmood Madani was deliberately manufactured through a tacit alliance involving the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, and AIUDF chief Badruddin Ajmal. Addressing the media on Monday, Gogoi claimed that the BJP is attempting to engineer communal polarization in Assam by elevating Madani as a provocative figure in the state's political discourse. He argued that Ajmal, once a key polarizing figure, has become "politically irrelevant," prompting the BJP to seek a replacement. "By making Madani relevant in Assam, the BJP hopes to achieve that," Gogoi stated. The controversy erupted following Madani's remarks on Assam's eviction drives, which drew sharp criticism from Sarma and other BJP leaders. In response, the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind (JUH), led by Madani, demanded the Chief Minister's resignation, further intensifying the political storm. Gogoi also pointed to Madani's historical ties with the BJP.

## Bad weather diverts Assam CM's flight, four others to Agartala

### Flight IGO 187 diverted to Agartala amid storms

**Agartala:** Severe weather conditions over Guwahati on Sunday led to the diversion of five flights to Agartala's Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport, including one carrying Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. Heavy rainfall and thunderstorms disrupted flight operations across the region, prompting precautionary rerouting. Among the diverted flights was IndiGo's IGO 187 from Dibrugarh, which was transporting the Chief Minister. Upon landing in Agartala, Sarma was received by Tripura Transport Minister Sushanta Chowdhury and senior officials. Chowdhury later shared on social me-



dia that he spent time with the Chief Minister during the unexpected stopover. Other flights affected included services from Aizawl, Kolkata, and Agartala

itself, which had to return mid-route due to poor visibility and unsafe landing conditions at Guwahati's Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport.

## AJP: BJP, Sarma, Ajmal staged controversy

**Guwahati:** Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) president Lurinjyoti Gogoi has alleged that the recent controversy surrounding Maulana Mehmood Madani was deliberately manufactured through a tacit alliance involving the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, and AIUDF chief Badruddin Ajmal. Addressing the media on Monday, Gogoi claimed that the BJP is attempting to engineer communal polarization in Assam by elevating Madani as a provocative figure in the state's political discourse. He argued that Ajmal, once a key polarizing figure, has become "politically irrelevant," prompting the BJP to seek a replacement. "By making Madani relevant in

Assam, the BJP hopes to achieve that," Gogoi stated. The controversy erupted following Madani's remarks on Assam's eviction drives, which drew sharp criticism from Sarma and other BJP leaders. In response, the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind (JUH), led by Madani, demanded the Chief Minister's resignation, further intensifying the political storm. Highlighting personal connections, Gogoi claimed that Ajmal and Madani were childhood friends from their time at Darul Uloom Deoband and continue to share close ties. "Ajmal, Madani and the BJP have long-standing relations. What we are witnessing today is a carefully orchestrated attempt to make Madani relevant in Assam," he said.

## ₹13 lakh allocated to preserve Tripura tribal languages

**Agartala:** The Central government has initiated multiple measures to safeguard and promote the tribal languages of Tripura, including Kokborok, Darlong, Ranglong, and Uchai. Replying to an un-starred question from Tripura MP Kriti Devi Debarman in the Lok Sabha, Union Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Durgadas Uikay said that financial support is being extended to 29 Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs)



across the country, including the Tribal Research and Cultural Institute (TR&CI) in Tripura, under the Cen-

trally Sponsored Scheme "Support to Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs)". He informed that the scheme covers infrastructure development, research, documentation, training and capacity building, cultural festivals, yatras, and exchange visits to preserve and disseminate tribal heritage, languages, and rituals. Highlighting the initiatives in Tripura, Uikay said the TR&CI has been publishing books and dictio-

naries on tribal languages, releasing a literary journal "SAIMA" annually, and a research journal "TUI" bi-annually. It also organizes seminars and workshops on indigenous languages in collaboration with Tripura University, produces audio-visual documentation on tribal heritage, and prepares notations of tribal folk songs. "Primers in tribal languages have already been introduced in government schools of Tripura.

## Supreme Court Admits Plea for NRC Re-Verification in Assam

### Verification loopholes led to wrongful inclusion, genuine exclusion

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court of India has agreed to hear a writ petition seeking a comprehensive re-verification of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam, reigniting debate over one of the state's most politically sensitive and long-standing issues. The petition was filed by Hitesh Dev Sarma, former State Coordinator of the NRC, who alleges large-scale irregularities in the preparation of the final NRC list published on August 31, 2019. A two-judge bench comprising Justice P.S. Narasimha and Justice Atul Chandurkar admitted



the plea and issued notices to the Union Government, the Government of Assam, the current NRC Coordinator, and the Registrar General of India.

Sarma, a retired IAS officer, contends that the NRC in its current form is rid-

dled with errors, including wrongful inclusion of ineligible individuals and exclusion of genuine citizens. The petition cites discrepancies in family tree matching, incorrect marking of "Originally Inhabitants," absence of speaking orders in decisions,

and financial irregularities flagged by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).

The plea seeks a time-bound, district-wise re-verification under Clause 4(3) of the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003. It also calls for the formation of a monitoring committee comprising district judges, magistrates, and police superintendents to oversee the process. Senior advocate Manish Goswami, representing Sarma, emphasized that the petition is not directed against any group or authority.

## Gourav Gogoi urges PM probe Assam quarrying



**Guwahati:** Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president and Deputy Leader of the Lok Sabha, Gourav Gogoi, has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking an independent investigation into alleged illegal quarrying in the Panimura Range of Karbi Anglong district.

In his letter, Gogoi stated that large-scale quarrying is reportedly being carried out

without valid environmental clearances. He highlighted that such unauthorized activities could threaten ecological stability, affect local communities, and undermine the credibility of regulatory authorities. Gogoi urged the central government to take immediate action to stop these alleged violations and ensure accountability through a fair and independent probe.



## Flipkart and NEDFi collaborate to expand digital market access for Assam's MSMEs and artisans

**Guwahati:** Flipkart, India's leading homegrown e-commerce platform, in partnership with the North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Limited (NEDFi), organized a workshop in Guwahati to enhance digital market access for over a million MSMEs and artisans. The session, attended by more than 100 local participants, focused on equipping weavers and artisans with the skills and tools to leverage e-commerce and scale their businesses nationally. Shri P V S L N Murthy, Chairman and Managing Director of NEDFi, emphasized that the Flipkart Samarth program bridges the digital divide and promotes sustain-



able livelihoods. He also revealed plans to establish a Common Facility Centre for packaging to support product sales. The initiative aligns with Flipkart's efforts in Assam, where over

1 lakh sellers are already active on its platform, recording 100% year-on-year growth in seller onboarding and listings. Collaborations with the Assam Industries & Commerce Department

and the Assam Skill Development Mission are strengthening local supply chain skills while promoting arts, crafts, and handlooms, thereby creating employment opportunities. From a Guwahati market perspective, local MSMEs and artisans are increasingly tapping into digital channels, complementing traditional retail. Businesses in the city are seeing higher visibility and sales through online marketplaces, reflecting growing consumer demand for regional crafts and handmade products. The city is emerging as a strategic hub connecting Assam's artisanal talent to the national e-commerce ecosystem.

## SBI Life launches 'Smart Shield Plus'

**Guwahati:** SBI Life Insurance, one of India's leading private insurers, announced the launch of its latest protection plan – 'SBI Life – Smart Shield Plus'. Positioned as a future-ready solution, the individual, non-linked, non-participating term insurance plan is designed to adapt to consumers' evolving financial responsibilities across key life stages. The product offers three plan options — Level Cover, Increasing Cover, and Level Cover with Future Proofing Benefit. The Increasing Cover option enhances the sum assured by 5% annually up to 200%, while the Future Proofing Benefit allows policyholders to raise cover during life events like marriage, childbirth or home purchase, without medical underwriting. Features such as flexible death benefit payouts, the Better Half Benefit for spouses,



and accident riders add further protection. In Guwahati, financial planners and insurance agents expect strong uptake of the new plan. With rising financial awareness among salaried families and small business owners, demand for flexible and scalable protection products is increasing. Experts noted that milestone-based adaptability and whole-life options could make Smart Shield Plus particularly attractive to young professionals in Assam. M. Anand, President and Chief Distribution Officer, SBI Life, said the product empowers customers to proactively secure their future while providing long-term financial confidence.

## Vi, MX Player unite OTT



**Mumbai:** Vodafone Idea (Vi) has broadened its digital content portfolio by integrating Amazon MX Player into its Vi Movies & TV app, strengthening its free entertainment offering at a time when India's OTT market is witnessing record growth. According to industry estimates, the country now has more than 547 million OTT users, with nearly 400–447 million relying on free, ad-supported platforms. The partnership adds MX Player's diverse slate of award-winning web series, international shows, regional films, and dubbed global content to Vi Movies & TV's existing mix of 400+ live TV channels, news streaming, and free first-episode access to Z5 Originals. By offering premium entertainment at no additional cost, Vi aims to capture a wider audience base and reduce subscription fatigue among digital consumers. Vi's paid subscribers will also gain access to up to 17 OTT platforms, including Sony LIV, Lionsgate Play, Sun NXT, and JioHotstar, making Vi Movies & TV a competitive, all-in-one digital entertainment hub.

## Goodnight Survey reveals year-round mosquito threat; East India leads at 86%

**Guwahati:** A pan-India survey by Goodnight, a leading brand from Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL), has revealed that 81% of Indians believe mosquito-borne diseases like dengue and malaria are no longer confined to the monsoon season. East India showed the highest awareness at 86%, followed by the West (81%) and both North and South at 80%. Conducted by YouGov, the survey titled "One Mosquito, Countless Threats" underscores the growing demand for year-round mosquito

protection solutions. The findings come against the backdrop of more than 2.33 lakh dengue cases reported in India last year. GCPL has responded with innovation by introducing Renofluthrin, India's first indigenously developed and patented molecule, in its new Goodnight Flash liquid vaporiser. The company claims the formulation is twice as effective as existing liquid vaporisers in the market.

In Guwahati, one of the busiest commercial hubs of the Northeast, retailers report steady year-round sales

of mosquito repellents, driven by consumer concerns over stagnant water and rapid urbanisation. Traders highlight that families increasingly prefer branded, government-approved solutions over unregulated incense sticks, reflecting a behavioural shift toward safety and quality. Industry experts note that changing climate patterns and urbanisation are reshaping the household insecticide market, with consistent consumer demand creating new growth opportunities for organised players like GCPL.

## ICICI Bank raises CSR spend, expands ESG across markets

**Guwahati:** ICICI Bank has reported a sharp expansion in its social and environmental commitments for FY24-25, with total beneficiaries reaching 1.89 crore, according to its latest Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Report. The Bank allocated ₹801 crore towards CSR, a 54% rise from ₹519 crore in the previous year, signaling stronger long-term investments in sustainable development. Women's empowerment through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) remained a key driver, with 10 lakh women supported in FY25, pushing cumulative beneficiaries to 1.1 crore. Rural market linkages also



strengthened with 91 lakh people benefitting from skill development, agriculture, and micro-enterprise programmes. On healthcare, the Bank facilitated treatment for 4 lakh individuals via 550 partner hospitals and pledged ₹1,800 crore to Tata Memorial Centre for three new cancer hospitals. In Guwahati, ICICI Bank's initiatives are viewed as critical in expanding financial

literacy and access to credit. Local SHGs and small traders highlight that enhanced rural credit pipelines and women-led entrepreneurship are creating new business avenues and increasing market activity in Assam's semi-urban clusters. Environmental investments included creating 3,387 crore litres of water harvesting capacity, restoring 17,453 water bodies, and planting 12 lakh trees. ICICI Bank reaffirmed its carbon neutrality target for Scope 1 and 2 emissions by FY2032, strengthening its ESG integration into market operations.

## India bets on SOAR to build AI-ready workforce by 2030



**Guwahati:** The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has launched the SOAR (Skilling for AI Readiness) program, marking a strategic move to build India's future workforce in artificial intelligence. The initiative, targeted at students from classes 6 to 12 and teachers, aims to create a strong base of AI literacy across the country. SOAR seeks to address the widening skill gap as technology adoption accelerates globally. Studies suggest that by 2030, more than half of India's workforce will require AI-related skills. Through engaging tools such as stories, game-based learning, and case studies, students will be introduced to concepts like machine learning and neural networks, advancing later to coding,

chatbot creation, and data analysis. Ethics in AI usage is a key pillar of the program. In Guwahati, the response to SOAR is already positive. Local educators and IT entrepreneurs believe this initiative will give Assam's youth an edge in emerging digital industries. With Guwahati's expanding role as a regional startup hub, stakeholders say early AI training could attract investments and strengthen the city's position in the Northeast's tech-driven economy. Backed by \$14.4 million raised through Skill Impact Bonds, SOAR has been piloted in over 10,000 schools. The government now plans a phased rollout nationwide by 2027, aligning with India's goal of becoming a global innovation hub under Viksit Bharat 2047.





### Renault launches New Kiger, adds 35 upgrades, starts at ₹6.29L

**Guwahati:** Renault India, a subsidiary of Renault Group, has launched the New Kiger, introducing over 35 upgrades under its "rethink performance" philosophy. The refreshed sub-four metre SUV features bold exterior styling, premium interiors, advanced technology, and enhanced safety. The new design includes a striking front grille, sculpted hood, LED headlamps, taillamps, fog lamps, and 16-inch diamond-cut alloy wheels, while interiors offer dual-tone dashboard, ventilated leatherette seats, and improved noise insulation. On the technology front, the Kiger is equipped with a multi-view camera, 20.32 cm touchscreen infotainment with wireless connectivity, rain-sensing wipers, and 3D ARKAMYS® surround sound. Powered by a 100 PS turbocharged



engine with best-in-segment torque-to-weight ratio, the SUV delivers up to 20.38 kmpl fuel efficiency, alongside naturally aspirated options. Customers can choose from manual, AMT, and CVT transmissions. Safety upgrades include 21 standard features, such as six airbags, ESP, Traction Control, and ISOFIX child seat anchorage. Prices range between ₹6.29 lakh

and ₹11.29 lakh (ex-showroom). In Guwahati, where compact SUVs continue to dominate, local dealers anticipate strong interest in the turbo variants, especially the new Oasis Yellow and Shadow Grey options. Market experts note that the Kiger's mix of affordability, efficiency, and safety could strengthen Renault's position in Assam's competitive urban SUV market.

### Medanta hosts Assam camp for IOCL employees

**Guwahati:** Medanta – The Medicity, Gurgaon, recognised as India's Best Private Hospital by Newsweek for six consecutive years, organised a two-day multi-specialty



medical camp for Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOCL) employees in Assam. Conducted in collaboration with IOCL Refinery Hospitals, the initiative concluded on August 23 after sessions in Guwahati and Bongaigaon. The camp was held at the IOCL L & D Centre in Noonmati, Guwahati on August 22, and at the Refinery Hospital in Bongaigaon on August 23. Senior specialists Dr. Pawan Rawal, Senior Director, Gastroscien-

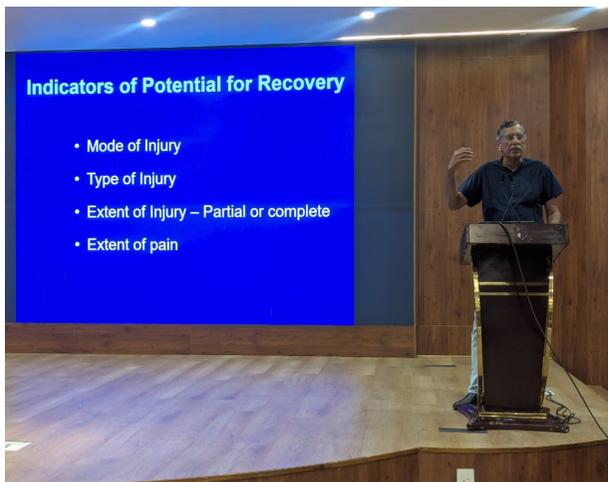
ces, and Dr. Sharad Tandon, Director, Cardiac Care, delivered expert consultations and awareness talks. Dr. Rawal emphasised preventive gastrointestinal care through balanced nutrition, screenings, and vaccinations, while Dr. Tandon highlighted risk management for cardiac health through diet, exercise, and regular check-ups. Medanta Chairman and MD Dr. Naresh Trehan said, "North East India has long been underserved in healthcare. At Medanta, we believe every life is invaluable, and our mission is to make latest care accessible everywhere."

### Rajiv Anand becomes IndusInd CEO

**Mumbai:** Veteran banker Rajiv Anand has taken charge as IndusInd Bank's chief executive and managing director, the bank said in an exchange filing on Monday. Anand, whose appointment was announced earlier this month, was previously the deputy managing director at private lender Axis Bank and has held key management positions at leading global financial institutions. IndusInd Bank took a \$230 million hit in the year ended March 31 due to years of misaccounting of internal derivative trades, prompting the resignations of CEO Sumant Kathpalia and deputy Arun Khurana in April. IndusInd Bank's board of directors appointed Rajiv Anand as the bank's new CEO and Managing Director on August 4.

### Medanta expands Northeast outreach with focus on Brachial Plexus and computer-aided plastic surgeries

**Shillong:** Medanta – The Medicity, recognised by Newsweek as India's Best Private Hospital for six consecutive years, is strengthening its footprint in the Northeast with specialised awareness programs in Shillong. The sessions, organised with the Indian Medical Association (IMA) Meghalaya branch and Meghalaya Medical Services Association (MMSA), highlighted advanced treatment of brachial plexus injuries and cutting-edge computer-assisted plastic surgeries. Dr. Rakesh Kumar Khazanchi, Chairman,



Plastic, Aesthetic and Reconstructive Surgery at Medanta, led the sessions. He explained that brachial

plexus injuries, often sustained in road accidents or during birth, require timely surgical intervention. "If

treated within six months, outcomes are favourable for restoring essential motor functions," he noted. He also emphasised the role of physical therapy in rehabilitation. On computer-assisted plastic surgery, Dr. Khazanchi said virtual surgical planning, 3-D modeling, and patient-specific implants are transforming craniofacial reconstruction, supported by AI for precision and improved outcomes. Senior IMA and MMSA officials, including Dr. C Daniala and Dr. Bhaskar Borgohain, were present at the event.

### Titas Footwear, Mohtas join for ₹50cr growth

**Guwahati:** Kolkata's well-known footwear brand Titas has undergone a major transformation with the formation of Titas Footwear Pvt. Ltd., backed by the Mohta family. The family has acquired a majority stake and committed an investment of ₹50 crore over the next three years, signaling strong confidence in the brand's long-term growth potential. Led by Director Anirudh Mohta, the company plans to channel investments into brand development, retail expansion, and distribution reach, while modernizing

internal systems. "Our goal is to make Titas a preferred family footwear destination offering world-class products. We will keep innovating to meet the demands of India's dynamic footwear market," Mohta said. The company aims to expand product lines, introduce design-led innovations, reinvent retail experiences, refresh its brand identity, and tap into emerging sales channels. Former promoter Masud Jamil expressed optimism that the partnership would enable Titas to move beyond eastern India to a national stage.

### Almonds drive gut and heart health, demand rising in Guwahati

**Guwahati:** New research underscores almonds' growing role as a functional food, supporting gut health and potentially benefiting heart wellness. Two studies, funded by the Almond Board of California, highlight that daily almond consumption acts as a prebiotic, promoting the growth of beneficial gut bacteria such as Bifidobacterium, Lactobacillus, and Rose-

buria. Almonds also boost production of butyrate, a short-chain fatty acid linked to reduced inflammation, improved digestion, and heart health. The first study reviewed evidence for almonds' prebiotic effects, showing that dietary fiber, polyphenols, and oligosaccharides in almonds nourish gut microbiota, enhancing bacterial diversity and supporting metabolic health.



The second study examined the gut-heart axis,

suggesting that almonds' impact on gut bacteria may

underlie cardioprotective benefits, including lowering LDL cholesterol and regulating blood pressure. Experts emphasized the need for further research to determine optimal intake and duration. Guwahati has seen growing consumer interest in almonds as a health-focused snack. Local retailers report increasing sales in supermarkets and specialty stores,

reflecting a trend among urban consumers prioritizing digestive wellness and heart-friendly diets. Nutritionists in the city are recommending almonds as a convenient, nutrient-dense addition to daily meals and snacks. With 6g of protein, 4g of fiber, and 15 essential nutrients per ounce, almonds are emerging as a key product in India's functional food segment.



# Abbott expands diabetes care in India with launch of FreeStyle Libre 2 Plus

**Guwahati:** Global health-care company Abbott has announced the launch of its FreeStyle Libre 2 Plus continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) sensor in India, strengthening its diabetes care portfolio in one of the world's fastest-growing health markets. The device delivers automatic glucose readings every minute straight to a smartphone, with optional alarms for low or high sugar levels, enabling real-time decision-making for patients and caregivers. With 101 million people living with diabetes, India represents



the second-largest diabetic population globally, underscoring the urgent demand for accessible, technology-driven monitoring solutions. Abbott said the new

sensor meets international accuracy standards, helping reduce complications and cutting hospital visits by up to 66%. In Guwahati, healthcare experts believe

the launch could reshape diabetes management across Assam and the Northeast. With urban centers witnessing higher incidence of lifestyle-related diabetes, the availability of advanced CGM technology is expected to reduce reliance on traditional fingerstick testing, expand preventive health-care, and open new opportunities for pharmacies and diagnostic players in the region. The FreeStyle Libre 2 Plus, suitable for adults and children above two years, including women with gestational diabetes, is now available across India.

## Vi seeks ₹5,000 crore funding

**Mumbai:** Vodafone Idea, the country's third-largest telecom operator, is in advanced talks to raise about Rs 5,000 crore through debt financing as part of its ongoing turnaround plan, as per a report by Moneycontrol. As per Moneycontrol reports, the fund could be raised by Vodafone Idea Telecom Infrastructure, a subsidiary that houses a part of the company's telecom infrastructure and renewable energy assets. JM Financial has been appointed as the advisor for the transaction, which is expected to close within the next two weeks, as per Moneycontrol.

By using its infrastructure arm for raising funds, the company is looking to ring-fence core assets and attract investors with greater security compared to the main operating company, highlights the moneycontrol report. The move is seen as an important step in Vodafone Idea's long battle to restore financial stability. The company has been under pressure for years due to high liabilities and a shrinking subscriber base, further worsened by the Supreme Court's ruling on Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) dues. While the government's decision to convert over Rs 53,000 crore.

## Medanta expands Northeast presence, prioritizes advanced cardio and renal care

**Itanagar:** The Medicity, Gurgaon, consistently ranked India's Best Private Hospital by Newsweek for six consecutive years, today reaffirmed its commitment to delivering world-class healthcare through cutting-edge treatments in cardiology and nephrology. The announcement was made during a special session in Itanagar, where senior Medanta experts highlighted new clinical approaches to tackling coronary artery disease (CAD), valvular heart disease (VHD), and complex Cardio-Renal-Hepatic-Diabetic Metabolic Syndrome (CRHD-MS).

Dr. Praveen Chandra,

Chairman, Interventional Cardiology, introduced next-generation options including robotic-assisted cardiac procedures, minimally invasive valve surgeries, TAVR, and hybrid angioplasty techniques. He emphasized the importance of early diagnosis in achieving better outcomes and reducing long-term treatment costs.

Dr. Debabrata Mukherjee, Senior Director of Nephrology, underscored the economic and health burden of interconnected cardiac, kidney, and metabolic disorders, calling for integrated care models to improve patient outcomes and commu-

nity health standards. In Itanagar, patients often face the challenge of limited access to advanced tertiary care, with many compelled to travel to Guwahati, Kolkata, or Delhi. Medanta's Northeast-focused expansion, including its upcoming Guwahati hospital, is expected to bring advanced healthcare closer to Itanagar, improving accessibility and reducing the cost of treatment migration. Founded by renowned cardiac surgeon Dr. Naresh Trehan, Medanta currently operates five hospitals and is expanding its network in Noida, Delhi, Mumbai, and Guwahati.

## Godrej Agrovet launches Ashitaka Herbicide to enhance maize yields

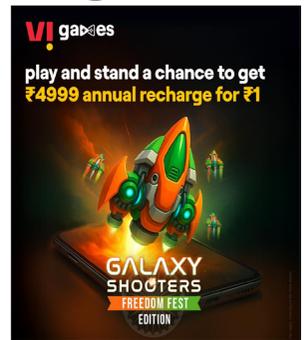
**Guwahati:** Godrej Agrovet Limited, one of India's leading agri-business companies, has launched Ashitaka, a new herbicide for maize crops developed in collaboration with ISK Japan. Designed to control grasses and broad-leaved weeds, Ashitaka targets a key challenge for maize farmers, particularly during the early growth stages. Applied at the 2-4 weed leaf stage, the product ensures better soil moisture and nutrient utilization, supporting healthier crop development and higher yields. Rajavelu NK,

CEO, Crop Protection Business, Godrej Agrovet, said, "Our mission is to deliver research-driven solutions that empower farmers and future-proof agriculture against environmental and market challenges. Ashitaka provides a powerful tool for maize farmers to improve productivity and profitability." Anil Choubey, GM - Marketing, highlighted that the recommended dosage of 50 ml/acre with 400 ml/acre of surfactant reduces crop-weed competition, enhances grain quality, and mitigates income volatil-

ity, especially in rain-fed areas. Initially launched in Telangana, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu, Godrej Agrovet plans to expand Ashitaka across all major maize-growing states. In Guwahati, where maize farming is steadily increasing, local distributors report strong interest in Ashitaka among farmers seeking advanced crop protection solutions. Early trials indicate better weed control and potential yield gains, positioning the herbicide as a promising addition to the city's agricultural input market.

# Vi's Galaxy Shooters Fest rewards gamers

**Mumbai:** For many smartphone users, mobile games are more than just entertainment—they are a daily escape. Vi, India's leading telecom operator, has tapped into this sentiment with the launch of the Galaxy Shooters Freedom Fest on its Vi Games platform, live on the Vi App until August 31. The special edition not only offers fun but also opens doors to life-changing rewards for ordinary customers at just ₹1. At the heart of the festival is an annual recharge pack worth ₹4999 available for ₹1, which includes 2GB data per day, Amazon Prime Video, and access to 19 OTT platforms such as SonyLIV, ZEE5, and Lionsgate Play. Other rewards include 50GB data packs, OTT bundles with 10GB data, and gift vouchers. Participants can play Galaxy



Shooters, collect gems daily, and improve their odds of winning—turning gaming moments into real savings. The initiative speaks directly to the aspirations of the city's youth and students, many of whom seek affordable access to digital entertainment. With Shillong's rising appetite for OTT content and online gaming, Vi's offer is seen as both accessible and empowering, making premium services attainable for everyday users.

## TVS Motor unveils King Kargo EV, targets growth

**Guwahati:** TVS Motor Company, a global leader in two and three-wheeler manufacturing, has launched the TVS King Kargo HD EV, marking a major push into the electric cargo mobility segment. The company also showcased the CNG variant, which is scheduled for launch by the end of 2025. The King Kargo HD EV is built to serve the needs of urban and semi-urban logistics operators, offering a combination of safety, comfort, and smart technology. Key highlights include LED headlamps and tail lamps, a spacious cabin with rolling windows, stylish door

trims for ventilation, and a dedicated Power Gear Mode delivering higher torque under load. As India's first Bluetooth-enabled cargo three-wheeler, it comes with TVS SmartX-onnect™, offering 26 smart features, while twin-axis mirrors improve navigation in congested roads. Priced at ₹3.85 lakh (ex-showroom Delhi), the King Kargo HD EV integrates with TVS Connect Fleet, a platform offering 31 advanced features including real-time tracking, reports, and intelligent dashboards. It will first be available across Delhi-NCR, Rajasthan, and Bengaluru.

## SMBC targets 4.99% YES Bank stake

**Mumbai:** Japan's Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC)



acquire an additional 4.99% stake, potentially from private equity players Advent International Group, source-

es told Financial Express. The transaction comes on the heels of RBI's nod for SMBC to raise its holding to 24.99% from the current 20%. Together, Carlyle and Advent via their affiliates hold 13.25% stake in YES Bank, as on June 30, 2025.



## Godrej launches smart security range in Guwahati, eyes 80% market share

**Guwahati** : Godrej Enterprises Group's Security Solutions division has launched its latest range of premium, tech-enabled home lockers in Guwahati, aiming to strengthen its leadership in the fast-growing security solutions market of Assam and the Northeast. With 75% share in the home locker category and about 70% in the jewellery segment, the company has set a target of capturing more than 80% market share over the next three years, with 18% year-on-year growth. Speaking at the launch,

Pushkar Gokhale, Business Head of Security Solutions, said, "As Guwahati and the Northeast emerge among India's fastest-growing markets, we see security moving from safeguard to lifestyle necessity. Our new range blends technology with intuitive design for both homeowners and jewellers." Guwahati is witnessing strong demand driven by urbanisation, rising disposable incomes, and premium housing projects. With gold prices crossing ₹1 lakh per 10 grams, jewellery retailers in Guwahati are reporting higher

recycled gold transactions, increasing the need for secure BIS-certified safes. Consumers are also prioritising advanced lockers for asset protection, making the city a key focus area for Godrej's expansion. Key products launched include the Defender Aurum Pro Royal safe for jewellers, the AccuGold iEDX gold testing machine, portable MX strong room panels, and premium home lockers such as NX Pro Luxe, NX Seal, Rhino Regal, and NX Pro Slide, combining advanced security with contemporary design.

## Banks to seek RBI nod to finance M&A deals: SBI Chief CS Setty

**Mumbai**: State Bank of India chairman Challa Sreenivasulu Setty on Monday said the Indian Bank's Association (IBA) is preparing a formal recommendation to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to allow bank financing for mergers and acquisitions, particularly for listed companies with shareholder-approved deals. "We have been requesting the regulator, and will make a formal request from the IBA as well, to allow bank financing for acquisitions where transparency and



governance are ensured," Setty said at the FIBAC 2025 conference. This marks a strategic shift from earlier regulatory caution rooted in concerns

over hostile takeovers, and reflects the industry's readiness to support corporate consolidation and strategic expansion. SBI chairman noted that legacy overhangs, such as constraints under project financing guidelines and net capital ratio norms, have been mainly addressed, setting the stage for a more flexible credit environment. "It's not a supply issue anymore. It's about demand visibility. And when that demand returns, banks must be ready."

## Comic Con India 2025-26 season expands its footprint to Northeast with Guwahati edition

**Guwahati** : Comic Con India, the country's biggest and most loved pop culture celebration, has announced its entry into the vibrant city of Guwahati, marking its first-ever edition in the Northeast. The maiden Guwahati edition will be hosted on 22nd and 23rd of November, bringing the Comic Con experience to an all-new audience. This new chapter will bring Comic Con experience not only to Guwahati but will also cater to fans across the entire Northeast region. This expansion is our way of recognizing the incredible potential and passionate fandom that the region has long shown for comics, cosplay, and pop culture. This move reflects Comic Con India's deeper connection with India's evolving youth culture and its commitment to celebrating the fandom across every corner of the country. "Comic Con comes to Guwahati, giving this passionate communi-



ty a stage at home where their art, effort, and love for the culture can shine brighter than ever." said

Akshat Rathee, Co-founder and MD, NODWIN Gaming. According to the New Horizons ranking by digital

travel platform Agoda, Guwahati has emerged as India's fastest-growing destination for international travellers, another reason to make it a perfect destination for Comic Con India to enter the market. Adding to this, Shefali Johnson, CEO, Comic Con India, commented, "Our expansion into Guwahati is not just about adding another city, it is about celebrating every fandom and building authentic experiences." The Guwahati edition will mark a milestone, extending Comic Con's reach to the Northeast and underlining its position as India's definitive pop culture festival. Tickets for Guwahati Comic Con 2025-2026 happening from 22nd November to 23rd November are live now on the District app. Tickets available on: <https://link.district.in/DSTRKT/GuwahatiComicCon2025CCIPR>. Website link: [www.comicconindia.com](http://www.comicconindia.com).

## Reliance AGM: Jio IPO, dividend buzz



**Mumbai**: Reliance Industries is scheduled to hold its 48th Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Friday, August 29, 2025, at 2 pm. The meeting will be held virtually, with over 44 lakh shareholders expected to tune in. Anticipation is particularly high around whether Chairman Mukesh Ambani will finally provide clarity on the long-awaited Reliance Jio IPO. Back in the 2019 AGM, Ambani told shareholders that the company would look to list its telecom and retail arms within five years. Since

then, there has been no concrete update. A Reuters exclusive in November 2024 reported that the Jio IPO was expected to launch in 2025, while the retail unit's IPO was projected to come much later. However, another Reuters piece on July 9, 2025, cast doubt on the likelihood of a 2025 IPO, citing delays as RIL focuses on strengthening its telecom subscriber base and improving digital offerings. The report also noted that no bankers have been appointed yet.

## TVS Raider Super Squad grows, inspired by Deadpool, Wolverine

**Guwahati**: TVS Motor Company, a global leader in two and three-wheeler manufacturing, has announced the addition of the TVS Raider Super Squad Edition. Drawing inspiration from two of Marvel's most iconic characters, Deadpool and Wolverine, this latest edition infuses bold design and attitude into the TVS Raider, tak-

ing the Super Squad range to the next level. This refreshed edition showcases dynamic new decals inspired by legendary Marvel characters, Deadpool and Wolverine reinforcing the motorcycle's unique identity in the 125 cc segment. The new TVS Raider SSE comes packed with speed and purpose with a powerful 3-valve engine, best-in-



class torque of 11.75 Nm @ 6,000 RPM, and a suite of tech-led features, the

Super Squad Edition will now also get the iGO assist with Boost Mode for enhanced acceleration and GTT (Glide Through Technology) for seamless low-speed manoeuvrability and en-

hanced fuel efficiency. It also features a fully connected reverse LCD cluster with 85+ features, combining cutting-edge innovation with a thrilling ride experience. TVS Raider became India's first motorcycle to launch Marvel-themed editions, debuting with Iron Man and Black Panther in August 2023. Strengthening its successful collab-

oration with Marvel, TVS Motor Company continues to bring iconic characters to life through cutting-edge design and engineering tailored for Gen Z. The new TVS Raider Super Squad Edition is priced at ₹99,465 (Ex-showroom Delhi) and will be available across all TVS Motor Company dealerships starting this month.



# Not Just Fragrance, How to Choose an Air Freshener That Elevates Your Home Décor

By Vinit Mhamunkar, Head, Industrial Design, Godrej Consumer Products Ltd.

As India prepares for the festive season, homes come alive with colour, lights, and elaborate décor. Walls are repainted, furniture is polished, and flowers brighten every corner. Yet, amid this visual transformation, there's one invisible design element that is often overlooked which is: fragrance.

Fragrance is more than a pleasant add-on. It sets the mood, influences emotions, and shapes how guests experience a space. Research shows that scent is tied most closely to memory, meaning a fragrant home lingers long after the lights are switched off. This makes fragrance as vital a décor element as flowers, drapes, or centrepieces.

## Shapes and Colours That Blend with Your Décor

Modern fragrance devices are no longer just about functionality—they are crafted with aesthetic appeal in mind to enhance contemporary living spaces. Today's consumers prefer designs with soft curves and sleek, minimalist forms, moving away from ornamental or overly decorative models. Subtle, muted colors such as pastels, greys are especially popular, as they harmonize with modern interiors without overpowering the room. A well-designed air freshener doesn't just add a pleasant scent; it naturally complements your style, making the space feel more inviting and thoughtfully curated. Ultimately, fragrance devices are being embraced as an integral design element that elevates both the mood and the visual appeal of the

home.

## Vanilla: The Trendsetter Fragrance of the Season

This festive season, vanilla is leading the way. Once dismissed as "basic," vanilla is now at the heart of the global "gourmand fragrance" movement as it is warm, indulgent, and comforting. It strikes the perfect balance between familiarity and modernity, making it an ideal festive choice.

Pairing vanilla with florals like jasmine or roses can create an inviting ambience in living rooms, while fresh aqas or citrus blends add energy to dining areas. Vanilla doesn't just smell festive; it feels celebratory, indulgent, and timeless.

## Choosing The Right Air Freshener for Every Room

Just as every room in a home serves a different purpose, the choice of fragrance can be tailored to enhance its mood, whether it's creating warmth for gatherings, calm for rest, focus for work, or subtle indulgence for dining.

- **Living Rooms:** Warm notes such as vanilla, sandalwood, or amber create an inviting and indulgent setting for gatherings
  - **Bedrooms:** Calming florals like lavender and rose help promote rest and relaxation
  - **Work Corners:** Fresh aqas and citrus fragrances sharpen focus and add vitality
  - **Dining Spaces:** Subtle gourmand notes such as vanilla or cinnamon complement festive meals without overpowering them
- By treating fragrance as

part of spatial design, homes can achieve harmony between what looks good and what feels good.

## Effortless Hosting with Technology

Festivities also mean a packed calendar of hosting, cooking, and entertaining. Modern fragrance devices make this effortless. Automated sprays and app-enabled diffusers ensure consistent fragrance, always keeping homes guest-ready without constant monitoring.

Design-led devices such as aer Matic and aer Plug not only fit into décor seamlessly but also offer a reliable way to maintain ambience through back-to-back gatherings. For busy hosts, that means one less thing to worry about.

## Beyond the Festival Window

What's striking is that consumers no longer see fragrance as seasonal. Increasingly, devices remain in homes year-round, becoming part of daily living. This reflects a larger cultural shift: fragrance is now a design staple, not just a festive indulgence.

Décor is no longer only about what meets the eye. As Indian homes become more design-conscious, fragrance is stepping into the spotlight as the invisible element that ties it all together. Lights may dazzle and flowers may fade, but a fragrance that lingers warmly in memory ensures that a home is remembered long after the celebrations are over.

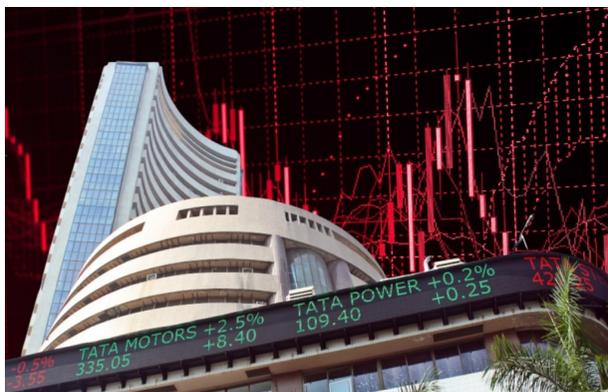
This festive season, style your space not just with what people can see—but with what they can feel.

## Tariff jitters hit markets: Nifty slips, Sensex dives 850 points—5 takeaways

### Tariff deadline sinks markets; Nifty, Sensex tumble

**Mumbai** : Indian equity benchmarks corrected a per cent each in Tuesday's session as Trump's tariff deadline approaches. The Nifty 50 closed the session 255 points or 1% lower at 24,712, and the Sensex corrected 850 points or 1.04% to end at 80,786. Similarly, the Nifty Bank was in line with the overall market, settling 690 points or 1.25% lower at 54,450. The midcap stocks also surged. The BSE Midcap declined 615 points, or 1.34%, at 45,322.02. On the other hand, the BSE Smallcap finished 892 points or 1.68% lower at 52,097.59.

"Domestic market sentiment turned cautious as the US penalty tariff deadline expires tomorrow. The persistent depreciation of the INR is adding pressure and may further impact foreign institutional inflows. Investors are closely monitoring the GoI's efforts to



support economic growth, including proposed GST rate revisions and sector-specific relief measures for industries affected by higher tariffs. Broad-based selling was observed across sectors, except for FMCG, which gained on expectations of increased consumption," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Investments.

"Technically, after a gap-down open, the market breached the crucial support zone of 24,850, and post-breakdown, selling

pressure intensified. Additionally, it also formed a long bearish candle on the daily charts and is holding a lower top formation on intraday charts, which is largely negative. We believe that the intraday market texture is weak, but a fresh selloff is possible only after the dismissal of the 24,650," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research at Kotak Securities. The indices closed Monday's session on a negative note. During the session, out of 3,084 trading stocks, 718 advanced,

while 2,286 declined, and 80 remained unchanged. Today, 52 stocks hit a fresh 52-week high. Meanwhile, 68 stocks touched a new 52-week low. Eicher Motors was the top gainer in the Nifty 50 in Tuesday's session, closing 2.68% higher. It was followed by Hindustan Unilever, Maruti Suzuki, ITC, and Nestle India. Shriram Finance's shares were the biggest losers in today's trade, declining 4%. It was followed by Sun Pharmaceutical Industries, Tata Steel, Bajaj Finance, Trent, and many others. The Textile sector's stocks fell the most in Tuesday's trade, falling 3% in the market capitalisation. Mining stocks were followed by Fertilisers, which was further followed by the Tyres sector stocks. The Paper sector stood behind the Capital Market sector. However, the Food Processing sector stocks rose in today's strong trade.

## HDFC Bank bonus: boon or tax trap?



**Mumbai**: HDFC Bank's recent bonus issue has sparked mixed reactions among investors, with many questioning whether it's a genuine reward or a strategic move that could have tax implications. The bank announced a bonus share issuance in a bid to enhance liquidity and reward shareholders, but experts caution that investors should understand the broader financial and regulatory context.

Market analysts suggest that while bonus issues can improve stock liquidity and signal confidence, they don't inherently increase shareholder wealth. The actual impact depends on future earnings perfor-

mance and investor sentiment. HDFC Bank's fundamentals remain strong, but post-bonus price adjustments and market volatility could influence short-term returns.

Under current Indian tax laws, bonus shares are not taxed at the time of receipt. However, when sold, the cost of acquisition is considered zero, which means the entire sale value is treated as capital gains. Depending on the holding period, this could attract short-term or long-term capital gains tax. Investors are advised to consult financial advisors to understand the implications based on their portfolio strategy.



## Cheteshwar Pujara bows out of all forms of Indian cricket

**New Delhi:** Cheteshwar Pujara, one of India's most dependable Test batsmen and a pillar of the national team for over a decade, has officially announced his retirement from all forms of Indian cricket. The 37-year-old made the announcement via social media on Sunday, marking the end of a distinguished career that spanned nearly two decades. Pujara played 103 Test matches for India, scoring 7,195 runs at an average of 43.60, including 19 centuries and 35 half-centuries.

He also featured in five One Day Internationals and amassed over 21,000 runs in first-class cricket. His final appearance for India came in the 2023 World Test Championship final against Australia at The Oval. In his heartfelt farewell message, Pujara reflected on his journey from a small-town boy in Rajkot to becoming the backbone of India's Test batting lineup. "Wearing the Indian jersey, singing the anthem, and trying my best each time I stepped on the field.

## Max Dowman, 15, makes stunning Premier League debut for Arsenal

**London:** Arsenal Football Club has unveiled its latest teenage sensation, Max Dowman, a 15-year-old midfielder from Chelmsford, Essex, whose rapid ascent through the ranks has culminated in a record-setting Premier League debut. Dowman entered the pitch in the 64th minute of Arsenal's emphatic 5-0 victory over Leeds United at the Emirates Stadium, becoming the second-youngest player in Premier League history at 15 years and



235 days, narrowly behind teammate Ethan Nwaneri. His cameo was met with thunderous applause, and he quickly justified the hype—drawing two fouls inside the box, one of which led to a stoppage-time penalty converted by Viktor Gyokeres. Dowman's

journey began at age five when he joined Arsenal's Hale End academy. By 13, he was already featuring for the Under-18s, and at 14, he became the youngest-ever goalscorer in the UEFA Youth League, netting against Atalanta. His 2024-25 season saw him rack up 19 goals and 5 assists in 23 Under-18 matches, with 17 goal involvements in the final seven games alone. His performances earned him a call-up to first-team training at just 14.

## NEUFC win fuels football dreams



**Kolkata:** NorthEast United FC (NEUFC) etched its name into Indian football history on Saturday night by securing a commanding 6-1 victory over Diamond Harbour FC in the final of the 134th edition of the Durand Cup. With this triumph, NEUFC became the first team since East Bengal in 1991 to win back-to-back Durand Cup titles.

The final, held at Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan, saw NEUFC dominate from the outset. Goals from Asheer Akhtar (30'), Parthib Gogoi (45'), Thoi Singh (50'), Jairo Samperio (81'), Andy Rodriguez (85'), and Alaaeddine Ajarai (90+3') sealed the emphatic win. Diamond Harbour FC managed a solitary goal through Luka Majcen in the 68th minute.

Bollywood actor and NEUFC owner John Abraham, present throughout the match, expressed deep pride in his team's achievement.

## Women's ODI World Cup: DY Patil replaces Chinnaswamy Stadium

Chinnaswamy's hosting status uncertain after stampede

**New Delhi:** In a significant venue change ahead of the ICC Women's ODI World Cup 2025, the International Cricket Council (ICC) has confirmed that DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai will replace Bengaluru's M. Chinnaswamy Stadium as one of the five host venues for the tournament. The decision follows the Karnataka State Cricket Association's (KSCA) failure to secure timely police and administrative clearances, compounded by safety concerns after a tragic stampede during Royal Challengers Bengaluru's IPL victory



parade earlier this year. The revised schedule retains the original tournament dates—September 30 to November 2—and includes matches across Guwahati, Indore, Visakhapatnam, Colombo, and now Navi Mumbai. DY

Patil Stadium will host up to five matches, including three league games, one semifinal, and potentially the final on November 2, unless Pakistan qualifies, in which case the final will be held in Colombo.

## Bhaker fourth; India sweep junior pistol

**Shymkent:** Manu Bhaker narrowly missed a podium finish in the women's 25m pistol final at the Asian Shooting Championship 2025 in Shymkent, Kazakhstan. She scored 25 points, placing fourth behind Vietnam's Thu Vinh Trinh, who took bronze with 29 points. China's Yueyue Zhang won gold after a shoot-off with teammate Jiaruixuan Xiao, both tied at 39 points. Esha Singh, another Indian contender, finished sixth with 18 points.

Despite missing individual medals, the Indian senior team—Bhaker, Esha Singh, and Simranpreet Kaur

Brar—secured bronze in the team event with a combined score of 1749, behind China and South Korea. Esha Singh had topped the qualification round, ahead of Bhaker and both Chinese finalists. India dominated the junior women's 25m pistol event, sweeping all individual medals. Payal Khatri won gold with 36 points, Naamya Kapoor took silver with 30, and Tejaswani claimed bronze with 27. The trio also earned team silver with a score of 1700, finishing behind Korea and ahead of Kazakhstan. In qualification, Naamya and Tejaswani ranked first and second.

## Argentina to play FIFA friendly in Kerala this November; opponent still undecided

Kerala gears up for historic Argentina football visit

**Kochi:** In a landmark announcement that has electrified Indian football fans, the Argentine Football Association (AFA) has officially confirmed that the reigning FIFA World Cup champions will play a friendly match in Kerala during the international window from November 10 to 18, 2025. The opponent for the fixture is yet to be finalized.



for its deep-rooted passion for South American football and its fervent support for Lionel Messi and the Albiceleste. The AFA confirmed the fixture via its official social media channels, stating that the team, led by head coach Lionel Scaloni, will

play two friendlies before the end of the year: one in Luanda, Angola, and the other in Kerala, India. The October leg of their tour will take place in the United States, with details of venues and opponents still under wraps. Kerala's Sports

Minister V. Abdurahiman also took to social media to celebrate the confirmation, calling it a "historic occasion" for the football-loving state. The minister had previously traveled to Spain in 2024 to negotiate the terms of the visit with AFA officials, following a period of uncertainty and stalled talks. The upcoming fixture is expected to feature Lionel Messi, Argentina's iconic captain and 2022 World Cup winner, although the final squad list will be announced closer to the date. The Kerala Football Association (KFA), in coordination with the All India Football Federation (AIFF).

## BCCI seeks 2 men, 4 women selectors

**Mumbai:** The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced vacancies for selectors in both the men's and women's national teams. The board is seeking to appoint two selectors for the senior men's team and four selectors for the senior women's team, along with one selector for the junior men's panel.

The senior men's selection committee is currently led by Ajit Agarkar, with members SS Das, Subroto Banerjee, Ajay Ratna, and S Sharath. The women's panel, headed by Neetu David, includes Renu Margrate, Arati Vaidya, Kalpana Venkatachar, and Shyama Dey Shaw. Applicants for the



senior men's roles must have significant playing experience at the national or first-class level. Candidates for the women's panel must have represented India internationally and should have retired from competitive cricket at least five years ago. Additionally, applicants should not have served on any BCCI committee for more than five cumulative years. The deadline for submitting applications is 5:00 PM IST on September 10, 2025.

