



## NDA eyes caste equation in Bihar

**Patna:** As the 2025 Bihar Assembly elections approach, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has intensified its efforts to recalibrate caste representation across its ticket distribution and campaign strategy. With 243 seats up for grabs, the alliance—comprising the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Janata Dal (United), and Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas)—is working to consolidate its support base among both forward and backward caste groups.

The BJP, contesting 101 seats, has allocated nearly 50% of its tickets to upper-caste candidates, including Rajputs, Bhumihars, and Brahmins. This marks a noticeable shift from previous elections, signaling a renewed emphasis on traditional vote banks. Meanwhile, JD(U) has focused its outreach on backward and extremely backward classes, reinforcing its core social justice narrative.

## I.N.D.I.A. Bloc Yet to Seal Deal on Seats, says Rahul

**Patna:** The I.N.D.I.A. opposition alliance remains embroiled in seat-sharing negotiations for the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections, with no final agreement reached even as the deadline for filing nominations for the first phase has passed. The delay has sparked confusion and internal tensions among alliance partners, threatening the unity of the anti-BJP front.

While the Congress released its first list of 48 candidates late on October 16, other key allies—including



the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), CPI-ML, and Vikassheel Insaan Party (VIP)—have yet to announce their candidates. In a surprising move, several parties filed nominations independently, leading to overlapping candidates in at least seven constituencies and what leaders are calling “friendly fights”.

## Trump warns India over Russian oil tariffs

**New Delhi:** U.S. President Donald Trump has issued a stern warning to India, stating that the country will continue to face “massive tariffs” if it does not halt its purchases of Russian oil. Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One, Trump claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had personally assured him that India would stop buying crude oil from Moscow. “I spoke with Prime Minister Modi of India, and he said he’s not going to be doing the Russian oil thing,” Trump said. “But if they want to say otherwise, then they’ll just continue to



pay massive tariffs, and they don’t want to do that”. The remarks come amid heightened U.S. pressure on countries maintaining energy ties with Russia, which Washington argues helps fund Moscow’s war

efforts in Ukraine. Despite Trump’s assertions, India’s Ministry of External Affairs has denied any such assurance, stating that India’s energy policy is guided by national interest and market conditions.

## Modi, Lanka PM Talk On Boosting Ties

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with his Sri Lankan counterpart, Harini Amarasuriya, in New Delhi on Friday to discuss ways to deepen cooperation between the two nations across key sectors. The meeting marked a significant step in reaffirming the longstanding partnership between India and Sri Lanka, with both leaders emphasizing mutual development and regional stability. According to official



statements and social media posts by PM Modi, the discussions covered a broad range of areas including education, women’s empowerment, innovation, devel-

opment cooperation, and the welfare of fishermen—a sensitive issue that continues to impact communities along the maritime boundary.

Prime Minister Modi described Sri Lanka as a “close neighbour” and stressed the “immense importance” of bilateral cooperation for the prosperity of both countries and the wider Indian Ocean Region. He also conveyed warm wishes to Sri Lankan President Dissanayaka.



Pakistan Army honors FC martyr in Kohat funeral

## Rajnath, Yogi Flag off First Batch of UP-Made BrahMos Missiles

### BrahMos completes first missile batch in Lucknow

**Lucknow:** In a landmark moment for India’s defence manufacturing sector, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath jointly flagged off the first batch of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles produced at the BrahMos Aerospace facility in Sarojini Nagar, Lucknow.

The event marks a major milestone for the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor (UPDIC), reinforcing India’s push for self-reliance under the ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’ initiative. The state-of-the-art facility, inaugurated on May 11, 2025, is equipped with ad-



vanced systems for missile integration, testing, and quality assurance.

According to official statements, the Lucknow unit will initially produce

100 missiles annually, with plans to scale up to 150. This expansion is expected to generate ₹150–200 crore in GST revenue for the state each year. Speak-

ing at the ceremony, Rajnath Singh emphasized the strategic importance of BrahMos missiles and praised the collaboration between central and state governments in boosting indigenous defence capabilities. CM Yogi Adityanath hailed the development as a turning point for Uttar Pradesh, positioning it as a rising defence manufacturing hub. The BrahMos missile system, known for its speed, precision, and versatility, is a joint venture between India’s Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Russia’s NPO Mashinostroyeniya.

## Pakistan to Hold Talks With Afghanistan in Qatar

**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan and Afghanistan are set to engage in high-level talks in Qatar today, following a sharp escalation in cross-border violence that claimed at least 10 lives and shattered a brief ceasefire. The meeting, confirmed by both governments, comes amid growing regional concern over deteriorating security conditions along the shared border.

Pakistan’s Defence Minister Khawaja Asif and intelligence chief General Asim Malik are leading the delegation to Doha, where they will meet with Afghan Taliban officials. Afghanistan’s delegation is headed by Defence Minister Mohammed Yaqub, according to Taliban government spokesman Zabihullah

Mujahid. The talks were prompted by Pakistani airstrikes on Friday targeting alleged militant hideouts in Afghanistan’s Paktika province, including areas in Urgun and Barmal districts. The strikes reportedly killed 10 civilians, including two children and several members of Afghanistan’s cricket team. The attacks broke a 48-hour ceasefire that had briefly calmed tensions following earlier clashes. Pakistan has accused Afghanistan of harboring members of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a group responsible for recent attacks on Pakistani military installations. Afghanistan has denied the allegations, while also accusing Pakistan of violating its sovereignty through repeated airstrikes.



## India's civilization rooted in 5,000 years of spiritual penance, says CM Sarma

**Guwahati:** Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday asserted that India was not born in 1947 but is the culmination of 5,000 years of spiritual and intellectual penance. He was speaking at the fourth Foundation Day celebration of Pragjyotishpur University at Hajongbari, Chandrapur in Kamrup (Metro) district.

Inaugurating the university's newly constructed auditorium and pharmacy block, Sarma said that the nation's ancient civilization led the world in wisdom and knowledge before the colonial era disrupted its intellectual progress. He urged institutions such as Pragjyotishpur University to revive India's great tradition of learning and philosophy rooted in the Sanatan value system. Elaborating on the legacy of Pragjyo-



tishpur, Sarma noted that the term means "City of Eastern Astrology" and that the name finds mention in the Ramayana and Mahabharata as the kingdom of King Bhagadatta. He traced Assam's lineage from ancient Pragjyotishpur to Kamrupa and later to its present identity after the Ahom era. "Pragjyotishpur University, grounded

in Indian educational and cultural values, reflects the noble mission of shaping education as a means of collective welfare," the Chief Minister said. He hailed the university's rapid progress in the last three years, describing it as a "young banyan tree" destined to grow into a leading institution for life-oriented education.

## Village Vision 2030 finalized for Kamjong

**Imphal:** The Village Vision 2030 and Village Action Plan (VAP) for 26 villages in Kamjong District under the Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan were finalized on Friday. The planning exercise, facilitated by the District Nodal Officer, brought together Block Nodal Officers, Master Trainers, officials from various line departments, and the UDCRMS team. The session was chaired by Shri H. L. Jain, ADC Kamjong.

The deliberations focused on consolidating village vision statements, identifying developmental gaps, and aligning sectoral priorities with departmental programmes to ensure effective and coordinated implementation. Key thematic areas discussed included infrastructure, livelihoods, education, health, natural



resource management, and local governance. Village representatives actively contributed to the discussions, voicing support for the collective development vision. Participants underscored the importance of scheme convergence and community participation to ensure sustainable outcomes. The finalized plans will serve as a strategic roadmap for inclusive, targeted, and time-bound development across Kamjong District, strengthening local governance and advancing the district's shared Vision 2030 goals.

## Gogoi alleges SIT bias

**Guwahati:** Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi on Sunday alleged that the investigation into the death of the state's icon Zubeen Garg in Singapore is not moving in the right direction.

He alleged that the state government constituted the Special Investigation Team (SIT) to save Shyamkanu Mahanta and Siddhartha Sharma, currently in judicial custody, as they have close ties with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and the BJP. "As an investigation is going on, it is the duty of the government to make public all information on Shyamkanu Mahanta and Siddhartha Sharma. Nothing should be kept hidden," Gogoi told reporters.

## Manipur Governor backs climate-first development

*Governor launches climate data centre*

**Imphal:** Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla has urged all Himalayan and Northeastern states to place climate action at the heart of their development strategies. Speaking at the valedictory session of the Indian Himalayan Region Climate Change Conclave 2025, held at the City Convention Centre in Imphal, the Governor emphasized that real progress requires integrating science, policy, and community efforts.

The two-day conclave, organized by the Directorate of Environment and Climate Change, brought together over 400 participants, including represen-

tatives from 12 Himalayan states, researchers, government departments, NGOs, and academic institutions. It served as a platform for dialogue on climate adaptation, policy innovation, and sustainable practices tailored to the unique challenges of the Himalayan region. Governor Bhalla highlighted the increasing climate vulnerabilities faced by Manipur, including erratic rainfall, rising temperatures, and frequent floods and droughts. He stressed the need for climate budgeting across all sectors and called for stronger regional cooperation to address shared environmental threats.

## Leaders greet on Kati Bihu

**Guwahati:** As Assam celebrated Kati Bihu on Saturday, a festival rooted in agricultural hope and spiritual reflection, prominent national leaders extended their greetings to the people of the state.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah conveyed his wishes via social media, praying for the well-being and prosperity of Assam's citizens. "May this auspicious occasion bring happiness and abundance into everyone's lives," he wrote, addressing the people as "brothers and sisters of Assam". BJP National President JP Nadda also joined in, expressing his heartfelt greetings and acknowledging the cultural significance of Kati Bihu.

## Eighteen firms show project's major significance Thenzawl Peace City becomes Mizoram's planned township

**Aizawl:** Mizoram Chief Minister Pu Lalduhoma has announced that Thenzawl, a town in Serchhip district, will be developed as the state's first planned township under the ambitious "Thenzawl Peace City" initiative. The project aims to promote tourism, balanced urban growth, and high-quality infrastructure.

The announcement followed a meeting between the Chief Minister and representatives from IPE Global, the consultancy firm tasked with preparing the master plan. Also present was Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation Minister Pu K. Sapdanga. Lalduhoma emphasized the



need for meticulous planning and a commitment to excellence, envisioning Thenzawl Peace City as a clean, well-organized, and beautiful urban space that will attract visitors and set a benchmark for future development projects.

The initiative has already drawn interest from 18 reputed firms during the pre-bid phase, reflecting its scale

and significance. The government hopes the project will serve as a model for sustainable urban development across Mizoram. The government's call for proposals has already attracted interest from 18 reputed firms during the pre-bid phase, indicating strong national attention to the project. The township is expected to include modern amenities, eco-friendly infrastructure, and smart city features tailored to Mizoram's unique geography and cultural context. Authorities hope it will boost local employment, improve quality of life, and position Mizoram as a forward-thinking state in India's Northeast.

## Zubeen Garg Case: Public Statements Invited

**Guwahati:** In a significant development concerning the Zubeen Garg case, a one-man inquiry panel has officially invited public statements and submissions from citizens. The panel, constituted to investigate the circumstances surrounding the recent controversy involving the popular Assamese singer, will accept inputs from No-

vember 3 to November 21, 2025. The initiative aims to ensure transparency and public participation in the inquiry process. Citizens, witnesses, and stakeholders are encouraged to submit written statements, relevant documents, or any other material that may assist the panel in its investigation. Submissions can be made in person or

via official communication channels designated by the panel. The inquiry was set up following widespread public interest and media coverage surrounding the incident. The panel's mandate includes reviewing all available evidence, hearing testimonies, and preparing a comprehensive report to be submitted to the appropriate authorities. Officials

have emphasized that the process will remain impartial and confidential. The panel has assured that all submissions will be treated with due diligence and respect for privacy. Further details regarding submission procedures, contact information, and office hours are expected to be released by the panel's secretariat in the coming days.

## Meghalaya police rescue man from witchcraft accusation mob

**Shillong:** A 39-year-old man was dramatically rescued by Meghalaya police from an irate mob in Lawmei, Diengiei area under Myllem block of East Khasi Hills district, following accusations of practicing witchcraft. The incident occurred on the night of October 15 when Nicolas Lyn-

gkhai, a woodcutter from Mawshynrut in West Khasi Hills, sought shelter in a shed due to cold weather. The shed's owner reportedly spotted Lyngkhai and began taking photographs, which drew the attention of local residents. Suspicions quickly escalated, and a mob gathered.



## Godrej aer unveils festive edition automatic home freshener, targets premium gifting segment

**Guwahati:** Godrej aer, India's No. 1 home fragrance brand under Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL), has expanded its automatic home freshener range with the launch of Godrej aer matic Royal Festive Essence. Designed exclusively for the festive season, the device features a rose-gold finish and a Warm Vanilla fragrance, combining rich vanilla with soft floral undertones to

create a warm, inviting ambience.

The device offers flexible placement with a built-in shelf stand and wall-mounting options. Each refill delivers up to 2,200 sprays lasting up to 60 days on low settings, and the smart timer allows intervals of 10, 20, or 40 minutes. The starter kit, priced at ₹549, is available across modern trade, general trade, and leading

e-commerce platforms.

Air fresheners remain one of the fastest-growing segments in East India, valued at over ₹300 crore, with automatic variants contributing over ₹150 crore. In Guwahati, festive demand is notably high, as urban consumers increasingly prefer premium, design-centric home fragrances. Retailers report strong early bookings, with shoppers seeking products that

elevate home interiors and serve as aspirational gifting options during Diwali and other celebrations. "Air care has delivered double-digit growth over the past few years," said Ashwin Moorthy, CMO – India & Global Head of Categories, GCPL. "This festive edition is crafted entirely in India to enhance celebratory moments and position air care as a must-have festive indulgence."

## Quick commerce eases Diwali celebrations rush

**Guwahati:** As Diwali nears, quick commerce platforms are playing a pivotal role in helping consumers manage last-minute gifting, hosting, and festive errands with ease. From busy professionals scrambling for gifts to families ensuring traditional treats and décor reach loved ones, platforms like Zepto, Happilo, Godrej, and Paperkraft are offering curated options available in minutes.

For office-goers who forgot gifts, Happilo Dhamaka Gift Boxes and Fabule Mini Karaoke Mics are providing instant festive energy. Families travelling home can rely on Godrej Jersey Mysore Pak and Phool Diwali Decor Boxes to relive childhood Diwali memories. Hosts organizing impromptu gatherings are turning to Zepto's Diwali party essentials, Paperkraft Eco Crackers, and Godrej Yummiez

range for quick, hassle-free setups. Office potluck participants can impress colleagues with Farmley Mix Dry Fruit Gift Packs and Open Secret Festive Snack Boxes, combining indulgence with mindful snacking.

In Guwahati, local demand for quick commerce has surged as urban consumers prioritize convenience alongside tradition. Retailers in the city report higher sales in sweets, home décor, and gifting segments, while online platforms are witnessing a sharp increase in same-hour delivery orders, helping consumers complete their festive shopping in record time. With these solutions, quick commerce is turning last-minute stress into timely Diwali celebrations, ensuring the festival is joyful, vibrant, and hassle-free.

## RBL eyes top 5 ranking in sector



**Mumbai:** In a landmark move, on October 18, Emirates NBD, the second-largest bank in the UAE, announced its intent to acquire a controlling stake in RBL Bank through a \$3 billion (Rs 26,850 crore) preferential capital infusion. The mood within RBL Bank is electric. Just this (Sunday) morning, R Subramaniakumar, managing director & CEO.

## Sony India launches WH-1000XM6, elevates High-End sound standards

**Guwahati:** Sony India introduced the WH-1000XM6 wireless noise-cancelling headphones, the latest iteration of its acclaimed 1000X series, aiming to redefine premium audio experiences for consumers, professionals, and travelers. Equipped with the next-generation HD Noise Cancelling Processor QN3 and 12 microphones—1.5 times more than the WH-1000XM5—the WH-1000XM6 delivers real-time noise reduction, adaptive ambient sound control, and ultra-clear call quality. Sony's Adaptive NC Optimiser and Auto Ambient Sound mode fine-tune audio

based on surroundings and air pressure, offering an uninterrupted listening experience. The headphones, co-developed with top mastering engineers, feature High-Resolution Audio, DSEE Extreme upscaling, and 360 Reality Audio Upmix for cinema-level spatial sound. Scene-based Listening, Quick Access, multi-device connectivity, and ultra-low latency LE Audio ensure seamless integration for both entertainment and professional use.

In Guwahati, the launch has triggered strong interest among tech-savvy consumers and audiophiles.

Leading electronics outlets and e-commerce platforms report high inquiries for the WH-1000XM6, with shoppers particularly drawn to its studio-level sound, adaptive noise cancelling, and ergonomic design. Analysts say the premium audio segment in Assam is expanding steadily, with increasing demand for next-gen headphones among young professionals and music enthusiasts. Priced at Rs. 39,990, the WH-1000XM6 is available in Black, Platinum Silver, and Midnight Blue from Sony Center, select Croma and Reliance outlets, and online from 26 September 2025.

## Škoda Auto India's all-new Octavia RS sells out in 20 minutes, marks iconic comeback

**Guwahati:** Škoda Auto India has reintroduced the all-new Octavia RS, marking a milestone as the brand celebrates 25 years in the country. Available in limited numbers as a Fully-Built Unit (FBU), the iconic model was sold out in just 20 minutes through pre-bookings, underscoring its cult status among enthusiasts. Priced at ₹49.99 lakh (ex-showroom), the Octavia RS combines legacy, design, and performance in a single package.

Powered by a 2.0 TSI turbocharged petrol engine producing 195 kW (265 PS) and 370 Nm of torque, paired with a 7-speed DSG automatic transmission, the Octavia RS accelerates from 0–100 km/h in 6.4 seconds and reaches a top speed of 250 km/h. It comes equipped with ad-



vanced safety and convenience features including 10 airbags, ADAS, Head-Up Display, 360° Area View cameras, and a premium Canton 675W sound system. The car's bold design is highlighted by LED Matrix headlights, 19-inch alloy wheels, and five striking colours, while the luxurious cabin offers Suedia/leather upholstery, sports seats with memory and massage functions, three-zone cli-

mate control, and a 32.77 cm infotainment system. Inside the cabin, the Octavia RS features Suedia/leather upholstery with red contrast stitching, sports front seats with electric adjust, memory, heating, and massage functions, a digital virtual cockpit and ambient lighting.

Safety features include 10 airbags, adaptive cruise control, autonomous emergency braking, lane assist,

intelligent park assist, a 360-degree area view camera, ISOFIX mounts, and a head-up display. The new Octavia RS is covered by a 4-year/1 lakh km warranty and a 4-year complimentary roadside assistance package. The model joins Škoda's existing India line-up comprising the Slavia, Kushaq, Kodiaq and Kylaq.

In Guwahati, the launch has generated strong interest among premium car buyers, with local dealerships witnessing inquiries from enthusiasts eager to experience the Octavia RS. The response reflects the city's growing appetite for high-performance, luxury vehicles. Customer deliveries across India will commence on November 6, reinforcing Škoda's strategy to combine legacy and innovation in the Indian market.

## Fortnite, Snapchat hit by global AWS outage



**Bengaluru:** Amazon's cloud services unit AWS was hit by an outage on Monday that took down several popular apps including Fortnite and Snapchat and caused connectivity issues for many companies around the world.

AWS said it was seeing increased "error rates and latencies" for multiple services. "We are working on multiple parallel paths to accelerate recovery," it said in its latest update. The AWS outage is the first major internet disruption since last year's CrowdStrike malfunction that hobbled technology systems in hospitals, banks and airports globally.

AWS provides on-demand computing power, data storage and other digital services to compa-

nies, governments and individuals. Disruptions to its servers can cause outages across websites and platforms that rely on its cloud infrastructure. AWS competes with Google's and Microsoft's cloud services.

AWS directed Reuters to its status page when requested for a comment. Amazon did not respond to a request for comment. AI startup Perplexity, cryptocurrency exchange Coinbase and trading app Robinhood attributed the outages to AWS. "Perplexity is down right now. The root cause is an AWS issue. We're working on resolving it," Perplexity CEO Aravind Srinivas said in a post on X.

Amazon's shopping website, PrimeVideo and Alexa were all facing issues, according to Downtetector.



### Nissan adds CNG retrofit to EZ-Shift Magnite, introduces integrated fuel lid at Rs 71,999

**Guwahati:** Nissan Motor India has expanded its CNG retrofitment program to the New Nissan Magnite BR10 EZ-Shift (AMT), following strong demand for the manual transmission variant. The government-approved retrofit allows customers to combine Nissan's performance with CNG cost-efficiency, now backed by a 3-year or 1 lakh km warranty. The company has also introduced an integrated fuel-filling system within the standard fuel lid, replacing the previous engine-compartment placement, enabling quicker refuelling and enhanced user convenience. The retrofit kit is priced at ₹71,999, reflecting GST benefits, and is available across 13 states through authorised Nissan retrofit centres, covering both Manual (BR10 MT) and EZ-Shift (AMT) variants of the 1.0-litre petrol New



Magnite. Saurabh Vatsa, Managing Director, Nissan Motor India, said, "Expanding the program to EZ-Shift demonstrates our commitment to customer-centric mobility, combining engineering excellence with affordability and convenience. The new fuel-lid integration and revised pricing enhance the ownership experience."

In Guwahati, the program has garnered positive traction among urban commuters seeking cost-effective and sustain-

able mobility. Dealers report increasing interest in the EZ-Shift variant, driven by the city's growing preference for compact SUVs with fuel-efficient CNG options, reflecting a broader trend toward eco-friendly and value-driven vehicles in Assam. With its bold design, over 55 safety and segment-first features, and the KURO Special Edition launch, the New Nissan Magnite continues to solidify its position as a versatile, value-rich compact SUV in India.

### HDFC Bank Q2 PAT rises 11% y-o-y



**Mumbai:** HDFC Bank, India's largest private sector lender, reported a net profit of 10.8% on year to Rs 18,641 crore for the quarter ended September, beating analyst estimates. As per Bloomberg estimates, analysts had expected the net profit at Rs 17,345 crore for the reporting quarter.

In the September quarter, the net interest income inched up by 5% on year to Rs 31,552 crore, higher than the analyst estimate of Rs 31,423 crore. Other income also grew by 25% on year to Rs 14,350 crore. However, on a sequential basis, it fell sharply by 34%.

Net interest margins moderated to 3.27% in July-September from 3.35% a quarter ago. The bank's management said there would be "some tailwinds" on account of deposit repricing over the next couple of quarters to a year.

### Godrej's Diwali campaign 'Kanta Didi' drives inclusion, sparks market buzz

**Guwahati:** Godrej Industries Group, through its brand-agnostic media property Godrej L'Affaire, unveiled its Diwali campaign film 'Kanta Didi', reinforcing its #CelebratingAcceptance initiative. The film centers on Kanta Didi, a domestic worker, whose warm, instinctive acceptance of a queer couple highlights how empathy emerges in everyday interactions. Kapil, a newcomer hesitant to share his identity, finds confidence and pride through Kanta Didi's simple words: "Acha, boyfriend hai? Toh mereko ko kya?" The narrative reflects Godrej's philosophy that acceptance and inclusion are practices of humanity, not mere awareness.

Parmesh Shahani, Head of Godrej DEI Lab, said, "The films celebrate quiet, everyday change, showing that progress happens when acceptance moves from policy to practice." Raz Rehman Ali, Director at Onlyn India, added that the campaign's strength lies in its authenticity, observing life rather than preaching lessons. Tanya Dubash, Executive Director & Chief Brand Offi-

cer, Godrej Industries Group said, "At Godrej L'Affaire we have always used storytelling to spark meaningful conversations around inclusion through our #CelebratingAcceptance series. Over the past three years, these films have delved into how acceptance finds expression in everyday life. With 'Kanta Didi' we continue that dialogue, to show that true progress is when acceptance and inclusion become simply second nature."

In Guwahati, the campaign has resonated strongly with local audiences. Social media chatter and discussions at retail outlets have spiked during the festive season, reflecting heightened engagement with themes of acceptance. The campaign has also encouraged local businesses to align with inclusive messaging, while community screenings have driven consumer attention toward Godrej's brand properties. Through Kanta Didi, Godrej reinforces that relationships, not rituals, define celebrations, making this Diwali a platform for unity, empathy, and societal dialogue.

### Retail, energy fuel RIL growth



**Mumbai:** Reliance Industries (RIL) is expected to build on its retail and fuel refining verticals while new energy and AI are the key for next leg of growth, according to brokerages. RIL on Friday missed analyst estimates for the Q2FY26 as softness in its oil and gas and petrochemical segments tempered gains in refining, retail, and digital services.

"RIL's earnings should get investor confidence back; re-rating is ahead as consumer retail is turning around and beat estimates," said Morgan Stanley. Terming that the guidance was optimistic, the brokerage said the setup for the December quarter looked very strong, notably retail and fuel refining. New energy and AI are key for the next \$50 billion in value creation, it said.

### TVS launches Apache RTX, redefine adventure rally touring at Rs 1.99 lakh

**Guwahati:** TVS Motor Company has unveiled its all-new TVS Apache RTX, marking its entry into the adventure rally touring segment with an introductory price of ₹1,99,000. Built on the next-generation TVS RT-XD4 engine platform, the 299.1 cc single-cylinder, liquid-cooled engine delivers 36 PS at 9,000 rpm and 28.5 Nm torque at 7,000 rpm. Designed for performance and long-distance touring, the Apache RTX features four ride modes—Urban, Rain, Tour, and Rally—along with a 5-inch TFT display with Bluetooth connectivity, bi-directional quickshifter, cruise control, linear traction control, and tyre pressure monitoring system. Engineered with a steel trellis frame, long-travel WP suspension, rally-inspired ergonomics, and modular mounts for luggage and guards, the

bike combines racing DNA with adventure touring comfort. Signature DRL lighting, modern design, and intuitive rider interfaces further enhance its appeal for thrill-seekers and off-road enthusiasts. In Guwahati, the launch has generated significant buzz among urban adventure riders, with dealers reporting robust pre-bookings. The city's growing motorcycle community appreciates the Apache RTX's blend of track-inspired performance and touring practicality, viewing it as an ideal companion for both weekend rides and long-distance exploration. Gaurav Gupta, President - 2W India Business, TVS Motor Company, said, "The Apache RTX continues the legacy of over six million Apache riders globally, while introducing a new segment in adventure rally touring."

### Assam's GAPPY sends second UPSC batch to Delhi training

**Guwahati:** Assam's Governor Assam Pratibha Protisaha Yojana (GAPPY) has taken a significant step in nurturing the state's talent with the second batch of scholars set to undergo free coaching for the 2026 UPSC Civil Services Examination in Delhi. Launched in 2024 by Governor Shri Lakshman Prasad Acharya in partnership with Arya Pratibha Vikas Sansthan (APVS), the programme aims to empower students from economically weaker sections, providing mentorship, residential support, and access to India's top UPSC coaching institutes.

The 2025 selection saw participation from 270 aspirants across Assam, including Sivasagar, Nagaon, and West Karbi Anglong. Following counselling, essay tests, and interviews in Guwahati, ten outstanding candidates were shortlisted for intensive training at institutes like Vision IAS, Vajiram & Ravi, ALS IAS, Sunya IAS, and Drishti IAS Academy. All expenses are fully covered under GAPPY, with APVS overseeing academic guidance and mentorship.

In Guwahati, educational and coaching centres in the city have observed a surge

in UPSC aspirant interest following GAPPY's announcement. Workshops, counselling sessions, and preparatory courses have gained traction, reflecting increased demand for structured civil services guidance and the growing aspirational mindset among urban youth. Since 2019, APVS has supported over 200 students nationwide, with more than 100 clearing the UPSC exam. Shri S.K. Arya, Chairman of APVS, lauded the Governor's vision and reaffirmed the organisation's commitment to shaping Assam's future civil servants.

### HDFC, ICICI stocks diverge post quarterly results

**Mumbai:** Shares of HDFC Bank Ltd. and ICICI Bank Ltd. moved in opposing directions after India's two largest lenders declared their quarterly results. HDFC Bank's share price rose as much as 1.75% over its previous close to an intraday high of ₹1,020 apiece on the BSE even as ICICI Bank's share price shed 2.57% to an intraday low of ₹1,399.65 apiece. The benchmark Sensex opened nearly a percent higher today. That, after both the companies reported their second-quarter earnings. HDFC Bank has outperformed ICICI Bank on several financial metrics—especially at the bottomline. Standalone net profit of India's largest private lender rose 11% over the year-ago period to ₹18,641 crore in the three months ended 30 September 2025.



# Expert Guide: How Men Can Stay Fresh and Energized for Diwali Parties

By Dr. Reena Bibals, Global Head- R&D for Premium Personal Care, Godrej Consumer Products Ltd

From high-energy Diwali parties to long evenings of social gatherings, family get-togethers, and festive celebrations, this season demands not just style but stamina and, above all, enduring freshness. For men who want to stay confident, upbeat, and fragrant throughout the celebrations, here's a step-by-step guide leveraging modern grooming essentials and fragrance techniques.

## 1. Start Your Routine with a Fresh Shower

Kick off your day with a revitalizing shower using a gentle shower gel or soap enriched with invigorating notes like citrus, mint or patchouli. These scents cleanse away sweat, infuse the skin with freshness, and lay the foundation for lasting aroma. Don't overlook a thorough scalp cleanse with a hydrating shampoo,

the festive humidity and long hours of socialising can lead to sweat build-up.

**Expert Secret:** Alternate between cooling body washes and exfoliating scrubs on different days. This dual routine not only purifies the skin but also keeps body odour at bay during long celebrations.

## 2. Layer Fragrances The Right Way

Long-lasting freshness requires smart layering. After showering, spritz a complementary body mist or deodorant directly onto clean, towel-dried skin especially on pulse points such as the wrists, inner elbows, and neck. Pulse points radiate heat and help diffuse scent slowly, ensuring a more persistent fragrance throughout the night.

**Expert Secret:** Never rub perfume or cologne into your skin; this breaks down

the delicate top notes. A light spray and air dry will preserve the scent structure, helping keep your fragrance true and appealing all evening.

## 3. Choose Fragrances Wisely

Opt for light and uplifting scents having citrus & spicy floral notes. Consider using deodorant sprays that offer freshness for longer hours such as Park Avenue Voyage Deodorant Spray. Such deo sprays are energy-boosting yet never overpowering, making them perfect for Diwali parties, card nights, and festive dinners. Avoid heavy fragrances, which can become overwhelming and even trigger discomfort for those around you.

**Expert Secret:** For a truly unique scent signature, layer a body mist with a lightly scented hair product. Subtle fragrance from multiple

grooming essentials (shower gels, deodorant, mist, and hair shampoo) creates a multidimensional freshness.

## 4. Maintain On-the-Go Grooming

Pack a compact grooming kit in your bag or car a travel-size soap or wipes, a roll-on deodorant, and a body mist/mini perfume. This allows quick touch-ups between events, especially after dancing or socializing. Many modern grooming kits now include matte-finish facial wipes and scalp sprays, helping control sweat and excess oil in minutes.

**Expert Secret:** Carry blotting papers or a small towel to dab away sweat after lively Garba routines. Reapply body mist or a deodorant, focusing on the neck and chest for maximum freshness.

## 5. Focus on Hydration

## and Nutrition

Stay hydrated with frequent water sips, and fuel up with light snacks like fruit, seasoned nuts, or yogurt before heading out. Proper hydration and nutrition help regulate body temperature, keeping sweat and fatigue in check. **Expert Secret:** Add a few drops of lemon or mint to your water bottle a subtle but noticeable flavour that reinvigorates senses and keeps breath fresh long into the night.

## 6. The Finishing Touch: Shirt, Scalp, and Accessories

Before leaving for celebrations, lightly mist your shirt or scarf with fragrance never directly onto expensive fabrics, but from a distance to allow a gentle, lingering freshness. Comb and style hair with a non-greasy hair serum or lightweight pomade featuring

fresh notes. For those with facial hair, run a scented beard oil through for total grooming harmony.

**Expert Secret:** If you plan to wear accessories like watches or metal bracelets, spray fragrance on the inner wrist before wearing them, the heat from metal can subtly amplify your scent.

## Conclusion

This Diwali, freshness is an art man can master with smart product choices and advanced fragrance techniques. Step into every party, get-together, and celebration not just looking great but feeling reinvigorated through the right shower gels, mists, deodorants, grooming kits, and most importantly, expert care. The festival is about togetherness, energy, and joy let each moment be accompanied by fresh confidence and lasting charm.

# MCX gold, silver prices rise higher on Diwali after a break over Dhanteras weekend

**New Delhi:** Gold and silver prices returned to a rally on Diwali day after a break over the Dhanteras weekend, according to data from the Multi Commodity Index. MCX Gold price rose as much as 0.97% to ₹1,28,556 for 10 gm even as the MCX Silver price increased 2.8% to ₹1,59,875 per kg, according to data on the MCX website. The bullion had traded lower over the weekend.

Globally, gold prices edged higher, helped by chances of more US Fed rate cuts while investors awaited US inflation data



and US-China trade talks this week. Spot gold was up 0.1% at \$4,253.33 per ounce. US gold futures for December delivery climbed 1.3% to \$4,266.30 per ounce. Spot silver rose

0.5% to \$52.12 per ounce. Prices fell about 4.4% on Friday in their worst session since early April, after hitting a record high of \$54.47 earlier in the day. Platinum fell 0.8% to \$1,596.88 per

ounce and palladium gained 0.2% to \$1,476.97. "The gold market is trying to find its footing after Friday's sell-off," Kyle Rodda, an analyst with Capital.com, told Reuters. "Sentiment is normalising, cooling down a bit, after a few weeks of mania."

Gold fell about 1.8% on Friday, the most since mid-May, after US President Donald Trump said his proposed 100% tariff on goods from China would not be sustainable. He said he would meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping and that he thought things would be fine with China.

# Small finance banks to scale up gold loan business



**New Delhi:** Amid a muted overall credit growth in the banking sector, gold loans have emerged as the only segment witnessing strong traction. Rising gold prices have further boosted customer demand.

Small finance banks are actively ramping up efforts to seize the opportunity and scale up gold loan portfolios by adding branches and deploying more employees on ground. This also marks a shift from unsecured lending to secured loan books. "We look forward to scale up the gold business. We would like to cater to customers in three segments – consumption purpose, business expansion and income generation – primarily focusing on business banking clients through overdraft and tailored offers. It will help unlock capital by shift-

ing towards secured assets, thereby improving liquidity and capital efficiency," said Murali Vaidyanathan, senior president and country head – branch banking, Equitas Small Finance Bank. As per the RBI data, loans against jewellery grew 117% in August, compared with 40% a year ago. Outstanding gold loans stood at Rs 62.13 lakh crore as on August 22.

"Rising gold prices have increased our focus on growing the gold loan business. Currently, we operate through a network of approximately 350 branches offering gold loans. We are actively working to expand this footprint and enhance presence to capitalise on emerging opportunities in the market," said Vibhas Chandra, head – micro banking and gold loans, Ujjivan Small Finance Bank.

# PSBs' digital loans may hit ₹1 lakh crore

**Mumbai:** Enthused by the initial round of digital-footprint-based lending, the government is nudging public sector banks (PSBs) to increase the threshold for such loans to around Rs 1-2 crore from Rs 50 lakh. The enhanced thresholds could enable them to collectively achieve around Rs 1 lakh crore loan disbursement through this new model in 2025-26.

It was announced in the Union Budget 2024-25 that PSBs will build their in-house capability to assess MSMEs for credit, based on the scoring of digital footprints of MSMEs, such as PAN,

Goods and Service Tax and Income Tax data, electricity bills, etc. The new model is an alternative to relying on the traditional assessment of credit eligibility based only on asset or turnover criteria.

The country's largest bank by assets, State Bank of India, started the digital-footprint-based lending from January 2025, while other PSBs started from April of the current financial year. The digital lending has reached around Rs 70,000 crore so far since January. Of this, SBI alone accounts for around Rs 56,000 crore, including

its achievement of around Rs 30,000 crore in Q4FY25. So far in FY26, the digital-data-based lending has reached around Rs 40,000 crore for all PSBs. "For the whole of FY26, we are expecting digital-assessment-based lending of about Rs 1 lakh crore, with SBI expected to do Rs 75,000 crore and other PSBs together Rs 25,000 crore," an official said. Acknowledging the challenge to achieve the stiff target, officials said banks have been asked to utilise their six months of experience to standardise such loans and think of larger amounts.



## Rodri out vs Villarreal, Villa



**London:** Manchester City will be without midfielder Rodri for matches against Villarreal and Aston Villa this week as the Spanish midfielder continues his recovery from a hamstring injury, manager Pep Guardiola said. The 29-year-old, who missed most of last season recovering from a major knee injury, limped off in the first half of City's 1-0 win at Brentford on October 5 before withdrawing from the Spain squad for their World Cup qualifiers. He also missed City's 2-0 home win over Everton on Saturday. "I don't think so for Villarreal or Aston Villa," Guardiola told British media. "It's not long, but it's muscular and you have to be careful."

"We've tried so many times, we've tried to not take a risk, but we have not been able to (manage) that. So we will see." City travel to Rodri's former club Villarreal on Tuesday in the Champions League before facing Villa in the Premier League on Sunday.

## Women's World Cup 2025: Indian women face a test of character

**Indore:** The Indian women's cricket team finds itself at a critical juncture in the ICC Women's ODI World Cup 2025, following three consecutive defeats that have cast doubt over their semifinal qualification hopes. After promising wins against Sri Lanka and Pakistan, the team has stumbled with back-to-back three-wicket losses to South Africa and Australia, followed by a narrow four-run defeat to England at the Holkar Stadium in Indore. In the latest match, England posted a formidable



total of 288, led by a century from captain Heather Knight. India's chase was anchored by Smriti Mandhana (88), Harmanpreet Kaur (70), and Deepti Sharma (50), but a late collapse saw them fall short by just four runs. The loss allowed England to secure a semifinal berth, becoming the third team to do so.

## Fleetwood keeps India promise to Frankie

**New Delhi:** England's Tommy Fleetwood delivered a masterclass in composure and precision to win the inaugural DP World India Championship at Delhi Golf Club, securing a two-shot victory over Japan's Keita Nakajima. The win marked Fleetwood's eighth career title on the DP World Tour and his first European Tour triumph of the season.

Fleetwood carded a final-round 7-under 65, highlighted by four consecutive birdies that turned the tide in his favor. He finished the tournament at 22-under

266, capping off a remarkable season that already included a FedEx Cup win and a standout performance in Team Europe's Ryder Cup victory. Beyond the leaderboard, the moment carried deep personal significance. Fleetwood's eight-year-old son Frankie had expressed a heartfelt wish earlier in the week: "You've never won a tournament and I've been able to run on to the 18th green." Fleetwood quietly wrote those words in his notebook and carried them with him throughout the tournament.

## Cristiano Ronaldo may skip India FC Goa match

**Margao:** Portuguese football legend Cristiano Ronaldo is unlikely to travel to India for Al-Nassr's upcoming AFC Champions League 2 fixture against FC Goa, scheduled for October 22 at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Fatorda, Goa.

Despite mounting anticipation among Indian football fans and multiple requests from FC Goa's management, reports from Saudi sports outlet Al Riyadhiah confirm that the 40-year-old forward will not be part of the travelling squad. Ronaldo is believed to be managing his workload and has opted out

of the trip, dealing a blow to expectations of witnessing one of the sport's biggest icons play on Indian soil. Al-Nassr are set to arrive in Goa on Monday night for their third group-stage match in the continental tournament. The team recently secured a comfortable league win over Al-Fateh and will now face FC Goa, who qualified for the AFC Champions League 2 after defeating Al Seeb and being drawn into Group D alongside Al-Nassr. The absence of Ronaldo has sparked disappointment among fans and stakeholders.

## Australia outplay India, secure win with seven wickets remaining

### Australia chase 131, Marsh top-scores with 46

**Perth:** Australia secured a commanding seven-wicket victory over India in the first One Day International (ODI) of the three-match series held at Perth Stadium. The match, which marked Shubman Gill's debut as India's ODI captain, was curtailed to 26 overs per side due to intermittent rain interruptions. After winning the toss, Australia elected to bowl first. India struggled early, losing four wickets for just 52 runs in 16.4 overs. Despite the shaky start, KL Rahul (38 off 31 balls) and



Axar Patel (31 off 38 balls) provided some resistance, helping India reach a total of 136 for 9 in their allotted 26 overs. Debutant Nitish Kumar Reddy added a late cameo with 19 not out off 11 balls. Australia's bowling attack was led by Josh Hazlewood, Mitchell Owen, and

Matthew Kuhnemann, each claiming two wickets. Under the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern (DLS) method, Australia was set a revised target of 131 runs. The hosts chased down the total comfortably in 21.1 overs. Captain Mitchell Marsh anchored the innings with an unbeaten 46 off 52 balls and was named Player of the Match. Wicketkeeper Josh Philippe contributed a brisk 37 off 29 balls, while Matt Renshaw supported the chase with a steady presence at the crease.

## India drops to 136 in FIFA rankings, lowest in nearly a decade; Spain retains top spot

### India slumps to 136th in FIFA rankings again

**New Delhi:** Indian football's dismal run on the international stage continued as the men's senior national team slumped to 136th in the latest FIFA World Rankings — their lowest position since November 2016.

The new ranking, released on Friday, compounds the Blue Tigers' woes as they find themselves out of contention for both the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the 2027 AFC Asian Cup. Once seen as a team on the rise after their 2023 triumphs in the Intercontinental Cup, SAFF Championship, and Tri-Nation Series, India's fortunes



have sharply declined over the past year.

That period of promise which saw them climb into the top 100 of the rankings — was followed by a disastrous AFC Asian Cup campaign in Qatar earlier this year, where they exit-

ed in the group stage without scoring a single goal in three defeats.

Since then, the national setup has struggled for stability, cycling through three head coaches in less than two years. Igor Štímac was first shown the

door, succeeded by Manolo Márquez, who himself made way for Khalid Jamil earlier this year. Despite flashes of progress under Jamil — particularly during the CAFA Nations Cup, a friendly tournament where India showed tactical improvement — the results in competitive fixtures have remained disappointing.

The team's last victory in a competitive match came nearly a year ago, a 1-0 win over Kuwait in November 2023. Globally, Spain retained top spot in the FIFA men's rankings, ahead of World Cup holders Argentina and third-placed France.

## India reach Sultan Johor Cup final triumphantly

**New Delhi:** The Indian junior men's hockey team produced a fine performance, as they defeated Malaysia 2-1 in their final pool-stage match of the ongoing Sultan of Johor Cup 2025 in Johor, Malaysia, on Friday. The win takes India into the final of the Sultan of Johor Cup 2025, where they will face Australia.

Playing against Malaysia, India opened the scoring through Gurjot Singh (22'), while Sourabh Anand Kushwaha (48') scored the winner. For Malaysia, Naaveenesh Panicker (43') found the back of the net.

With one eye on qualification for the final, the Indian junior men's hockey team started on the front

foot against Malaysia. The Indian forwards looked sharp and were attacking in waves, putting the hosts under pressure. Malaysia, however, did not sit back and attack, but India's defence held tight. Neither side, though, could break the deadlock by the end of the first quarter, with the teams going into the breather locked at 0-0.

Malaysia got the first attack of the second quarter early on, but right after, India roared back with a flurry of attacks and hit the crossbar as well. Malaysia were pinned back in their half, and the pressure eventually paid off, as Gurjot Singh (22') found the back of the net from a rebound off a Penalty Corner.