



# THE MILEAGE



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## Shah vows Maoist-free C'garh

**Knaker:** In a significant development in India's fight against Left-Wing Extremism, 21 Maoists, including 13 senior cadres, surrendered with arms in Chhatisgarh's Kanker district on Sunday, October 26. The surrender was confirmed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who reiterated the central government's commitment to eradicating Naxalism by March 31, 2026.

The surrendered Maoists handed over 18 weapons to local authorities, marking another milestone in the government's ongoing de-radicalization efforts. Shah praised the individuals for renouncing violence and joining the mainstream, stating, "I commend them for abjuring violence at the call of the Modi government. I reiterate my appeal to the rest who are still wielding guns to surrender at the earliest". This latest surrender follows a larger wave of defections earlier in October.

## SC's MGNREGA order: TMC hails Bengal win

**New Delhi:** In a landmark development, the Supreme Court of India has upheld the Calcutta High Court's directive for the prospective implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in West Bengal, starting August 1, 2025. The ruling has been hailed by the Trinamool Congress (TMC) as a decisive victory for the state's rural poor and a rebuke to the BJP-led central government's stance on the matter. On Monday,



a bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta dismissed the Centre's special leave petition challenging the High Court's June 18 order. The apex court stated that there was "no reason to interfere" with the High Court's decision, which mandates the

resumption of the 100-day job guarantee scheme in the state after a prolonged suspension since 2022 due to alleged financial irregularities. Reacting to the verdict, TMC leaders launched a scathing attack on the Centre. State Panchayat and Rural Development Minister Pradip Mazumdar described the ruling as a "supreme blow" to the central government and a "major victory for the poor and deprived" of Bengal. He accused the Centre of withholding funds

as political retaliation following its electoral defeat in the state in 2021. TMC General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee echoed similar sentiments, describing the ruling as a "rebuke to Delhi's arrogance and injustice." In a social media post, Banerjee accused the Centre of imposing an "economic blockade" on West Bengal by withholding wages under the scheme, and credited the judiciary for restoring dignity and livelihood to rural workers.

## Mahagathbandhan Faces Uncertainty Amid Rahul Gandhi's Campaign Absence

**RAHUL LAST ADDRESSED PATNA CROWD POST VOTERS' ADHIKAR YATRA**

**Patna:** As Bihar gears up for the 2025 Assembly elections, the absence of senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi from the campaign trail has sparked debate over its potential impact on the Mahagathbandhan alliance's electoral prospects. With polling dates approaching, alliance partners and political observers are closely watching how



the Congress navigates its campaign strategy in one of India's most politically dynamic states.

Rahul Gandhi, who has been active in national-level campaigns and Bharat Jodo outreach efforts, has yet to make a public appearance in Bihar for the current election cycle. His absence has led to speculation about internal coordination within the Mahagathbandhan, which includes the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Congress, and Left parties.

## Delhi Bans Non-BS-VI Vehicles

**New Delhi:** All commercial goods vehicles registered outside Delhi that are not BS-VI compliant will be prohibited from entering the national capital from November 1, in line with the CAQM's directions.

The BS-VI compliant vehicles meet stricter emission standards are expected to curtail pollution. BS-IV goods vehicles allowed in Delhi till October 2026.

## PM Modi begins Bihar campaign: with "Phir Ek Baar NDA Sarkar"

**Modi cites Karpoori, pledges inclusive growth**

**Samstipur:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi officially kickstarted the National Democratic Alliance's (NDA) campaign for the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections with a high-energy public rally in Samastipur on Friday, October 24. Addressing a massive crowd just days before the Chhath Puja festivities, Modi declared that the state was ready to re-elect the NDA, invoking the slogan "Phir Ek Baar NDA Sarkar" and promising a renewed era of good governance.

"The trumpet of the grand festival of democracy has sounded. The entire Bihar is saying 'Phir Ek Baar NDA Sarkar, Phir Ek Baar Sushasan Sarkar'. Jungle-raj walon ko dur rakhega Bihar," Modi proclaimed,



taking a direct swipe at the opposition and referencing past law-and-order issues under previous regimes.

The Prime Minister also paid tribute to Bharat Ratna awardee and former Chief Minister Karpoori Thakur at his native village, Karpoori Gram, earlier in the day. He highlighted Thakur's legacy of social justice and inclu-

sive development, aligning it with the NDA's current agenda for Bihar.

Modi emphasized the NDA's commitment to accelerating Bihar's growth, particularly for poor, backward, and marginalized communities. "Nayi raftaar se chalega Bihar jab phir aayegi NDA sarkar," he said.

## SC says no to contempt action against Lawyer

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court of India has declined to initiate contempt proceedings against Advocate Rakesh Kishore, who was involved in a controversial courtroom incident earlier this month. The lawyer allegedly attempted to throw a shoe at Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud during a hearing on October 6, prompting widespread concern across legal circles.

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) had filed a plea seeking criminal contempt action against Kishore and a John Doe order to prevent the glorification of such acts on social media. However, a bench comprising Justices Surya Kant and J.B. Pardiwala ruled that the decision to pursue contempt lies with the judge presiding over the matter. In this case, CJI Chand-



rachud had chosen not to press charges, reportedly instructing court staff to "ignore the incident." Justice Kant remarked that initiating contempt proceedings would only give undue importance to the act and the individual involved. "Let us not magnify the incident. The Chief Justice has shown magnanimity, and we will follow the same approach," he said during the hearing.

The bench acknowledged the seriousness of the act, stating that shouting slogans and throwing objects in court clearly amount to contempt.

## I.N.D.I.A. Bloc unveils Manifesto

**Patna:** In a major political development ahead of the Bihar Assembly Elections 2025, the I.N.D.I.A. bloc—comprising the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Congress, CPI(ML), Vikasheel Insaan Party (VIP), and other constituents—unveiled its joint election manifesto on October 28, 2025. The document, titled 'Bihar Ka Tejashwi Pran', outlines the alliance's vision for governance and development in the state, with RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav declared as the bloc's chief ministerial candidate.

The manifesto was released in Patna in the presence of senior leaders from across the alliance. It promises sweeping reforms across key sectors including education.





### Zubeen's final film releases

**Guwahati:** The final cinematic work of legendary Assamese singer and actor Zubeen Garg, titled Roi Roi Binale, is scheduled for a nationwide theatrical release on October 31. Directed by Rajesh Bhuyan and produced by Garg himself, the film will be screened across 46 cities in India, including Kochi, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Ahmedabad, and Dehradun.

The musical drama has generated unprecedented excitement among fans, with advance bookings crossing ₹41.2 lakh on day one alone. Over 13,500 tickets have been sold across 102 shows, and many theatres in the Northeast are scheduling more than ten daily screenings to meet demand. In Guwahati and Jorhat, fans have queued for offline tickets, while premium seats in major multiplexes are already sold out for the first three days. Roi Roi Binale features Zubeen Garg in the lead role alongside Mousumi Alifa, Joy Kashyap, and Achurjya Borpatra.

### Tripura Congress files minister bribery FIR

**Agartala:** The Tripura Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) has filed a First Information Report (FIR) against state minister Sudhangshu Das, accusing him of corruption and receiving illegal commissions. The complaint, lodged under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, calls for a full investigation into the alleged misuse of office.



The FIR follows the circulation of video footage purportedly showing Minister Das admitting to accepting money from contractors. While opposition parties have demanded his immediate dismissal, Das has claimed the footage was deceptively edited and denies any wrongdoing. TPCC leaders have urged law enforcement agencies to act swiftly and transparently. They emphasized the need for accountability and warned against political interference in the investigation. The party also called on the state government to uphold ethical standards and ensure that public office is not used for personal gain. The controversy has sparked widespread debate in Tripura's political circles, with civil society groups.

### Nagaland CM urges architects to lead in sustainable design

ARCHITECTS SHAPING NAGALAND'S SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

**Kohima:** Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio has urged architects in the state to take the lead in promoting safe, sustainable, and locally inspired design practices, highlighting the profession's significant role in employment generation and economic growth. Speaking as Guest of Honour at the 25th anniversary celebration of the Association of Nagaland Architects (ANA) held at Chümoukedima on Saturday under the theme "Celebrating Community, Nurturing Creativity," Rio described the milestone as a reflection of vision, perseverance, and the profession's contribution to shaping Nagaland's urban landscape. Earlier,



the Chief Minister inaugurated an exhibition showcasing home and décor materials. Recalling ANA's early efforts in advocating for development controls and building bye-laws, he termed them a crucial foundation for organised, safe, and sustainable urban growth in the state.

Rio commended ANA for evolving into a strong professional body with over

120 registered architects engaged in policymaking, government service, private practice, and entrepreneurship. He said architects serve as custodians of heritage, interpreters of culture, and visionaries of the future, adding that every design should reflect the traditional Naga ethos while embracing modern functionality. Pointing out that Nagaland falls under "Earthquake Zone 5," Rio stressed that this reality must guide all design and construction decisions. He also emphasised the potential of the construction sector as the state's largest employment generator and urged ANA to train and empower local youth.

### Manipur targets global market with premium indigenous rice variety

## Manipur to export 20 MT Chakhao rice Japan

**Imphal:** In a landmark move for agricultural exports from Northeast India, the Government of Manipur has announced plans to export the first batch of 20 metric tonnes (MT) of Chakhao white rice to Japan by the end of 2025. This initiative marks a significant step in promoting indigenous rice varieties on the global stage and enhancing farmer incomes through international trade. The export will be facilitat-



ed through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Department of Agriculture, Government of Manipur, and the Agricultural and Processed Food

Products Export Development Authority (APEDA). The rice is scheduled to be shipped during the November-December window. Peter Salam, Director of Agriculture, Manipur, confirmed the development and emphasized the department's commitment to expanding export opportunities for local farmers. He also announced Manipur's participation in the inaugural Bharat International Rice Conference (BIRC), to

be held on October 30-31 at Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. The event, organized by the Indian Rice Exporters' Federation (IREF) in collaboration with APEDA, aims to position India as a global leader in rice exports. The BIRC is expected to host over 1,000 international buyers from more than 80 countries, alongside 3,000 farmer organizations and 2,500 exporters, millers, and industry stakeholders.

### Assam govt scraps two-child policy for tea tribes, Morans, & Motoks for govt jobs

Government exempts tribes to preserve identity, prevent decline

**Guwahati:** In a significant policy shift aimed at safeguarding the demographic future of indigenous communities, the Assam government has decided to exempt members of the tea tribes, Moran, Motok, and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities from the two-child norm previously mandated for eligibility in government jobs.



The decision was announced by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma following a cabinet meeting held at Lok Sewa Bhawan in

Guwahati. Addressing the media, the Chief Minister stated that the exemption was necessary to protect these micro-communities from potential extinction. "If we stick to the policy,

these populations will lose their distinct identities and gradually become extinct in the next 50 years," Sarma said. Under Assam's population policy, candidates with more than two children were previously barred from applying for government jobs. The revised policy now excludes the aforementioned communities from this restriction, acknowledging their vulnerable demographic status and the need for inclusive development. The cabinet's decision was informed by consultations with social scientists and demographic experts, who highlighted the risks of imposing strict population control measures on small ethnic groups.

### Mizoram territorial army rally starts Nov 15

**Aizawl:** In a landmark initiative aimed at expanding military opportunities for local youth, the Mizoram government, in collaboration with the 166 Assam Infantry Battalion (Territorial Army), will conduct its first Territorial Army (TA) recruitment rally from November 15 to 25, 2025, at the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium in Aizawl.

The announcement was made by Lt. Col. Clement Lalhmingthanga, MLA from the ruling Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) and chairman of the state TA coordination committee. The rally marks a significant step in integrating Mizoram's youth

into national defense services, with a total of 144 posts available, including 9 reserved for women candidates.

The Territorial Army (Home & Hearth) offers recruits pay and benefits comparable to the regular Indian Army, including medical assistance and other service-related entitlements. This initiative is expected to attract a large number of aspirants from across the state, especially given the inclusion of women in the recruitment drive—a progressive move toward gender-inclusive defense participation.



## Manipal Hospitals spotlights North-East cancer surge, urges preventive healthcare market expansion

**Aizawl:** Manipal Hospital, EM Bypass, Kolkata, a leading healthcare chain in India, organized a high-profile awareness session in Aizawl to address the growing cancer burden in the North-East and emphasize early detection and timely treatment. The session, part of the hospital's 'Anveshana – Medical Education for Media' program, brought together top oncologists, including Dr. Sourav Datta, Dr. Arunava Roy, and Dr. Kinshuk Chatterjee, who shared insights on cancer trends, risk factors, and advanced treatment options. Ten cancer survivors from Mizoram,



successfully treated at Manipal Hospital Kolkata, also participated, sharing compelling stories of recovery. PC Lalsawmliana, a high school teacher, and Vanlalpari, a housewife, credited expert care and advanced surgical techniques for giv-

ing them a new lease on life, reinforcing the message that timely intervention can significantly improve outcomes.

Dr. Datta highlighted the rising incidence of oral, head, and neck cancers linked to tobacco use, while

Dr. Roy focused on gynecological cancers, advocating for HPV vaccination, Pap smear tests, and preventive education. Dr. Chatterjee emphasized how modern surgical precision and multidisciplinary care have transformed cancer treatment. In Aizawl, local healthcare providers, diagnostic centers, and pharmacies reported a surge in inquiries for cancer screening and preventive care services following the event. The session is expected to boost demand for early detection services, representing a growing healthcare market opportunity in the region.

## Amrita STI Hub boosts Mizoram rural innovation, opportunities

**Mumbai:** Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, in collaboration with Mizoram University and the Department of Science and Technology (DST), has inaugurated its new Science, Technology & Innovation (STI) Hub at Mizoram University, marking a milestone in technology-driven rural empowerment. The facility provides permanent laboratories, training spaces, and innovation centers tailored for Mizoram's hilly and tribal regions.

Since its inception two years ago, the hub has reached over 9,000 beneficiaries, with more than 70% being women, through initiatives in food processing, bamboo craft, digital litera-

cy, and health awareness. Leveraging expertise from Amrita's Live-in-Labs® and AMMACHI Labs, the hub introduces frugal, locally adapted technologies such as solar dryers, eco-friendly bamboo craft machinery, and water purification systems, co-created with the communities themselves. Dr. Raghu Raman, Dean of Amrita School of Business, said, "This is more than a building; it's a bridge between science and society." Mizoram's Rural Development Minister, Dr. Lalnilawma, called the hub "a turning point for rural innovation," emphasizing its role in promoting women's participation and sustainable livelihoods.

## India's US oil imports surge

**New Delhi:** In what can be seen as an effort to ease tensions with the Trump administration, India has substantially increased its crude oil imports from the United States. The country's crude oil imports from the US reached 540,000 barrels per day as of October 27, which is a highest level of surge since October 2022, as per Kpler.

The month of October is expected to close with nearly 575,000 barrels per day (bpd) of oil imports from the US, while November could record around 400,000–450,000 bpd, reported PTI. This is a sharp increase from the average of about 300,000 bpd seen earlier this year.

## Seasonal changes demand immunity boost, experts suggest lifestyle tweaks

**Guwahati:** As the city transitions into cooler months, health experts are urging residents to focus on boosting immunity to ward off seasonal illnesses. Fluctuating temperatures, increased allergens, and lifestyle changes can compromise the body's defenses, making people more prone to colds, flu, and fatigue.

Nutritionist Ritika Samaddar, Regional Head of Dietetics at Max Healthcare, New Delhi, advises, "Strengthening your immunity during this transitional period is key to staying healthy and energised. A balanced diet, mindful habits, and regular physical activity form the foundation of a strong immune system." Samaddar recommends incorporating nutrient-rich



foods like green vegetables, fatty fish, and California Almonds, which are high in vitamin E, zinc, and copper—minerals essential for immunity.

In Guwahati, demand for immune-boosting foods, including nuts, salmon, and fresh produce, has seen a notable increase in local markets. Retailers report a surge in sales as residents stock up on health-focused

items to prepare for seasonal changes. Other preventive measures include staying hydrated, prioritizing 7–8 hours of sleep, and engaging in light exercise such as brisk walking or stretching. Experts emphasize that even small daily steps can significantly enhance the body's resilience, ensuring residents enjoy the season while maintaining optimal health.

## RBI rejects Jana's universal bank bid

**Mumbai:** Jana Small Finance Bank said that the Reserve Bank of India has returned its application to become a universal bank due to non-fulfilment of criteria. The Small Finance Bank's managing director and chief executive, Ajay Kanwa, said that in the communication received late on Monday evening, the regulator has not spelt out the exact reasons for returning the application made in June this year.

"We will soon figure out what the answer really is, and we will rectify as per the expectations. We have



to keep in mind that this is a return and not a rejection," Kanwal told PTI. Kanwal said he will discuss the exact reasons for returning its universal bank application with the RBI top brass later this week, and then rectify them before the bank reapplies. However, he did not give a timeline for a new application.

## Indian refiners halt Russian oil orders

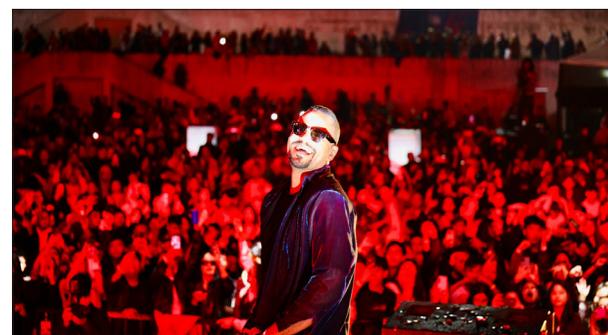
**New Delhi:** Indian refiners have not placed new orders for Russian oil purchases since sanctions were imposed, as they await clarity from the government and suppliers, sources told Reuters on Tuesday. Some refiners are tapping the spot markets to meet their crude oil needs, said the sources, who did not want to be named as they are not authorised to speak to media.



State-run Indian Oil has issued a tender for purchase of oil while conglomerate Reliance Industries has boosted purchases from spot markets, according to sources. The European Union, the UK and the U.S. have imposed a raft of sanctions against Russia over its war in Ukraine, including fresh U.S. sanctions on Thursday that target Russia's two top oil purchasers Lukoil and Rosneft.

## Courtyard Marriott Shillong hosts Mohombi's India debut, boosting city's culture and hospitality appeal

**Shillong:** Courtyard by Marriott Shillong, in collaboration with Meghalaya Tourism and Meghalayan Age, proudly hosted international pop icon Mohombi for his India debut concert at Lariti, Mawkasiang on October 25. The event, attended by nearly 3,500 guests, transformed Shillong into a vibrant global stage, highlighting the region's growing prominence in international entertainment and hospitality. The Swedish-Congolese artist, known for global hits like "Bumpy Ride" and "Co-



conut Tree", delivered a captivating performance alongside Meghalaya's homegrown talents — Jessie Lyngdoh, Gary Daniel, Quills, Sev, and Meban. The celebration contin-

ued with an exclusive after-party at Tavern Club, Courtyard by Marriott Shillong, featuring live sets by Brainy, Meban, Quills, Sev, and Gary Daniel. In Shillong, the concert demon-

strated the city's readiness to host large-scale global events, boosting tourism, hospitality, and local enterprise. Hotel occupancy, local transport demand, and restaurant business surged during the event, reinforcing Shillong's appeal as a dynamic tourism and cultural hub in North-east India. Tanuj Arora, General Manager of Courtyard by Marriott Shillong, said, "Hosting Mohombi was about celebrating culture and community while showcasing Meghalaya's spirit and hospitality."



### IFAT India 2025 ends, highlights booming green tech sector

**Guwahati:** IFAT India 2025, the country's largest trade fair for water, sewage, solid waste, and recycling solutions, concluded in Mumbai with unprecedented global participation and strong sustainability momentum. Organised by Messe Muenchen India from October 14–16 at the Bombay Exhibition Centre, the 12th edition witnessed over 18,000 visitors and 560 exhibitors from more than 30 countries across 45,000 sqm. The event featured six international pavilions from Germany, Canada, the

Netherlands, South Korea, Hungary, and Australia. Actor and UN Environment Goodwill Ambassador Dia Mirza inaugurated the fair, urging greater collaboration to combat the climate crisis. Cutting-edge launches included Alfa Laval's SG2-series centrifuges, Fornnax's R-MAX3300 shredder, and Danfoss India's edge computing-enabled drives. India's first "Chief Engineers' Forum for Swachh Bharat" was also launched, reinforcing structured peer learning among municipal engineers. In Guwahati, experts

noted that the city's expanding industrial base and growing population present a significant opportunity for adopting advanced waste management and water reuse technologies showcased at IFAT India. Local environmental firms and municipal representatives from Assam expressed interest in partnerships to enhance sustainability-driven infrastructure in the Northeast. Building on this success, IFAT Delhi will debut from April 22–24, 2026, followed by IFAT India 2026 in Mumbai from September 9–11.

### Tide launches NCMC card for SMEs

**Guwahati:** Tide, India's leading financial management platform for SMEs, has announced the integration of the National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) with its RuPay-powered Expense Card, revolutionising how small businesses and freelancers manage their travel and expenses. The move brings metro, bus, toll, and parking payments under one digital solution, allowing members to tap, travel, and transact seamlessly. Backed by the Government of India, the NCMC integration enables users to pay for public transport and business-related travel using one card, eliminating the need for multiple payment tools. Through the Tide app, members can top up their cards instantly, check balances in real-time, and

access queue-free travel across major Indian cities. Commenting on the launch, Kumar Shekhar, Deputy Country Manager, Tide India, said, "With NCMC support, we're making business travel and expense management effortless for SMEs and freelancers. This is a game-changing way for entrepreneurs to manage mobility and cash flow efficiently." In Guwahati, where small businesses and startups are increasingly adopting digital tools for operations, Tide's innovation is expected to simplify daily commutes and financial workflows, fostering greater productivity and cost efficiency. Since launching in late 2022, Tide India has grown rapidly, serving over 800,000 SMEs — a majority of its 1.6 million global member base.

### Amazon begins 30,000 layoffs

**Bengaluru:** Amazon is reportedly preparing to eliminate up to 30,000 corporate positions starting Tuesday, 28 October, marking its largest workforce reduction since 2022, according to a Reuters report citing individuals familiar with the matter. This would mark Amazon's largest job cut since late 2022, when it started to eliminate around 27,000 positions.

The move is part of Amazon's broader cost-cutting strategy as it seeks to streamline operations and recalibrate after the Covid-19 pandemic-era over-hiring, when surging online demand prompted aggressive expansion across divisions. While the planned redundancies account for only a fraction of Amazon's 1.55 million global workforce

### Aadhar Housing Finance boosts Assam rural women's empowerment



**Guwahati:** Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd. (AHFL) has launched a skill development initiative aimed at boosting livelihood opportunities and financial independence for underprivileged women in Assam. The program will benefit 300 women across seven villages in Dakhin Bholagaron and Ranigaon Gram Panchayats of Chayani Rani Block, Rani Development District, focusing on handloom weaving, turmeric and black pepper processing, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy. Implemented in collaboration with Assam and Meghalaya-based NGO Grameen Sahara, the initiative connects women with banks, microfinance institutions, and market access, enabling sustainable rural entrepreneurship. Rishi Anand, MD & CEO of AHFL, said, "This initiative strengthens traditional skills, promotes financial awareness, and

links women to market opportunities, empowering them to earn a livelihood and achieve self-reliance." In Guwahati, the program is expected to create significant business linkages. By channeling handloom products and locally grown spices from rural Assam to urban buyers and retailers in Guwahati, the initiative can boost demand, integrate rural producers into the city's consumer market, and contribute to the growth of micro-enterprises while supporting inclusive economic development. Sarat Chandra Das, Secretary of Grameen Sahara, added that combining traditional skills with modern financial knowledge will help women transition from subsistence livelihoods to sustainable businesses. AHFL plans to expand its CSR footprint across India, focusing on skill development, education, and social inclusion.

### HDFC Bank sidelines staff

**Mumbai:** HDFC Bank Ltd., India's largest private-sector lender, has put two senior executives on gardening leave amid a probe after customers alleged mis-selling of Credit Suisse securities, according to people familiar with the matter. The bank took the step over the last few months with the employees, who were at the center of the allegedly disputed trades of Credit Suisse's Additional Tier 1 bonds, the people said, asking not to be identified discussing confidential matters. In response to Bloomberg queries, an HDFC spokesperson said "with reference to the sale of Credit Suisse AT1 Bonds, the bank has not come across any instances of mis-selling till now."



### Apraava Energy grows Northeast solar reach, empowering 21,000 lives

**New Delhi:** Apraava Energy, one of India's leading integrated energy solutions providers, has strengthened its clean energy presence in Northeast India through a partnership with SELCO Foundation to power community, health, and education facilities across Assam and Nagaland. The solar installations are expected to benefit over 21,000 lives and save around 57 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions annually—equivalent to planting about 2,580 trees.

In Assam's Chirang district, a 27.5 kW solar-powered community facility is driving inclusive development with programmes on women's empowerment, mental health, education, and youth engagement. Similarly, in



Nagaland's Jhakama and Zhadima villages, 22.32 kW solar systems are energising schools, health centres, and community areas, improving education and safety standards for rural residents.

In Guwahati, industry analysts noted that Apraava's initiative signals growing investor confidence in the region's renewable energy sector. The city's energy businesses and startups are

increasingly exploring solar-based models, driven by both corporate investment and state-level sustainability goals, positioning Guwahati as a key green growth hub in the Northeast. Dr. Priyesh Modi, Head-CSR, Apraava Energy, said the initiative exemplifies the company's long-term commitment to holistic community development and sustainable transformation in the region.

### PNB Housing Finance Q2 profit rises 24% to Rs 582 cr

**New Delhi:** PNB Housing Finance on Monday reported a 24% increase in its net profit to Rs 582 crore for the quarter ended September due to higher growth in the affordable and emerging market segments. The net interest income grew 14.4% to Rs 765 crore. The net interest margin stood at 3.67%, lower compared with 3.74% in Q1 of this fiscal and 3.68% in the year-



ago period. Operating expenditure rose 7.6% to Rs 217 crore in the reporting quarter. The management expects the net interest margins in the range of 3.6-3.7% for the second half of the current fiscal year.

Disbursements during the quarter grew 12.2% on year and 20.4% on a sequential basis to Rs 5,995 crore. Disbursements in the affordable and emerging markets segment increased by 30.7% and 23.0% respectively, contributing 50% of the total retail disbursements. The housing finance company has maintained its growth guidance of 17-18% for FY26. "Looking ahead

to FY26, we are focused on accelerating retail growth and expanding our Affordable and Emerging Markets segment footprint. Our goal is to enhance customer experience, strengthen risk frameworks, and maintain industry-leading asset quality while delivering sustainable returns," Jatul Anand, executive director, said in the post-earnings analyst call.



## Jayant Chaudhary heads India-Philippines mission advancing skills, startups, Global South ties

**Guwahati:** Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Shri Jayant Chaudhary led a high-level Knowledge Exchange Mission to the Philippines from October 20-22, 2025, highlighting India's growing leadership in Global South cooperation on skills and entrepreneurship. "When nations of the Global South learn from each other, we don't just exchange knowledge—we build collective strength for a shared future," Chaudhary said during the visit, facilitated by the World Bank. During the mission, Chaudhary held detailed discussions with H.E. Bienvenido



Laguesma, Secretary of Labor and Employment, and H.E. Jose Francisco Benitez, Director General of TESDA, on joint initiatives to enhance employability, digital transformation, and workforce skill development. Engagements with the Department of Migrant Workers, Philippine Statistics Authority, and

Overseas Workers Welfare Administration emphasized data-driven policies, labour mobility, and future-ready skilling programs. The Minister also interacted with the Indian diaspora, acknowledging their role as a "living bridge" strengthening bilateral ties.

In Guwahati, the mission opens avenues for local

entrepreneurs and skilling institutions to align with international standards, especially in vocational training, digital skills, and youth employment programs. Industry experts in the region view this as an opportunity to leverage India-Philippines collaborations for business expansion and talent development in Assam. The delegation included senior officials from the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and representatives from Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Telangana, reflecting a strong Centre-State synergy in building globally relevant skilling ecosystems.

## IDBI Bank jumps 9%, nears yearly high

**New Delhi:** IDBI Bank shares moved higher by 9 per cent to ₹104.10 on the BSE in Tuesday's intraday trade, amid heavy volumes. The stock price of the private sector bank was quoting close to its 52-week high level of ₹106.34, which it touched on June 30, 2025. The average trading volume on the counter jumped over eight-fold with 76.1 million equity shares, representing 13.4 per cent of total free-float equity of IDBI Bank, having changed hands on the NSE (70.47 million shares) and BSE (5.63 million shares) till 01:48 PM.

As on September 30, 2025, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) (49.24 per cent) and Government of India (GoI) (45.48 per cent), together, held 94.71 per cent shareholding in the IDBI Bank. They, however,

have stated their intent to divest their shareholding in the bank through a strategic stake sale with an intent to hand over management control in the bank.

The GoI, acting through the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM), had invited expressions of interest from potential investors in October 2022. Even as the process to dilute their respective stakes in IDBI Bank has progressed, the conclusion and eventual finalisation of new stakeholders is still awaited. The extent of the respective shareholding to be divested by GoI and LIC will be decided at the time of structuring the transaction, in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The measures come against IDBI Bank's improving asset quality.



## Steel stocks hit highs



**Mumbai:** Shares of steel companies were in demand with Tata Steel, JSW Steel, Jindal Steel and Steel Authority of India (SAIL) gaining between 2 per cent and 4 per cent on the BSE in Tuesday's intra-day trade in an otherwise weak market. In comparison, the BSE Sensex was down 0.66 per cent at 84,222 at 02:28 PM.

Among individual stocks, JSW Steel hit a record high of ₹1,183.75, gaining 3 per cent on the BSE in intra-day trade. Jindal Steel rallied 4 per cent to ₹1,077.95, and was trading close to its record high level of ₹1,097.10 touched on June 21, 2024. Tata Steel also quoted near to its all-time high level of ₹184.60 hit on June 18, 2024. The stock price of Tata Group company advanced 3 per cent to ₹182 in intra-day trade. According to media reports, China has announced a stricter steel capacity swap plan to control overcapacity and stabilise supply and demand. The plan requires 1.5 tons of old capacity to be removed for every 1 ton of new capacity added.

## Bristol Myers launches Kopozgo® in India, transforming cardiac care

**New Delhi:** In a landmark stride for India's healthcare innovation ecosystem, Bristol Myers Squibb (BMS) has launched Kopozgo® (Mavacamten) — the nation's first cardiac myosin inhibitor for adults suffering from symptomatic obstructive hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (oHCM). The breakthrough drug exemplifies how global pharma innovation is aligning with India's growing

demand for cutting-edge, precision-based medical solutions.

Approved by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) on March 6, 2025, Kopozgo® is a first-in-class oral therapy that directly targets the root cause of oHCM, a chronic condition affecting around 2.8 million Indians. Backed by robust Phase III clinical trials (EXPLORER-HCM and VALOR-HCM),

the medicine introduces a transformative approach to cardiac care, addressing a major treatment gap and setting a new standard for therapeutic innovation in India. Sanjay Sharma, Managing Director of BMS India, remarked, "Kopozgo® reflects our commitment to bringing breakthrough science to Indian patients and supporting the country's innovation-led healthcare growth."

## Foxconn invests \$1.37B in cloud, AI

**New Delhi:** Foxconn, the Taiwan-based electronics manufacturer, announced late Monday that its board of directors has approved an investment of NT\$42 billion (\$1.37 billion) to build an AI compute cluster and supercomputing centre. Foxconn said in a company filing published late on Monday that it will fund the planned investment using its own resources between December 2025 and December 2026.

While the company did not provide specific details or the location of the project, a person familiar with the matter told Reuters that the investment will likely be made in Taiwan. This initiative is part of Foxconn's ongoing strategy to strengthen its position in artificial intelligence (AI) and cloud



infrastructure. Known formally as Hon Hai Precision Industry Co Ltd, Foxconn is the world's largest contract electronics manufacturer and has been actively seeking to diversify its growth drivers beyond the company's traditional reliance on smartphones and electronics manufacturing. The recent announcement by Foxconn follows two other key AI-related developments announced earlier this year. In May, Foxconn announced that it plans to build an AI centre in Taiwan, in collaboration with Nvidia, which is targeted to have a power capacity of 100 megawatts.

## Tata AIA unveils Shubh Family Protect for lasting financial security

**Aizawl:** Tata AIA Life Insurance Co. Ltd. (Tata AIA) has officially launched Shubh Family Protect, a unique term insurance plan offering an immediate lump-sum payout along with a monthly income for up to 30 years. The plan is aimed at providing holistic financial protection to families, combining short-term relief with long-term stability.

Commenting on the launch, Amit Dave, Chief Distribution Officer - Proprietary Business and Allied Channels, Tata AIA Life Insurance, said, "At Tata AIA, we believe in providing more than just financial protection—we believe in making sure that families are supported through every stage of life. Shubh Family Protect is our way of ensuring that families have the financial security they need, with

the flexibility they deserve. The 0% GST makes it even more accessible, making the product a powerful tool for those who want to secure their family's future without the burden of additional costs."

### A Product Designed for Real-Life Needs

In the event of a sudden loss of a loved one, the emotional devastation is immeasurable, and the financial burden that follows can feel just as overwhelming. Often, families are left with a large lump-sum payout, which, while helpful, can be difficult to manage—especially at a time when clarity and stability are needed most.

**Shubh Family Protect** by Tata AIA understands this challenge and offers a thoughtful solution. Rather than leaving families to nav-

igate a single, large payout, the plan combines the benefit of a lump-sum amount with the security of a steady monthly income—a lifeline for those left behind. The product offers flexible payout options, multiple nominee choices, and terminal illness protection. By combining lump-sum payouts with a consistent monthly income, the plan ensures that families can manage immediate expenses while maintaining financial security over time.

In Aizawl, local insurance advisors have reported strong interest in Shubh Family Protect, as families are increasingly looking for insurance solutions that provide both immediate and long-term financial support, underscoring the region's growing demand for innovative life insurance products.



## Renault announces the return of the iconic Duster—this Republic Day

**Guwahati:** Renault India, a wholly owned subsidiary of the French carmaker Renault Group, has officially announced that its much-awaited new SUV will proudly carry forward the legacy of the iconic nameplate – Duster. Originally launched in India in 2012, the Renault Duster redefined the SUV landscape and pioneered a segment that today accounts for nearly one-fourth of the passenger vehicle market. The Duster is also going to be the first product to be launched under the brand's International Game Plan 2027 in India. The car is a key pillar company's India centric transformation strategy renaul. rethink.

Speaking on the occasion, Stephane Deblaise, CEO Renault Group India said "Renault Duster is more than just a name –



it's a true legend. A symbol of adventure, reliability and innovation, its comeback shows our commitment to the Indian market and our desire to offer vehicles that meet the needs of our customers. New Renault Duster will rely on its iconic heritage while adopting a modern design, advanced technology, and enhanced performance." The announcement marks a significant moment for Indian automotive enthusi-

asts, many of whom have long awaited the return of the beloved SUV. With close to 1.8 million customers globally and more than 200,000 happy owners in India, the Duster enjoys a cult following and remains one of the most successful SUVs in Renault's global portfolio. The icon will be unveiled on Republic Day – 26th January 2026. Until then, stay in the loop by joining the waiting program.

## Ola's 4680 Bharat Cells approved, boosting EVs

**Bengaluru:** Bhavish Aggarwal-led, Ola Electric, announced that, it has secured ARAI certification for its indigenously developed and manufactured 4680 Bharat Cell battery packs. These battery packs are in a 5.2 kWh configuration and makes the company, the first EV manufacturer to get the certification for in-house developed battery packs.

As per the regulatory filing, these batteries are as per the safety standards issued by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (AIS-156 Amendment 4 standards). The certified pack will debut on Ola's latest electric scooter model, the S1 Pro+ (5.2 kWh). The Ola Electric spokesperson said, "We are ready to deliver our first vehicles powered by our own cells. This is a defining milestone in our mission to build India's EV



technology leadership and reduce reliance on global supply chains."

The new battery technology is expected to significantly enhance range and performance, improve unit economics, and reduce dependence on global supply chains — especially as Ola's upcoming Gigafactory scales up production.

Until now, Ola Electric has been using third-party cells across its scooter and motorcycle line-ups, all certified under AIS-156 standards. With the introduction of the 5.2 kWh battery pack built on its indigenously developed 4680 Bharat Cells.

## Oil, gas bidding extended

**New Delhi:** In a move aimed at encouraging broader participation from domestic and international investors, the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH) announced the extension of bid submission deadlines across three major licensing rounds: the Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP-X), the fourth round of Discovered Small Field (DSF), and the special Coal-Bed Methane (CBM) round.

The OALP-X round, which represents the largest acreage offering to date, was initially launched in February 2025 during India Energy Week in New Delhi. Originally scheduled to close at the end of July, the deadline was first extended to October 31, and now further pushed to December 31, 2025. This round includes 25 blocks covering approximately 191,986 square kilometres across various sedimentary basins.

The government's decision to extend the bidding timeline reflects its commitment to maximizing investor engagement and ensuring thorough evaluation of geological data. The additional time is expected to help bidders finalize investment decisions and technical assessments, particularly in light of evolving energy demands and exploration opportunities. This extension also aligns with India's broader energy strategy to boost domestic hydrocarbon production



## Sensex slips 150 pts, Nifty below 25,950

**Mumbai:** Domestic equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty ended lower on Tuesday, weighed down by muted trend in Asian markets and selling pressure in heavyweight stocks such as Trent, Tech Mahindra and ICICI Bank, which offset gains in Tata Steel and L&T. At the closing bell, the Sensex declined 150.68 points, or 0.18 per cent, to close at 84,628.16, while the Nifty50 fell 29.85 points, or 0.11 per cent, to settle at 25,936.20. Rupak De, Senior Technical Analyst at LKP Securities, said the market witnessed heightened volatility on the NSE's monthly F&O expiry day. "However, the overall chart setup on the daily timeframe remains intact.

## Mahindra inaugurates 10 new dealerships in this festival season for its truck and bus customers

**Guwahati:** After achieving a robust volume growth over the past 4 years and with aspirations of further strengthening its footprint in the truck and bus business, Mahindra has inaugurated 10 new dealerships in this festival season. These ten state-of-the-art 3S dealerships are located in Durgapur, Guwahati, Haldwani, Hissar, Bhopal, Hubli, Raipur, Muzzafarpur, Jalandhar and Kanpur, adding another 60 vehicle service bays with an overall capacity of servicing more than 100 vehicles per day in addition to providing driver lodging, 24-hour breakdown assistance and AdBlue availability. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Vinod Sahay, President –



Trucks, Buses & Construction Equipment, Aerospace & Defense, Executive Chairman, SML Isuzu Ltd. and Member of Group Executive Board, said, "Addition of 10 more 3S dealerships further reinforces our serious commitment to the truck and bus business and our strong growth aspirations. Along with SML, we now

have an overall strength of over 600 Sales and Service touchpoints and a vast and growing network of spares retail outlets, geared to provide world-class customer care experience to our customers. Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. now holds close to 7% market share in trucks and buses, with a 24% market share

in I&LCV buses. We are targeting to increase our market share to 10-12% by FY31 and over 20% by FY36." Dr. Venkat Srinivas, Business Head – Mahindra Trucks, Buses & Construction Equipment and ED & CEO – SML Isuzu Ltd., added, "Be it the guaranteed higher mileage of our entire product range, or the most advanced telematics solution – iMAXX, which gives the fleet owners complete control over their transport business or a rapidly growing network of dealerships and other formats of after-sales support paraphernalia, we are committed to impart the best customer experience in the Indian Commercial vehicle industry."

## Starlink opens Mumbai office, expands

**Mumbai:** Elon Musk's satellite internet venture Starlink has taken a major step toward expanding its footprint in India by leasing office space in Mumbai's Chandivali area, according to a report by The Economic Times. The move signals the company's renewed focus on setting up operations in the country, where it aims to launch commercial ser-



vices soon. According to property documents accessed through Propstack, Starlink Satellite Communications has rented space on the ground floor of the

commercial building Boomerang in Chandivali. The lease, signed for five years starting October 14, covers 1,294 sq ft at a monthly rent of over ₹3.52 lakh, with an annual rent escalation of 5 per cent. The company has also paid a security deposit of ₹31.7 lakh, the news report said. Though modest in size, this marks Starlink's first reported office in Mumbai,

a move that aligns with its broader plan to build a local presence as part of its India entry strategy. The news report quoted industry experts as saying that Mumbai could serve as a central hub for Starlink's India operations.

These stations will form part of the infrastructure needed to deliver satellite-based internet across the country.

## TVS Motors Q2 profit up, shares down

**Mumbai:** TVS Motor Company Ltd on Tuesday reported a 41.93 per cent year-on-year (YoY) increase in consolidated net profit for the July–September quarter (Q2 FY26) at Rs 795.48 crore, compared with Rs 560.49 crore in the same period last year. Revenue from operations rose 25.49 per cent YoY to Rs

14,051.22 crore from Rs 11,197.19 crore in Q2 FY25. Total expenses during the quarter increased 23.90 per cent to Rs 12,801.67 crore, against Rs 10,332.19 crore a year ago. The company reported its highest-ever operating EBITDA at Rs 1,509 crore, up 40 per cent from Rs 1,080 crore in the corresponding quarter last year.



INSIGHT

HUMAN MOVEMENT



Movements of marine animals may have halved since the Industrial Revolution due to fishing and whaling, while those of humans have increased 40-fold in the same time, a study has estimated.

Findings published in the journal *Nature Ecology and Evolution* also suggest that movement due to humans on the planet could be up to 40 times more than that of all land animals combined. Researchers from the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel and institutes in Germany and the US have attributed the result to population growth, use of motor vehicles, fossil fuels and an extensive infrastructure enabling mobility of humans. They added that while walking accounted for the vast majority of human movement in 1850 — when new industries started rising and expanding geographically — walking makes up about a seventh of all forms of human movement today. Motorised road vehicles were estimated to make up 65 per cent of all human movement, followed by walking and cycling at 20 per cent each. Flying constituted 10 per cent and rail transport about five per cent

of the world's humans movement. The researchers analysed previously published studies and country-level data sources to estimate movement "The biomass movement of marine animals, which we find to be the living world's largest, has been halved since 1850 due to industrial fishing and whaling, while human biomass movement has increased by about 40-fold," the authors wrote. High-income countries, hosting 16 per cent of the world's population but accounting for nearly 30 per cent of movements among humans, were seen to show the largest increase in per capita movement — almost twice as much as in other income groups. However, human movements in low-income countries — hosting nine per cent of the global population — were seen to account for only four per cent of the world's human movement. In another paper, published in the journal *Nature Communications*, researchers including those from the Weizmann

Institute of Science in Israel estimated that the biomass — how much an animal weighs — of wild mammals combined has declines by more than half since 1850. Marine mammal biomass alone has decreased by around 70 per cent, mainly driven by the decline of larger species such as blue, humpback, fin, and sperm whales, the team said. However, biomass of humans and domesticated mammals, such as cows and sheep, was found to have increased nearly fivefold. The analysis looked at estimates from the History database of the Global Environment (HYDE) and United Nations' World Population Prospects database, among other sources. The study emphasizes that while humans have become hyper-mobile, many animal species are increasingly restricted in their movements due to habitat loss, climate change, and human interference. This imbalance poses serious risks to biodiversity and ecological stability.

Researchers argue that understanding the scale and drivers of human mobility is essential for urban planning, climate policy, conservation efforts, and global health. The findings serve as a reminder that mobility is not just a social or economic issue—it's a biological and environmental one that affects the entire planet. Researchers argue that understanding the scale and drivers of human mobility is essential for urban planning, climate policy, conservation efforts, and global health. The findings serve as a reminder that mobility is not just a social or economic issue—it's a biological and environmental one that affects the entire planet.

Mental illness rights protect workers

Mental health challenges can affect anyone, regardless of background or circumstance, and they are becoming more common across the United States. In 2022, a national survey found that about 60 million American adults — approximately 23% of the U.S. adult population — were living with a mental illness, defined as a diagnosable mental, emotional or behavioral disorder.

This translates to a nearly 37% increase over the past decade. These conditions can have a profound and lasting effect on patients' lives, including their ability to engage meaningfully and sustainably in the workforce. Globally, depression and anxiety are estimated to lead to 12 billion lost working days annually, costing an estimated US\$1 trillion per year in lost productivity worldwide and \$47 billion in the United States.

I am a medical director and practicing psychiatrist. I work with graduate students, residents, faculty and staff on a health science campus, supporting their mental health — including when it intersects with challenges in the workplace. I often meet with patients who feel unsure about how to approach conversations with their schools, programs or employers regarding their mental health, especially when it involves taking time off for care. This uncertainty can lead to delays in treatment, even when it's truly needed.

Mental health by the numbers

Anxiety and depression are the most common mental health conditions in the U.S.. Nineteen percent of American adults suffer from

an anxiety disorder, and more than 15% have depression. Meanwhile, about 11% of Americans experience other conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder, commonly known as PTSD, bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder or obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Rates of anxiety and depression increased worldwide during the COVID-19 pandemic. But one positive consequence of the pandemic is that talking about mental health has become more normalized and less stigmatized, including in the workplace. Struggling at work

For those with mental illness, the traditional expectation of maintaining a strict separation between personal and professional life is not only unrealistic, it may even be detrimental. The effect of mental illness on a person's work varies depending on the type, severity and duration of their symptoms.

For instance, severe depression can affect basic self-care, making it difficult to complete tasks such as bathing, eating or even getting out of bed. Severe anxiety can also be profoundly debilitating and limit a person's ability to leave the house due to intense fear or panic. The symptoms of such severe mental illness may make it difficult even to show up to work. On the other hand, someone struggling with mild depression or anxiety may have a hard time initiating or completing tasks that they would typically manage with ease and find it difficult to interact with colleagues. Both depression and anxiety may affect sleep, which can contribute to cognitive lapses and increased fatigue during the work day.



## Aussie tears as Kohli-Rohit shine

**Sydney:** In a moment that captured the emotional depth of cricket's global appeal, an Australian commentator was visibly moved to tears while witnessing the iconic partnership between Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma during the third and final ODI between India and Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

The match, which served as the series decider, saw Kohli and Sharma deliver

a vintage batting performance, stitching together an unbeaten 168-run stand that led India to a commanding victory and a 2-1 series win. Their partnership, marked by precision, flair, and mutual understanding, was widely regarded as one of their finest in recent years—and possibly their last together on Australian soil. The commentator's reaction highlighted cricket's emotional reach.



## Australian allrounder Maxwell set to return for T20I series against India

**Maxwell fractured wrist bowling pre-New Zealand T20s**

**Sydney:** Australian cricket has received a timely boost ahead of its upcoming T20I series against India, with star allrounder Glenn Maxwell officially cleared to return to international action. The 37-year-old has been added to Australia's squad for the final three matches of the five-game series, following a successful recovery from a fractured wrist. Maxwell sustained the injury during a net session prior to Australia's T20I tour of New Zealand in September. After undergoing a minor procedure and an extensive rehabilitation program, he was deemed fit by Cricket Australia's medical staff earlier this week. The T20I series is scheduled to begin on October 29 in Canberra, following the conclusion of the ongoing ODI leg of the tour. Maxwell's inclusion is expected to bolster Australia's middle-order batting and provide additional depth in the bowling department. His return comes at

a crucial juncture as the team looks to fine-tune its combinations ahead of next year's ICC T20 World Cup.

Joining Maxwell in the squad is young pacer Mahli Beardman, whose selection has drawn attention follow-



ing impressive domestic performances. Beardman and Maxwell will be available for the final three T20Is, while pace veteran Josh Hazlewood is set to feature in the first two matches. Bowling allrounder Sean Abbott has been

## Suryakumar's form key in India-Australia T20I

**India begins T20I series, Suryakumar aims strong comeback performance**

**Canberra:** Team India is set to begin its five-match T20I series against Australia on October 29, 2025, at the Manuka Oval in Canberra, following a 2-1 defeat in the preceding ODI series. The T20I leg marks a crucial phase in India's preparations for the ICC T20 World Cup 2026, with particular attention on the form of T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav.

Despite leading India to a triumphant Asia Cup 2025 campaign in the UAE, Suryakumar's personal form with the bat has been under scrutiny. He managed only



72 runs in seven innings during the tournament, raising concerns about his consistency. However, head coach Gautam Gambhir has expressed confidence

in the skipper, stating that "form doesn't concern" him and emphasizing the team's commitment to an ultra-aggressive brand of cricket. Suryakumar, known for his

360-degree stroke play, acknowledged the dip in his performance but remained optimistic. "Runs will come eventually," he said, adding that his focus remains on team goals and maintaining a fearless approach.

Australia, currently ranked second in the ICC Men's T20I rankings, enters the series with momentum, having recently defeated New Zealand 2-0 in a T20I series. Mitchell Marsh will lead the Australian side for the first three matches, with Mahli Beardman set to make his debut.

## FIFA unveils ASEAN Cup for Southeast Asia

**ASEAN Cup to follow FIFA's Arab Cup format**

**Kuala Lumpur:** FIFA President Gianni Infantino has officially announced the launch of the FIFA ASEAN Cup, a new international football tournament designed exclusively for Southeast Asian nations. The announcement was made during the 47th ASEAN Summit held in Malaysia, where Infantino signed a Memorandum of Under-



standing (MoU) with ASEAN Secretary-General Kao Kim Hourn to promote football development across the region. The FIFA ASEAN Cup will feature national teams

from all 11 ASEAN member states and is modeled after the successful Arab Cup format introduced by FIFA in 2021. Unlike the existing biennial ASEAN Championship, the new tournament will be scheduled during FIFA's official international match windows, allowing top players from global leagues to participate without club conflicts.

## Rohit values life

**Sydney:** Indian cricketer Rohit Sharma has opened up about the importance of personal balance and self-reflection following his triumphant return to international cricket. Speaking after India's nine-wicket victory over Australia in the final ODI of the three-match series, Sharma emphasized that life offers much more than professional commitments, and that his recent success was rooted in a period of introspection and preparation "on his own terms."

Rohit, who had not played competitive cricket since the IPL in May, scored an unbeaten 121 in Sydney, helping India avoid a series whitewash. His performance earned him both the Player of the Match and Player of the Series awards, with a total of 202 runs across the three games.

"Since the time I started playing, I never had four to five months to prepare for a series," Sharma told the BCCI. "I wanted to utilize that. I wanted to do things in my own way, on my own terms, and that actually worked out well for me understanding what I need to do for the rest of my career".



## Pakistan Pulls Out of Junior Hockey World Cup in India

**New Delhi:** The Pakistan Hockey Federation has officially withdrawn its team from the upcoming FIH Men's Junior Hockey World Cup, scheduled to be held in India from November 28 to December 28. The tournament, which will take place across Chennai and Madurai, will now proceed without one of the sport's traditional powerhouses.

The International Hockey Federation (FIH) confirmed the withdrawal in a statement released to the press on Friday. "We can confirm that the Pakistan Hockey Federation has notified the International Hockey Federation (FIH) that its team, initially qualified for the upcoming FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup Tamil Nadu 2025, won't participate eventually," the statement read. The FIH added that a replacement team will be announced shortly by Pakistan's exit. The reasons for the withdrawal were not officially detailed, but the move comes amid strained sporting relations between



India and Pakistan following the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack and subsequent Indian military response under Operation Sindoor.

Pakistan's absence marks a significant development in the tournament's lineup, as the country has historically been a strong contender in junior hockey. The decision is expected to impact the competitive dynamics of the event, which features top under-21 teams from around the world. This is the second major tournament that a Pakistani hockey team has withdrawn from this year. Pakistan had pulled out of the men's Asia Cup in August following which Bangladesh were invited as a replacement. "We know it's a great loss for the junior team. But at this point, with so much negative emotion in India, the decision is apt and wise," Mujahid said.

