

"Rahul Blocked My CM Appointment" : Himanta's 2014 Bombshell

Himanta: Rahul's Snub Freed Me to Serve Sanatan and Assam

Guwahati, Feb 17: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday claimed that then Congress president Sonia Gandhi had asked him to decide on the date of his swearing-in as the CM in 2014, but the party's decision changed when Rahul Gandhi intervened from the United

backed me for the CM's post. Several senior leaders remained neutral. Only 12 MLAs said Himanta Biswa Sarma should not become the CM and that the incumbent should continue," Sarma told media persons. "Sonia Gandhi called me to her residence and asked me to decide on

the date of my swearing-in. I had told Madam that I would take the oath the day after the Ambubachi Mela. Later, we learnt that Rahul Gandhi, who was in America, called up and the decision of the Congress changed," Sarma further stated. He claimed that thereafter, whenever Congress leaders criticised him, Kharge would



States. This was a phase when Sarma, supported by a group of party MLAs, raised the banner of revolt against then Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi, serving third straight term in the post. The Congress had rushed Mallikarjun Kharge to Assam to douse the fire of dissidence. "When Mallikarjun Kharge came, 58 MLAs

backed me for the CM's post. Several senior leaders remained neutral. Only 12 MLAs said Himanta Biswa Sarma should not become the CM and that the incumbent should continue," Sarma told media persons. "Sonia Gandhi called me to her residence and asked me to decide on

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Sikkim CM Awarded for Creative Tech

Gangtok, Feb 17: Sikkim CM Prem Singh Tamang received the Silver SKOCH Award for the "Creative Hub" and "Sikkim Odyssey" AR game initiatives. Developed by the IPR Department, these projects promote cultural heritage through innovation. Additionally, the CM unveiled the official poster for the Sikkim Film Festival 2026, scheduled for this March. Cultural heritage through modern technology and innovation.

The 'Sikkim Odyssey' AR game, launched in 2025 to mark 50 years of Sikkim's statehood, encourages players to visit real-world landmarks, collect AR clues, and earn rewards, blending cultural education with fitness and technology. Palani agreed to explore flights from Hollongi airport to southern cities, including options using new fleets and seaplane services.



Border Crackdown: ₹1,047Cr Narcotics Seized in Mizoram

Aizawl, Feb 17: Mizoram Governor Gen Vijay Kumar Singh (ret'd) on Tuesday announced that law enforcement agencies seized narcotics valued at Rs 1,047 crore during the 2025-26 fiscal year, reflecting intensified action against cross-border smuggling. Addressing the state assembly



at the opening of the budget session, Singh credited proactive policing and joint operations with Assam Rifles and the BSF along Mizoram's 325-km borders with Assam, Manipur, and Tripura, as well as its 828-km international borders with Bangladesh and Myanmar, for maintaining law and order.

Authorities also seized large consignments of areca nuts, liquor, arms, explosives, and counterfeit currency, resulting in multiple arrests. The excise and narcotics department reported 652 drug trafficker arrests and confiscation of 487 kg of narcotics. Singh identified drug trafficking and substance abuse as ongoing

threats. Between October and December, under the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition) Act, 2019—recently amended to permit limited sales for dignitaries and local wines—4,532 arrests were made and 4,915 cases registered.

To strengthen enforcement, the state government set up a prosecution directorate, introduced biometric checks for foreigners, partnered with the National Forensic Sciences University, and deployed mobile forensic units.

The four-week assembly session will conclude on March 16, with Chief Minister Lalduhoma scheduled to present the 2026-27 budget and 2025-26 supplementary budget on February 26.

CM Mamata slams ECI over alleged differences in guidelines for SIR in Bihar and Bengal

Kolkata, Feb 17: West Bengal Chief Minister (CM) Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday made blistering attacks against the Election Commission of India (ECI) for displaying a discriminatory attitude in connection with the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the State. The CM, during a press conference at the State secretariat Nabanna this afternoon, alleged that documents required for SIR are valid in the BJP-led Bihar but invalid in Bengal for the same voters' list revision exercise. Mamata termed the Commission as 'capture mission' and 'commission run in Md Bin Tughlaque style'. She also alleged that the national poll panel is not following the directives of the Supreme Court, where she had filed a petition against the SIR drive in Bengal. "I call the Nirvachan Commission a torture commission since the SIR was launched in the State. The Commission is trying to hold elections in the State before the normal schedule, and the same thing has happened in Haryana and Maharashtra, respectively," she said, intensifying its attacks against the Commission today. "One BJP lady using AI has deleted names of 58 lakh voters from the draft electoral rolls, and there are many valid voters among the deleted people. The Commission is unleashing a threat culture in Bengal," the CM alleged. "The entire democratic system is being bulldozed to protect the



interests of only one party (BJP)," she said. Reacting to the ECI decision to suspend seven poll officials, she said, "We will promote them. They were suspended without getting any scope to defend themselves." The ECI on Sunday night suspended the seven Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs) who are West Bengal Civil Service (WBCS) executives, from six assembly segments in Bengal after holding them guilty of allegedly including several ineligible persons in the post-Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the State. It is learnt that the suspended officers have worked in their respective offices till Monday. Sources said, for the first time, the

ECI suspended the seven poll-duty officials directly in Bengal instead of recommending such punitive action to the State government. Poll panel sources said the revelation that a few AEROs had allowed ineligible names on the rolls had hung a cloud on the publication of the final rolls on February 28. The ECI on Friday had also asked the chief secretary, Nandini Chakraborty, to lodge an FIR against the four government officers, including two West Bengal Civil Service (WBCS) executives, by 17 February.

The four officers, former Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs), of the Baruipur Purba and Moyna Assembly segments, respectively. The South 24 Parganas and East Midnapore districts had allegedly enrolled fictitious voters last year. Nabanna has not yet lodged an FIR against the four officers till this evening, despite the ECI directive.

Nandini rushed to Delhi on Friday evening and appeared before the full Bench of the ECI to explain why the poll panel's directives could not be implemented so far. Sources in the Commission said, "Besides lodging FIRs against four government officers by 17 February, she has also been asked to implement several other directives issued by the Commission earlier."

SC to Hear CBI Probe Plea Over CM Khandu's Kin

Itanagar, Feb 17: The Supreme Court on Tuesday reserved its order on a petition demanding a CBI investigation into public works contracts awarded in Arunachal Pradesh to firms owned by relatives of Chief Minister Pema Khandu. A bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta, and N V Anjaria directed counsel for all parties to file written submissions within two weeks. Advocate Prashant Bhushan, representing petitioners Save Mon Region Federation and Voluntary Arunachal Sena, cited a recent state affidavit. He highlighted multiple contracts given to companies linked to the chief minister's family, urging a CBI probe. "This is reeking of corruption," Bhushan argued, claiming state police could not investigate impartially.



PM Modi: Northeast has evolved from 'neglected' to 'Ashtalakshmi'

Guwahati, Feb 14: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday accused the Congress of neglecting the Northeast during its rule, asserting that the BJP-led government considers the region as "Ashtalakshmi," symbolizing eight forms of prosperity. Speaking at a rally in Assam, his first visit to the Northeast since the recent Union Budget, Modi highlighted the government's focus on infrastructure development, stating that the region is now a priority for economic growth.



He cited ongoing projects, in-

cluding advanced highways, as examples of the government's initiatives.

Modi also paid tribute to security personnel on the anniversary of the Pulwama terror attack, referring to India's response through Operation Sindoor. He lauded BJP workers in Assam, calling their contribution "the greatest honour of my life," and offered respects to Maa Adi Shakti and Maa Kamakhya. Assam is scheduled to hold assembly elections in the first half of 2026.

Kokborok Row: Human chains demand Roman script

Guwahati, Feb 14: Agartala: Thousands of Kokborok-speaking students organised coordinated protests across Tripura on Saturday, forming human chains at several locations to press for the adoption of the Roman script for the Kokborok language. The demonstrations were held under the banner of the United Movement Committee for Roman Script (UMCRC), a joint platform of Kokborok-speaking student bodies. Human chains were reported at 11 locations statewide, with participants raising slogans demanding official recognition of the Roman script for Kokborok, Tripura's second official language and the mother tongue of most of the State's 19 tribal communities. UMCRC convener John Debarma said the demand represented the aspirations of Kokborok-speaking people and called on the government to acknowledge public sentiment. He also expressed disappointment over recent remarks by Chief Minister Manik Saha, arguing that a democratically elected government should not overlook concerns tied to cultural and linguistic identity. Responding to the protests, Saha alleged that vested interests were influencing the movement and accused certain groups of politicising the issue. He stated that



he was not opposed to Kokborok or the use of English, but rejected the proposal to adopt the Roman script, contending that a "foreign script" was not permissible under the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

The Chief Minister further maintained that students were free to write examinations in either Bengali or Roman script. He urged Kokborok-speaking communities to focus on developing an indigenous script, adding that capable members of the community could undertake the task rather than turning it into a political campaign. Saturday's protests underscored growing differences between student groups and the state government over the future of Kokborok and its script, with both sides appearing to hold firm on the sensitive cultural question.

BJP national president to visit Dibrugarh on Feb 18

Dibrugarh, Feb 15: The newly elected BJP national president Nitin Nabin will visit Dibrugarh on February 18 to attend a Prista Pramukh Sanmela at Khanikar. BJP state president Dilip Saikia confirmed Nabin's two-day tour to Upper Assam beginning February 18. Saikia visited Dibrugarh on Sunday to review preparations for the programme. Speaking to reporters, Saikia said Nabin will reach Dibrugarh on February 18 and participate in the Prista Pramukh programme at Khanikar field. On February 19, he will visit Tinsukia and pay tribute at



the Maidam of Matak King Sarbananda Singh. "This will be Nitin Nabin's first visit to Dibrugarh and Tinsukia after assuming office. He will take part in several organisational programmes," Saikia said. He added that the party will

organise a BJP zonal meeting where members from seven to eight districts will participate. The leadership will also hold a meeting with leading citizens of Dibrugarh. Saikia further said that Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal

Borah Stays, Resignation Withdrawn Hours Later



Guwahati, Feb 16: Former Assam Congress chief Bhupen Borah on Monday reconsidered his resignation from the party hours after submitting it. Borah (55) has sought time to reflect on his decision, following intervention by the party high command. Assam Congress in-charge Jitendra Singh told reporters that Borah has withdrawn his resignation, while state unit president Gaurav Gogoi added that Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi personally spoke with him, and the high command did not accept the resignation.

Borah had tendered his resignation at 8 am, citing "certain circumstances" in recent days despite 32 years of service with the party. "I will continue in active politics," he told reporters outside his Guwahati residence, noting that he had not yet decided on his future course. The development comes ahead of Assam's assembly elections scheduled for March-April. Borah was replaced as state president by Gogoi in May last year.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma reacted to the news, alleging that Borah was sidelined due to lacking "an illustrious father or minority community ties," unlike Gogoi and Rakibul Hussain. Sarma said he plans to meet Borah on Tuesday to discuss future prospects.



Khemchand Reviews Security, Meets Delegation

Manipur, Feb 16: Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand on Monday held a meeting with Rajendra N. Dash, Inspector General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), at his office in Babupara following a courtesy call. During the meeting, the two leaders held constructive discussions and exchanged views on the prevailing security situation in the state. They reaffirmed their shared commitment to maintaining peace and stability and ensuring the safety and well-being of all citizens. In a separate engagement, the Chief Minister met office bearers and members of the Mayai Lambi Apunba Lup (MALAL) at his residence. The delegation ex-

pressed appreciation for the strengthening of the pavement along National Highway 137A, popularly known as Mayai Lambi.

The Chief Minister thanked the delegation for their constructive engagement and valuable suggestions. He assured them that their requests regarding the widening of the road in market areas and improvement of the drainage system are under serious consideration, and that appropriate action will be taken in due course to enhance public convenience and infrastructure in the region. He reiterated the government's commitment to ensuring sustainable development and improved connectivity across the state.

Tripura BJP Training Meet Under Upadhyay Drive

Agartala, Feb 17: A training strategy meeting was held today at the state BJP headquarters as part of the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Training Maha Abhiyan. The session aimed to strengthen organizational skills and ideological training for party workers across Tripura. State BJP president and MP Rajib Bhattacharjee, state in-charge Rajdeep Roy, along with other senior leaders and office-bearers, attended the meeting. Addressing the gathering, Bhattacharjee said the initiative seeks to familiarize new members with the party's philosophy, ideals, and organizational practices, while reminding experienced workers of the same. "Our goal is not just to form a government but to carry forward our ideals. Social change is possible only through dedicated workers. That is why regular training is an essential part of our organizational work," Bhattacharjee emphasized.

The meeting resolved to expand training camps from the state level down to dis-



tricts, mandals, and even assembly constituencies. Under the campaign named after Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay, special focus will be placed on strengthening booth-level organization, amplifying welfare-oriented messages, and highlighting the achievements of the central government more effectively before the public. nior Manager, Bishramganj Branch.

Marking more than a change of address, the reopening symbolizes a renewed promise of modern banking, enhanced service delivery, and financial empowerment for the community. Customers and well-wishers are warmly invited to visit the revamped branch and experience the new-age banking environment.

Manipal Hospitals strengthens Eastern India oncology network, expands access for Mizoram patients

Aizawl: Manipal Hospitals is strengthening its oncology network in Eastern India to provide seamless, comprehensive cancer care for patients from Mizoram, a state that records among the highest cancer incidence rates in the country. Leading oncologists from the Manipal network visited Aizawl to participate in the Association of Oncologists, North East India (AONEI) conference, reinforcing collaboration with regional clinicians to enhance early detection, treatment access and continuity of care. Manipal Hospital EM Bypass, Kolkata associated with the Mizoram Universal HealthCare Scheme (MUHCS) offers cashless treatment for oncology, neu-



rology, cardiology, urology, gastro and orthopaedic services. With more than 25 oncologists across sub-specialties and integrated oncology centres in Kolkata and Siliguri, the hospital group is emerging as a key

referral hub for patients from the North-East seeking advanced diagnostics, surgical oncology, radiation therapy, immunotherapy and targeted treatments, including robotic-assisted surgeries and image-guided radiotherapy.

Doctors highlighted that lifestyle risks, tobacco use and late diagnosis continue to drive high cancer burden in Mizoram, underscoring the need for coordinated, multi-disciplinary cancer care pathways covering prevention, early detection, treatment and survivorship planning.

In Aizawl, healthcare providers report rising patient awareness and growing demand for specialised oncology services, with increasing referrals to Eastern India centres. Strengthened partnerships between Manipal Hospitals and local clinicians are expected to streamline referrals, reduce treatment delays and improve access to advanced cancer care for patients across Mizoram.

SEBI chief launches multilingual comic series to boost investor awareness

Guwahati: The CDSL Investor Protection Fund (CDSL IPF), in collaboration with Amar Chitra Katha, has launched a new investor education comic series aimed at simplifying financial concepts and strengthening awareness among investors. The series was unveiled by SEBI Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey at CDSL's 3rd Annual Symposium, Reimagine: Securities Market through Data Synergy.

Developed under the guidance of SEBI, the initiative translates complex financial topics into engaging story-based narratives designed to encourage informed participation in India's capital markets. The comics will be available in both digital and print formats and distributed through investor protection programmes in 12 languages, including English, Hindi, Assamese, Bengali, Tamil, and Telugu, to ensure wider reach across urban and rural regions.

SEBI Chairman Pandey said investor awareness is essential for building transparent and inclusive securities markets, noting that initiatives such as "Slam the Scam" and "AtmanirbHER" have already strengthened public confidence. CDSL MD and CEO Nehal Vora added that storytelling can make investor education more relatable and trustworthy, helping individuals make informed financial decisions. In Guwahati, the multilingual format, particularly the inclusion of Assamese, is expected to improve financial literacy among first-time investors in the region, potentially encouraging greater participation from smaller towns in the Northeast capital market ecosystem.

Gemini said Shringla: Rail & Tourism to Unlock NE Growth

New Delhi: MP Harsh Vardhan Shringla on Thursday highlighted infrastructure expansion, rail connectivity and tourism development as key drivers of economic transformation in the North Eastern Region, calling for stronger monitoring of ongoing projects and effective utilisation of central funds. Raising the issue in Parliament, he sought details on the progress of initiatives announced at the Rising North East Summit and urged the government to ensure that investment commitments translate into employment, trade expansion and sustainable regional growth.

Shringla emphasised that improved rail and road connectivity linking remote areas of the Northeast to the rest of the country is already symbolising greater integration and opportunity, bringing markets closer, boosting tourism and strengthening national unity. Stressing the tourism potential of the region, he described the Northeast as a hub of eco, cultural and adventure tourism supported by rich tribal heritage and natural beauty.

Quoting his intervention, Shringla said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has displayed a deep and heartfelt connection with the Northeast... During the recent Northeast Investors' Summit inaugurated by him, investors committed investment interests of Rs 4.3 lakh crore."

Tata AIA launches Enhanced Value Index Funds combining equity growth with life protection

Mumbai: Tata AIA Life Insurance has launched two new value-focused equity offerings Enhanced Value Index Fund and Enhanced Value Index Pension Fund designed to help investors build long-term wealth while securing life protection through unit-linked insurance and pension solutions. The New Fund Offer (NFO) will run from February 9 to 16, 2026, with policies issued at a NAV of ₹10 on February 16.

The funds track the BSE 500 Enhanced Value 50 Customised Index, investing 70-100% in equity and equity-related instruments across 50 large-, mid-, and small-cap companies selected using valuation parameters such as book



value-to-price, earnings-to-price, and sales-to-price ratios. The pension variant is tailored for retirement planning, enabling policyholders to create a long-term retirement corpus alongside life insurance coverage.

Commenting on the launch, Harshad Patil, Chief Investment Officer, Tata AIA Life Insurance, said, "Equity markets reward patience and discipline over time. Many investors struggle with stock selection or market timing. Our Enhanced Value Index

strategy simplifies this by offering a systematic, fundamentals-driven approach that makes long-term equity investing transparent and accessible."

CDSL hosts 'Reimagine' Symposium, highlights data-driven future of securities markets

Guwahati: Central Depository Services (India) Limited (CDSL) hosted the third edition of its annual symposium, "Reimagine: Securities Market through Data Synergy," bringing together policymakers, regulators, market infrastructure institutions and technology leaders to discuss the growing role of data in shaping India's securities markets. Central Depository Services (India) Limited said the event also marked the launch of the inaugural Reimagine Ideathon, rewarding five student teams with prizes worth ₹12 lakh.

Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Chair-

man of Securities and Exchange Board of India, who attended as Chief Guest, emphasised that "data is the new plumbing of capital markets," highlighting the importance of governance, security and quality of market data. The symposium also featured an AI-powered panelist providing real-time insights, reflecting the increasing integration of artificial intelligence in financial market decision-making.

A key highlight included the launch of the CDSL Investor Protection Fund's Amar Chitra Katha comic series in 12 languages to promote invest-

ment awareness. The Ideathon winner, Project Sahayak from Goa Institute of Management, secured the top ₹5-lakh prize among over 1,000 participating entries nationwide.

Initiatives focusing on investor education and data-driven infrastructure could further deepen retail participation in emerging regional markets such as Guwahati. With rising demat account penetration in the Northeast, enhanced investor awareness programmes and digital financial infrastructure are expected to support broader capital market participation from the region.

Toing enters Guwahati, targets value-driven food delivery segment with lowest-price promise

Guwahati: Affordable food delivery platform Toing has launched its services in Guwahati, marking its expansion to six emerging cities across India, including Pune, Agra, Vadodara, Nagpur and Nashik. The app, introduced in the second half of 2025

with Pune as its first market, guarantees the lowest item prices by matching or beating restaurant table menu prices while offering zero packaging charges and no platform fees on all orders.

Built for students, early job-goers and value-conscious Gen Z consumers, Toing aims to make food delivery an everyday habit rather than an occasional indulgence. Customers can order dishes such as biryanis, burgers and bowls for under Rs. 99. Several popular Guwahati restaurants, including Rang De Basanti Dhaba, Burger King, Govindam and Fat Belly, are already listed on the platform, offering cuisines such as North Indian, Biryani, Chinese, Chaat and Continental fast food. The launch, timed ahead of



Valentine's Day, allows users to order local favourites such as pizzas, momos, rolls and biryani.

In Guwahati, the entry of Toing is expected to intensify competition in the city's growing online food delivery sector, particularly among price-sensitive student communities, potentially prompting restaurants and rival platforms to introduce more value-focused deals and pricing strategies.

Sidharth Bhakoo, Chief Business Officer, Swiggy Food Marketplace, said Guwahati's strong student base makes it a natural expansion market. With over one million downloads nationwide and a 4.5 user rating, Toing is emerging as a strong contender in the value-driven delivery segment.

Croma Summer Sale 2026 offers up to 71% discounts on ACs and Premium TVs

Guwahati: Infiniti Retail Ltd's electronics retail chain Croma has launched its Summer Sale 2026, offering discounts of up to 71% on air conditioners, premium televisions, and seasonal appliances across stores nationwide until February 28. The omni-channel retailer is providing exchange benefits, cashback offers, easy EMI options, and up to 10% additional discount for HDFC Tata Neu credit card users, subject to partner bank and finance terms.

The sale features major price cuts on cooling solutions, including the Lloyd Inverter AC (1.25T) starting at ₹26,990, LG Inverter AC (1.0T) at ₹30,490 with cashback benefits, Croma Inverter Split AC (1.5T) at ₹29,990, Samsung 2026 Inverter AC (1.0T) at ₹28,990, Bluostar Inverter AC (1.5T) at ₹40,990, and Voltas Inverter Split AC (1T) at ₹24,990. Attractive offers are also available on Symphony and Croma air coolers.

Croma is also offering deals on big-screen televisions, including Samsung's 100-inch Neo QLED TV priced from ₹3,84,990, TCL's 85-inch QLED TV from ₹1,23,990, LG's 86-inch Nano TV from ₹1,68,490, and Samsung's 55-inch LED Frame TV from ₹64,990.

Regions like Guwahati is witnessing early seasonal demand for cooling appliances and large televisions, with exchange offers, cashback schemes, and flexible financing expected to drive higher consumer purchases ahead of the peak summer months.

Axis Max Life reports strong 9M FY'26 performance; individual FYP up 20%, VNB surges 30%

Guwahati: Max Financial Services Limited reported an 18% year-on-year rise in consolidated revenue (excluding investment income) to ₹24,625 crore during the first nine months of FY'26, while consolidated revenue including investment income stood at ₹36,891 crore with profit after tax of ₹137 crore.

Axis Max Life Insurance continued to outperform the private life insurance industry, registering a 20% YoY growth in Individual Adjusted First Year Premium (FYP) at ₹6,396 crore and expanding its private market share by 53 basis points to 9.8%. Total Annualized Premium Equivalent (APE) grew 21% to ₹6,908 crore, supported by strong proprietary channels and 51 new partnerships, including 24 group and 27 retail alliances. Gross Written Premium rose 18% to ₹25,195 crore, while renewal premiums increased 17% to ₹15,551 crore.

Profitability indicators also strengthened, with Value of New Business (VNB) rising 30% YoY to ₹1,633 crore and new business margins improving to 23.6%. Embedded Value grew 16% to ₹28,110 crore, Assets Under



Management reached ₹1.93 lakh crore (up 12%), and Individual New Business Sum Assured expanded 41%. Managing Director and CEO Sumit Madan said the company's growth reflects "disciplined execution, expanding partnerships, and continued digital innovation driving customer experience and long-term leadership." Insurance penetration is steadily rising in Guwahati, where increasing financial awareness, expanding agency networks, and growing demand for protection-led policies are contributing to stronger uptake of life insurance solutions, aligning with Axis Max Life's nationwide growth momentum.

CDSL hosts 'Reimagine' Symposium, highlights data-driven future of securities markets

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HP unveils new Desk Jet All-in-One printers to boost home printing market in India

Guwahati: HP Inc. has introduced a new range of DeskJet All-in-One (AiO) printers in India, aimed at students, parents, and professionals seeking reliable and affordable home printing solutions. The portfolio spans HP DeskJet, HP DeskJet Ink Advantage, and HP DeskJet Ultra Ink Advantage models, designed for easy plug-and-play printing, scanning, and copying with dual-band self-healing Wi-Fi and low-cost high-yield inks.

The printers support everyday home productivity with speeds of up to 7.5 pages per minute (ppm) in black and 5.5 ppm in colour, while the DeskJet Ink Advantage 4388 delivers up to 8.5 ppm and features an automatic document feeder. All models include a 60-sheet input tray, Bluetooth and Wi-Fi multi-device print-

ing via the HP App, and contemporary white designs with vibrant accent colours such as Very Peri, Warm Aroma, Surf Blue, Machu Picchu, and Pimento. Select models also offer a complimentary one-year HP Print Learn Center subscription valued at INR 899. Notably, each device contains at least 70% post-consumer recycled plastic and supports recycling through the HP Planet Partners programme.

Guwahati is expecting strong interest in the new DeskJet range, driven by expanding home-learning environments, small home-office setups, and demand for affordable multi-function devices. Competitive pricing starting at INR 6,999 and distribution through HP World stores and the HP Online store are expected to accelerate adoption across the Northeast consumer segment.

MSDE show cases inclusive AI skilling strategy at India AI Impact Summit 2026

Guwahati: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has positioned skilling at the core of India's inclusive artificial intelligence strategy with a dedicated pavilion at the India AI Impact Summit 2026, underway at Bharat Mandapam. Located at Booth Nos. 3F 26 and 3F 20, the pavilion highlights the theme "AI for Inclusive Development," demonstrating how artificial intelligence can enhance productivity and livelihoods while supporting employment generation.

Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education, Jayant Chaudhary, said hosting one of the largest AI gatherings in the Global South reflects India's commitment to shaping a responsible and inclusive AI future. He noted that India is equipping its youth and workforce with AI-ready skills to power economic growth and opportunities. Chaudhary is scheduled to visit the pavilion on February 17 to interact with participants and review AI-enabled skilling installations, while



also engaging global technology leaders, academia and industry partners to strengthen collaborations.

The pavilion showcases a comprehensive framework built around "skilling in AI, skilling with AI and skilling for AI," featuring initiatives such as SOAR (Skilling for AI Readiness), nano-credentials, AI-driven career guidance through the Skill India Assistant, personalised course recommendations via the Skill India Digital Hub, and computer vision-based assessment systems. Interactive demonstrations highlight AI applications supporting farmers, electricians, construction workers and weavers.

In Guwahati, the expansion of AI-focused skilling initiatives could stimulate demand for digital training centres, IT-enabled services and local startups, helping the Northeast region integrate more actively into India's rapidly expanding AI-driven business ecosystem.

From village beginnings to Top 13 Leaders: Shanyo Horam and Worchinan Kasar build success with Oriflame

New Delhi: Shanyo Horam and her husband Worchinan Kasar have emerged as one of the leading success stories in Oriflame India, rising to become Diamond Directors and ranking among the company's Top 13 Leaders through years of persistence, partnership, and strategic growth.

Shanyo, the eldest daughter from a small village of just 33 houses, had to leave formal education early to support her family. Despite limited opportunities, she remained focused on achieving financial independence and stability. After working in various roles, her

career took a decisive turn in 2011 when she was introduced to Oriflame by her aunt. The company's social-selling model and clearly defined success plan enabled her to build a flexible career while balancing family responsibilities.

Her husband Worchinan, a banker by profession, strongly supported her vision and later joined her full-time after attending an Oriflame Director Seminar that highlighted the long-term growth potential of the business. Together, the couple steadily progressed from Gold Director to Dia-



mond Director, building their leadership network through consistent mentoring and teamwork.

Today, the duo has earned multiple performance rewards, purchased their dream car, travelled to more than 16

international destinations, and created a sustainable family-led business model, reflecting the growing potential of social selling entrepreneurship in India. Shanyo Horam and her husband Worchinan Kasar have become a celebrated success story in Oriflame India, rising to the ranks of the Top 13 Leaders in the company. Their journey is a powerful example of perseverance, ambition, and partnership.

Shanyo grew up in a small village with limited opportunities. education early to support her family.



Kenvue announces dual hydration strategy with ORSL and new eRZL brand in India

Guwahati: Kenvue has unveiled a corporate-level dual-brand strategy to strengthen its hydration portfolio in India, introducing ORSL for diarrheal dehydration and launching eRZL as a new brand for everyday hydration solutions. The company said the “Double Power for Complete Hydration” strategy is designed to address rising public health concerns around dehydration while tapping into the rapidly expanding electrolyte drinks market.

Under the announcement, ORSL will serve as the company’s oral rehydration salts portfolio based on the World Health Organization formula, available in both ready-to-drink and powder formats. Effective January 2026, the company has rebranded its electrolyte drink range as eRZL, featuring a new and



improved composition with 1.4 times more electrolytes and eight times less sugar compared to the earlier formulation. The drink combines sodium, potassium, chloride, vitamin C, and real fruit juice, offering faster hydration and supporting recovery from heat exhaustion, tiredness, muscle cramps, and mild to moderate dehydration.

Manish Anandani, Managing Director-India, Kenvue, said the company remains

committed to advancing science-backed hydration solutions and strengthening awareness around both illness-related and everyday hydration needs. Prashant Shinde, Business Unit Head – Self Care, added that growing consumer preference for low-sugar wellness products is driving innovation in the category, while Dr. Nikhil Bangale emphasized the importance of choosing electrolyte drinks with optimal nutrient concentration.

ICICI Prudential introduces ICICI Pru SmartKid 360 to expand child financial planning portfolio

Imphal: ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has launched ICICI Pru SmartKid 360, a long-term savings product aimed at helping parents plan systematically for their children’s future financial milestones while offering guaranteed benefits. The product provides Money-Back or pre-decided payouts aligned with key life stages such as school education, higher studies, and early adulthood goals, with customers having the flexibility to opt for either fixed or increasing payout structures. Commenting on the launch,

Vikas Gupta, Chief Product Officer, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance, said, “ICICI Pru SmartKid 360 has been designed to cater to the parents need to financially secure their child’s future. In addition to the Money-Back benefits, the product provides a guaranteed maturity benefit in the form of a lump-sum payout, at the end of the policy tenure, which can support the child’s transition into adulthood.” A key feature of the plan is the inbuilt waiver of premium and continuity of benefits, ensuring that in case of

the life assured’s demise, all future premiums are waived, the life cover is paid to the nominee, and policy benefits continue. Optional features such as the Family Income Benefit provide additional income support to families. In Imphal, growing awareness about long-term education planning and financial protection for children is expected to drive interest in structured savings products like ICICI Pru SmartKid 360, particularly among young urban families seeking guaranteed and milestone-linked payouts.

PM India calls for stronger government–industry collaboration to curb illicit tobacco trade

New Delhi: On Anti-Smuggling Day 2026, Philip Morris India Trading Pvt. Ltd. (PM India) reaffirmed its commitment to combating illicit tobacco trade, emphasizing the need for sustained collective action and stronger government collaboration to restrict smuggled cigarette inflows. The company stated that the illegal cigarette market poses serious challenges to legitimate businesses, public revenue, and consumer safety, calling for coordinated interventions amid evolving fiscal and regulatory developments.

With the Government of India rolling out the Track & Trace (T&T) mechanism to help authorities identify illegal tobacco products, PM India highlighted the importance of strengthening enforcement frameworks. According

to government data, customs and Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) units seized around 3.93 crore cigarette sticks up to June 2025, reflecting the scale and complexity of smuggling operations. India, with an estimated 267 million tobacco users, remains one of the fastest-growing illegal cigarette markets globally.

In 2025, PM India conducted a survey covering 3,000 shops across more than 500 market clusters in 10 states and provided training support to over 145 customs and tax officers to improve identification of illicit products. Managing Director Navaneel Kar stressed that continued government-industry cooperation is essential to protect consumers and safeguard legitimate supply chains.

L&T Finance doubles gold loan network to 260+ branches, accelerates retail expansion

Guwahati: L&T Finance Ltd. (LTF), formerly known as L&T Finance Holdings Ltd., has doubled its dedicated gold loan branch network to more than 260 locations nationwide, marking a significant milestone in its retail growth strategy. The company entered the gold finance business in June 2025 through the acquisition of 130 branches and has added over 130 new branches within eight months, including the launch of its 130th new branch earlier this month. The rapid expansion spans the North, West, East, and South regions, with the company’s gold loan business now present across 18 States and Union Territories. LTF has expanded into several key markets, including Assam,



Karnataka, Telangana, Maharashtra, Odisha, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, and Rajasthan, aiming to meet rising demand for secured credit through faster turnaround times and flexible financing solutions supported by digital integration.

In Guwahati, the company’s entry into Assam is expected to enhance access to formal gold-backed financing for small traders, retailers,

and households, while intensifying competition among NBFCs and improving customer-centric lending services in the region.

Chief Operating Officer Raju Dodti said the expansion reflects the company’s “Lakshya” strategy to build a digitally enabled, customer-focused retail lending ecosystem backed by strong security systems and specialised workforce expertise.

Bandhan Life rolls out ‘Invest Ultima’ ULIP, launches Mid Cap Fund at Rs 10 NAV

Guwahati: Bandhan Life Insurance, the life insurance arm of the Bandhan Group, has introduced a new Unit Linked Insurance Plan (ULIP) — iInvest Ultima — along with the launch of a Mid Cap New Fund Offer (NFL), priced at an opening NAV of ₹10 and open for subscription until February 18, 2026. The new offering aims to combine long-term wealth creation with life protection benefits.



The iInvest Ultima plan provides access to Bandhan Life’s 5-star and 4-star rated funds, which have outperformed industry benchmarks, along with features such as an Accidental Death Benefit Rider, loyalty rewards, and return of 100% mortality charges from the 15th policy year. Women customers will receive an additional 0.5% premium allocation for the first five policy years. The plan is designed for investors aged 30–50 who are comfortable with market risk and can invest ₹2 lakh or more

annually. The Mid Cap Fund, benchmarked against the Nifty Midcap 150 Index, focuses on quality mid-sized companies across financial services, industrials, healthcare, and capital goods sectors. MD & CEO Satishwar B. said the plan “offers long-term value by combining protection with access to high-performing funds,” while CIO Saibal Ghosh noted the fund will target companies with strong balance sheets and scalable business models.

In Guwahati, financial planners report rising interest among investors in ULIPs and mid-cap-focused investment products, driven by increasing financial awareness and growing demand for insurance-linked wealth creation solutions across the region.

J Infratech wins CPSU contract for NH-37 maintenance project in Assam

Guwahati: J Infratech Limited has secured a highway maintenance contract from a Central Public Sector Undertaking (CPSU) for the repair, maintenance, and improvement of riding quality on selected stretches of NH-37 (Old) in Assam. The project was awarded after the company’s successful bid, with the CPSU issuing a formal Letter of Acceptance under FY 2025–26 (2nd Call).

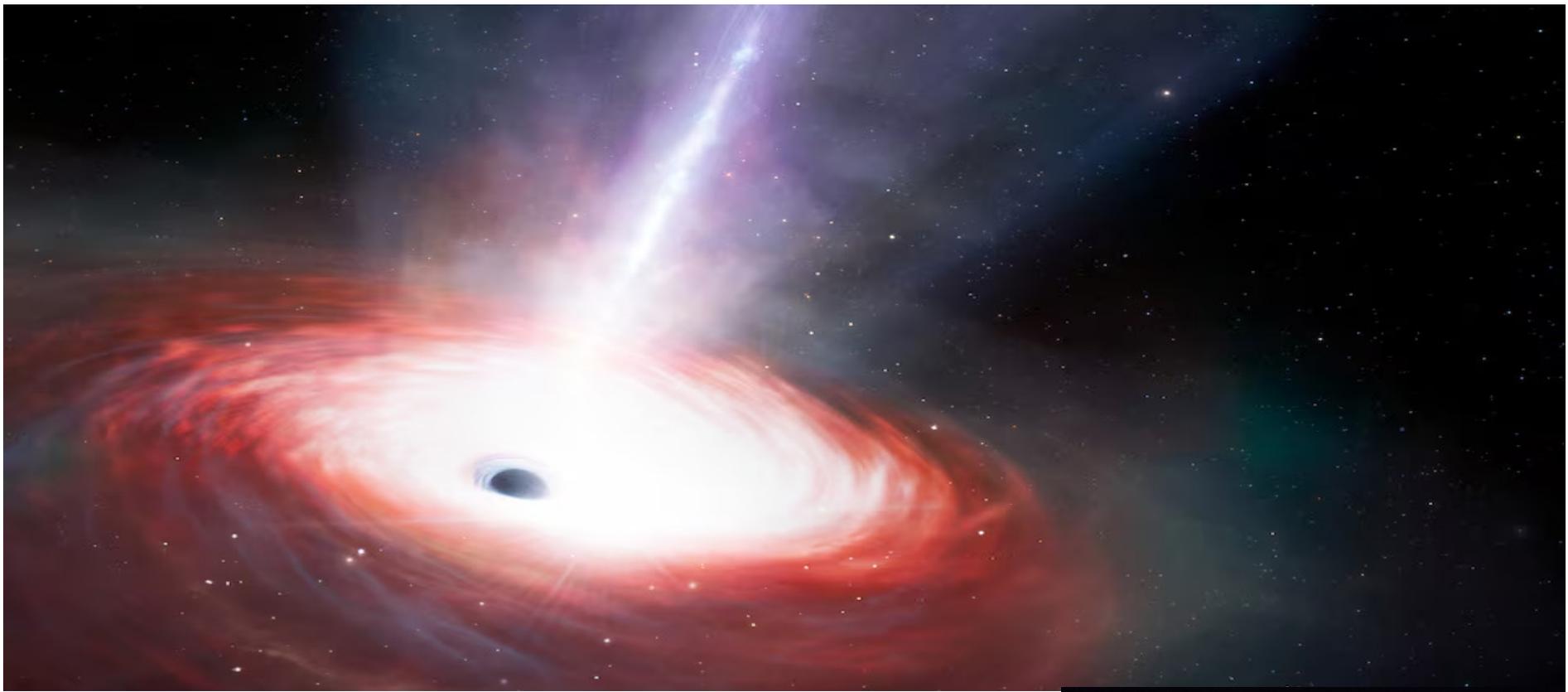
The NH-37 stretch plays a vital role in supporting daily commuter traffic while enabling the efficient movement of goods across the region. Officials noted that strengthening riding quality is critical for maintaining traffic reliability, reducing vehicle operating stress, and improving transport efficiency. The initiative is part of broader efforts to reinforce existing highway infrastructure through timely maintenance and targeted upgrades.

Commenting on the development, Rajat Jaggi, AGM – Planning & Monitoring, J Infratech Limited, said the project reflects the company’s continued commitment to strengthening and sustaining critical road infrastructure while delivering work in line with the highest quality standards and stipulated timelines.

In Guwahati, improved road conditions are expected to enhance logistics efficiency, reduce freight transit time, and support smoother supply chains for wholesale and retail trade linked to the city’s growing commercial hubs. The project is also likely to benefit transport operators and regional businesses dependent on highway connectivity.

J Infratech, with established experience in highway construction, repair, and maintenance across the North-East and other regions, said the new order further strengthens its participation in central government infrastructure programs aimed at upgrading India’s highway network.





Webb telescope reveals rapid growth of primordial black hole

Black hole existed 1.5 billion years after Big Bang, Object exceeded theoretical limits on growth rate

The Reuters Bureau

At the heart of our Milky Way galaxy lurks a supermassive black hole about four million times the mass of the sun, called Sagittarius A*. In fact, these objects, which increase in mass over time by eating material that wanders too close, reside at the center of most galaxies.

But since NASA's James Webb Space Telescope came online in 2022, astronomers have been surprised to find supermassive black holes inhabiting the early universe - earlier than they had thought possible considering the time needed to gather such great mass. New observations of one such primordial black hole is offering insight into how this may have occurred - through episodes of supercharged growth.

Black holes are extremely dense objects with gravity so strong that not even light can escape. With their immense gravitational pull, they grow in mass by sucking in material such as gas,

dust and stars unfortunate enough to stray nearby.

"The existence of supermassive black holes in the early universe challenges our current models of black hole formation and growth," said astronomer Hyewon Suh of the International Gemini Observatory in Hawaii and the U.S. National Science Foundation's NOIRLab, lead author of the study published in the journal *Nature Astronomy*.

The new Webb observations involve a supermassive black hole called LID-568 that existed when the cosmos was about 11% its current age - about 1.5 billion years after the Big Bang event 13.8 billion years ago that initiated the universe. LID-568 has a mass about 10 million times greater than the sun, so 2-1/2 times that of Sagittarius A*. The researchers have not yet determined the mass of its home galaxy.

LID-568 was observed gaining mass at a pace faster than previously thought possible. Webb showed that, based on its observed energetic output,

LID-568 appeared to be consuming infalling material - known as accretion - at more than 40 times the hypothesized maximum, called the Eddington limit, for such activity.

"The Eddington limit is a theoretical limit for the maximum energy output the black hole can produce through the accretion process. This theoretical limit assumes that the outward force from the radiation produced during the accretion process balances the gravity of the infalling material," said astronomer and study co-author Julia Scharwächter of the Gemini Observatory and NOIRLab.

These primordial black holes are thought to have originated in one of two ways, either following the explosive death of the universe's first generation of stars or through the collapse of large clouds of gas present in the early universe.

"The discovery of LID-568 suggests that a significant portion of mass growth can occur during a single episode of rapid

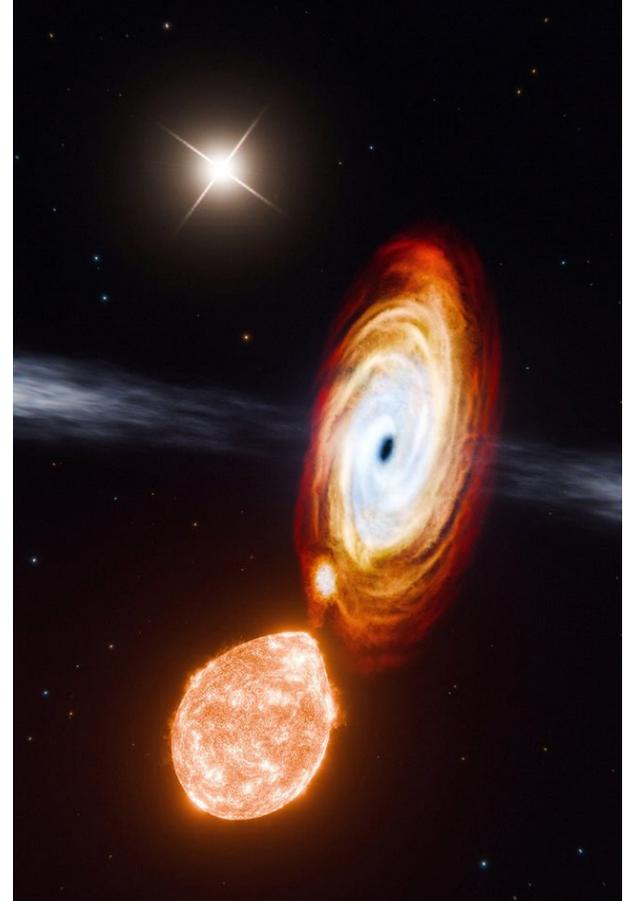
accretion. This could help explain how supermassive black holes formed so early in the universe, regardless of how they originated," Suh said.

"Until now, we have lacked observational confirmation of how these black holes could grow so quickly in the early universe," Suh added.

"Until now, we have lacked observational confirmation of how these black holes could grow so quickly in the early universe," Suh added.

A key sign of a growing supermassive black hole is emission of X-rays, high-energy electromagnetic radiation with very short wavelengths. Material swirling around a supermassive black hole before it is consumed is superheated and glows strongly in X-ray wavelengths. The researchers first spotted LID-568 using NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory and then studied it more closely using Webb's infrared observational capabilities.

The Webb observations suggest the existence of



some sort of mechanism through which a black hole can gobble up material at a faster pace than previously believed possible.

The Webb Telescope's infrared observational capabilities were crucial in this discovery, following initial detections by the Chandra X-ray Observatory. Material swirling around a black hole emits X-rays as it heats up, serving as a cosmic beacon for researchers.

"We don't yet understand how LID-568 manages to exceed these limits,"

Scharwächter explained. Further research is underway, promising to delve deeper into this cosmic anomaly. More observations from Webb will be essential to unlock the mysteries of early universe black holes.

Chandra X-ray Observatory. Material swirling around a black hole emits X-rays as it heats up, serving as a cosmic beacon for researchers.

"We don't yet understand how LID-568 manages to exceed these limits," Scharwächter explained.



Assam Seeks More Strategic Emergency Runways

The Moran ELF: A 200km Buffer for Strategic Northeast Security

Guwahati, Feb 15: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that his government has sought more emergency landing facilities (ELFs) in the State. Notably, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 4.2-km Moran Bypass ELF in Dibrugarh district on Saturday, wherein an Indian Air Force (IAF) C-130J aircraft carrying him made a historic touchdown on the highway airstrip. "Assam will get four or five more ELFs. The IAF can use these for dual purposes for military use and to supply relief materials during floods," Sarma told media persons, adding that strategic decisions will help civil administration.

According to him, the Moran ELF, located 200 km from China and 70 km from Myanmar's border, is a high-stakes project that will provide strategic security to the Northeast region. "The presence of the Prime Minister and the Air Chief Marshal on Saturday was a strong message



that India is ready to face the enemy," he said. Two days ago, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved the 33.7 km 4-lane corridor from Gohpur to Numaligarh, including a tunnel beneath the Brahmaputra. It will be built for Rs 18,662 crore. CM Sarma said this would be India's first and the world's second

road cum rail tunnel, which will run at a depth of 57 metres underneath the Brahmaputra. "We need this project as the northeast is strategic. The project is fully backed by the Indian Army. It has four stakeholders, Assam government, Indian Army, National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited

and Indian Railways," the Chief Minister said.

He also referred to the Centre's plans to build an underground railway line through the "Chicken's Neck," also known as the Siliguri Corridor, highlighting that it will secure railway facilities. He said the next effort would be to build a highway beneath that stretch. "Strategic infrastructures are coming up in Arunachal Pradesh, too. The rail tracks will be constructed up to Tawang (India-China border town). Two highways are under construction. Assam is a backup state and a strategic theatre in the event of a war. The Moran ELF, Numaligarh-Gohpur tunnel and railway corridor beneath the Chicken's Neck are important strategic projects," Sarma said.

He also disclosed that a proposal to build a national highway connecting Assam's Jagiroad semiconductor unit with Bhutan is under active consideration.

Rhino Attack Kills Kaziranga Home Guard

Guwahati, Feb 15: A forest home guard was killed while another was injured when a rhino attacked them at the Kaziranga National Park & Tiger Reserve (KNP&TR) on Sunday. The deceased individual, identified as Sahabuddin, hailed from Assam's Nagaon district. He and the injured, Ramen Borah, were on duty when the incident occurred. "I am deeply saddened to inform you that one of our staff members, Sahabuddin, a home guard posted in Bordoloni Camp of Kohora Range, was attacked by a rhino at about 12 noon while on duty and passed away while being brought to Kohora Hospital," Arun Vignesh, Divisional Forest Officer, told media persons. The injured person was shifted to Jorhat Medical College and Hospital for treatment. The KNP&TR is known worldwide for the greater one-horned rhinos.

According to a 2022 census, the park has 2,613 rhinos, constituting around 70% of the world's one-horned rhino population. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, which was declared a Tiger Reserve in 2006. Kaziranga is also home to large populations of Indian elephant, wild water buffalo and swamp deer.

J&K Reopens 14 Tourist Spots

Srinagar, Feb 16: Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday ordered the reopening of 14 tourist destinations in the Union Territory that had been closed following last year's Pahalgam terror attack, which killed 25 tourists and a local, who operated pony rides. "After a thorough security review and discussion, I've ordered reopening of more tourist spots in Kashmir and Jammu Divisions, which were temporarily closed as precautionary measures," Sinha posted on X. The 14 sites include 11 in the Kashmir Valley — Yousmarg, Doodhpathri (Budgam), Dandipora Park (Kokernag), Peer Ki Gali, Dubjan, Padpawan (Shopian), Astanpora, Tulip Garden (Srinagar), Thajwas Glacier, Hung Park (Ganderbal), and Wullar/Watlab (Baramulla) — and three in Jammu region: Devi Pindi (Reasi), Mahu Mangat (Ramban), and Mughal Maidan (Kishtwar). All will reopen immediately.

Shah Dares Rahul Gandhi to Public Debate Over US Trade Deal Claims

Shah Slams Gandhi's "Laughable" Lies



Gandhinagar, Feb 15: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday accused the Congress and its leader Rahul Gandhi of spreading "lies" and misleading farmers over India's trade pacts with the US, UK and the EU, asserting the government has fully safeguarded the country's agriculture and dairy sectors. He termed as "laughable" the Opposition party's allegations that trade agreements would harm Indian farmers. "I feel like laughing when Congress's Shahzada Rahul Gandhi stands in Parliament and talks about protecting farmers. The Congress has a long history of misleading the country and now they are spreading lies about trade

deals," Shah said. Shah challenged Gandhi to debate the issue publicly. "Rahul Gandhi ji, decide any platform. Even the president of the BJP Yuva Morcha can come and debate with you on who has harmed farmers and who has worked for their welfare," he said. Shah was addressing a gathering in Gandhinagar after launching India's first Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)-based Public Distribution System. He asserted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government had ensured full protection of farmers' interests in every agreement. "I want to assure the farmers, cattle-rearers and fishermen of this country that in every trade deal signed with

the European Union, England and America, Narendra Modi has safeguarded your interests completely. There is no need to worry," he said. Referring to the Congress's criticism that the agreements would destroy India's dairy sector, Shah said Rahul Gandhi is spreading a lie that PM Modi has finished India's dairy sector by signing these deals. "We are the people who expanded the dairy sector, not weakened it. In all the agreements, full protection has been given to dairy (sector)," the Union minister said. Following a phone conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump, both sides recently announced a reduction of US tariffs on Indian goods to 18 per cent from 50 per cent.

Last month, India and the European Union (EU) concluded negotiations for the proposed free trade agreement (FTA), which will help boost two-way commerce and strengthen economic ties between the two sides, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal earlier said. Union Home Minister Amit Shah addresses a rally in Gandhinagar on Sunday, Feb. 15, 2026.

India-US trade de

Medical Student Found Hanging in Durgapur Hostel

Kolkata, Feb 15: A 22-year-old medical student, Labonya Pratap's body was recovered from the hostel of a premier private medical college hospital in Durgapur of West Bengal on Saturday night. He was found hanging from the ceiling of a bathroom in the college hostel. He hails from Patna in Bihar. According to sources in Durgapur police station (PS), the body has been sent to the morgue for post-mortem examination. An unnatural death case has been registered by the police.

Sources also said that a few hostellers spotted the body hanging from the ceiling of the bathroom, and police were informed about the incident. Initial investigations conducted by police revealed that the deceased was upset due to his poor performance in several semester examinations. "We are awaiting the post-mortem report, and after that, the nature of the death will be explored," a police official said, requesting anonymity. The incident has triggered tension among students and doctors inside the hospital campus, as it comes just five months after a rape incident occurred in the same teaching hospital in October. A second-year medical student of the private college had alleged that she was gangraped near the campus. The accused reportedly had taken her to a deserted area behind the hospital where she was assaulted. The incident had triggered massive outrage and a political slugfest with the Opposition BJP blaming the ruling Trinamool Congress miscreants and accusing Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of failing Bengal's women. The TMC had hit back, saying the BJP was politicising the tragedy and that women's safety remains a priority in the State.

The Bengal Police on 31 October had filed a chargesheet in connection with the gang-rape case against six persons, including the classmate of the survivor.



IPL Over Exams: Sooryavanshi Joins RR



New Delhi, Feb 16: India's teen batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, who recently played a pivotal role in the nation's Under-19 cricket World Cup triumph earlier this month, will not sit for his Class 10 board examinations this year. Speculation had been rife over whether the 14-year-old would be able to appear for the crucial exams, but his commitments on the cricket field have ultimately taken precedence.

Having spent much of 2025 on international tours representing India Under-19 and even India A, Sooryavanshi has had limited time to prepare academically. The left-handed batter, a resident of Tajpur in Bihar, is enrolled at Modesty School in Tajpur

and was scheduled to sit for his Class 10 board examinations from 17 February to 11 March. However, his coach Manish Ojha has confirmed that the youngster would be skipping the examinations in order to focus on preparations for the upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League. Sooryavanshi is expected to play a key role for the Rajasthan Royals in IPL 2026 after a remarkable debut in 2025 and has already joined the franchise's pre-season camp. "He won't be giving the Class X exams. He is currently in Nagpur preparing for the upcoming IPL. He has already joined Rajasthan Royals for a pre-season camp," Ojha told India Today.

Modrić Late Strike Snatches Milan Victory



Pisa, Feb 15: Luka Modrić scored a late winner for AC Milan to beat Pisa 2-1 and close the gap on Serie A leader Inter Milan to five points on Friday. Inter plays fourth-placed Juventus on Saturday. Milan had drawn three of its last six games, including against struggling Fiorentina and Genoa, and made heavy work of a match against the second-from-bottom club that had won only one league game all season. Ruben Loftus-Cheek got the opener just before halftime when he rose unmarked to head home a cross from the right, and Niclas Füllkrug missed a penalty as Milan took control after a slow start. However,

Pisa threatened to dent the visitor's title hopes when Felipe Loyola equalized with 20 minutes left.

Former Tottenham and Real Madrid midfielder Modrić came to Milan's rescue six minutes from time when he stole into the box and poked home the winner. There was still time for Milan's Adrien Rabiot to be sent off but no more time for goals and Massimiliano Allegri's men celebrated an important three points. Pisa was equal on points with Verona. Fiorentina was three above both teams and Lecce another three points clear. The Milan teams meet in the city derby at the San Siro on March 8.

No Fight, No Chance: Pakistan's Shocker

Ishan's All-Round Heroics Seal Clinical Victory

Colombo, Feb 15: The rain stayed away. But so did the 'spirit of the game' as India and Pakistan continued their recent policy of not engaging at the toss. Suryakumar Yadav didn't greet Pakistan's Salman Agha. The game itself was reduced to a non-event as a dominating Indian display meant they won the game by 61 runs to advance to the Super Eight stage of the World Cup where stiffer tests will arrive.

After weeks of theatrics and threats of boycott, more drama arrived even before a ball was bowled in front of a capacity crowd as the two captains refused to engage with each other. Both of them stood within handshaking distance but the hands never shook. This game of political chess was made all the more inexplicable as Wasim Akram, here on media duties, and Rohit Sharma, the World Cup ambassador, greeted each other like



long lost friends. They hugged and shook hands in front of the world cricket media 10 minutes before the beginning of the first innings. By the time game started, the city came to a standstill with heightened security and loud fans from the subcontinent. All pre-match discussions were immediately put to the background as Ishan Kishan continued his coruscating batting form to reduce Pakistan's mix and match spinners. His batting has been thoroughly incandescent since the World Cup began: 20 off 16 against US, 61 off 24 against Namibia and, now, 77 of the

most murderous runs you will see at a global event. He did edge a few to start his innings but the only way you win the lottery is when you buy yourself a ticket. He bought a few tickets and helped the team win the jackpot.

Pakistan helped them by opting to bowl -- probably to budget for dew -- but it seems likely the stage got to them. They were never on the money and the Men In Blue didn't need a second invitation to punish them on a night when they played like champions elect. For all the psychodrama and hype associated with this fixture, it has not been worthy of the build-up in terms of results. Long after the lights were switched off at the Premadasa, one thought lingered. This now makes it six games on the trot for India against them in T20Is.

Game. Set. Match. The Championship will follow at this rate.

Lyon down Nice to boost Ligue 1 title bid with 13th straight win

Paris, Feb 16: PARIS: Corentin Tolisso scored as Lyon beat Nice 2-0 on Sunday to strengthen their grip on a top-three place in Ligue 1 and moved to within seven points of leaders Lens. Paulo Fonseca's side are now five points clear of fourth-placed Marseille in the race for the third and final automatic Champions League qualifying spot. A 13th straight win in all competitions also kept the seven-time French champions' slim title hopes alive. Lens reclaimed top spot on Saturday with a 5-0 thumping of Paris FC, after Paris Saint-Germain had opened the door by losing 3-1 at Rennes the previous day.

Lyon broke the deadlock

against Nice in first-half added time with a superb counter-attack which was finished off at the back post by Tolisso for his 50th goal for the club. Both sides missed good chances early in the second period, as Nice winger Tom Louchet had a low effort saved by goalkeeper Dominik Greif before Lyon forward Pavel Sulc curled narrowly wide.

The hosts took total control in the 65th minute, just seconds after Nice had a huge penalty appeal waved away for an apparent foul on Kail Boudache. Sulc raced clear



at the other end and teed up Noah Nartey, who jinked away from two defenders and slotted the ball home. Earlier, Auxerre, who occupy the relegation play-off place, boosted their hopes of avoiding the drop with a 3-1 win at bottom

club Metz.

Lorient, promoted from the second tier last season, moved to within three points of the European places by sealing their fourth victory in five matches with a 2-0 win over Angers.

Indian Duo Clinch First-Ever WTT Star Contender Medal at Home; Sathiyam Reaches Quarters

Chennai, Feb 15: Fourth seeds Harmeet Desai and Yashaswini Ghorpade sealed their mixed doubles final berth comfortably while Sathiyam G registered a hard-fought win to reach his first ever men's singles quarterfinals of the WTT Star Contender Chennai 2026 at the Tamil Nadu Physical Education and Sports University on Saturday. Desai and Ghorpade were cruising in the all-Indian mixed doubles semifinal, beating wild card Payas Jain and Syndrela Das 3-0 (11-9, 11-6, 11-9). They will now face Romanian pair and second seeds Eduard Ionescu and Bernadette Szocs, who advanced after third seeds Oh Junsung of Korea and Miku Nagasaki of Japan conceded the match while trailing 1-2.



This mixed doubles tie will bring familiar faces from the Ultimate Table Tennis franchise league. Ghorpade and Szocs were part of the title-winning U Mumbai team in June 2025. Earlier, Sathiyam kept Indian hopes alive in men's singles as he fought back from a 1-2 deficit to beat Ionescu 3-2 (9-11, 11-3, 10-12, 11-

7, 11-5) to advance. He will now face Czechia's Lubomir Jancarik, who got the better of India's Manush Shah 3-1 (11-4, 13-11, 5-11, 13-11). Meanwhile, Snehit Suravajjula's giant-killing run came to an end when he went down 3-1 (11-6, 10-12, 15-13, 11-7) against top seed Oh Junsung.

The Korean, however, has given a walkover to Frenchman Thibault Poret in the quarterfinals after he injured himself during the mixed doubles semifinals.

India's challenge in women's singles also came to an end after qualifier Nithya Mani lost 3-1 (9-11, 11-5, 11-6, 11-8) against Chinese Taipei's fourth seed Cheng I-Ching in the pre-quarterfinals.

