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Rupee rises 39 paise to 84.18 against US dollar in early trade

The rupee gained 39 paise to 84.18 against the US dollar in early trade on Monday, as continued foreign investor interest in Indian assets lent fundamental support to the local unit.

Forex traders said a sharp decline in crude oil prices and a positive trend in domestic equities enthused investors further.

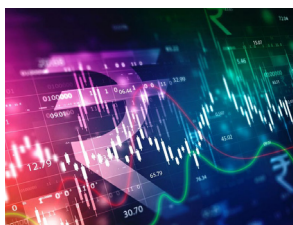
Brent crude oil prices slumped nearly 4 per cent in the morning Asian trade after OPEC+ signalled over the weekend that they will further increase production in the coming months. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 84.45 and fell to an early low of 84.47 and a high of 84.18 against the greenback, registering a gain of 39 paise over its previous close.

On Friday, the rupee witnessed high volatility as it hit a seven-month high and rose past the 84 per dollar level but pared all gains to settle 3 paise lower at 84.57 against the greenback.

The Indian rupee witnessed heightened volatility last week, driven by shifting market positions, steady capital inflows, and evolving Reserve Bank actions in the forex space, CR Forex Advisors MD Amit Pabari said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index was struggling at 99.69 just below 100 level even as concerns about a US recession ebbed a little after a solid March payrolls by lengthening the odds on a Fed Reserve rate cut in June.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength



against a basket of six currencies, was trading lower by 0.26 per cent at 99.76. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, fell 3.59 per cent to USD 59.09 per barrel in futures trade.

"The OPEC+ announced a second straight monthly output hike for June, adding 411,000 barrels per day to global supply. Coupled with a 1 per cent decline in crude prices -- Brent settled at USD 61.245 -- this could ease India's oil import bill and support the rupee further," Pabari added.

In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex advanced 330.55 points, or 0.41 per cent, to 80,832.54, while the Nifty rose 115.75 points, or 0.48 per cent, to 24,462.45. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 2,769.81 crore on a net basis on Friday, according to exchange data.

Meanwhile, India's forex reserves increased USD 1.983 billion to USD 688.129 billion during the week ended April 25, the RBI said on Friday. This is the eighth consecutive week of a rise in the kitty, which had jumped 8.31 billion to USD 686.145 in the previous reporting week.

Gold surges Rs 2400 to Rs 99750 due to persistent buying by jewellers and stocks

Mumbai: Gold prices surged by ₹2,400 to ₹99,750 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday due to persistent buying by jewellers and stocks, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

On Monday, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had ended at ₹97,350 per 10 grams. In Calcutta, the price of pure gold rose by ₹3,100 to ₹97,500 from ₹94,400 on Monday.

Extending the gains for the third straight day, gold of 99.5 per cent purity (hallmark gold) jumped ₹2,400 to ₹99,300 per 10 grams on Tuesday. It had closed at ₹96,900 per 10 grams in the previous close.

"Gold prices edged higher as safe-haven demand returned following President Donald Trump's announcement of fresh tariff plans.

"The proposed measures include duties on pharmaceutical imports and a steep 100 per cent tariff on movies produced outside the US -- a move that stoked concerns over renewed trade tensions and their potential impact on global growth," Abans Financial Services' chief executive officer Chintan Mehta said. According to the Sarafa Association, silver prices also climbed ₹1,800 to ₹98,500 per kg.

According to experts, market participants will focus on Wednesday's outcome of the US Federal Reserve's FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee) policy meeting and Fed Chair Jerome Powell's commentary on growth and inflation.(PTI)

Apple India shipments grew 25% in March 2025 quarter, Vivo led smartphone market: Report

Mumbai: Apple's iPhone supplies in India grew 25 per cent year-on-year in March quarter 2025, capturing 8 per cent market share, a CyberMedia Research report said on Monday. Chinese smartphone company Vivo led the overall smartphone market in India with 20 per cent share followed by Korean smartphone major Samsung with 18 per cent share in January-March 2025.

Xiaomi was at the third place with 13 per cent market share. Its share declined 37 per cent YoY -- the sharpest among the top five, reflecting challenges in both affordable and value-for-money smartphone portfolios, the report said.

"Apple posted 25 per cent growth YoY, and captured an 8 per cent market share, driven by strong demand for premium smartphones and a broader retail presence in In-

dia." "The iPhone 16 series, including the iPhone 16e, significantly contributed to this growth, with Apple's market share in the superpremium segment (Rs 50,000 -- Rs 1 lakh) rising 28 per cent YoY and the uber-premium segment (over Rs 1 lakh) up 15 per cent YoY," the report said.

Oppo smartphone supplies increased 8 per cent YoY to reach 12 per cent market share. Motorola recorded 53 per cent YoY growth. CyberMedia Research (CMR) India mobile handset market review report for the quarter estimates that 5G smartphone supplies in India accounted for 86 per cent of the overall market in the quarter, marking a 14 per cent YoY increase.

"5G smartphones priced between Rs 8,000 and Rs 13,000 recorded over 100 per cent YoY growth, reflecting



surging demand for affordable 5G access," the report said. Vivo led the 5G smartphone market with a 21 per cent market share, followed by Samsung at 19 per cent.

In the feature phone segment, Chinese mobile phone itel led the market with 41 per cent share during the quarter despite 6 per cent YoY decline. It was followed by home-grown mobile phone

maker Lava which recorded 14 per cent YoY decline.

HMD, known for selling Nokia phones, clocked 19 per cent share despite a 6 per cent decline in supplies.

MediaTek dominated India's smartphone chipset market with 46 per cent market share. Qualcomm led the premium smartphone segment (above Rs 25,000) with a 35 per cent share.(PTI)

Over 35 flights cancelled at Delhi airport after India avenges Pahalgam attack

At least 35 flights to and from the Delhi airport have been cancelled by various airlines, including foreign carriers, in the wake of the armed forces carrying out missile strikes on terror targets in Pakistan. A source said, 23 domestic departures and eight arrivals were cancelled. Besides, four international departures have been cancelled since 12 am.

Foreign carriers, including American Airlines, cancelled some of their services from the Delhi airport, the source added.

The Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) in the national capital is the country's busiest airport and handles around 1,300 flight movements daily.

Kindly note, due to changing airspace conditions some flights have been impacted at Delhi Airport," DIAL said in a post on X. Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) operates IGIA.

In retaliation for the Pahalgam terror attack, Indian armed forces, under Operation Sindoor, on early Wednesday, carried out missile strikes on nine terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir, including the Jaish-e-Mohammad stronghold of Bahawalpur and Lashkar-e-Taiba's base in Muridke.(PTI)

Current indicators show India's economy is doing well: CEA Nageswaran

New Delhi: Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) V. Anantha Nageswaran has highlighted that current indicators show the Indian economy is continuing on a high growth path despite the global challenges. Speaking at an event at Ashoka University, Nageswaran said, "India's economy is in good shape despite challenging global environment. While the final number for FY25 will be available in May, current indicators suggest we are progressing well."

The country's Chief Economic Advisor listed energy affordability and energy transition employment generation with the rise in manufacturing and small and medium enterprises as priority areas for the country. Besides, artificial intelligence, education and skilling of the country's workforce would drive growth, he added.

He emphasised on the need to maintain macro-economic stability, which entails keeping inflation in check, while targeting inclusive growth as the country moves ahead. NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Bery, in his address at the event, emphasised India's longterm vision of becoming



a developed, high-income country by 2047.

"Over the last three decades, India has achieved a consistent annual growth rate of 6.5 per cent, and I think it's an impressive achievement. It showcases both institutional agility and a certain institutional maturity in India," he said.

Bery stated that the global turmoil could throw up opportunities for India. He highlighted the potential for India to leverage its demographic dividend, technology and geopolitical shifts to spur economic growth.

Indian stock market closes higher; Adani Group shares surge

Mumbai: The Indian equity markets opened the week with strong gains on Monday, supported by a rally in Adani Group stocks and strength in select auto and banking shares. Sensex started the day around 160 points higher at 80,662 and climbed to an intra-day high of 81,049.

Although it gave up some of the gains later in the session, the index still ended 295 points up at 80,797. The Nifty touched a high of 24,526

during the day and eventually closed with a gain of 114 points, or 0.5 per cent, at 24,461. "Markets started the week on a firm footing, lifted by steady foreign inflows and optimism around an impending India-US trade deal," said Vikram Kasat of PL Capital. Strength in Asian currencies and easing global trade tensions added to the positive sentiment, even as activity remained muted in some global markets due to holidays, Kasat added.

Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance announces a record bonus of ₹1,833 crore for the financial year 2024-25

Guwahati: Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance, one of India's leading private life insurers, has announced a record bonus of ₹1,833 crore for the financial year 2024-25 (FY25), its highest ever to date. This marks a significant 32% increase over the ₹1,383 crore bonus declared in FY24. The bonus will benefit over 11.71 lakh policyholders who have invested in the company's participating (with-profit) products. With this declaration, Bajaj Allianz Life continues its strong legacy of delivering value to customers, having consistently announced annual bonuses for 24 consecutive years.

Policyholders with traditional participating policies that are in force as of March 31, 2025, are eligible to receive this bonus, which is declared from the surplus generated under the participating fund. Additionally, the company has announced a special reversionary bonus of 5% for policyholders of higher equity allocation products, Bajaj Allianz Life ACE-Wealth Option and Bajaj Allianz Life Flexi Income Goal – Enhanced Benefit (A Non-Linked, Participating, Guaranteed Income Life Insurance Plan), amounting to ₹206 crores. Speaking on this announcement, Tarun Chugh, MD & CEO, Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance, said, "We are happy to announce our highest-ever annual participating (PAR) bonus of ₹1,833 crore this year." In addition, cash bonuses will be disbursed on policy anniversary or as outlined in the respective policy terms.

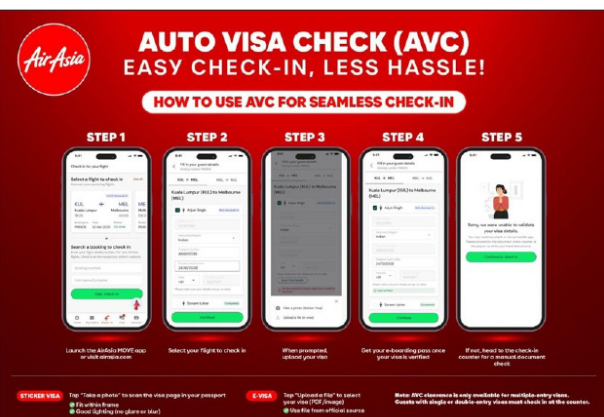
Motorola Launches Edge 60 Pro in India

Mumbai: Motorola has launched the edge 60 pro in India, featuring a cutting-edge AI experience and a unique 50MP + 50MP + 50X AI camera system. Priced starting at ₹29,999, the device boasts a vibrant 1.5K True Colour Quad-Curved display, a powerful 6000mAh battery with the highest DXOMARK rating, and the MediaTek Dimensity 8350 Extreme chipset.

The edge 60 pro, available for pre-order from 30 April, includes innovative AI capabilities like "Next Move" for contextual suggestions and "Image Studio" for creative enhancements. Designed for durability, it meets IP68/IP69 ratings and military standards (MIL-810H).

The smartphone will be available in three colors—Dazzling Blue, Shadow, and Sparkling Grape—on Flipkart, Motorola.in, and leading retail stores, with sales starting on 7 May 2025.

AirAsia rolls out auto visa check for smoother travel experience



Guwahati: AirAsia has unveiled its new Auto Visa Check (AVC) feature on the AirAsia MOVE app and airasia.com, enhancing the international travel experience with a seamless, tech-enabled check-in process. This strategic move is set to streamline visa verification for passengers flying to destinations requiring visas or Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA).

AVC enables travellers to verify their visas in real time during online check-in—available from 14 days up to one hour before departure. Guests can scan the visa sticker on their passport or upload their e-visa, receiving their e-boarding pass instantly upon verification. This eliminates the need for manual checks at airport

counters, cutting wait times and easing congestion.

The feature is currently applicable to multiple-entry visas, while passengers with single or double-entry visas will still need to check in manually. Hand-carry travellers can head directly to the gate, while those with checked baggage can print bag tags at kiosks and drop them at dedicated counters.

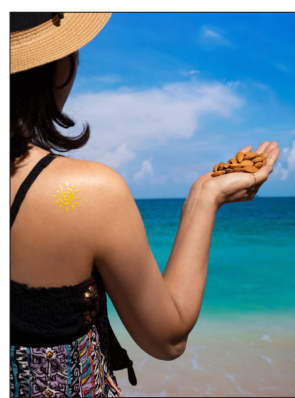
In Guwahati, a key gateway for Northeast India's international travellers, the AVC feature is expected to boost demand for AirAsia's global routes. Local travel operators foresee higher interest among business and leisure flyers seeking faster, hassle-free international travel from Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport.

Rising demand for anti-ageing superfoods boosts nutritional market

Guwahati: As environmental stressors like UV rays, pollution, and humidity accelerate skin ageing, health experts are pointing to nutrition as a powerful solution. Dr Geetika Mittal, a renowned skin expert and cosmetologist, has identified five anti-ageing superfoods that can help maintain youthful, glowing skin.

Dr Mittal said that nourishing the skin starts from within. She recommends incorporating almonds, salmon, sweet potatoes, citrus fruits, and yoghurt into daily meals. Almonds are packed with vitamin E and healthy fats that improve skin tone and offer protection from UVB rays. Salmon, rich in omega-3 fatty acids, hydrates the skin and boosts collagen production. Sweet potatoes provide antioxidants like vitamins C and E, while citrus fruits are vitamin C powerhouses that aid collagen synthesis. Yoghurt offers lactic acid and B vitamins to tighten and refresh the skin.

In Guwahati, health-conscious consumers are increasingly turning to these superfoods, with local markets witnessing a steady rise in demand for organic almonds, fresh salmon alternatives, and seasonal citrus fruits. Wellness retailers note a shift in preferences toward skin-friendly, nutrient-rich diets, reflecting a growing awareness of beauty through balanced nutrition.



NMIPL delivers the best single-year result for FY 2024-25 in the previous seven years

Jorhat: Nissan Motor India Pvt. Ltd. (NMIPL) continued consistent and sustainable growth in India, has delivered its best single-year performance for FY 2024-25 in the last seven years despite multiple headwinds faced by the domestic auto industry. The year was marked by the continued success of the New Nissan Magnite, which remains a key pillar of Nissan's domestic business plan and a vital part of the company's global export operations. In FY 2024-25 Nissan Motor India recorded total domestic volume of 28,000+

units led by the New Nissan Magnite introduced in October 2024. On the export front, the company expanded its operations from 20 markets to 65+ international markets as a part of its "One Car One World" philosophy and registered an unprecedented and historic export sales of 71,000+ units, further reinforcing India's role as a growing manufacturing and export hub for Nissan globally.

This brings the consolidated sales of the company to 99,000+ units for FY 2024-25. Commenting on the

performance, Frank Torres, Divisional Vice President of AMIEO Region Business Transformation & President of Nissan India Operations, said, "India remains a strong pillar of growth for Nissan driven by the continued success of the Nissan Magnite." Saubh Vatsa, Managing Director, Nissan Motor India, said, "The continued expansion of our dealership network reflects our commitment to improving accessibility and customer service." The Nissan Magnite has consistently performed well in its segment.

HDFC Flexi Cap Fund delivers Rs 1.84 cr from Rs 1 lakh, demonstrates resilience across market cycles

Guwahati: HDFC Flexi Cap Fund, an open-ended dynamic equity scheme investing across large-cap, mid-cap, and small-cap stocks, has emerged as a standout performer in the mutual fund space. Since its inception on January 1, 1995, the fund has delivered a stellar CAGR of 18.82% as of March 31, 2025. A lump sum investment of ₹1 lakh at inception would have grown to approximately ₹1.84 crore, significantly outperforming its benchmark NIFTY 500 TRI by ₹1.51 crore.

Additionally, a monthly SIP of ₹10,000 since inception, amounting to ₹36.20 lakh, would now be worth approximately ₹20.24 crore. The fund follows a robust bottom-up stock selection strategy focused on quality companies with strong fundamentals and long-term growth potential, guided by a structured risk management framework built on compliance, research, portfolio construction, and diversification.

In Guwahati, the fund is gaining traction among retail investors, particularly first-time equity participants. Local financial advisors report increased interest in SIPs driven by the fund's long-term performance and wealth creation potential.



Mr. Navneet Munot, MD & CEO, HDFC AMC, commented: "HDFC Flexi Cap Fund's journey over the past three decades is a testament to our disciplined investment philosophy and unwavering commitment to investor wealth creation. The Fund has navigated various market cycles and emerged stronger each time, reflecting the resilience of our investment processes. The fund performance reinforces our focus on delivering long-term value to our investors."

Ms. Roshni Jain, Senior Fund Manager, HDFC AMC, added: "We take great pride in helping investors create wealth through this Fund. Our consistent focus on identifying high-quality businesses with sustainable growth drivers has enabled us to create wealth for our investors. With HDFC Flexi Cap Fund, we remain committed to our goal of delivering better risk-adjusted returns through a balanced and diversified approach."

Vi launches industry-first IR packs for Hajj pilgrims to stay connected in the Gulf

Guwahati: Vi (Vodafone Idea), India's top telecom operator, has introduced industry-first International Roaming (IR) packs for the Gulf region to cater to Hajj pilgrims traveling to Saudi Arabia this year. With over 1,75,000 Indian pilgrims set to embark on the annual pilgrimage, Vi's IR packs ensure seamless connectivity, offering unlimited incoming calls, generous data allowances, and free outgoing minutes, starting at just Rs. 1199 for 20 days.

The IR packs include options for both Prepaid and

Postpaid users. The Rs. 1199 Prepaid pack offers 2 GB data, 150 minutes of outgoing calls, and Rs. 15 per SMS, while the Rs. 2388 pack provides 4 GB data and 300 minutes for 40 days. For Postpaid users, the Rs. 2500 pack includes 4 GB data and 500 minutes, with free incoming SMS. Shorter-duration travelers can also choose affordable options, with packs starting at Rs. 495 for 3 days.

In Guwahati, Vi's new offering provides an invaluable solution to Hajj-bound customers, ensuring they stay



connected with family and friends without worrying about high roaming charges. Guwahati, a key market for Vi, stands to benefit from these tailored international roaming plans, helping customers stay connected while traveling abroad for religious purposes.

India takes center stage at TiEcon 2025, showcases AI and skilling innovation

Guwahati: At TiEcon 2025, India presented its growing prowess in AI and skill development, with the government spotlighting initiatives aimed at nurturing over 1 million entrepreneurs. Shri Jayant Chaudhary, Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, delivered a recorded message emphasizing the success of programs like Startup India, Skill India, and Atal Innovation Mission. These programs aim to foster innovation and entrepreneurship across the country.

The conference, held at the Santa Clara Convention Center in California, focused on AI's disruptive potential. A high-level Indian delegation, including leaders in deep-tech, healthcare, and AI, highlighted India's growing role as a global innovation partner. Minister Chaudhary noted, "India is at a powerful inflection point where innovation, enterprise, and skills are converging to shape a new global narrative."



In Guwahati, local entrepreneurs are tapping into these national initiatives to build AI-driven solutions. The market is increasingly adopting digital platforms like Skill India Digital Hub, which allows entrepreneurs in Guwahati to access cutting-edge training programs and equip themselves with the skills required to thrive in emerging technologies. These advancements are not only boosting local businesses but also positioning Guwahati as a rising tech hub.

Shri Ved Mani Tiwari, CEO of NSDC, also discussed the critical role of skilling in preparing India's youth for AI and future-ready industries.

Shah Rukh Khan launches Sunfeast Dark Fantasy's "Fantasy Zaroori Hai" campaign



Guwahati: Sunfeast Dark Fantasy has unveiled its latest brand initiative, "Fantasy Zaroori Hai," with Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan leading the charge. The heart of the campaign is a captivating Hindi poem, written by National Award-winning lyricist Swanand Kirkire and narrated by Khan himself. The poem explores the importance of fantasy in daily life, urging people to embrace their imagination and escape the ordinary.

The initiative aligns with Sunfeast Dark Fantasy's brand philosophy, "Har Dil Ki Fantasy," emphasizing the personal yet universal power of fantasy. From the hustle of daily routines to whimsical adventures,

the campaign resonates with the need to pause and reconnect with one's dreams. Shah Rukh Khan, sharing his thoughts, stated, "Fantasy isn't about escape — it's where dreams begin."

In Guwahati, this campaign is creating a significant buzz. Known for its vibrant culture and growing digital engagement, Guwahati has quickly embraced the message, with audiences relating to the theme of finding moments of fantasy amidst the city's fast-paced environment. The campaign's digital-first approach is receiving positive reactions across social media platforms in the region, further amplifying its reach.

Godrej Consumer Products promotes workforce inclusivity with 'Hands That Speak' on International Labour Day

Guwahati: Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL) marked International Labour Day with the launch of a moving digital film, 'Hands That Speak,' celebrating inclusivity in the workforce. The film focuses on the diverse employees, including those with hearing and speech disabilities, at GCPL's flagship greenfield manufacturing facility in Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu. Through Indian Sign Language (ISL), employees share their stories, highlighting how their hands communicate strength, precision, and pride, redefining traditional notions of

voice and contribution.

The film underscores GCPL's commitment to fostering diversity, with the Chengalpattu plant employing 50% women and 5% people with disabilities (PWD) and LGBTQIA+ individuals. By showcasing these silent strengths, GCPL aims to inspire other industries to embrace inclusive hiring practices and break down societal barriers. The initiative also draws attention to the fact that despite India having nearly 30 million PwDs, only 11% are meaningfully employed.

In Guwahati, where inclu-



sive employment practices are still evolving, GCPL's 'Hands That Speak' offers a significant model. Local businesses can learn from such initiatives by focusing on creating more

opportunities for persons with disabilities, ultimately contributing to a diverse and skilled workforce, which is crucial for innovation and growth in the region.

Aviva Life Insurance ranks as India's most trusted private life insurance brand for the seventh year

Guwahati: Marking a consistent legacy of trust, Aviva Life Insurance has been ranked India's most trusted private life insurance brand for the seventh year in succession by TRA's Brand Trust Report 2025. Further strengthening its leadership in the private life insurance sector, Aviva India has achieved one of the best claim settlement turnaround times, with 100% claims settled within 30 days in FY 2023-2024. Mr. Vinit Kapahi, Chief Mar-

keting Officer, Aviva Life Insurance, expressed his gratitude, stating, "At Aviva, our commitment extends beyond traditional protection as we aim to redefine life insurance by shifting the focus towards prevention, health, and holistic well-being."

Aviva Life Insurance continues to build on its legacy of trust by offering a comprehensive portfolio of life insurance products, including guaranteed savings plans, term plans, investment solu-

tions, and retirement plans. The company recently introduced the Aviva Signature 3D Term Plan – Platinum, a non-linked, non-participating pure risk life insurance plan designed to provide comprehensive financial security. Mr. N. Chandramouli, CEO of TRA Research, commended Aviva's remarkable achievement, stating, "We congratulate Aviva Life Insurance on being recognized once again as the Most Trusted Brand in the Private Life Insurance category."

CMF announces the open sales for CMF Phone 2 Pro



Guwahati: CMF, the sub-brand of London-based technology company Nothing, has announced the open sales for CMF Phone 2 Pro across Flipkart, Flipkart Minutes, Vijay Sales, Croma and all leading retail stores in India, starting 5 May, 12 noon onwards. As a special introductory offer on day 1, Phone 2 Pro will be available for as low as ₹16,999 (including all offers). CMF by Nothing launched the Phone 2 Pro globally on April 28, 2025, with a best-in-segment three-camera system, a wonderfully bright display, and a premium design, CMF Phone 2 Pro is the ultimate daily smartphone.

The slimmest and lightest smartphone Nothing has ever designed. At 7.8 mm, weighing just 185 g, CMF Phone 2 Pro is nearly weightless – 5% thinner than CMF Phone 1. Plus, increased water durability with IP54 – CMF Phone 1 was IP52. CMF Phone 2 Pro will be available in White, Black, Orange and Light Green colour. As a special introductory offer on 5th May, CMF Phone 2 Pro will be available for as low as INR 16,999 for the 8+128 GB variant and INR 18,999 for the 8+256 GB Variant (including all offers).

Toyota launches exclusive edition of Innova HyCross with premium features

Shillong: Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) has unveiled the Exclusive Edition of its popular InnovaHyCross, available in the ZX(O) grade. This special edition, priced at Rs. 32,58,000/- ex-showroom, is designed to offer a dynamic presence with its refreshed styling and dual-tone accents. The limited edition will be available in two color options – Super White and Pearl White – and is available until July 2025.

The Exclusive Edition enhances the InnovaHyCross with both exterior and interior upgrades, including black elements on the roof, front grille, and alloy wheels, alongside a sleek front and rear under run. The interior boasts dual-tone details with a new instrument panel, door fabric, and center console lid, complemented by features like an air purifier, wireless charger, and leg room lamp. These additions provide a more functional



and comfortable driving experience.

The InnovaHyCross has been a top choice for customers, offering a seamless blend of SUV-like proportions and MPV spaciousness. It continues to be a leader in the premium MPV segment with its hybrid electric system, exceptional fuel efficiency, and advanced safety features.

From a Shillong market perspective, Toyota's new launch is expected to generate significant interest due to

the growing demand for premium vehicles in the region. Consumers in Shillong, known for their preference for both style and functionality, are likely to appreciate the InnovaHyCross's exclusive features and efficient performance. With its limited availability and attractive features, this edition is set to become a sought-after choice in the market.

Bookings are now open at all Toyota dealerships across India and online via the official Toyota website.

Indian Health Policy: COP11 puts foreign interference in the spotlight

Itanagar: As India has prepared for the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) COP11, concerns over foreign influence in health policymaking are gaining prominence. Growing apprehension surrounds the FCTC process, which many believe is increasingly shaped not by science but by a few powerful international

NGOs, often backed by private philanthropic funding. While India has consistently asserted its right to localize global frameworks across sectors, the issue becomes particularly stark in the case of tobacco regulation. India faces one of the most severe tobacco burdens globally, with over 300 million users and more than 1.35 million

annual deaths attributable to tobacco-related illness.

Commenting on the issue, Jeffrey Smith, Resident Senior Fellow at Integrated Harm Reduction, stated, "The only known fact is that the existing tobacco policies fall far short of meeting the goal of cessation. Without novel policies that provide options for those who use to-

bacco products to switch, it is unlikely that India will reduce the health consequences of tobacco use at the population level." Sweden, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the UAE, among others, are exploring more flexible regulatory models — focused on mitigating harm through innovation, consumer awareness, and better enforcement.

Sacred relics of Lord Buddha arrive in Vietnam



Guwahati: The sacred relics of Lord Buddha have arrived in Vietnam for public viewing and worship as part of the UN Vesak Day celebrations. Originally enshrined in a vihara in Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh, the relics were transported to Vietnam on Thursday aboard a special Indian Air Force aircraft. The exhibition will take place from May 2nd to May 21st, 2025. The Indian delegation accompanying the relics was led by Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Minority Affairs, Shri Kiren Rijiju, and included Shri Kandula Durgesh, Minister for Tourism, Culture & Cinematography of Andhra Pradesh, along with several officials.

Minister Rijiju shared his reflections on social media, stating, "Humbled to lead the delegation carrying the Holy Relics of Lord Buddha to Vietnam, an experience that touches the soul." He added, "Joined by Revered Monks, Shri Kandula Durgesh ji, and officials on this sacred journey of peace, compassion, and harmony." The exhibition will begin at Han Tam Pagoda in Ho Chi Minh City from May 2nd to the 8th and then move to Ba Den Mountain in Tay Ninh Province from May 9th to the 13th. From there, the relics will be displayed at Quan Su Pagoda in Hanoi from May 14th to the 18th, before concluding at Tam Chuc Pagoda in Ha Nam Province from May 18th to the 21st, where a massive turnout of devotees is anticipated.

Strategic skilling partnership to boost Saudi Arabia's workforce transformation

Guwahati: In a significant step toward Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, NSDC International (NSDCI) and Takamol Holding have entered into a strategic partnership to implement the Skill Accelerator Program, a key initiative aimed at transforming the Kingdom's workforce. This program addresses the urgent need to align workforce skills with the evolving demands of industries across the country.

The Skill Accelerator Program focuses on bridging sector-specific skill gaps by co-developing effective skilling strategies and innovative delivery models. Through this collaboration, NSDCI will provide expertise in workforce analytics, curriculum development, and global benchmarking, enhancing Saudi Arabia's human capital capabilities. This partnership strengthens India's



position as a leader in workforce development worldwide.

Mr. Ved Mani Tiwari, CEO of NSDCI, emphasized the shared commitment to shaping the future of global skills, while Mr. Alok Kumar, CEO of NSDCI, highlighted the strategic importance of the collaboration. Takamol's Project Director, Ms. Hessah Alobaid, added that the partnership would equip Saudi workers for the future.

In Guwahati, there's keen interest in global skilling initiatives like this one, with local industries recognizing the potential of similar workforce development programs. As skilling needs grow, Indian companies, including those in the Northeast, can leverage global expertise to address sector-specific talent shortages, ensuring that they remain competitive on the international stage.

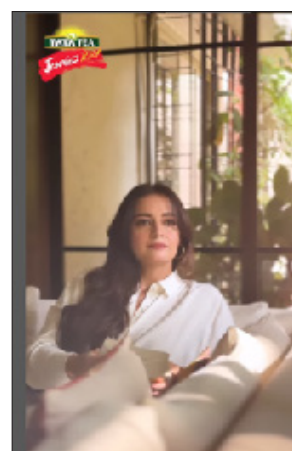
Dia Mirza partners with Tata Tea Jaago Re to inspire eco-friendly choices, empowers consumers to make a difference

Guwahati: Bollywood actress and environmental advocate Dia Mirza has teamed up with Tata Tea Jaago Re for a campaign that highlights the power of small, sustainable actions in the fight against climate change. The initiative encourages individuals to adopt simple habits—like covering pots while cooking to save energy—which can collectively make a significant impact on the environment.

Mirza, known for her eco-conscious lifestyle, shares in the campaign, "It's all about those small shifts." With the support of Tata Tea, she's making sustainability accessible and empowering fans to take

action through an AI-powered climate calculator on JaagoRe.com. By uploading photos of their green actions, users can track their CO₂ savings, and for every 10 actions logged, a tree is planted in their name.

In Guwahati, there's growing awareness around sustainability, with consumers increasingly leaning towards eco-friendly choices. The city's market is seeing a rise in demand for sustainable products and services, signaling a shift towards greener living. This aligns with Tata Tea's efforts to foster a movement of collective environmental responsibility, providing residents with an easy way to contribute to climate action.



As Mirza says, "Every small action counts," and through Jaago Re, individuals are empowered to make a lasting difference.

Godrej Foundation backs GATI to turn India into global talent engine



Guwahati: In a landmark move to make India a global hub for skilled talent, the Godrej Foundation, in collaboration with The Convergence Foundation and industry leader Manish Sabharwal, launched the Global Access to Talent from India (GATI) Foundation. The launch event was held in New Delhi, with External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar as Chief Guest and Minister of State Jayant Chaudhary as Guest of Honour.

GATI is a non-profit initiative aimed at creating ethical, structured, and circular pathways for Indian workers to access international job markets. With a projected shortage of 45–50 million skilled and semi-skilled workers in high-income countries by 2030, the foundation seeks to unlock global employment opportunities through collaboration among governments, businesses, and nonprofits.

Leaders from diplomacy, industry, and policy gathered to discuss ethical recruitment, government-to-government cooperation, and industry-led migration models. "Global labour mobility is transformative development," said Omar Momin, CEO, Godrej Foundation.

From the perspective of Guwahati's growing skilled youth population, GATI presents a significant opportunity. Local educational institutes and skilling centres can now align their training with international demand, potentially opening new overseas job pathways and boosting remittance-driven economic growth in the Northeast.

Celebrate your mom's health with healthy California almonds this Mother's Day

Guwahati: No single day can truly reflect the endless love, care, and quiet strength that mothers give each day. From asking if we've eaten to making sure everyone is okay, moms are always putting others first.

But how often do we stop to ask them how they're doing—or check in on their health and well-being? This Mother's Day, let's celebrate the one who has been our caregiver by caring for her in return. A thoughtful way to show your care is a simple gesture—like making California almonds a

part of her daily routine. Known as the King of Nuts, California almonds are a natural source of 15 essential nutrients, including protein, zinc, magnesium, and vitamin E. Bollywood actress and celebrity Soha Ali Khan said, "Health has always been wealth for me—it's something I truly believe in and try to live by every day."

Fitness and Celebrity instructor, Yasmin Karachiwala said, "California Almonds are one of my go-to recommendations—they're packed with 15 essential nutrients like protein, zinc, iron, good fats, and vitamin E that support muscle recovery, energy, and overall wellness." Nutrition and wellness consultant Sheela Krishnaswamy said, "For women managing busy lives, a handful of almonds can be a simple, nourishing way to support heart health and overall well-being." Popular South Indian actress Shriya Saran said, "I usually munch on them between shoots or during those busy moments when I'm trying to balance work and motherhood." This Mother's Day, celebrate her with the gift of health. Gifting your mother the goodness of California almonds is a thoughtful way to show her your care.



Suniel Shetty: I want to go to Mahakaleshwar temple every week

Mumbai: Actor Suniel Shetty, who is awaiting the release of his upcoming film 'Kesari Veer', feels that the spiritual landscape of India has seen massive changes in the past few years. The actor spoke with IANS in the run-up to the film's release, and shared that while earlier, only people after retirement were drawn towards spirituality, in current times, a lot of people from the younger generation are taking interest in spirituality. He said that he also craves to visit the Mahakaleshwar temple in Ujjain every week.

Suniel told IANS, "The love for Lord Shiva has only grown over a period of



time. And, you see in the last few years, this awareness among the youth is also massive. I mean, when did young children and young boys and girls go on pilgrimages? When did they go to all these places? We never heard of it". "They always said that,

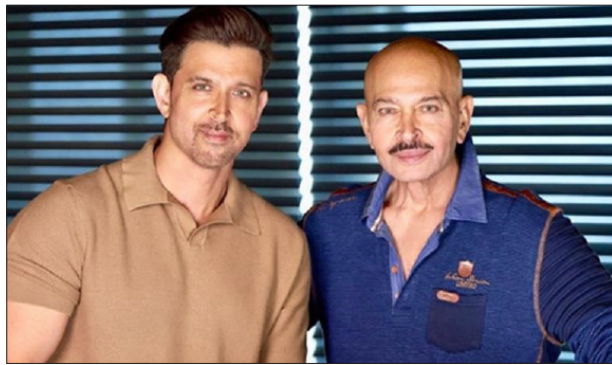
"Once you retire or you've given up on life, you go to Char Dham". No, I want to go to Mahakaleshwar temple Ujjain now every week", he added. Earlier, the actor gave a message on national unity for the people of the country after the cowardly attack in Pahalgam, last week by the terrorists.

The actor gave a call to the fellow countrymen to stand united, and keep the differences aside. He equated the film's message as the current requirement on behalf of the country's citizens as the film also deals with the attack led by the Tughlaq Empire where locals fought the invading forces to protect the Somnath Temple and the Hindu faith.

Rakesh Roshan shares screen with son Hrithik for the first time, calls it a moment to cherish forever

Mumbai: Veteran filmmaker Rakesh Roshan shared a heart-warming moment with his son, Bollywood star Hrithik Roshan, as the duo appeared together for the very first time in a commercial. The proud father described it as a moment he would cherish forever, highlighting their special bond both on and off screen. On Friday, the director took to his Instagram handle and shared a video featuring the father-son duo in a commercial for a vehicle lubricant brand. Sharing the clip, Rakesh wrote, "A moment I'll cherish forever-sharing the screen with my son for our very first commercial together. Here's to creating memories, both on and off camera :)."

In the commercial, Rakesh Roshan is seen whistling the iconic tune of 'Kaho Naa... Pyaar Hai' as he makes his entrance and asks Hrithik about his journey. The 'War' actor responds with a single word that captures it all- "Unforgettable."



Interestingly, Hrithik Roshan and his father, Rakesh Roshan, have shared a long-standing creative partnership in Indian cinema, most prominently through the Krrish film series. Their collaboration began with "Koi... Mil Gaya" in 2003, followed by the superhero-themed sequels "Krrish" (2006) and "Krrish 3" (2013). Rakesh Roshan also backed "Kites," which featured Hrithik in the lead. Looking ahead, the filmmaker has confirmed that the much-anticipated "Krrish 4"

is on the horizon, with Hrithik taking on directorial duties for the first time in the franchise.

On March 28, Rakesh took to social media to announce his son's directorial debut with a sweet note that read, "Duggu 25yrs back I launched you as an actor, and today again after 25 years you are being launched as a director by two filmmakers Aditya Chopra & myself to take forward our most ambitious film #Krrish4. Wish you all the success in this new avatar with good wishes and blessings!"

Things that seem insignificant are the ones that have the biggest impact, says Ritika Singh

Chennai: Actress Ritika Singh, who shot to limelight with her stellar performance as a boxer in director Sudha Kongara's 'Irudhi Suttru' ('Saa-la Khadoos' in Hindi), has now put out an inspiring video on how she lost excess weight and got back into shape despite her nagging knee injuries. Taking to Instagram, the actress put out a video at the beginning of which she disclosed how she had gained weight and was weighing 72 kilograms. She then showed how she worked out to reduce weight and get back into shape.

She wrote, "The last three months have been absolutely transcendental for me. It wasn't just the fact that I had hit an all time high on the weighing scale, but the fact that my knee injuries got worse. The pain was terrible. I couldn't move, kick or dance effortlessly. That's when I looked at myself in the mirror and said enough, it's time to lock in

and look the best you've ever looked. And here we are." Stating that this was a "very long topic" and that there was a lot to unpack, especially when it came to her relationship with food and how she finally got her bad habits under control, the actress disclosed, "I made some big lifestyle changes, but the ultimate game changer for me has been the attention to the small things. The things that seem too insignificant to matter but those are the ones that have had THE BIGGEST IMPACT!"

The actress concluded the post saying, "I would love to talk about it coz I truly believe it could help so many of us look and most importantly feel better." Ritika Singh, who has made a name for herself in Tamil cinema with her performances in films like 'Irudhi Suttru', 'Aandavan Kattalai', 'Oh My Kadavule' and 'Kolai', was last seen in the Rajinikanth-starrer 'Vettaian

Samantha: My identity as a woman will naturally influence all of my creative choices

New Delhi: Actress-producer Samantha Ruth Prabhu said that her identity as a woman naturally drives her to champion such narratives and emphasized the need for more female voices in Indian cinema.

As an actor, Samantha has portrayed strong, complex female characters in projects such as "The Family Man" Season 2, "Rangasthalam," "Majili," "Yashoda," "Mah-anati," and "Eega" to name a few. Asked if as a producer, she is consciously trying to create more space for layered female narratives in Indian cinema, Samantha told IANS: "My identity as a woman will naturally influence all of my creative choices and I'm proud of that."

"I believe that our industry needs more of the female perspective. It's still incredibly male-dominated. I'm not saying that as a bad thing," added Samantha, whose maiden production, "Subham," is all set to light up the silver screen on May 9. She stressed that there is a need for more women filmmakers and storytellers to come to the forefront.

"It's just important to remember that women make up half the population and we need more women producers, directors, storytellers, bringing their voices and experiences to the forefront." Samantha said that she does want to make stories that resonate with modern women.

Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan to make his Met Gala debut in Sabyasachi ensemble

Mumbai: Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan is set to make his Met Gala debut in a Sabyasachi Mukherjee outfit on May 5 (ET), his manager Pooja Dadlani Gurnani confirmed on Monday, hours before the fashion gala in New York.

Taking to their Instagram Stories, both Dadlani and Mukherjee wrote, "King Khan. Bengal Tiger," confirming Shah Rukh's attendance at Met Gala after months of speculation.

Alongside the Jawan actor, singer-songwriter Diljit Dosanjh and actress Kiara Advani are also set to make their debut appearance at the Met Gala.

The 2025 Met Gala, set to take place on Monday at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, aims to focus on menswear, particularly highlighting the style and influence of black men throughout history.

Over the years numerous Indian celebrities, including Deepika Padukone, Priyanka Chopra and Alia Bhatt, have made stunning debut appearances at the Met Gala. Last year, Sabyasachi Mukherjee made history as the first Indian fashion designer to walk the Met Gala red carpet in New York.

On the work front, Shah Rukh, 59, will next appear in Sidharth Anand's King. The film is likely to feature Shah Rukh's daughter, Suhana Khan, and Abhishek Bachchan in key roles.



Lauren Gottlieb breaks down Bollywood, Hollywood, and UK dance scenes

New Delhi: Dancer-actress Lauren Gottlieb said that Bollywood is vibrant and fueled by natural talent and passion for dance, while Hollywood is highly professional. She finds the UK dance scene a "gritty mix" of both, offering its own raw and powerful energy. Asked about the key differences she has experienced in the dance and film industries of Bollywood and Hollywood, Lauren told IANS: "I've had the chance to

work across Hollywood, Bollywood, and also in London. In India, there's so much raw, natural talent, and song and dance are such a central part of the culture."

"The second I land in Mumbai, I can literally feel the energy-like the whole city is running on Bollywood (and Cricket)." The industry is just so alive and buzzing, with endless events, shoots, and creativity happening all the time. It's colorful, vibrant, and my personal favorite," said Lauren, who has performed with globally known artists such as Rihanna, Mariah Carey, Shakira and Enrique Iglesias to name a few. Talking about Hollywood, where she has worked with Tom Cruise, Katie Holmes, and Tobey Maguire, Lauren said: "Hollywood, on the other hand, is much more structured. If something starts at 9 AM, it starts at 9 AM!" "There are clear schedules, rules, and systems in place, and training is taken incredibly seriously. It's a highly polished environment, and that structure can be really beneficial."

For her, the UK feels like a mix of both. "The dancers there are gritty and grounded-they have this really raw, powerful style that I love. It's been so cool to see how each region brings its own rhythm and energy, and I've learned something unique from all of them." "Each industry has its own flavor, and I feel really lucky to have moved through all three," said the actress-dancer, who stepped into Bollywood with the 2013 film ABCD: Any Body Can Dance by Remo D'Souza.



14-ball 53: Romario Shepherd decimates CSK, hits second-fastest fifty in IPL history

Bengaluru: Romario Shepherd produced a jawdropping late assault at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium on Saturday night, smashing an unbeaten 53 off just 14 deliveries to lift Royal Challengers Bengaluru to 213 for 5 against the Chennai Super Kings in their IPL clash. The West Indian allrounder walked in with RCB at 157 for 5 in the 18th over, and what followed was a stunning display of clean, brutal hitting that turned the match on its head. Shepherd tore into the CSK bowlers,

especially Khaleel Ahmed, who was taken for 33 in the 19th over to become the most expensive over of the 2025 season and the joint third most costly in IPL history.

He hit four sixes and three boundaries, and he reached his maiden IPL half-century in just 14 balls—matching the second-fastest fifty in league history. He now shares that mark with KL Rahul (2018) and Pat Cummins (2022), trailing only Yashasvi Jaiswal, who reached the milestone in 13 balls in



2023. Fastest Fifties in IPL History (by balls faced): 13 balls - Yashasvi Jaiswal (RR) vs KKR, 2023 14 balls - KL Rahul (PBKS) vs DC,

2018 14 balls - Pat Cummins (KKR) vs MI, 2022 14 balls - Romario Shepherd (RCB) vs CSK, 2025 Earlier, RCB laid the foundation with a

rapid 55 from opener Jacob Bethell and a fluent 66 from Virat Kohli. But CSK clawed their way back in the middle overs, with Noor Ahmad and Matheesha Pathirana tightening the screws on a surface that began to slow and grip.

Just as momentum seemed to shift in Chennai's favor, Shepherd's explosive intervention turned the tide once more. What looked like a competitive total suddenly became a formidable one, leaving CSK facing a steep chase under pressure.

IPL 2025: Chennai Super Kings sign Urvil Patel as replacement for injured Vansh Bedi

New Delhi: Chennai Super Kings (CSK) have signed Gujarat wicketkeeper-batter Urvil Patel as a replacement for Vansh Bedi, who has been ruled out of the remainder of Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 due to a ligament tear in his left ankle. Bedi was on the verge of making his IPL debut during CSK's last match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru. He was named in the playing XI but picked up the injury moments before the game and was replaced by Deepak Hooda. With Bedi ruled out of the season, CSK moved quickly to bring in Urvil Patel. Urvil, 26, represents Gujarat in domestic cricket. He gained nationwide attention during the 2024-25 Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy when he smashed the joint-fastest T20 century by an Indian batter - a blistering 28-ball ton against Tripura. That innings helped him cement his place as one of the most exciting uncapped talents in the country



Kagiso Rabada cleared to play again after completing 'substance abuse treatment program'

New Delhi: South Africa pacer Kagiso Rabada has been cleared to play again after completing the 'substance abuse treatment program' following testing positive for a recreational drug during the SA20 competition earlier this year.

According to a statement from the South African Institute for Drug-Free Sport (SAIDS), Rabada was tested following the SA20 match between MI Cape Town and Durban Super Giants on January 21. He tested positive for a "Substance of Abuse" and was informed of the result on April 1, following which a provisional suspension was imposed. "Mr. Rabada tested positive for a Substance



of Abuse and was subsequently notified of the allegation of his doping offence on 1 April 2025.

A provisional suspension was imposed and Mr. Rabada returned immediately to South Africa from India," the release stated. While the specific drug was not named in the statement, Article 4.2.3 of the SAIDS Code lists cocaine, heroin, MDMA/ecstasy, and THC among the substances of abuse.

Run-fest awaits as Mumbai Indians hosts Gujarat Titans in crucial fixture

Mumbai: Another run-fest could be on the cards when Mumbai Indians take on Gujarat Titans at the Wankhede Stadium on Tuesday. MI head coach Mahela Jayawardene confirmed that the match will be played on the same pitch used in the high-scoring clash against Royal Challengers Bengaluru last month. On that occasion, both teams crossed 200, with RCB emerging victorious.

Mumbai comes into this game with six consecutive wins and a surge in momentum. With the best Net Run Rate in the league, MI needs just two wins from its remaining three matches to seal a playoff spot. Playing two of those games at home adds to its advantage. The batting line-up is firing on all cylinders. Suryakumar Yadav and Rohit Sharma are among the



runs, and the unit looks settled. On the bowling front, Jasprit Bumrah continues to lead the charge, supported ably by Trent Boult, Deepak Chahar, and skipper Hardik Pandya. This attack has consistently delivered, and poses a serious threat to any opposition.

Gujarat's top order - Sai Sudharsan, Jos Buttler, and cap-

tain Shubman Gill - has held firm so far. But facing Mumbai's bowlers at Wankhede will be a different challenge. GT's bowling, meanwhile, has looked unconvincing. Rashid Khan's dip in form remains a concern. However, the return of Kagiso Rabada from suspension gives the unit a timely boost.

KKR Edge Rajasthan by One Run as Russell's Heroics Keep Playoff Hopes Alive

Kolkata: Kolkata Knight Riders captain Ajinkya Rahane praised his side's nerves of steel after they secured a dramatic one-run victory over Rajasthan Royals at Eden Gardens, keeping their IPL playoff ambitions very much alive. Opting to bat first, KKR posted 206 for 4, powered by Andre Russell's unbeaten 57 off 25 balls and substantial contributions from Angkrish Raghuvanshi (44), Rahmanullah Gurbaz (35) and Rahane himself (30). In reply, Rajasthan came agonizingly

close but finished on 205 for 8.

"It was really close but really happy," Rahane said at the post-match presentation. "When you win by one or two runs, it gives you a lot of satisfaction. The partnerships between Gurbaz and me, and between Angkrish and Russell, were very good. We wanted to go hard in the powerplay, then consolidate on a dry pitch in overs 7-12 before our batters could express themselves." Rahane also highlighted the impact of sharp fielding. "If you can save 10-12

runs in the field, that's huge. Good catches and a run-out can change the course of a game," he added. Player of the Match Russell credited the victory to collective effort. "Total team effort from the guys. We knew the importance of this game—it was like a final. We had to leave everything on the park," he said. Reflecting on his innings, Russell noted, "I wasn't worried about dot balls; I knew I could make up. The wicket was tough initially, so I gave myself time, and it paid off."

IPL 2025: Rabada serving provisional suspension after testing positive for recreational drug

New Delhi: South Africa's fast-bowling spearhead Kagiso Rabada has revealed he is serving a provisional suspension from all forms of competitive cricket after testing positive for a banned substance, which is a recreational drug. Rabada had played two matches for the Gujarat Titans (GT) in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 before abruptly flying back home due to 'personal reasons'. "As has been reported, I recently returned to South Africa from participating in the IPL for personal reasons. This was due to my returning an adverse analytical finding for the use of a recreational drug."

"I am deeply sorry to all those whom I have let down. I will never take the privilege of playing cricket for granted. This privilege is much larger than I. It goes beyond my personal aspirations. I am serving a provisional suspension and I am looking forward to returning to the game I love playing," said Rabada in a statement issued by the South African Cricketers' Association (SACA) on Saturday.

With this revelation, it is unlikely that Rabada will return to India to play for GT in the remainder of their IPL 2025 campaign. It is yet to be known if the recreational drug that Rabada used was a performance-enhancing one or not. Moreover, whether the positive result of the drug test came through either an 'in competition' or 'out of compe-