

# NORTH EAST BUSINESS MIRROR

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## TCS shares trade lower after it announces to layoff 12,200 employees

**New Delhi:** Shares of tech major Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) were trading lower on Monday, following the company's announcement to lay off around 12,200 employees in FY26. The share had slipped 1.7 per cent to an intra-day low of Rs 3,081 on BSE. India's largest IT exporter on Sunday announced plans to lay off around 2 per cent of its global workforce.

The IT giant which has a total headcount of 6.13 lakh employees as of June 2025, plans to implement the layoffs across various domains and geographies. In a statement, the company said the layoffs would primarily impact middle and senior grades. TCS CEO K Krithivasan described the de-



cision as "one of the toughest" he had to make and said it is aimed at making the company "future-ready and agile" in the face of rapidly evolving technologies and workplace models. The company is offering severance packages, extended insurance, notice period pay, and placement assistance in finding alternative job opportu-

nities, according to the reports. FM Sitharaman clarifies GST issue related to apartment associations New Delhi, July 28 (IANS) Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman clarified in Parliament on Monday that apartment associations are required to register under GST if their aggregate turnover exceeds Rs 20 lakh (Rs 10 lakh

in special category states) in a financial year and the associations are required to pay GST only where the maintenance charged is more than Rs 7,500 per month per member.

The Finance Minister further stated that apartment associations having maintenance charges up to Rs 7,500 per month per member or having aggregate turnover of goods and services below the threshold need not be registered under GST. The residents staying in the apartments do not have to pay GST. It is only the apartment associations that have to pay as they are the supplier of services, the Finance Minister said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha.

## Indian stock market settles in negative territory amid selling pressure, FII outflow



**Mumbai:** The Indian stock market continued its downward momentum as it ended lower on Monday amid a potential delay in the India-US trade agreement and continued FII outflow. Sensex closed at 80,891.02, down 572.07 points or 0.70 per cent. The 30-share index began the session in the negative territory at 81,299.97 against the last day's closing of 81,463.09. The index dragged down further to touch an intraday low at 80,776.44 amid selling in heavyweights, especially in the IT sector.

Nifty settled at 24,680.90, down 156.10 or 0.63 per cent. "Domestic market sentiment has remained cautious, weighed down by a disappointing set of Q1 earnings, delays in the India-US trade agreement, and continued FII outflows," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited.

In contrast, global markets remain broadly positive, supported by the US-EU trade developments that are perceived as less concerning than anticipated, Nair added. The upcoming monetary policy decisions from the Fed and Bank of Japan, along with the trajectory of domestic quarterly earnings, are expected to play a pivotal role in shaping market direction in the near term. Kotak Bank, Bajaj Finance, Bharati Airtel, Titan, TCS, HCL Tech, SBI, Tata Steel, Eternal, Axis Bank, and Mahindra and Mahindra were top losers among the Sensex basket. Hindustan Unilever, Asian Paints, and ICICI Bank ended the session in green.

## Lenskart plans \$1 billion maiden offer, joins India's growing IPO pipeline

**Mumbai:** Indian eyewear retailer Lenskart Solutions is planning to file for an initial public offering of about \$1 billion as early as this week, sources said, according to a Bloomberg report.

The company, backed by the SoftBank group, is finalising the valuation as it prepares to submit its draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) with the market regulator, the people said, asking not to be identified as the deliberations are private.

Global investors such as Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, KKR & Co., and TPG Inc. are among the backers of the company, founded in 2010.

With the potential IPO, Lenskart joins the rush for listings in India as shares bounce back from their April low on easing fears of a damaging global trade war and the nation's growth prospects.



The offering comes as Indian technology start-ups increasingly turn to the local stock market instead of share sales overseas. Another SoftBank-backed firm, InModi, is aiming to file for a \$1 billion IPO this year, sources told Bloomberg.

In June 2024, Lenskart raised \$200 million from Temasek Holdings and Fidelity Management & Research at a \$5 billion valuation, according to Avendus Capital, an adviser on the deal. Fidelity has since revised its internal estimate of the company's value to \$6.1 billion, based on April portfolio disclosures.

## Digital payments rise 10.7 pc on POS terminals, UPI, internet banking

**New Delhi:** The adoption of digital payments across the country recorded a 10.7 per cent year-on-year increase (as of March 2025), according to the latest Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data. The Central Bank uses an index that evaluates the adoption of digital payments across the country, known as the RBI's Digital Payments indicator (DPI). "The increase in the RBI-Digital Payments Index (DPI) index was driven by significant growth in parameters viz. payment infrastructure – supply-side factors and payment performance across the country over the period," the RBI said in a statement.

The supply-side factors in index measures POS terminals, ATMs, QR codes, bank branches offering digital services. The payment performance measures volume and value of transactions across UPI, IMPS, NEFT, RTGS and other payment modes including internet banking. RBI's DPI grew to 493.22 in March 2025, up from 465.33 in September 2024, indicating that the growth of digital payments across the nation has not slowed.

## GST collection has clocked double digit growth in April-June quarter: Minister



**New Delhi:** The average monthly net GST collection has risen by a robust 10.7 per cent to Rs 1,80,774 crore in the first quarter (April-June) of the current FY 2025-26, compared to the average monthly net GST collection of Rs 1,63,319 crore in the same quarter of the previous year, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary informed the Parliament on Tuesday. A number of measures have been taken by the government on the recommendations of the GST Council for the benefit of the small business sector, the minister said in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha.

These steps include exempting small and medium

enterprises from the need to obtain GST registration if the persons involved in intra-state taxable supply of goods, if their aggregate turnover in a financial year does not exceed Rs 40 lakh (Rs 20 lakh for certain special category states). Similarly, persons involved in intra-state or inter-state taxable supply of services also need not go for GST registration, if their aggregate turnover in a financial year does not exceed Rs 20 lakh (Rs 10 lakh for certain special category states)

The composition levy scheme in GST is an alternative, simple method of levying tax designed for small and medium taxpayers whose turnover is up to

the prescribed limit. A uniform rate of tax @1 per cent (0.5 per cent under the CGST Act and 0.5 per cent under the respective SGST Act) is payable on supplies by traders of goods and manufacturers of goods, and 2.5 per cent under each Act for supplies by restaurants. All eligible registered persons with an annual turnover up to Rs 5 crore in the preceding financial year may opt for filing of quarterly returns with monthly payment of tax.

The minister further stated that a series of administrative measures, including fiscal and trade policy, have been taken to control inflation and mitigate its impact. These include the augmentation of buffer stocks for essential food items and strategic sales of procured grains in the open market to increase supply and bring down prices. Besides, facilitation of imports and export curbs during periods of short supply, and implementation of stock limits to push more supplies of select commodities into the market are other steps that have been taken by the government to control inflation, the minister added.

## Tata AIA registers 50 MDRT-qualified Advisors in Assam, strengthens financial advisory reach

**Guwahati:** Tata AIA Life Insurance has solidified its leadership in India's life insurance sector by registering 2,871 Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT) advisors in 2025—an 11% increase from last year. The company retains its No. 1 position in India for the third consecutive year and has advanced to the 4th spot globally, up from 6th. Assam contributed significantly to this achievement with 50 MDRT-qualified advisors, including 2 MDRTs, 6 Court of the Table (COT), and 1 Top of

the Table (TOT) qualifiers.

Tata AIA also demonstrated progress in gender diversity, securing the 7th global rank for female MDRT membership with a record 1,343 women advisors—a growth of 8.5% year-on-year.

Guwahati has witnessed a surge in consumer interest for trusted financial planning. With rising awareness of long-term financial security, Tata AIA's presence, backed by its MDRT-certified advisors, is helping residents make confident decisions on life insurance,



investments, and retirement planning.

Amit Dave, Chief Distribution Officer, said, "This global and national recognition highlights the success of our Premier Agency model and the unwavering trust of our consumers, who rely on Tata AIA for expert financial advice."

## IndiaSkills 2025 registration opens, paves way for nation's top young talent

**Guwahati:** India's largest skill development platform, IndiaSkills Competition (ISC) 2025, officially kicked off as the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) opened registrations today. The biennial event invites young aspirants from across India to compete in 63 skill categories, setting the stage to represent the nation at WorldSkills 2026—the world's biggest vocational skills competition.

Participants from all 36 states and union territories can register online through the Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH) portal by September 30, 2025. Eligible Indian nationals aged 16–25 can apply for one skill only, with specific age relaxations for advanced technologies like Cyber Security and Mechatronics.

The competition will follow a rigorous two-track selection process—State-level contests by State Skill Development Missions (SSDMs) and skill-specific contests by Sector Skill Councils (SSCs). Top performers from these will move to regional rounds across five zones, followed by boot camps and the final national showdown.

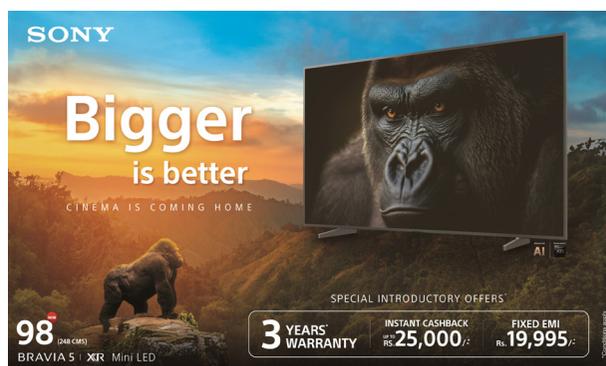
In Guwahati, Assam-based institutions and skilling hubs are expected to actively mobilize youth participation, especially in Northeast-specific trades. This presents a unique opportunity for the region's skilled workforce to gain national and global recognition, fostering job-ready talent in key local industries.

## Sony unveils 98-inch BRAVIA 5 in India, targets high-end home cinema market

**Guwahati:** Sony India has launched its biggest-ever television, the 249 cm (98-inch) BRAVIA 5 mini-LED, promising a premium "Cinema is Coming Home" experience. Priced at ₹6,49,990, the model (K-98XR55A) is available from July 23 onwards, with launch offers including a ₹25,000 cashback on select cards and a fixed EMI option of ₹19,995.

The BRAVIA 5 features Sony's Advanced AI Processor XR and XR Backlight Master Drive, enhancing realism with brighter highlights, deeper blacks, and immersive textures. Dolby Vision and Atmos further enrich the viewing and sound experience, transforming homes into private theatres.

With Studio Calibrated Mode, Netflix Adaptive Calibrated



Mode, and a new Prime Video Calibrated Mode, the TV aligns with the creator's vision for both films and live sports. Sony Pictures Core also grants access to a rich catalog of 4K Blu-ray-quality content, including IMAX Enhanced titles.

In Guwahati, the premium segment of the television market is witnessing increasing demand from affluent consum-

ers and high-end hospitality sectors. Retailers expect strong traction for the BRAVIA 5, with luxury-conscious buyers viewing it as an investment in a superior home entertainment upgrade.

The product is available across Sony Centers, www.ShopatSC.com, leading outlets, and major e-commerce platforms.

## Messe Frankfurt and MEX Exhibitions enter into a strategic alliance

**Mumbai:** In a landmark announcement made during the grand opening of Gifts World Expo – Delhi 2025, the organisers of Paperworld India, Corporate Gifts Show, and Gifts World Expo have officially announced the merger of their exhibition portfolios. With dedicated shows now mapped across Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Kolkata, this joint initiative underscores a long-term strategy to establish a pan-India presence for the Gifting and Stationery sector.

By creating strong regional platforms in the country's top-tier commercial and consumption hubs, the organisers are delivering a scalable model that supports: Wider market access for exhibitors by reaching buy-

ers and distributors in multiple cities, Year-round business engagement through staggered show calendars, Enhanced visibility for brands targeting B2B, retail, and corporate segments, Targeted networking and buyer connect opportunities tailored to each region's commercial pulse.

Together, these leading exhibition brands in India will form an unmatched powerhouse for the gifting & stationery industry—offering an integrated platform that connects manufacturers, innovators, and buyers from across the country and beyond. Talking about the alliance, Mr Raj Manek, Executive Director and Board Member of Messe Frankfurt Asia Holding

Ltd. commented: "Our continued partnership with MEX Exhibitions aims to align our strengths and industry insights to build a nationally relevant and sectorally deep portfolio." Ms Himani Gulati and Mr Gaurav Juneja, Directors of MEX Exhibitions Pvt Ltd, shared their enthusiasm about the collaboration, stating: "We are excited to partner with Messe Frankfurt India in the gifting and stationery segments through Gifts World Expo." The Indian gifting market is experiencing robust growth, with an estimated value of USD 75.16 billion in 2024, projected to reach USD 92.32 billion by 2030, growing at a CAGR of 3.55% (as per Retail Research Trends).

## TVS unveils marvel-inspired NTORQ 125 'Super Soldier Edition' for GenZ riders

**Guwahati:** TVS Motor Company has launched the TVS NTORQ 125 Super Soldier Edition, the latest addition to its Marvel Avengers Super Squad series. Inspired by the iconic character Captain America, the new edition features a bold camo theme designed to resonate with GenZ consumers.

Building on the success of its collaboration with Marvel, TVS continues to reimagine fan-favourite superheroes through stylish and high-performance scooters. The refreshed Super Soldier Edition enhances the TVS NTORQ's dynamic appeal with striking graphics, blending superhero flair with sporty aesthetics.

India's first Bluetooth-connected SMART scooter, the TVS NTORQ 125 is powered by SmartXconnect™ and has earned popularity for its



performance and tech-savvy features. Priced at Rs. 98,117 (ex-showroom Delhi), the new edition is now available at TVS dealerships nationwide.

In Guwahati, where demand for stylish, feature-rich two-wheelers is steadily growing among young professionals and college-goers, the new NTORQ variant is expected to make a strong impact. Local dealers anticipate high footfall, citing the city's affinity for uniquely designed scooters that balance performance with personality.

## Feed Them Like Cats and Dogs, Love Them Like Family

**Mumbai:** Despite growing love and emotional bonding in Indian pet households, pets are still fed like humans—from the same kitchen, and often the same plate that lacks essential nutrients pets require. Addressing this gap, Mars, Incorporated, a global leader in pet care products and services, has launched 'Feed Them Like Cats and Dogs,' a campaign each for the Pedigree® and Whiskas® brands on raising awareness about the specific nutritional needs of dogs and cats. The message is simple and universal: pets may be family, but their nutritional requirements are biologically different. In the Pedigree® brand film, a pet parent realises that dogs respond to their own natural instincts, especially around food. The Whiskas® brand film captures a quiet bonding moment where the pet parent comes to understand that while we treat cats as part of the family, their nutritional needs are uniquely their own.

The campaign has been created by BBDO India and BBDO Guerrero, respectively. Dr. Umesh Kallahalli, Senior Veterinarian & Small Animal Consultant, Ban-



galore, said, "We regularly treat pets affected not by lack of care, but by habits driven by emotion rather than nutritional understanding. Pet parents today are more attentive, more involved, and more loving than ever." Salil Murthy, Managing Director, Mars Petcare India, said, "Our campaign is helping pet parents bring the two together and shift the narrative from emotional feeding to informed feeding." Ayesha Huda, Chief Marketing Officer, Mars Petcare India, said, "Backed by Mars 90 years of global nutritional expertise in pet care, the Pedigree® and Whiskas® brands ensure complete and balanced nutrition when fed as recommended."

## India sends medical team to Bangladesh after deadly Dhaka plane crash



**Guwahati:** India has dispatched a medical team comprising burn specialists and nurses to Bangladesh following a tragic plane crash in Dhaka that killed at least 27 and injured over 170 people. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) confirmed on Monday that the team is en route with essential medical supplies to assist in treating the injured.

The MEA also stated that the team will assess the condition of the victims and may recommend their transfer to Indian hospitals for specialised care, if necessary. Additional medical teams may follow based on the assessment.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed deep sorrow over the incident on social media platform X, stating, "Deeply shocked and saddened at the loss of lives, many of them young students... India stands in solidarity with Bangladesh and is ready to extend all possible support and assistance."

In Assam, Guwahati's major hospitals, including GMCH and Nemcare, have reportedly been alerted for potential patient transfers from Dhaka. Medical professionals in the city say they are prepared to offer advanced burn care if required, reflecting the region's growing role in cross-border medical aid.

The tragedy has evoked widespread grief and solidarity across South Asia.

## Bank of Baroda marks 118th Foundation Day with tech-driven, sustainable banking push

**Guwahati:** Marking its 118th Foundation Day, Bank of Baroda announced a series of forward-looking initiatives under the theme 'Trust Empowered by Innovation', reaffirming its commitment to customer trust, digital excellence, and sustainable growth. The event, graced by Shri M. Nagaraju, Secretary of the Department of Financial Services, focused on strengthening inclusive banking for a future-ready India.

The bank unveiled key customer-centric offerings including the bob World Business app for MSMEs and merchants, a pilot Virtual Front Office using AI and 3D holography, bob ₹ Pay International for global UPI transactions, and the bob in-SIGHT Braille Debit Card for

visually impaired customers. The launch of Green Financing schemes further underscored the bank's push toward sustainability.

Managing Director & CEO Shri Debadatta Chand emphasized that the bank's century-long trust fuels its drive to innovate responsibly for a digitally empowered and inclusive India. In Guwahati, one of the bank's key growth markets in the Northeast, customers welcomed the announcement. Local MSMEs, startups, and digitally savvy users expressed optimism about the new offerings, especially the bob World Business app, which is expected to streamline financial operations and boost access to digital banking tools in the region.

## Salman Khan unveils Season 2 of Indian Supercross Racing League, set to accelerate motorsport in India

**Guwahati:** Bollywood superstar Salman Khan on Wednesday launched Season 2 of the Indian Supercross Racing League (ISRL), announcing plans to invest in the league to help bring motorsport into the Indian mainstream.

At a press event in Mumbai, Khan—already the face of ISRL—shared his vision of transforming the niche sport into a national phenomenon. "This league is about pushing boundaries," he said, unveiling the ISRL Proving Grounds, a dedicated 7-acre facility near Pune for training youth riders and testing automotive innovations.

The new season has already registered 155 international athletes, reflecting the growing global interest. ISRL will also introduce Fan Parks to combine racing with entertainment for families and brands alike.

Veer Patel, ISRL Managing Director, said Khan's transition from ambassador to investor "adds unmatched cultural capital and mainstream trust" to the league's future. The league aims to scale across Indian cities, attract international tal-



ent, and boost brand engagement through immersive racing experiences.

In Guwahati, which has a rising base of young biking enthusiasts and off-roading clubs, ISRL's growing popularity is expected to spark local events and dealership tie-ups. The region's automotive retailers see this as a golden opportunity to engage with Gen-Z consumers through motor-sport-driven campaigns.

## Vi launches 'Vi Finance' to simplify loans, FDs and credit cards via Vi app

**Guwahati:** Telecom giant Vi (Vodafone Idea) has launched Vi Finance, a new digital platform within the Vi App, offering seamless access to personal loans, fixed deposits, and credit cards. The service has been rolled out in collaboration with Aditya Birla Capital, Upswing Financial Technologies, and Credilio to address customers' evolving financial needs.

The initiative marks Vi's foray into the digital finance ecosystem, transforming the Vi App into a one-stop solution for lifestyle and financial services. With a fully digital, paperless process, users can secure personal loans from ₹50,000, book FDs with interest up to 8.4%, and apply for credit cards from top banks—all with minimal documentation.

Avneesh Khosla, CMO, Vi said, "At Vi, we are committed to bringing convenience to our customers' lives through digital solutions. By making financial solutions easy, quick, and accessible within the Vi App with Vi Finance, we are enabling customers to take control of their finances without the usual complexities. Our partnerships with trusted financial institutions ensure that every customer can find the right product for their needs. We believe this digital-first, paperless approach will simplify how



millions of Indians manage their finances."

In Guwahati, where smartphone penetration is rapidly rising, Vi Finance is expected to gain strong traction among digitally savvy youth and small business owners. With growing interest in hassle-free digital banking and investment tools, the new platform offers much-needed flexibility and speed for Assam's urban consumers.

Vi Finance is now live on the Vi App, available on both Android and iOS platforms.

## Muthoot Microfin enters Assam, targets Northeast's growing microfinance market

**Guwahati:** Muthoot Microfin, India's second-largest NBFC-MFI, has announced its strategic entry into the Northeast with the launch of its first branch in Assam. The company inaugurated its debut branch in Mirza, Guwahati on July 29, marking its presence in 21 states and union territories across India.

The newly launched Guwahati branch is strategically positioned to serve both the city's urban population and surrounding rural communities. With this move, Muthoot Microfin aims to expand access to rural credit, strengthen the local financial ecosystem, and promote inclusive growth in the region.

Assam, with its vibrant micro-enterprise culture and strong base of women-led businesses, presents a promising market for microfinance.

Commenting on this development Sadaf Sayeed, CEO, Muthoot Microfin, said, "Assam represents more than a new market, it reflects the entrepreneurial resilience and untapped potential of India's Northeast. Our presence here is rooted in our commitment to bridging financial access gaps, and promoting responsible credit



practices. As a company that serves millions across rural India, we understand the importance of tailoring our approach to regional needs, and we are committed to working closely with local communities to create lasting value."

In Guwahati, the expansion is expected to significantly enhance financial services for underserved segments, especially women entrepreneurs. Local stakeholders have welcomed the move as a step towards greater economic participation and self-reliance.

Muthoot Microfin's entry into Assam will also include financial literacy initiatives and capacity-building efforts, furthering its mission of empowering women and fostering sustainable, grassroots entrepreneurship across rural India.

## Byatikram Real Estate Conclave 2.0 spotlights booming Northeast property sector

**Guwahati:** The Byatikram Real Estate Conclave 2.0 held at Hotel Vivanta, Guwahati, on July 25, 2025, spotlighted the immense growth potential of the Northeast's real estate sector. Organized by the Byatikram Group in collaboration with The Times of India, and powered by SRMB and NEDFi, the conclave attracted top industry players, financial institutions, and policymakers.

In his keynote, AREIDA President P.K.

Sharma noted that Assam's real estate market, valued at \$26 billion, is growing annually by 8–10%. He emphasized the urgent need for housing and infrastructure to match rising urbanization, projected to hit 40% by 2030. SBI's CGM Prabhass B. Bose reaffirmed the bank's strong role in financing real estate across Assam.

A special highlight was the Lifetime Achievement Award conferred to Ar. Abani Kumar Das of Dona Builders Pvt.

Ltd., whose emotional acceptance underscored resilience in the sector. Panel discussions and presentations from experts like NEDFi's P.V.S.L.N. Murty and SRMB added valuable insights.

Guwahati drew particular attention as a real estate hub, with panelist Sanjay Kr. Agarwal emphasizing strong buyer interest and infrastructure demand. Industry leaders hailed Guwahati as a bellwether for growth in the Northeast region.

## Medanta Hospital flags surge in paediatric respiratory illnesses at Guwahati CME

**Guwahati:** Medanta Hospital, in collaboration with the Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP) Guwahati City Branch and IAP Intensive Care Chapter, Assam, organized a Continuing Medical Education (CME) program in Guwahati to raise awareness on paediatric critical care, with a strong focus on respiratory illnesses.

The event was spearheaded by Dr Praveen Khilnani and Dr Rajiv Uttam from Medanta, Gurugram, who emphasized

the urgency of managing paediatric viral infections that have recently surged nationwide. Dr Khilnani highlighted the ABCDE approach—Airway, Breathing, Circulation, Disability, and Exposure—as a foundational method in emergency care. He stressed that a mother's or caregiver's insight into the child's condition often holds vital diagnostic clues.

Dr Uttam, leading a panel discussion on "Recent Surge of Viral and Atypical Pneu-



monia in India," underscored the impact of infections like mycoplasma pneumoniae, RSV, and influenza among children under five. He attributed the seasonal spike in cases to monsoon-related respiratory stress, calling for stronger vaccination and nutritional support.

In Guwahati, paediatric clin-

ics and hospitals have reported increased footfall of young patients with respiratory symptoms. Healthcare providers are stocking up on child-friendly nebulizers, antibiotics, and antivirals, with a noticeable uptick in preventive care awareness among parents.

Local experts Dr Devajit Sarma, Dr Nayanmoni Deka, and Dr Diganta Barman also joined the discussion, echoing the need for regional preparedness.

## Nissan rolls out flood relief program for affected car owners across India

**Guwahati:** In response to widespread flooding across several Indian states, Nissan Motor India has announced a full-scale customer support program aimed at aiding vehicle owners whose cars have been damaged by floodwaters. The initiative features free towing, extended workshop hours, repair discounts, and insurance assistance.

Nissan has activated a dedicated flood support helpdesk (1800 209 3456) to provide timely assistance to affected customers. The company is offering complimentary towing of damaged vehicles to authorized service centers, along with a 10% discount on engine oil, oil filter replacements, and floor carpet changes. Additionally, a full vehicle health check-up will be provided to ensure safety and functionality.

Mr. Saurabh Vatsa, Managing Director of Nissan Motor India, said, "Our goal is to offer complete reassurance to customers affected by the floods. We are committed to standing by them with practical support and compassion."

In Guwahati, which has seen a surge in water-damaged vehicles, local Nissan service centers have extended their working hours to accommodate growing demand. Dealers expect the relief measures to significantly reduce customer repair costs and minimize vehicle downtime.

## Durian Furniture opens their first store in Meghalaya

**Shillong:** Durian Furniture, one of India's most trusted names in luxury furniture, has marked a significant milestone with the launch of their first store in Meghalaya. Located on Meccabe Road, near Assam Rifles Signal Unit in Demseiniong, Shillong—793001, the store opened its doors to customers on the 5th of July, 2025. Chief guest Mr. Bhim Sen Sethi inaugurated the launch of this store. With this addition, Durian now has over 55 stores across India, further strengthening their presence in the country. Managed by Bolivia Nongbri, the new Shillong store brings Durian's signature collections to Meghalaya for the very first time.

This 3,060 sq. ft. store offers a thoughtfully curated range



of home and office furniture, including luxurious sofas, recliners, beds, dining sets, storage units, and ergonomic office pieces—each designed to elevate everyday living. For over four decades, Durian has remained committed to crafting timeless furniture that blends enduring quality with refined aesthetics. Com-

menting on the launch, Mr. Sajjan Dokania, Chairman & Managing Director of Durian Industries Ltd., said, "Our expansion into Meghalaya marks a proud moment in our journey. With every new store, we aim to bring thoughtfully designed, high-quality furniture closer to our customers across India."

## TVS launches futuristic Apache RTR 310 for 2025, eyes urban youth and tech-savvy riders

**Guwahati:** TVS Motor Company has unveiled the 2025 edition of its flagship naked street bike, the TVS Apache RTR 310, redefining street performance with cutting-edge technology, sharper styling, and first-in-segment features. Priced from ₹2.39 lakh to ₹2.75 lakh (ex-showroom), the new model was launched in Bengaluru on July 16 and is now available across major metros, including Guwahati.

Equipped with an OBD2B-compliant engine, the RTR 310 boasts real-time emission monitoring, improved responsiveness, and a Gen-2 digital cluster with multi-language UI. Riders can opt for the factory-customized Built-To-Order (BTO) version, which includes high-performance add-ons like cornering drag torque control, launch control, and keyless ride.

The 2025 Apache also flaunts three new bold colour options, hand guards, sequential turn indicators, and a transparent clutch cover. Delivering 35.6 PS at 9,700 rpm and 28.7 Nm at 6,650 rpm, the freestyler promises an adrenaline-filled yet

sustainable ride.

In Guwahati, a city with rising demand for premium performance bikes among young professionals and street-riding enthusiasts, dealers report heightened inquiries. "The tech-loaded Apache RTR 310 aligns well with the evolving taste of our urban customers," said a local showroom executive.

Speaking about the launch, Vimal Sumbly, Head Business – Premium, TVS Motor Company, said, "The TVS Apache RTR 310 has been a trendsetter in the naked sports segment since its debut. With the 2025 edition, we're building on its bold legacy by integrating future-ready tech, intuitive digital interfaces, standout styling and with unwavering commitment to rider safety. This refreshed freestyler reflects the new era of motorcycling, one that is connected, customizable, and committed to sustainability. We're proud to bring this upgraded experience to our community of TVS Apache riders who live to push boundaries every day."

## Tata AIA tops India in MDRT rankings for 3rd year, rises to 4th globally

**Aizawl:** Tata AIA Life Insurance has once again secured the top spot in India for the highest number of Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT) members, achieving this milestone for the third consecutive year. The company has also climbed to the 4th position globally, up from 6th last year, with a record 2,871 MDRT-qualified advisors — an 11% increase from 2024.

Notably, Tata AIA also ranked 7th worldwide for women MDRT members, with 1,343 female advisors — an 8.5% rise — reflecting the company's strong focus on gender inclusion and diversity in the financial advisory sector.

The MDRT qualification is globally recognized as the gold standard in financial advisory services. Tata AIA's continued dominance showcases its commitment to offering expert financial guidance, underpinned by its Premier Agency model and extensive digital training support.

In Aizawl, this growth signals greater access to high-quality financial advice for local consumers. With financial literacy gaining ground in Mizoram, the presence of MDRT-standard advisors is expected to boost consumer confidence and long-term investment planning across the region.

Amit Dave, Chief Distribution Officer at Tata AIA, said, "This recognition reflects our advisors' commitment and the trust consumers place in our services."

## New Nissan Magnite was awarded a 5-star overall safety rating by the GNCAP

**Guwahati:** Nissan Motor India Pvt Ltd is proud to announce that the New Nissan Magnite has been awarded a 5-star overall safety rating by the Global New Car Assessment Program (GNCAP). The New Nissan Magnite is manufactured at the Chennai plant and is exported to 65+ countries under Nissan Motor India's 'One Car, One World' strategy for RHD and LHD markets. The New Nissan Magnite (RHD) spec sold in India and South Africa both, was tested by GNCAP and received a perfect rating of 5-star rating in adult safety and 3-star rating in child safety accumulating an overall 5-star safety rating for the passengers. The New Nissan Magnite underwent rigorous testing, including assessments of adult occupant protection, child safety, and safety assist features.

The vehicle demonstrated exceptional performance across all categories, showcasing its robust build quality, advanced safety features, and innovative design aimed at safeguarding drivers and passengers alike. Commenting on the achievement, Mr Saurabh Vatsa, Managing Director, Nissan Motor India, stated, "We are delighted to receive a 5-star safety rating for the Made In India New Nissan Magnite." It also offers enhanced safety with a reinforced body structure, over 40 standard safety features including six airbags, electronic stability control, traction control system, and hydraulic brake assist. Additional safety features such as three-point seatbelts for all seats, seatbelt reminders, child lock, ISOFIX child seat anchorages, and rear parking sensors now come as standard across all variants, ensuring every journey is not just comfortable but more secure than ever.

## Toyota Kirloskar Motor Launches 'Prestige Package' for Urban Cruiser Hyryder

**Mumbai:** Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) has unveiled a limited-period 'Prestige Package' for its Urban Cruiser Hyryder hybrid SUV, aimed at enhancing customer experience. Available from July 2025, the package features 10 premium accessories designed to amplify the SUV's bold aesthetic and functionality.

Key accessories include a premium door visor, chrome garnishes, and body cladding, all tailored to complement the Hyryder's robust design. The SUV boasts a first-in-segment self-charging hybrid powertrain, combining a 1.5L TNGA engine with an electric motor for optimal fuel efficiency.

With over 1,00,000 units sold since its 2022 debut, the Urban Cruiser Hyryder reflects Toyota's commitment to sustainable mobility and customer satisfaction. Customers are encouraged to visit local dealerships to explore the new Prestige Package.



# Tamannaah Bhatia shares a glimpse of 'backstage chaos' behind the runway

**Mumbai:** Actress Tamannaah Bhatia took to social media to offer a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the backstage chaos at a recent fashion event. Reflecting on the fastpaced atmosphere and teamwork involved, she highlighted the effort that goes into creating those magical moments on the runway. Taking to Instagram, the Baahubali actress shared a series of photos and videos from her ramp walk at India Couture Week

2025. Alongside it, Tamannaah wrote, "The thrill of walking in one look and coming back in another is unmatched. What happens in those minutes backstage - the speed, the teamwork, the focus, it's chaotic yes. But it's the kind of chaos that fuels you. There's so much love and labour behind those fleeting moments on stage, from many more people than one can assume. @rahulmishra\_7 @divyabmishra What a night.



What a team. What a feeling.."

In the images, she is seen striking a pose with utmost grace and style. In the next Tamannaah is seen posing or the shutterbugs. In one of the backstage videos, the actress could be heard saying, "Ganpati Bappa Moriya. Har Har Mahadev." On July 24, the 'Sikandar Ka Muqaddar' actress turned showstopper for designer Rahul Mishra at India Couture Week 2025.

## Varun Dhawan's ladylove in 'Border 2' revealed



**Mumbai:** Actress Medha Rana, who has worked in Friday Night Plan, Ishq In the Air, Dancing on the Grave and London Files, will be seen playing the role of Bollywood star Varun Dhawan's ladylove in the upcoming war drama "Border 2".

Speaking about the decision to cast Medha, producer Bhushan Kumar shares, "It was imperative for us to find someone who could naturally embody the dialect, spirit, and rooted essence of the region. Medha impressed the team not just with her raw talent, but with her effortless command over the regional dialect and her emotional range as an actor. We truly believe she will bring depth and realism to the role." The film marks a pivotal moment for Medha, who comes from an Army family.

Producer Nidhi Dutta shared that Border 2 is not just a film; it's an emotion. Talking about casting Medha, she said: "Every choice we've made, from the director to the cast, is driven by our vision to tell a story that feels honest, powerful, and relevant. Medha Rana opposite actor Varun Dhawan will bring freshness and sincerity that aligns beautifully with the tone of the film."

Border 2 is helmed by director Anurag Singh and is set to hit screens on January 23, 2026. Set against the backdrop of valour, sacrifice, and national pride, Border 2 is the sequel to the 1997 film "Border", an epic war film, based on the events of Battle of Longewala (1971).

## Ankita Lokhande & Vicky Jain on the 'Namak' in their relationship during Laughter Chef 2



**Mumbai:** Popular television couple, Ankita Lokhande and Vicky Jain, entertained the audience not just with their culinary skills but also with their comic timing during the second season of the cooking reality show, "Laughter Chef". While interacting exclusively with IANS, the couple was asked, "During the show, did anyone run out of 'masala' or was there ever less 'namak' in your relationship?"

Speaking to IANS, Vicky said that Masala might've finished for someone else — but in their relationship, there has always been plenty of spice. Ankita pitched in, saying, "That spice is what makes us entertaining!" Shedding further light on their ultimate recipe for entertainment, the lovebirds revealed who added more "mirch" on set of "Laughter Chef 2". — Anki-

ta with her cooking or Vicky with his jokes? While Ankita believes it was Vicky's jokes, Vicky said it was Ankita's "mirch" though.

Ankita and Vicky further disclosed what made them say yes to the second season of "Laughter Chef". Ankita revealed that initially, they both refused to do the show. "We didn't think we could do it again," she said. Vicky added that, remembering their relationship with Colors, they couldn't say no to them. "And thank God we didn't refuse. If we had, and then watched the show later, we would've regretted it so much," Ankita said. Vicky added, "A lot of people actually did say no — and we thank them now!"

To this, Ankita reacted, saying, "Yes, many times over! Because their no led to our yes, and this amazing experience." Talking about how much their cooking skills have improved after the show, Ankita shared, "Honestly? We learned everything there and forgot everything there." Vicky stated, "Maybe we'll find out when we do our next cooking show"

"We only cook when Laughter Chef is on. Otherwise, I have zero interest in cooking," she added. Vicky revealed that the situation is the same for him. "Whatever I learn is only because of the pressure during the show," he concluded.

## Palak Muchhal reveals if 'Andaaz 2' music has the potential to resonate as timelessly as 'Andaaz'

**Mumbai:** Singer Palak Muchhal, who has lent her melodious voice to the album of Suneel Darshan's "Andaaz 2" revealed if the music of the sequel has the potential to resonate as timelessly as the original drama. Hoping for "Andaaz 2" music to connect with the audience, Palak told IANS that when the music for the original drama was rereleased earlier this year, the kind of response the audience gave was simply amazing. Speaking to IANS, she said, "Both the film and the music—we're seeing a great deal of enthusiasm again."



She was also asked, "Given that the songs from 'Andaaz' are considered iconic, how do you view your contribution to 'Andaaz 2' in light of that legacy?" To this, Palak responded by saying that whenever a sequel is created, comparisons with the original are natural—whether it's the film or the music. Talking about her approach towards the project, she shared, "But I've approached this project not with the intention of competing with Andaaz 1 or trying to match or surpass it. For me, this is a completely fresh story."

"Even though it's titled Andaaz 2, the creative process was not dominated by the fact that it's a sequel. We worked on it with a new and original perspective, and I think that's what makes it special," the singer added. Revealing what kind of briefings she received from Suneel Darshan while recording the songs, Palak said, "For the past ten years, I've had the privilege of singing for all of Sunil Sir's films, and the response has been overwhelming. If you look at the music platforms, the number of views and the affection the songs have received is truly heartwarming. His approach to filmmaking is quite unique—it feels like a revival of old-school cinema, but with a fresh spirit. For me, as an artist, being part of such a project is a matter of great joy and learning."

She added that the "Andaaz 2" album is very versatile, with a wide range of songs. Palak further disclosed that she has tried different styles vocally throughout the album.

## Alia Bhatt backs mother Soni Razdan as she voices her concern over the Palestine crisis

**Mumbai:** Alia Bhatt's mother, and veteran actress, Soni Razdan, decided to share a piece of her family history amidst the ongoing atrocities in Palestine. Razdan revealed that at the time when concentration camps were booming against Jews in Germany, her grandfather ran an underground newspaper against Hitler.



She wrote on her IG, "In this, very terrifying and uncertain atmosphere, he had the courage to run an underground newspaper against Hitler. They distributed it as widely as they could, and of course the inevitable happened... One day he was found out. They arrested

him. He was thrown into prison and later into the concentration camp."

Razdan added that, having good lawyers on his side, her grandfather was eventually released but was asked to never set foot in Germany again. Ap-

plauding her grandfather's remarkable courage, she shared, "My grandfather had the courage to stand up against a tyrant all those years ago. Therefore, when I see what is happening in Palestine today, I am so glad he is no longer alive.

## Mouni Roy on Salakaar: My character isn't just brave, she's complicated, conflicted, resilient

**Mumbai:** The makers of "Salakaar" unveiled the trailer of the spy thriller on Tuesday. The lead actress of the series Mouni Roy said that her character isn't just brave, she's complicated, conflicted and incredibly resilient.

Mouni said, "This is one of the most emotional roles I've ever done. My character isn't just brave, she's complicated, conflicted, and incredibly resilient. She operates in a high-risk zone, but she also carries her personal trauma and history into every decision. "The trailer gives just a hint

of the layered storytelling, and I feel privileged to be part of a project that dares to go deeper." Inspired by real life events, Salakaar takes you deep into a world where loyalty is currency, silence is survival, and one man's past mission could decide the fate of a nation.

The show by Faruk Kabir, which also stars Naveen Kasturia, Mukesh Rishi, Purnendu Bhattacharya, Ashwath Bhatt, and Surya Sharma, is told across two timelines - 1978 and 2025.

## Inter Miami, Cincinnati Draw 0-0 Without Suspended Messi

**Fort Lauderdale:** Inter Miami and FC Cincinnati played out a goalless draw at Chase Stadium on Saturday night, with star forward Lionel Messi missing the action due to suspension. Messi, along with teammate Jordi Alba, sat out the match after both received one-game bans from Major League Soccer for skipping the recent All-Star game. Despite the absence, Messi was present at the stadium, watching the proceedings from a suite. Inter Miami co-owner Jorge Mas described the league's decision as "draconian," noting that Messi was "extremely upset" at being forced to miss such a crucial fixture as the club chases its second consecutive MLS Supporters' Shield. Both Miami and Cincinnati entered the clash in red-hot form, each having won six of their previous seven matches. Cincinnati, who had defeated Miami 3-0 just days earlier, sit second in the league standings with 49 points, while Miami are currently fifth with 42 points.



The match itself was a tightly contested affair. Cincinnati nearly snatched a dramatic win in stoppage time, as defender Miles Robinson found the net with a header from an Evander free kick. However, the goal was disallowed after the referee spotted a foul in the build-up.

## Mandhana slips to second as Sciver-Brunt returns to top position in ICC Women's ODI rankings



**Dubai:** Despite India clinching a 2-1 ODI series win against England, vice-captain Smriti Mandhana has dropped one place to No. 2 in the latest ICC Women's ODI batters rankings. England skipper Nat Sciver-Brunt reclaimed the No.1 spot among ODI batters, riding on a superb 98 off 105 balls in the final match of the series. Sciver-Brunt's 160 runs in the series proved decisive in her leap to the top, despite England falling short in the series decider at Chester-le-Street. Mandhana, who scored 115 runs across the three matches, slipped a spot after briefly holding the top position. However, the rankings update brought better news for Indian captain Harmanpreet Kaur, who surged 10 places to 11th, after her composed middle-order contributions. Jemimah Rodrigues also inched up two spots to

13th, rounding off a strong showing from India's core batting group during the England tour.

The rankings update also reflected gains for bowlers. England's Sophie Ecclestone maintained her place at the top among ODI bowlers, followed by Australia's Ashleigh Gardner. However, Ireland's Orla Prendergast was the standout name across all departments. The 22-year-old Irish all-rounder had a series to remember against Zimbabwe, scoring an unbeaten 67 in the second ODI in Belfast. That effort catapulted her 12 places up to joint 22nd in the ODI batting charts.

She also rose 10 places to 33rd among bowlers after a tight spell in the same game. Prendergast's all-round excellence saw her break into the top 10 among ODI allrounders for the first time, now ranked No.10. Ireland's Arlene Kelly also climbed four spots to equal 30th among bowlers, while Gaby Lewis, the team's T20I captain, jumped four places to 14th among T20I batters after a pair of half-centuries against Zimbabwe.

## Asia Cup 2025 in UAE from Sept 9-28; India-Pakistan Set for Sept 14 & 21 Clashes

**New Delhi:** The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) has confirmed that the upcoming men's Asia Cup will be staged in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from September 9 to 28, 2025, with Dubai and Abu Dhabi set to host all matches. The much-anticipated clash between arch-rivals India and Pakistan will take place at the Dubai International Stadium on Sunday, September 14, with a likely rematch in the Super Four round scheduled for the following Sunday, September 21. Announcing the official schedule, ACC president Mohsin Naqvi highlighted the significance of hosting the marquee continental event in the UAE, describing

it as an opportunity for fans from across Asia to unite in a region known for its vibrant diversity. "The ACC Men's T20 Asia Cup 2025 in the UAE allows fans from across Asia to come together in a setting that mirrors our region's incredible diversity. When crowds gather to witness the tournament's unforgettable clashes, it will be a great reminder of cricket's power to build bridges," Naqvi stated.

This edition of the Asia Cup will follow the T20 format, aligning with preparations for the upcoming ICC T20 World Cup, which will be hosted by India and Sri Lanka. Eight teams will feature in this expanded event:



India, Pakistan, UAE, and Oman make up Group A, while defending champions Sri Lanka are placed alongside Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Hong Kong in Group B. India opens its campaign on September 10 against UAE and is expected to play all its matches in Dubai. All 19 tournament matches—including both group-stage and Super Four

fixtures—will be played across Dubai and Abu Dhabi, with squads expanded to 17 members for the tournament. The competition's venue was finalized at the ACC meeting held on July 24, which saw participation from all 25 member nations.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) remains the official host for the event, but in view of ongoing diplomatic tensions, both India and Pakistan have mutually agreed to play each other only at neutral venues until 2027. This arrangement allows for continued high-stakes matchups between the two cricket giants in front of packed stadiums and global audiences.

## Gill's Fighting Century Lifts India, Falls Before Lunch on Day Five



**Manchester:** Shubman Gill delivered a courageous hundred under pressure on day five of the fourth Test at Old Trafford, helping keep India's hopes alive in a tense battle with England. Resuming at 174 for two and still trailing by 137 runs, India ended the morning session at 223 for four, with England maintaining a slender advantage of 88 runs. Gill, leading from the front, completed his fourth century of the series—a knock that could go down as his most significant if it helps India avoid defeat and keeps the series alive. Displaying composure and grit, Gill looked untroubled for much of the morning before a lapse at the stroke of lunch cost him his wicket. Expecting the ball to come in, he pushed tentatively at a delivery from Jofra Archer that held its line and took a faint edge through

to the keeper, departing for a hard-fought 106.

Earlier in the session, Gill and K L Rahul (90 off 230 balls) extended their mammoth partnership to 188 runs, steadfastly resisting England's attack and raising hopes of salvaging a draw from a difficult position. However, the stand was finally broken when Rahul fell to Ben Stokes, trapped leg before by a delivery that kept low. Just a couple of balls later, Stokes produced a sharp lifter from a similar length that struck Gill's thumb and glanced off his helmet, momentarily halting play. Stokes, despite obvious discomfort from shoulder and hamstring issues that kept him from bowling on day four, showcased trademark determination to send down eight probing overs on the final morning, giving England

a crucial breakthrough when it mattered most.

After the 80th over, England immediately took the new ball, which brought almost instant success with Gill's dismissal. Ravindra Jadeja (not out on 0) joined Washington Sundar (batting on 21 from 61 balls) as India headed to lunch, the visitors still facing a stern challenge to save the Test, especially with Rishabh Pant carrying a foot injury and a long tail to follow. England's bowlers, particularly left-arm spinner Liam Dawson, maintained pressure with tight lines—Dawson targeting the rough and restricting scoring opportunities, while Joe Root nearly grabbed another wicket just before lunch when Jadeja edged Archer's first ball to slip, only for Root to spill a difficult chance.

## Indian Archers Shine at WUG; Chithravel Wins Triple Jump Silver

Indian archers ended their World University Games campaign on a high, adding five medals to the nation's tally, with Sahil Jadhav clinching a dramatic gold in the men's compound individual event on Saturday. The compound archery squad collected a mixed team gold, men's team silver, women's team bronze, and two individual medals—Jadhav's gold and Parneet's silver—highlighting India's depth in the discipline.

Jadhav delivered an outstanding performance under pressure, shooting 14 perfect 10s before dropping just a single point with his final arrow to edge out Britain's Ajay Scott 149-148 in a thrilling gold medal match. Earlier, Jadhav advanced to the final after a tense all-Indian semifinal shoot-off with Kushal Dalal, with Jadhav prevailing by shooting a closer 10 in the decider. Dalal narrowly missed out on a podium finish, losing the bronze match to Poland's Przemyslaw Konecki, who produced a flawless round.

In the women's compound section, Parneet, the reigning Asian Games team gold medallist, settled for silver after a hard-fought 147-146 loss to South Korea's Moon Yeeun. Parneet had started strong and led midway but lost ground as Moon delivered perfect scores in the closing rounds.