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Insurers see green shoots as zero GST on life, health insurance boosts growth prospects

The Insurance industry, which has seen a slowdown in growth rates in premiums in August, expects zero GST on insurance, effective from Monday, to drive adoption and boost growth. Life and health insurance, along with reinsurance, have been exempted from GST. The tax rate was 18 per cent with input tax credit earlier.

Vineet Arora, executive director and chief business officer, HDFC Life, told The Telegraph that lower taxes will lower the overall cost of securing protection, making life insurance more affordable and accessible for families across income segments.

"We expect to see greater demand for retail life insurance products such as term, ULIPs, and endowment plans. Younger earners and families in tier-2 and tier-3 cities, who are often more price-sensitive, are likely to be early adopters of this change," said Arora.

"Over time, this will improve insurance



penetration in India —currently at just 2.8 per cent for life insurance compared with global averages of over 7 per cent," he said.

"We expect customers to welcome this reform positively, as reduced premiums directly address affordability — one of the key barriers to insurance adoption. Over time, this change has the potential to drive higher policy uptake, renewals and broader coverage. As part of the transition to a GST-exempt regime, we are already

communicating with our customers and agents about the benefit arising through this change," said Tarun Chugh, MD and CEO of Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance.

"The net outgo for individual consumers has been reduced for products like health insurance, personal accident and travel insurance, maintaining the same policy coverage and claims servicing standards. The exemption applies to new policies, portability as well as migration, enabling individual policyholders to benefit from lower insurance premiums," said Naveen Chandra Jha, MD and CEO of SBI General Insurance.

Data compiled by CareEdge Ratings show that the annual premium equivalent increased by 6.6 per cent in August 2025, slower than the 10.5 per cent a year ago. Non-life insurance sector grew 1.6 per cent in August compared with 4.2 per cent previous year.

SBI Card rolls out festive offer 2025



New Delhi: SBI Card, India's largest pureplay credit card issuer, has rolled out an extensive line-up of exciting offers across the country for the festive season 2025 with the 'Khushiyan Unlimited' campaign. Customers can benefit from around 1250+ merchant-funded offers, cashback, and instant discount offers across online and offline platforms in over 2900 cities, including tier 2 and tier 3. The festive offers are applicable on all key categories including consumer durables, mobiles, laptops, fashion, furniture, jewellery, e-commerce and grocery, among others. To ensure that cardholders can make high-value purchases with greater convenience and flexibility, SBI Card has also introduced many EMI-focussed offers in partnership with several revered partner brands.

Sensex falls 380 points, Nifty slips below 25,100 on FII outflows, H-1B fee worries



Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty fell in early trade on Wednesday as foreign fund outflows and concerns over the steep hike in US H-1B visa fees continue to dent investors' sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 380.48 points to 81,721.62 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 106.45 points to 25,063.05.

From the Sensex firms, Tech Mahindra, Tata Motors, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, Tata Consultancy Services, Axis Bank, Titan and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among the major laggards.

However, Trent, NTPC, State Bank of India and Asian Paints were among the gainers.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 3,551.19 crore on Tuesday, ac-

ording to exchange data.

"Now a concern in the market globally is the high asset prices. Prices of assets be it stocks, gold, silver, bit coins are high. This concern was articulated by the Fed chief Jerome Powell yesterday in his speech at Rhode Island. Powell reiterated the risks to inflation and employment, too, signalling that the Fed policy, going forward, will be challenging," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi and Japan's Nikkei 225 index quoted lower while Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng traded in positive territory.

US markets ended lower on Tuesday.

"On Dalal Street, sentiment remains under pressure as investors grapple with Trump's 50 per cent tariff hike on India and his steep USD 1,00,000 one-time H-1B visa fee, which disproportionately impacts Indian professionals," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.28 per cent to USD 67.82 a barrel. On Tuesday, the Sensex ended lower by 57.87 points or 0.07 per cent at 82,102.10. The Nifty dipped 32.85 points or 0.13 per cent to 25,169.50.(PTI)

Centre to distribute 2.5 million free LPG connections under Ujjwala Yojana this Navratri

New Delhi: The Centre will provide 2.5 million free LPG connections under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) during the festival of Navratri, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri announced on Monday. With this addition, the total number of Ujjwala beneficiaries will rise to 106 million families

across the country. The Minister said that the government will spend Rs 2,050 on each connection, which will cover a free LPG cylinder, gas stove, regulator, and other related equipment.

Calling it a Navratri gift for women, Puri said the expansion of Ujjwala reflects Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to hon-

ouring women's power. "With the auspicious beginning of Navratri, the gift of 2.5 million new free PM Ujjwala connections is yet another proof that PM Narendra Modi honours women just like Goddess Durga. This decision further strengthens our resolve for the respect and empowerment of mothers and sisters," he wrote in a post on X.

Gold price hits a fresh peak amid global rally, silver scales new high



New Delhi: Gold prices surged ₹2,200 to hit a fresh peak of ₹1,16,200 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday, buoyed by strong global cues as investors awaited key commentary from US Fed officials for policy direction.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at ₹1,14,000 per 10 grams on Friday. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity rallied ₹2,150 to hit a record high of ₹1,15,650 per 10 grams. It had settled at ₹1,13,500 per 10 grams in the previous market session.

In Calcutta, gold of 99.9 per cent purity surged ₹1,050 to close at ₹1,12,000 per 10 grams on Monday. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity rose ₹1,000 to close

at ₹1,07,000 per 10 grams.

The precious metal prices have added ₹37,250 per 10 grams or 47.18 per cent in the current calendar year, climbing from ₹78,950 per 10 grams on December 31, 2024.

Meanwhile, silver prices skyrocketed by ₹4,380 to hit an all-time high of ₹1,36,380 per kg on Monday in the national capital. The white metal had ended at ₹1,32,000 per kg on Friday. In Calcutta, silver rose ₹2,150 to close at ₹1,33,300 per kg on Monday.

So far in this year, silver prices have zoomed ₹46,680 per kg or 52.04 per cent, rallying from ₹89,700 per kg on December 31, 2024.

Spot gold hit a record peak of \$3,728.43 per ounce.

'GST 2.0 to yield long-term benefits'

New Delhi: There has been a general reaction of relief and welcome with the new Goods and Services Tax (GST) slabs coming into effect beginning from Monday. Essential goods, healthcare, insurance, consumer durables, and agricultural inputs now enjoy lower rates, while luxury and sin goods are taxed at 40 per cent. The reform aims to reduce the cost of living for households, support manufacturing, agriculture, and services.

This festive season, let's celebrate the 'GST Bachat Utsav'! Lower GST rates mean more savings for every household and greater ease for businesses," Prime Minister Narendra Modi posted on his X handle evening. Central Board of Excise and Customs' (CBEC) former Chairman Sumit Dutt Majumder said that GST 2.0 has some changes with a lesser number of slabs. As a Member, Central Excise, and then Chairman of the CBEC, he was associated with the preparations for the earlier GST regime. He had also presented his views to the then Select Committee of the Rajya Sabha on the GST Constitution Amendment Bill.

Even by the earlier GST regime, in inter-state transactions, the destination state gets the money. While the tax collection is done by the Centre, there are rules laid out for transferring the money to states," Majumder, the author of two books on GST, added. GST Network's (GSTN) first Chairman, Navin Kumar, also stressed the rules that are followed in transferring prescribed amounts to states.

"In the previous regime, too, some states had apprehended losses. Thus, the Centre introduced compensation. When the collection started growing, these compensations were withdrawn," he added.

Tata AIA launches Shubh Maha Life to address financial needs across life stages



Guwahati: Tata AIA Life Insurance Co. Ltd. has launched Shubh Maha Life, a Non-Linked, Participating Whole Life Savings Plan designed to provide financial protection and growth across different stages of life. The plan aims to offer high life cover during peak earning years, reduced cover post-retirement, tax-free retirement income, and long-term critical illness protection.

Kamal Bhardwaj, Chief Bancassurance Officer, Tata AIA Life Insurance, said, "Shubh Maha Life grows with individuals—ensuring protection during critical years, significant tax-free income in retirement, and coverage for long-term health needs. It reflects our commitment to empowering individuals with sustained security and financial peace of mind."

Shubh Maha Life is offered in four packages—Gold,

Plus, Gold Health, and Plus Health—with flexible payout structures including Retirement Income, Deferred Income, and Lump Sum options. Special discounts are available for women, existing Tata AIA customers, and Tata Group employees.

In Guwahati, the launch has been met with interest from retail investors and working professionals seeking long-term financial security. Local agents report rising inquiries about policy customization, particularly for retirement planning and critical illness coverage, reflecting growing awareness of holistic insurance solutions in the city.

With integrated health benefits via Tata AIA Health Buddy and the option to tailor coverage across life stages, Shubh Maha Life positions itself as a comprehensive solution for both protection and wealth creation.

Ancient wisdom meets modern life: Ayurveda gains ground in 21st century lifestyles

Guwahati: As India gears up to observe National Ayurveda Day on September 23, experts are highlighting the growing relevance of Ayurveda in addressing modern lifestyle challenges. Stress, sleep disorders, anxiety, weight concerns, and hormonal imbalances are pushing many to seek holistic solutions rooted in the ancient science of life.

Dr. Madhumitha Krishnan, an Ayurveda specialist, emphasizes practices such as waking up early during Brahma Muhurta,



adopting mindful diets including almonds and fresh produce, and integrating yoga and meditation into daily routines. Personalized approaches, based on one's dominant dosha—Pitta, Vata, or Kapha—are increasingly seen as essential for sustained well-being. Ayurveda also underscores the importance of adequate sleep, suggesting routines like warm oil massages and meditation to combat insomnia and improve overall health.

In Guwahati, Ayurvedic products and wellness services is witnessing notable growth. Local stores report rising demand for organic foods, herbal supplements, and nuts like almonds, while yoga studios and wellness centers are seeing increasing participation in classes and workshops. Consumers in the region are actively seeking products and practices that support holistic health, reflecting a broader national trend of integrating traditional wisdom into modern lifestyles.

Starbucks India launches 'AamarPujo, Aamar Starbucks' limited-edition menu across Eastern India

Guwahati: Starbucks India is set to celebrate DurgaPujo with its first-ever Pujo-inspired menu, "AamarPujo, Aamar Starbucks," launching on September 20 across select stores in Kolkata, Guwahati, Siliguri, Gangtok, Bhubaneswar, Jamshedpur, Patna, and Ranchi. The festive menu blends Eastern India's culinary heritage with Starbucks' signature coffee offerings,

featuring dishes such as Chingri Turnover, Bhetki Bhaja Sandwich, AlooPoshto Burger, Kasundi Chicken Burger, and Dhakai Chicken Wrap. Sweet treats include Mihidhana Brulee and Kalakand Pie, reimagining traditional Bengali mithai for a contemporary palate.

Complementing the menu are two exclusive beverages: Chocolate Foam Cold Brew

and Jaggery Cloud Latte. Customers can also enjoy 50% off on the second food item, encouraging shared festive moments.

In Guwahati, the festive offering is expected to draw significant footfall as locals embrace the city's growing café culture. Starbucks stores in key locations have reported early interest from customers eager to sample the limit-

ed-edition menu, reflecting the city's enthusiasm for premium coffee experiences during Pujo.

Mitali Maheshwari, Head of Product and Marketing, Tata Starbucks, said, "Pujo is a time of joy when everyone comes together. Our stores become a 'third place' to connect, celebrate, and create memorable moments with friends and family."

Flipkart Minutes turns Big Billion Days 2025 into India's fastest shopping festival



Guwahati: Flipkart has announced that its 12th edition of The Big Billion Days (TBBDD) 2025 will become India's fastest shopping festival with the launch of Flipkart Minutes, offering 10-minute doorstep delivery across 19 cities and 3,000 pincodes. Starting midnight, customers will gain access to blockbuster deals on mobiles, electronics, groceries, beauty, personal care, and festive hampers.

The platform is introducing fruits and vegetables starting at Rs 9, lipsticks from Rs 49, up to 80% off on perfumes and deodorants, and up to 50% discounts on gourmet essentials such as olive oil, coffee, pulses, and millets. Customers can also shop the iPhone 17 and other smartphones, with a first-of-its-kind hyperlocal real-time exchange option. Over 900 festive categories, including swadeshi and global brands, will be available with exclusive offers.

In Guwahati, the move is expected to significantly boost festive shopping. Consumers in the Northeast capital are welcoming the convenience of instant access to fresh produce, gourmet items, and regional festive assortments, while traders see Flipkart Minutes as a catalyst for shifting buyer preferences toward digital-first shopping during peak demand.

Hemant Badri, Senior Vice President at Flipkart, said the initiative combines speed, scale, and selection, ensuring festive celebrations without compromise.

Catch the perfect brew this National Chai Day: Tata Tea and Tetley launch special blends across India

Guwahati: This National Chai Day, tea lovers across India can indulge in a variety of specially curated brews as Tata Tea and Tetley roll out their latest offerings nationwide. Tata Tea Premium celebrates regional tastes with hyperlocal blends, from "Dumdar Chai" for Uttar Pradesh to "Kadak Assam Chai" for Odisha, priced between Rs 150 and Rs 315 and available in major retail stores and e-commerce platforms including Amazon and Tata NutriKorner. Tata Tea Gold offers a rich aroma and taste with Assam valley teas and highland leaves, priced up to Rs 600 for a 1kg pack.

Health-conscious consumers can opt for Tetley Green Tea Slim Care, featuring antioxidant-rich green tea with L-Carnitine, available in Lemon & Honey and Ginger Mint Lemon variants. Tata Tea Chakra Gold Care combines taste with wellness using five natural ingredients, while Organic India Tulsi Green Tea Classic promises relaxation and rejuvenation. Tetley Japanese Matcha Tea,



sourced directly from Japan, caters to the growing mindfulness and wellness segment in India.

In Guwahati, retailers report high demand for these specialty teas, particularly Tata Tea Premium and Tetley Green Tea, as consumers seek both indulgence and wellness. Local stores and e-commerce platforms are experiencing brisk sales, reflecting the city's evolving tea preferences.

Schneider Electric launches its national retail activation campaign in Guwahati

Guwahati: Global energy management leader Schneider Electric has launched its national retail activation campaign in Guwahati, part of the "Bring Home the Smart" initiative aimed at strengthening engagement with retailers and electricians across India. The campaign features live product demonstrations, interactive sessions, and hands-on training to enhance stakeholder knowledge and trust.

The campaign highlights Schneider Electric's latest innovations, including the Miluz Zeta switches with Air Quality Indicator for real-time indoor monitoring, motion-sensing LED foot lamps for nighttime safety, and the Wiser Smart Home Automation system offering GPS-enabled appliance control and energy management. These solutions reflect the company's commitment to intuitive design, usability, and sustainable technology.



RajatAbbi, Vice President, Marketing, Schneider Electric India, emphasized the importance of retailers and electricians as brand ambassadors, stating that the campaign aims to build lasting engagement and accelerate adoption of smart home solutions. SumatiSahgal, Vice President – Retail Business, added that the initiative equips partners with tools and knowledge beyond transactions to drive growth and innovation.

In Guwahati, the activation taps into Assam's growing ur-

ban and semi-urban consumer base, where demand for smart, safe, and energy-efficient home solutions is rising. Retailers in the city welcomed the program, noting that live demonstrations and training sessions are helping them better educate customers and boost product adoption locally.

The campaign will continue across major Indian cities, reinforcing Schneider Electric's position as a trusted partner in energy management and home automation.

MF Didi arrives in Guwahati: MadhuLunawat champions women's financial empowerment

Guwahati: Madhu Lunawat, Founder of The Wealth Company Mutual Fund, brought her flagship initiative, MF Didi, to her hometown of Guwahati, marking a significant step in empowering women across Assam and Tier II and III cities. The nationwide roadshow, spanning Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar, Patna, Mumbai, and Pune, now reaches the northeast with a focus on financial literacy, certification, and professional opportunities for women.

Born and raised in Guwahati, Lunawat has been a pioneer in India's financial sector, founding Pantomath Group and The Wealth Company Mutual Fund. MF Didi aims to train and certify women as mutual fund distributors under NISM V norms, covering investment fundamentals, ethical practices, and investor awareness. The programme targets 1,000 certified MF DIDIs by FY26, with over 1,000 already onboarded, and 5,000 empowered women within three years.

Guwahati has shown strong growth in mutual fund participation, with Assam's assets under management rising nearly 159% in the past five years to ₹29,268 crore and women accounting for almost 30% of investors. Local financial advisors and women entrepreneurs welcome MF Didi as a transformative



platform for professional and economic independence in the city.

"MF Didi is about giving back to my roots and enabling women to rise with dignity, independence, and opportunity," Lunawat said, highlighting the initiative's broader economic impact.

Mirae Asset expands footprint in north-east with new office in Guwahati

Guwahati: Mirae Asset Investment Managers (India) Pvt. Ltd. has strengthened its presence in the North-East by inaugurating its first office in Assam and 25th nationwide at Dihang Arcade, GS Road, Guwahati. The new branch is expected to enhance accessibility for investors and distribution partners across Assam and other North-Eastern states.

Swarup Anand Mohanty, Vice Chairman & CEO, Mirae Asset Investment Managers, said, "The North-East has been one of the promising regions for mutual fund participation, and we have seen encouraging growth here.

With our new office in Guwahati, we want to be closer to our investors and partners, ensuring they have better access to our products and services, while staying true to our core principle of putting investors first."

In Guwahati, financial services demand has grown steadily in recent years, with a rising middle-class and greater awareness about mutual funds. Industry experts view Guwahati as the gateway to the North-East economy, making it an ideal location for asset managers to strengthen distribution and investor outreach.

Suranjana Borthakur, Head – Distribution & Strategic Alliances, added that the Guwahati branch would act as a hub for awareness programs to encourage financial literacy and informed investment decisions across the region.



Bajaj Finserv Flexi Cap Fund crosses Rs 5,400 crore AUM, marks two years of robust growth

Guwahati: Bajaj Finserv AMC's flagship equity scheme, Bajaj Finserv Flexi Cap Fund, has crossed a significant milestone, with assets under management (AUM) reaching ₹5,410.04 crore across 2,52,388 folios as of 31 August 2025. Launched in August 2023, the fund has delivered a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 19.19% under the regular plan and 20.91% under the direct plan, highlighting its strong performance in a short span.

The fund follows a 'Megatrends' investment strategy, identifying structural shifts in technology, demographics, regulatory frameworks, environment, and societal transformation. Its diversified portfolio spans 81 stocks across sectors such as banking, financial services, pharmaceuticals, IT, industrial products, consumer durables, retail, and real estate, with a balanced allocation across large, mid, and small-cap companies. Bajaj Finserv AMC attributes the fund's success to its IN-QUBE philosophy—leveraging information, quantitative, and behavioural edges to anticipate market opportunities rather than simply follow trends.

In Guwahati, the Flexi Cap Fund has seen growing interest among retail and HNI investors seeking long-term wealth creation avenues. Financial advisors in the city report a steady influx of new subscriptions, reflecting investor confidence in Bajaj Finserv AMC's differentiated approach and consistent fund performance.

Ganesh Mohan, Managing Director, Bajaj Finserv AMC, said the fund's growth underscores investor trust and highlights the firm's commitment to sustainable, long-term wealth creation.

Minister Jayant Chaudhary strengthens India-Australia ties in skills and entrepreneurship



Guwahati: Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education, Shri Jayant Chaudhary, began his official visit to Australia today to boost bilateral cooperation in skilling and entrepreneurship.

The visit commenced in Melbourne with Shri Chaudhary addressing the Australia India Business Council Event on "Skilling for the Future," emphasizing the need to align training programs with industry requirements. He held a bilateral meeting with Australia's Minister for Skills and Training, Hon. Andrew Giles, discussing collaboration in vocational education, workforce development, and preparing youth for emerging global sectors.

Chaudhary also toured Holmesglen's Victorian Tunnelling Centre to study advanced skilling models relevant to India's infrastructure and construction sectors. At North Metropolitan TAFE, Western Australia, he witnessed applied learning in mechanical, fabrication, and advanced manufacturing workshops, including demonstrations in rail signalling, electrical systems, and communications technologies. In Brisbane, discussions with Queensland Minister Ros Bates focused on expanding apprenticeship pathways and skill-building in clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and digital services.

In Guwahati, local industry leaders welcomed the initiative, noting that exposure to global skill frameworks could enhance the employability of Assam's youth and strengthen regional workforce development. Business associations in Guwahati expressed optimism about potential collaboration in vocational training and entrepreneurship programs linking India and Australia.

Chaudhary reiterated, "This partnership ensures our youth gain world-class skills and prepares India to emerge as a global hub of talent by 2047."

Renault launches Kwid 10th Anniversary Edition, revamps variant lineup

Guwahati: Renault India has launched the 10th Anniversary Edition of Kwid, celebrating a decade of the car that transformed India's entry-level segment. Limited to 500 units, the special edition is priced at ₹5.14 lakh (MT) and ₹5.63 lakh (AMT), ex-showroom pan-India.

The anniversary edition, based on the Techno variant, introduces 10+ exclusive enhancements, including dual-tone colour options—Fiery Red with Black Roof and the new Shadow Grey with Black Roof. It also features shiny black Flex Wheels, yellow grille inserts, and distinctive anniversary decals. Inside, the cabin gets themed seat designs, yellow accents, illuminated scuff plates, and leatherette steering with mustard stitching.

Renault also announced a refreshed variant lineup with new nomenclature—Evolution, Techno, and Climber. All Kwid variants now feature 3-point seatbelts for all seats, while the Climber variant gains six airbags, boosted safety standards.



The Kwid range starts at ₹4.29 lakh, with AMT models available from ₹4.99 lakh, making it one of India's most accessible automatic cars. Powered by a 1.0L SCe engine, high ground clearance of 184 mm, and robust suspension, Kwid continues to offer SUV-like confidence.

MD Venkatram Mamillapalle said, "The Kwid has redefined India's entry segment, and the 10th Anniversary Edition celebrates a decade of customer trust and high-value mobility."

Medanta Hospital Gurgaon launches year-long Campaign to raise awareness and drive action against cancer

Guwahati: Gurgaon-based Medanta – The Medicity, which has been named Best Private Hospital in India by Newsweek for six years in a row, has launched the "Jaanta Hai Medanta" campaign—a year-long movement dedicated to foster consciousness about Cancer, and advance the fight against the disease. Cancer is a critical public health challenge in India, with approximately 1 out of every 1,000 people diagnosed with the disease, according to National Cancer Registry

Programme. Further, data from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) alarmingly suggested that in 2023, there were more than 14 lakh incidences of cancer cases in the country. Noting that in India, cancers are often diagnosed at later stages, Dr. Naresh Trehan, Chairman and Managing Director, Medanta, said, "As an institution, we remain focused on making world-class healthcare accessible to all, ensuring that every patient, regardless of their stage of disease, receives

the best possible care."

The "Jaanta Hai Medanta" campaign will kick-off with a drive to raise awareness about Breast Cancer -- one of the most common types of cancer worldwide, representing one in four of all cancers in women. As part of the initiative, Medanta has launched a number of key initiatives, including the "Aao Dekho Seekho" kiosks -- A first-of-its-kind concept created by Medanta to teach women the importance of and the correct technique to

carry out the self-breast examination. Hailing the cancer campaign, Mr. Pankaj Sahni, Group CEO, Medanta, said, "Jaanta Hai Medanta" is more than just a tag line. It is our promise of understanding, empathy and assurance—a reminder that we truly understand our patients' struggles and that we walk beside them at every step of their journey." For ease of access Medanta has launched a dedicated Northeast Helpline Number: 0124-6930090.

slice Small Finance Bank appoints retired IAS Officer and IMF Advisor, K.V. Eapen to its Bank Board

Guwahati: slice Small Finance Bank (slice SFB) has further strengthened its commitment to the Northeast by appointing Mr. K.V. Eapen as an Independent Director on its Bank Board. A retired IAS officer of Assam and Meghalaya cadre, and former Senior Advisor to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Mr. Eapen brings 35 years of experience in public administration, financial policy, and institutional governance. Over the course of his distinguished career in the Indian Administrative Service, he has held several leadership roles in the Ministry of Finance, the Department of Commerce, and various state departments in Assam and Meghalaya. He has also served as the Secretary of the Ministry of Development of the North Eastern Region (DoNER). He has also served as Administrative Member at the Central Administrative Tribunal and held board positions in public sector banks like Union Bank of India, offering



seasoned oversight on institutional governance and banking operations.

Mr. Eapen holds an MSc in Macroeconomic

Policy and Planning from the University of Bradford (UK), a PG Diploma in Business Management and Policy from MDI Gurgaon, an MA in Economics from the Delhi School of Economics, and a BA (Hons) in Economics from St. Stephen's College, Delhi. The bank has also deepened its outreach to MSMEs, agri-linked sectors, and first-time borrowers, with simplified credit processes and branch-led decision-making models that reflect local needs. "We are honoured to welcome Mr. Eapen to our Board," said Mr. Satish Kumar Kalra, MD & CEO, slice SFB. "His deep understanding of public sector governance, financial policy, and Northeast development will add immense value to the bank." "I am pleased to join slice small finance bank at such an important time," said Mr. K.V. Eapen. The appointment reinforces slice SFB's dual commitment to strong governance and grassroots presence.

Croma unveils 'Festival of Dreams' with flat 35% off this Durga Puja

Shillong: Croma, India's leading omni-channel electronics retailer, has rolled out the first leg of its much-awaited 'Festival of Dreams' campaign, offering festive deals across West Bengal, Odisha, Assam, Meghalaya, and Jharkhand. The campaign, running from September 12 to 22, is designed to make Durga Puja shopping more affordable with attractive discounts, cashback up to ₹30,000, and GST relief benefits.

Key offers include flat 35% off on televisions, air conditioners, and small appliances, 25% off on refrigerators, 30% off on washing machines and home audio, and 20% off on laptops. Smartphones are available at 15% off, while earphones and headphones come with a 45% discount. The retailer is also extending EMI plans and exchange offers to boost affordability.

In Shillong, the festive season has already translated into rising demand for smart electronics. Local consumers are showing strong interest in premium televisions, smartphones, and kitchen appliances ahead of the Puja. With Croma's competitive offers, the Shillong market is expected to see a sharp uptick in sales as households plan upgrades to match festive celebrations.

"Durga Puja is a time of celebration and renewal. We want to make this season more special by enabling families to bring home the latest technologies at great value," a Croma spokesperson said.

Flipkart reinvents two-wheeler shopping with fully digital experience ahead of Big Billion Days 2025

Guwahati: Flipkart, India's homegrown e-commerce giant, is set to transform two-wheeler shopping with a fully digital, end-to-end experience as the Big Billion Days festival approaches. The platform offers an extensive range of petrol and electric two-wheelers, including top brands such as Hero, TVS, Bajaj, Suzuki, TVS iQube, Chetak, Ather, VIDA, OLA, Ampere, and premium options like Royal Enfield, Jawa Yezdi, KTM, and Triumph.

The recent GST revision, reducing tax on two-wheelers below 350cc from 28% to 18% from September 22, further boosts affordability. Flipkart's digital-first approach allows customers to complete the entire purchase journey online, including insurance, registration, and financing, with options up to 48 months tenure and 24-month No-Cost EMI plans. Dedicated 24x7 two-wheeler expert assistance enhances convenience and transparency,



helping buyers make informed decisions.

In Guwahati, the festival season is expected to spur significant interest in two-wheeler purchases, driven by rising urban mobility needs and increasing acceptance of online buying. Local customers are leveraging Flipkart's platform for access to a variety of models, easy financing, and doorstep assistance, bridging the gap between traditional showrooms and the convenience of digital ownership.

Sujith Agashe, Flipkart VP, Electronics, said, "We're committed to making two-wheeler ownership seamless, accessible, and trustworthy through a fully digital journey."

ICICI Bank rolls out 'Festive Bonanza 2025' with deals across sectors, eyes strong festive demand

Guwahati: ICICI Bank has announced the return of its flagship 'Festive Bonanza 2025', unveiling a comprehensive set of offers across e-commerce, electronics, fashion, travel, grocery, dining, and home décor. Customers can access cashbacks and discounts up to ₹50,000 through ICICI Bank credit and debit cards, internet banking, cardless EMI, and consumer finance. No-cost EMI options are also available.

The offers include a 10% additional discount up to ₹4,500 during Flipkart's Big Billion Days (September 23–October 2), ₹6,000 cashback on iPhone 17 purchases, and up to ₹50,000 off on electronics from brands such as LG, Haier and Panasonic. Discounts extend to OnePlus, Nothing smartphones, TataCliq, Ajio, MakeMyTrip, Goibibo, Yatra, Bigbasket, Blinkit, SwiggyInstamart, Pepperfry, Livspace, and The Sleep Company. Dining and entertainment benefits are available via Swiggy, EazyDiner, and District.

In Guwahati, retailers in hubs like Fancy Bazar and GS Road are optimistic that ICICI Bank's festive tie-ups will stimulate consumer spending ahead of Durga Puja. Electronics and smartphone dealers expect the cashbacks on Apple and OnePlus products to be strong demand drivers, while grocery and travel discounts are likely to further lift festive consumption in Assam's capital.

ICICI Bank has also extended festive offers on home, auto, personal loans, and loan against securities, with special rates and processing fee waivers valid through December 2025.

Medanta expands kidney care expertise to Guwahati, targets critical health challenges

Guwahati: Gurgaon-based Medanta – The Medicity has extended its specialized kidney care and transplant services to Guwahati, aiming to address pressing renal health issues in the North Eastern region. Recognized as India's Best Private Hospital by Newsweek for six consecutive years, Medanta held a healthcare awareness event in Guwahati, highlighting advanced techniques in kidney cancer treatment and renal transplants.

Dr. Sanjay Gogoi, Chairman of Urology and Renal Care, stressed the benefits of Nephron Sparing Surgery, which preserves kidney function while excising tumors, enhancing patients' quality of life compared to traditional kidney removal. Dr. Manish Jain, Senior Director of Nephrology, outlined the complexities of kidney transplants and emphasized the need for greater awareness, noting India's 13,400 kidney transplants in 2024 fall far short of the nearly 2 lakh patients on waiting lists.

In Guwahati, the introduction of Medanta's multi-specialty OPD at Sunvalley Hospital on GS Road, Mathura Nagar, Bortoria, represents a significant boost to local healthcare infrastructure. Residents can now access world-class nephrology care and consultations without traveling to metros, reflecting growing demand for high-quality medical services in the city.

This expansion aligns with Medanta's plans to establish a 400-bed super specialty hospital in Guwahati, reinforcing its commitment to delivering advanced healthcare to underserved communities across the country.

Next-gen leadless pacemakers transform cardiac care across India

Shillong: Next-generation leadless pacemakers are redefining treatment for patients with abnormal heart rhythms. Designed to manage arrhythmias like bradycardia—where the heart beats too slowly—these miniaturized devices eliminate the need for chest incisions and wires, reducing infection risk and post-operative complications.

Unlike traditional pacemakers, which sit beneath the skin near the collarbone and rely on leads to deliver electrical signals, leadless pacemakers are implanted directly into the heart via a catheter. "Leadless pacemakers have been developed to make both implantation and retrieval as smooth as possible for physicians, while offering meaningful improvements over existing technologies," said Ajay Singh Chauhan, General Manager, Cardiac Rhythm Management, Abbott India and Southeast Asia.

In Shillong, the adoption of this technology is gaining momentum. Dr. AmitMalviya of NEIGRIHMS highlighted the benefits for patients in the region: "Minimally invasive implantation allows for shorter hospital stays, faster recovery, and reduced follow-up complexities—particularly important for Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities like ours."

Start your day right: Guwahati residents urged to boost heart health with California almonds on World Heart Day

Guwahati: As the world observes World Heart Day 2025 under the theme "Don't Miss a Beat," health experts in India are highlighting the rising threat of cardiovascular diseases (CVD), which strike Indians a decade earlier than the global average. With heart disease affecting young adults and women facing higher first-heart-attack mortality, adopting preventive measures has become critical. Nutritionists recommend incorporating California Almonds into daily diets, citing over 200 studies that show almonds' role in lowering bad cholesterol, reducing inflammation, and supporting overall cardiovascular health.

Sheela Krishnaswamy, Nutrition and Wellness Consultant, emphasized that almonds are a nutritional powerhouse rich in healthy fats, fiber, vitamin E, magnesium, and potassium, which align with ICMR and FS-SAI guidelines. Ritika Samaddar from Max Healthcare added that small dietary changes, like consuming almonds, can help manage cholesterol and maintain blood pressure amidst busy lifestyles.



In Guwahati, local retailers have reported a spike in demand for almonds leading up to World Heart Day, reflecting growing awareness among health-conscious consumers. Experts suggest that including almonds in breakfast routines can offer sustained energy and support heart health, making it a simple yet effective preventive measure for the city's working population.

Celebrities like Soha Ali Khan are also promoting almonds as part of a balanced lifestyle, encouraging wider adoption of heart-healthy habits.

‘Bigg Boss 19’: Awez Darbar tells Neelam Giri ‘anda, chai bana’ during fight

Mumbai: “Bigg Boss 19” heats up as an upcoming task creates a clash between Awez Giri and Neelam Giri over strategies to play it safe. After the task about who doesn’t deserve to be in the Bigg Boss thumbnail, Awez names Neelam, leading to an argument between the two in the garden area of the house. Awez is heard saying that Neelam tries to please people.

A promo shared by the channel showed Awez saying in the task: “Neelam bahut logo ko please karna chah rahi hai just woh nominations se bachne ke liye.” To which, Neelam says



she disagrees with Awez. To omeltte jo log khate hai wohi which, Awez replies: “Paranthe agree karengay”. This leaves

Neelam furious, who says that “I make eggs for him not because I want him to save me. I like him. I don’t like you, that’s why I don’t make anything for you. Tu safe khela hai.... The person I respect, I will respect and the person I don’t I will not and that’s you.”

An annoyed Awez is then heard telling Neelam: “Seedha jaa left le.. Anda bana chai bana aur dede sabko.” The two then are seen pointing fingers at each other. Awez is heard saying that I will fight with those who interfere, to which Neelam retorts when he starts speaking up.

Janhvi Kapoor calls ‘Homebound’ India’s Oscar entry ‘nothing short of a dream’



Mumbai: Actress Janhvi Kapoor took to social media to express her joy after her film “Homebound” was named India’s official entry for the Oscars 2026. Calling the film “nothing short of a dream,” the actress shared her gratitude for being part of the milestone project. Taking to her Instagram handle, the ‘Dhadak’ actress shared the poster of the film and captioned it, “Every part of this film has been nothing short of a dream. The journey, the people, what this story means, and how personal it’s been for everyone in our team. At every step I have been thankful I could witness this journey, which in my mind was truly the reward in itself.”

Everything since has been a celebration of all these people that I love and respect so much, for their talent, their goodness and their courage. @neeraj.ghaywan @karanjohar @vishaljethwa06 @ishaankhatter this movie and even its journey, has been about hope, in so many more ways than one would expect in cinemas on the 26th of September :).”

Mahima Makwana reveals she nearly broke a bone as she wraps up a film in Kerala



Mumbai: Actress Mahima Makwana took to social media to reveal that she nearly broke a bone while shooting, as she celebrated wrapping up her latest film in Kerala.

Taking to her Instagram handle, the ‘Antim’ actress shared a series of her photos and captioned them, “we wrapped a film, spotted bunch of elephants, almost broke a bone, fell in love with the place and the people. Kerala, you beauty.” In the images, Mahima can be seen striking joyful poses against stunning natural backdrops. She also shared a behind-the-scenes moment from the makeup room, where her hairstylist is seen perfecting her look. Additionally, Mahima posted videos capturing the serene beauty of trees, hills, and wildlife. The actress did not reveal any details about the project, only announcing that she has completed shooting.

Netizens react to Deepika Padukone’s cryptic note: ‘People matter more than success’

Mumbai: Actress Deepika Padukone made headlines after Vyjayanthi Movies confirmed her exit from the “Kalki AD 2898” sequel. On Saturday, DP penned a cryptic note on her official Instagram handle saying that, “People you work with matter more than the success of a film”. Announcing that she has commenced the shoot for Shah Rukh Khan’s “King”, Deepika wrote, “The very first lesson he taught me almost 18 years ago while filming Om Shanti Om, was that the experience of making a movie, and the people you make it with, matter far more than its success. I couldn’t agree more and have applied that learning to every decision I’ve made since. And that’s probably why we’re back making our 6th movie together? (sic)”

Deepika’s latest post is being seen as an indirect dig at the makers of “Kalki AD 2898”. As soon as the post was up, netizens used the comment section to applaud Deepika for taking a stand for herself. One of the Instagram users wrote, “I’m so glad that u spoke up! I love you,” along with a red heart emoji. The second one penned, “Who was saying that deepika’s down-



fall has begun?” The third comment read, “it’s always the company”. A cybercitizen shared, “Im so proud of you! Stand for yourself and never stop believing what u deserve! I love you”, followed by a red heart emoji.

Kalyani Priyadarshan trashes post that claimed her parents had made her brother and her to stay at an orphanage



Chennai: Actress Kalyani Priyadarshan, whose just released film Lokah has now set the cash registers ringing at the box office, has trashed a post on X that claimed that her parents had made her brother and her to stay at

an orphanage in Vietnam for a week, to teach them the value of life. Replying to the tweet put out by the handle, which attributed the fake quote to her, actress Kalyani Priyadarshan wrote, “I’ve never said this and it never happened” with a smile.

She then went on to add, “So, please stop spreading false news.” Soon after the actress’ responded to the tweet, the handle that posted the tweet deleted it. Meanwhile, director Dominic Arun’s ‘Lokah’ continues its strong run in theatres. It may be recalled that actress Kalyani Priyadarshan, who plays the lead in film, had penned a note of gratitude to both the audiences and her unit in the wake of the collections of the film going past the Rs 200 crore mark. Taking to her Instagram page to pen the post, the actress had said, “Yesterday, our film reached a number that was only possible because of you, the audience. I’m beyond speechless, and truly beyond grateful for the love being showered on this film.

Sonakshi Sinha calls hubby Zaheer Iqbal ‘weird’ after catching him reading her horoscope

Mumbai: Actress Sonakshi Sinha shared a lighthearted moment by posting a playful video of her husband, actor Zaheer Iqbal, reading her horoscope. The clip captures the couple’s fun side, giving a glimpse into their playful and candid relationship. Taking to her Instagram, the ‘Akira’ actress shared a video in which Zaheer, sitting in a car, is seen reading Sonakshi’s horoscope on his phone. Sharing this candid moment, she wrote in the caption, “Husband @iamzahero reading my horoscope. I think his week is not going to go so well.”

In the clip, Zaheer is heard reading, “laughter, dramatic moments, and constant check-ins. She loves hard and needs to be loved out loud in return. Things she loves—long phone calls, surprises that show thought...Talking about feelings, constant reassurance, matching mood and energy. That’s the June girl for you.” Hearing this, Sonakshi asks Zaheer, “Why are you so weird?.” To this, he said, “Why are you sending me June, girl? I know you. I know how June girls are. Lovely.”

A few days ago, Zaheer Iqbal celebrated Sonakshi Sinha completing 15 years in Bollywood with a heartfelt post. “Happy 15 Years. Happy 15 Years of KICKING ASS Babyyyy, no one in this world is prouder of you than I am. Yeh toh bas shuruwat hai #BestActress #BestHuman #BestWife,” he wrote. Replying to him, the Dabangg actress left a heartwarming comment, writing, “I love you just toooooo much!!!! With you by my side, I can do just about anything.” Sonakshi also shared a fun video reel featuring Zaheer Iqbal. In the clip, the couple playfully enacted Sonakshi’s iconic dialogue, “Thappad Se Dar Nahi Lagta,” along with behind-the-scenes moments.



India vs Pakistan is not a rivalry anymore: Suryakumar

Dubai: After India's comprehensive six-wicket win in Asia Cup Super Four match against Pakistan, skipper Suryakumar Yadav has dismissed the notion that an India vs Pakistan clash is a rivalry anymore while highlighting the skewed results in India's favour in recent times. While responding to a question about whether Pakistan raised their standards compared to their opening bout with 25 balls to spare, Suryakumar "I feel we should stop asking this question on [India-Pakistan] rivalry, whether a team plays good cricket or not."

Notably, India have now beaten Pakistan in seven straight games [in men's internationals alone] since their previous loss to them at the Asia Cup in 2022 in Dubai. He continued, "According to me, if two teams are playing 15-20 matches and if it is 7-0 or someone is ahead 8-7, then that is called playing good cricket and that is called rivalry. 13-0, 10-1, don't know what the stats are. But this is not a rivalry anymore."

Speaking about the Super Four fixture, Suryakumar highlighted what he felt was the game's decisive phase, saying,



"According to me, the turning point was in the first drinks in the first innings. 'People changed their body language after that. You always see the game changes generally after the powerplay. But today, the game changed after ten overs, when the bowlers changed their line and lengths, understood what was needed in that situation, and showed a little more energy. The spinners bowled well. And according to me, Shivam Dube's spell, you can say that it was a turning point," he added.

Abhishek Sharma hits back at Pakistan's onfield aggression with fiery knock

Dubai: India opener Abhishek Sharma said he did not appreciate Pakistan players' needless aggression during their Asia Cup Super 4 clash on Sunday and felt his attacking approach with the bat was the perfect reply. Abhishek smashed a 39-ball 74 and stitched together a 105-run opening stand with Shubman Gill, setting up India's successful chase of 172 with six wickets in hand. "The way they (Pakistan players) were coming at us for no reason, I didn't like it at all. This (aggressive batting) was the only medicine I could give them," Abhishek said at the post-match presentation. Both he and Gill had heated exchanges with Pakistan pacers Haris Rauf and Shaheen Shah Afridi during the match at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium. Reflecting on his partnership with Gill, Abhishek said: "We've been playing together since school days. We enjoy each other's company. The way he was giving it back, I really enjoyed it."

While Abhishek shone at the top, India's ace pacer Jasprit Bumrah had an off-day, conceding more than 10 runs an over. Skipper Suryakumar Yadav brushed it aside, saying: "That's fine, he's not a robot, he will have a bad day. But Shivam Dube bailed us out." The captain praised Abhishek and Gill for providing the perfect start. "They complement each other really well, like fire and ice," Suryakumar said,

Sachin Tendulkar inaugurates revamped Shivaji Park Gymkhana in Mumbai

Mumbai: Indian cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar inaugurated the renovated Shivaji Park Gymkhana (SPG) in a grand ceremony in Mumbai on Monday, as a large crowd gathered to welcome the Bharat Ratna recipient. Shivaji Park in Mumbai, a location deeply rooted in Marathi culture and sport, marked another significant moment as the revamped Shivaji Park Gymkhana was officially opened. The atmosphere within the iconic ground was charged with excitement and applause, particularly when master blaster Tendulkar performed the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Mandhana continues to be on top, Brits gain big in women's ODI rankings

Dubai: South Africa's batter Tazmin Brits made a significant leap in the latest ICC women's ODI player rankings, released on Tuesday, ahead of the Women's World Cup starting next week in India. While South Africa faced Pakistan in a three-match ODI series, India hosted Australia for an equally intensive series as teams prepare for their World Cup campaign. Both South Africa and Australia won their respective series with a similar score of 2-1, with players, especially batters, earning substantial points thanks to their top performances.



Against Pakistan, Brits scored her career-best innings of an unbeaten 171 off 141 balls, including 20 fours and four sixes. While Brits scored back-to-back centuries against Pakistan, Mandhana also scored consecutive centuries in the second and third ODIs against Australia. Mandhana, however, continues to top the ODI rankings after gaining career-high ranking points of 818, while Brits has jumped a remarkable 15 places to take fifth position. Beth Mooney, who scored a match-winning century against India in the recently concluded third ODI, moved up two spots to third.

India defeat Pakistan, maintain perfect record in SAFF U17 Championship 2025



Colombo: In a gripping contest packed with drama and end-to-end football, the India U-17 men's national team edged arch-rivals Pakistan 3-2 at the Racecourse International Stadium in Colombo on Monday to leap to the top of Group B in the SAFF U-17 Championship 2025. The match was tied 1-1 at half-time.

The clash saw substitute Rahan Ahmed deliver the winner in the 73rd minute to settle an enthralling five-goal thriller. India's other goals came through Dallalmuon Gangte (31') and Gunleiba Wangkheirakpam (63'), while Pakistan found the net via Muhammad Abdullah's penalty in the 43rd minute and Hamza Yasir's rebound strike in the 70th. The early exchanges were balanced, but India looked the more composed side, attempting to exploit the gaps behind the Pakistan defence with clever movement and crisp passing.

Ganguly poised for unopposed return as CAB president, takes charge amid credibility concerns

Kolkata: Former India captain Sourav Ganguly is set to make an unopposed return as president of the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) at its annual general meeting on Monday, but his second tenure promises to be more demanding with the association grappling with financial controversies and image issues.

The 53-year-old ex-BCCI chief will succeed his elder brother Snehasish Ganguly, who had to step down due to the six-year cap on executive posts mandated by the Lodha Committee. Ganguly's panel — Bablu Kolay (secretary), Madan Mohan Ghosh (joint-secretary), Sanjay Das (treasurer), and Anu Dutta (vice-president) — is also set to be elected unopposed. CAB's reputation has taken a hit in recent months. Finance committee member Subrata Saha was fined and barred from sub-committees over conflict-of-interest violations, while former joint-secretary Debabrata Das was suspended for six months on charges of financial misconduct. Bengal's domestic performances, particularly in the Ranji Trophy, have also been underwhelming.

"Most organisations have issues. If there are any in the future, they will be dealt with appropriately," Ganguly said after filing his nomination. Outlining his roadmap, he stressed on strengthening Bengal's first-class setup, boosting the Bengal Pro T20 League, reviving grassroots development, and promoting women's cricket. "Players' skills mat-



ter most. As an administrator, I'll try to provide the best possible support," he added. Ganguly, who oversaw the historic pink-ball Test at Eden Gardens in 2019 during his BCCI stint, will now be responsible for the India-South Africa Test scheduled at the same venue from November 14. Eden Gardens is also likely to host marquee matches, including a knockout, in next year's T20 World Cup.

Reflecting on his return, Ganguly said: "I do not consider it a challenge. I have eight years of experience as CAB and BCCI president. We will work together to take Bengal cricket forward." He also spoke about reviving the long-stalled Vision Project and strengthening junior and club cricket pathways.

Farhan defends gun-firing celebration, says he "doesn't care" about criticism after India loss

Dubai: Pakistan opener Saibzada Farhan brushed aside criticism of his controversial "gun-firing" celebration during the Asia Cup Super 4 clash against India, insisting he doesn't care how people interpret it. Farhan, who top-scored with 58 off 45 balls, brought up his half-century by striking Axar Patel for a six in the 10th over and then mimicked firing shots in the air with his bat. The gesture sparked backlash on social media, but the 29-year-old

remained unapologetic. "That celebration was just a moment at that time. I don't celebrate much after scoring fifties, but it suddenly came to my mind. I don't know how people will take it — I don't care about that," Farhan told reporters. "You should play aggressive cricket wherever you play, not just against India."

Pakistan posted 171/5, largely thanks to Farhan's knock, but India chased the target down with ease in

the penultimate over, led by Abhishek Sharma's 74 and Shubman Gill's 47. The defeat left Pakistan in a must-win situation against Sri Lanka in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday. Farhan admitted his innings would have mattered more if Pakistan had sealed victory. "If I had won this match, it would have been very important for me. Performing against India is always rated highly, but winning would have made it meaningful," he said.