

NORTH EAST BUSINESS MIRROR

Vol.No. 03 ■ Issue - 35 ■ North East Business Mirror ■ Thursday, 11 December, 2025 ■ Edition - Guwahati

■ Pages - 6 ■ Price ₹ 3

Sensex, Nifty end lower amid profit booking

Mumbai: Indian stock markets ended lower on Tuesday as investors booked profits after the recent rally, leading to a broad dip across major indices. Sentiment weakened further after reports suggested that US President Donald Trump may consider imposing new tariffs on Indian rice, raising fresh concerns about unresolved trade negotiations between India and the United States. At the closing bell, the Sensex closed at 84,666.28, falling 436.41 points or 0.51 per cent.

The Nifty also slipped and settled at 25,839.65, down 120.90 points or 0.47 per cent. Several heavyweight stocks dragged the market, with Asian Paints, Tech Mahindra, HCL Tech, Tata Steel,



Maruti Suzuki, Sun Pharma, TCS, ICICI Bank and Bajaj Finance emerging as the biggest losers. These counters declined up to 4.6 per cent during the session. However, a few stocks such as Eternal, Titan, Adani Ports, BEL and SBI managed to stay in

the green and provided some support to the benchmarks. The broader markets showed a stronger performance as the Nifty MidCap index gained 0.32 per cent and the Nifty SmallCap index rose 1.14 per cent -- indicating continued buying interest in mid- and

small-cap stocks.

Most sectoral indices, including Nifty IT, Auto and Pharma, were under pressure and fell nearly 1 per cent. Other pockets such as PSU Bank, FMCG, Media, Consumer Durables and Chemicals also traded in the red through the day. Analysts said that the market remained weighed down by global trade worries and consistent profit booking, as investors turned cautious ahead of further developments on the US-India tariff issue. "In the near term, central bank commentary, currency movement, and FII flows will steer sentiment, while domestic macro resilience is expected to provide a cushion against downside risks," market watchers said.

Microsoft to bring over 15,000 employers and partners to India's NCS platform

New Delhi: Global software giant Microsoft will work with the Ministry of Labour and Employment to introduce AI-powered chatbots that will guide workers through key government employment platforms, it was announced on Wednesday. A central feature of the partnership is Microsoft's commitment to encourage more than 15,000 employers and partners from its extensive international network onto the Ministry's National Career Service (NCS) platform.

This collaboration represents a major step in expanding employment linkages, scaling AI-led skilling, and preparing India's workforce for global opportunities. This will significantly broaden formal job access, support high-growth sectors, and enable India to develop a skilled workforce not only for domestic demand but also for the world, strengthening pathways for international mobility of Indian professionals and youth.



The e-Shram portal, launched in August 2021 after millions of informal workers lost jobs during the Covid lockdowns, is built on Microsoft Azure. The system can handle up to 172,000 transactions per second and has previously managed up to 8 million registrations in a single day, according to the company.

RBI governor urges banks to lower intermediation costs, improve efficiency



New Delhi: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Sanjay Malhotra has urged Managing Directors and Chief Executive Officers of public and select private banks to lower intermediation costs and improve operational efficiency citing the 125 basis points (bps) policy rate reduction since February. "The governor noted that the 125

basis point easing, combined with greater use of technology, should translate into lower intermediation costs and higher efficiency, thereby supporting sustainable growth and deeper financial inclusion," the official statement from RBI said.

These interactions form part of the Reserve Bank's ongoing engagement with the senior management of regulated entities after similar meetings in January 2025. The RBI Governor observed that while there has been steady improvement in the health and operations of the banking sector in 2025, banks must avoid complacency and remain vigilant in a dynamic environment.

Further, Malhotra urged banks to focus on reducing grievances and strengthening internal systems. He highlighted the growing risks from digital frauds and called for more robust, intelligence-driven safeguards.

Adani Group to invest over \$75 bn in energy transition space over next five years

New Delhi: Adani Group will invest over \$75 billion in energy transition space over the next five years, said its Chairman Gautam Adani on Tuesday. At the 100th anniversary of the Indian Institute of Technology (Indian School of Mines) Dhanbad, the businessman noted that Adani Group has invested to become one of the world's fastest-growing renewable energy companies. Gautam Adani shared that the global green energy transition is emerging as the largest industry of our time, worth several trillion dollars over the coming decades. "It will fuel the rise of electricity-based manufacturing, green steel, green fertilisers, hydrogen ecosystems, and the critical infrastructure that AI and digital economies depend on," said Gautam Adani.

"Adani Group is investing over \$75 billion in the space of energy transition over the next five years," the Chairman added. Further, Gautam Adani also called out a "weaponised narrative" at the recent COP-30 in Brazil, where a report downgraded India's sustainability ranking.

RBI's guidelines for bank groups balance structural strengthening with business flexibility

New Delhi: The Reserve Bank of India's guidelines on commercial banks' financial services businesses permitting overlapping lending activities within bank groups averted the need for major restructuring by 12 bank groups, a report said on Tuesday. The final guidelines aim to eliminate any regulatory arbitrage by aligning regulations across bank group entities, thus contributing to structural strengthening, while providing flexibility in business conduct, the report from Crisil Ratings said. Together, these banks accounted for about 55 per cent of sectoral advances.

Earlier, draft guidelines released in October 2024 had proposed that only one bank group entity could carry out a specific form of business, with no overlap in lending activities between the bank and its group entities. The central bank retained several draft proposals, including the applicability of upper layer scale based regulations for non banking financial companies (NBFCs), regulatory restrictions on loans and advances, and a 20 per cent ceiling on a bank group's holding in an asset reconstruction company (ARC).

India's IPO proceeds hit record Rs 1.77 lakh crore in 2025

New Delhi: India's initial public offerings (IPO) have raised a record Rs 1.77 lakh crore (\$19.6 billion) in 2025 so far, marginally higher than the 2024 tally, as companies rush to capture increasing investor demand. With five more offerings scheduled to close on or before December 16, including ICICI Prudential Asset Management Co.'s \$1.2 billion deal, the total value of IPO proceeds is set to rise much higher than last year's proceeds. In 2024, Indian IPOs raised Rs 1.73 lakh crore, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. The surge reflects a maturing capital market driven by a swelling base of retail investors and steady institutional appetite, even as demand for equities in the secondary market softened.

Analysts said that firms are using buoyant demand to lock in funding before global



conditions tighten, and India has eased the process for companies to list and initiated a run of big-ticket deals. Foreign institutional investors remain active participants in IPOs despite selling a record number of Indian equities in the secondary market. FII enthusiasm in primary markets helped companies across sectors and market caps to raise capital at elevated valuations. Almost half of the more than 300 firms listed so far this year are trading below their offer price when the scrips debuted.

Kotak Securities sees strong equity outlook for 2026



Mumbai: Kotak Securities Ltd ('Kotak Neo') has released its Market Outlook 2026, expressing confidence in the strength of Indian equities and the continued appeal of gold despite global volatility. The report highlights the major macro trends, sector opportunities and commodity movements expected to shape investor sentiment in the coming year. Shripal Shah, MD & CEO, Kotak Securities, said India remains a strong growth hub amid worldwide economic uncertainty. He noted that robust corporate earnings and supportive policy conditions keep the equity outlook positive, while gold is expected to maintain its position as a safe-haven asset. Shah also pointed to SEBI survey findings showing that although 63% of households are aware of securities products, only 9.5% actually invest-indicating significant untapped potential.

MG Motor India launches midnight carnival

Guwahati: JSW MG Motor India has announced its nationwide 'Midnight Carnival', a three-day celebration from December 5-7 that will keep all MG showrooms open until midnight. The initiative aims to provide customers more time and a festive, family-friendly atmosphere to explore MG's full vehicle portfolio, including the Windsor EV, Hector, Astor, Comet, ZS and Gloster.

For Guwahati, where EV adoption and mid-segment SUV demand continue rising, the Midnight Carnival is ex-



pected to attract strong footfall. MG showrooms in locations such as Christian Basti and Lokhra will host exclusive

midnight test drives along with carnival-themed activities for families.

Customers in Guwahati

stand a chance to win assured rewards worth ₹11 crore, including a dream trip for two to London, 3 days/2 nights holiday vouchers and scratch-and-win gifts like gadgets and lifestyle accessories. Attractive finance options such as a 3-month EMI holiday and 100% on-road funding are also available during the event.

MG Windsor, now India's fastest-selling EV with 50,000 units sold and contributing to 1 lakh MG EVs on the road, continues to be a major draw for Assam's eco-conscious buyers.

Biscuit snacking gets a playful twist in Shillong

Shillong: Quick snacking is finding new excitement as Britannia 50-50 Golmaal highlights easy ways to customise biscuits into party snacks and chaat-style bites, a trend increasingly noticed among students and young working groups in the city.

The brand says Golmaal can be enjoyed directly or turned into a fun base for toppings like potatoes, onions, chutneys and spices. Its Buttery Bites and Kala Jeera variants offer familiar tastes that appeal to people looking for something flavourful during college breaks or evening tea sessions around popular Shillong hangout corners.

For Shillong youth, the concept of quick snacking fits with the fast routine of classes, music sessions or weekend meet-ups. Many prefer something simple that also feels different from routine packaged snacks. Golmaal suggests ideas such as a quick "biscuit chaat" that can be prepared in minutes using everyday ingredients easily available in local markets.

As Shillong continues to shape a lively food culture influenced by youth habits and creative snacking, easy recipes like these could gain popularity among those who like experimenting without spending much time in the kitchen.

Godrej Group plans Rs 10,000-crore investment in Telangana; Godrej Jersey inks Rs 150-crore dairy MoU

Guwahati: Godrej Jersey, operated by Creamline Dairy Products Limited, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Telangana government to invest INR 150 crore in a new state-of-the-art dairy facility. With this, the total planned investment by the Godrej Industries Group in Telangana crosses INR 10,000 crore across various business verticals, including dairy, oils, housing and emerging sectors.

Executives from Godrej stated that the facility is intended to support the fast-growing market for value-added milk products as consumer demand for nutritious and protein-rich

packaged dairy continues to rise.

In Guwahati's retail market, distributors said that Telangana-based processing capacity could help companies expand eastern distribution routes in the coming years, especially as Assam and the Northeast show growing demand for packaged curd, paneer and milk beverages.

The MoU was signed in the presence of the Telangana Chief Minister and senior industry representatives. The project is expected to create more than 300 direct jobs, while also helping improve supply chains and the broader dairy ecosystem.

Care for your skin this winter with California Almonds by Ritika Samaddar

Guwahati: Winter comes with cozy nights and festive cheer, yet it also brings a familiar challenge for many: dry, dull, and sensitive skin. The cold air pulls moisture from our skin, leaving it susceptible to flakiness and irritation. Topical skincare can help, but lasting nourishment starts from within.

Delhi Max Healthcare's Dietetics Regional Head Ritika Samaddar explains that winter dryness is not only a skincare concern but also a nutritional one. She highlights the importance of incorporating foods rich in protein, healthy fats, vitamin E, and omega-3, such as fatty fish and California Almonds. Including almonds in your daily diet can nourish the skin from within, helping it stay soft, hydrated, and healthy, even in harsh weather conditions.

As the winter season intensifies across Assam, skin problems such as dryness and loss of glow are becoming more common. Nutrition experts say almonds are among the most effective winter foods because of their natural vitamin E content, which provides internal protection and keeps the skin moisturised.

Almonds are also known to improve skin



texture and elasticity, especially among people spending long hours in cold outdoor conditions. Their healthy fats support internal hydration, while antioxidants delay early signs of aging.

Doctors note that poor gut health often shows up in the form of acne and dullness. Almonds, being easy to digest and rich in nutrients, may help maintain better digestion. Experts recommend consuming them early in the morning or adding them to local meals.

Lifestyle experts say investing in natural nutrition is more helpful than relying only on skin creams. A handful of almonds every day may help to maintain healthier and more glowing skin throughout winter.

Vi Business unveils smart gas metering in Guwahati

Guwahati: Vi Business has announced new Smart Gas Metering solutions that will enable City Gas Distribution companies to reduce operational losses by using digital monitoring systems. The company said the smart meters rely on Narrowband-IoT to minimise gas loss caused by leakage, theft and manual entry errors.

Officials stated that the expansion reinforces Vi Business' position as a leading IoT solutions provider in the utility sector. The technology initiative is also aligned with the government's efforts to modernise metering infrastructure across the country.

In Guwahati, where energy demand has increased with growing urban development, consumers believe that digital metering can reduce billing disputes and improve transparency. The city's expanding residential neighbourhoods and commercial establishments are expected to benefit from automated systems, especially during peak-demand seasons.

Vi Business representatives said the company will continue to focus on scalable and future-ready solutions, enabling CGD networks to modernise operations and achieve better service delivery.



MSDE and IGNOU partner to expand nationwide access to skill training

Guwahati: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding in New Delhi to jointly strengthen the country's skilling ecosystem by delivering industry-focused courses under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) through IGNOU's extensive regional network. This collaboration will pave the way for the establishment of dedicated Skill Centres across IGNOU Regional Centres, enabling learners to acquire job-ready competencies within a flexible higher education framework. Under the agreement, implementation will begin with 21 pilot Skill Centres, followed by a phased expansion to cover all 70 IGNOU Regional Centres within three years. The initiative places significant emphasis on the integration of vocational skilling with academic pathways, aligning training programmes with national standards such as the National Skills Qualification Framework to ensure seamless mobility and recognition for learners.

The partnership also envisions industry engagement for internships, apprenticeships, and placement support, while leveraging digital platforms like the Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH) for transparent delivery and certification process-



es. Speaking on the occasion, Ms. Debashree Mukherjee, Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India, said that the Ministry is committed to bringing skill development opportunities closer to every young Indian. She emphasised that this collaboration would help students learn future-ready skills alongside their formal education, ensuring that they are better prepared for employment and entrepreneurship. "This partnership with IGNOU will help more youth build confidence and get ready for the real world of work," she added. Professor Uma Kanjilal, Vice Chancellor, IGNOU, noted that the university has consistently worked to provide inclusive and flexible learning avenues to diverse communities across India. "This partnership enables us to expand the reach of skill training to learners everywhere while ensuring high-quality instruction, assessment, and strong employment linkages," she remarked.

Aizawl cited in national dialogue on illicit cigarette circulation

Aizawl: Philip Morris India has reiterated its commitment to supporting reforms aimed at curbing the spread of illicit tobacco, noting that effective compliance requires joint participation from regulators, enforcement agencies and industry.

The company has engaged in capacity building for customs and GST personnel, and says that awareness training is important in border-linked states like Mizoram, where smuggled cigarettes can enter informal markets.

Officials said that illegal cigarettes avoid tax and undermine legal manufacturing, which also impacts public revenue. With India preparing stronger digital measures, global track-and-trace systems implemented in over 140 markets may

provide reference models.

For cities such as Aizawl, enforcement bodies continue to focus on building coordination between local units and national agencies to prevent the circulation of non-duty-paid tobacco products.

India, Australia push skills mobility with focus on sports economy

Guwahati: India and Australia have agreed to deepen their partnership in skills development and workforce mobility during a bilateral meeting held in New Delhi as part of the 3rd Australia-India Education and Skills Council (AIESC) meeting. The discussion was led by Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Shri Jayant Chaudhary and Australian Minister for Skills and Training Andrew Giles.

Both sides decided to fast-track the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications and design bridge courses to help Indian workers meet global standards, especially in advanced construction. The talks also highlighted new opportunities linked with India's bid for the 2030 Commonwealth Games and Australia's preparation for the 2032 Brisbane Olympics and Paralympics.

The sports sector is emerging as a potential job driver with estimates suggesting that sports and physical wellness could contribute nearly 2% of India's GDP. Officials said students and youth in



cities like Guwahati could benefit from future sports-related skilling and training programmes.

Further collaboration is planned between Indian skill institutions and Australia's TAFE network across digital skills, renewable energy, logistics and green jobs. The meeting concluded with both nations committing to responsible and high-quality mobility of skilled workforce.

Young athletes in Guwahati draw inspiration as Manasi Joshi shares road to recovery and renewal

Guwahati: Para-badminton star Manasi Joshi is preparing for one of the busiest competitive cycles of her career, with her eyes firmly set on winning gold at the upcoming World Championships. Speaking at the Godrej Industries Assistive Tech Conference, she said reclaiming the title she won in 2019 remains her top priority as she heads into a demanding 2026 season.

Joshi, who has received her official selection letter, confirmed that she has qualified in singles, doubles and mixed doubles; a feat she described as a matter of pride. Her recent performances include medals from tournaments in Japan, Aus-

tralia and Indonesia. She acknowledged that her world ranking had dipped after the Paralympics as she competed in fewer events, but said she has been pushing hard to regain her position.

For sports enthusiasts in Guwahati, where para-sports awareness and athlete development programmes have grown rapidly in recent years, Joshi's return to form is being closely followed. Local coaches say her recovery journey including surgery for uterine fibroids highlights the resilience required at the highest level. Joshi said the focus now is on recovery, readiness and adapting quickly during back-to-back matches.

Assam's tea culture reflected in Tata Tea premium care's new 'Premium Care' campaign

Guwahati: Tata Tea Premium Care has introduced a new campaign that places emotional importance on the simple act of sharing tea, drawing attention to thoughtful gestures within Indian households. The narrative shows how replacing an ordinary cup with a more considered option becomes a symbol of affection within families.

Officials said the product blends strong Assam tea with ginger, tulsi, elaichi, brahmi and mulethi. According to the company, households today are not only seeking traditional flavour but also natural benefits, making the new variant a mindful choice.

Puneet Das, President - Packaged Beverages at Tata Consumer Products, said the aim of the campaign is to underline how premium care can be expressed through everyday routines, especially when consumers choose options that reflect wellness and cultural preferences.



In Guwahati and other parts of Assam, tea continues to be a major part of lifestyle and identity. Retailers in the city said that premium positioning combined with wellness-based ingredients may find preference among younger families looking for authentic Assam blends. The campaign forms part of the brand's wider marketing focus that celebrates the tradition and emotional value of tea in Assamese households.

New Mobility+ Credit Card targets fuel spenders in Guwahati

Guwahati: IndusInd Bank and Jio-bp have launched the IndusInd Bank Jio-bp Mobility+ Credit Card, aiming at consumers who seek higher returns on fuel-related spending alongside lifestyle privileges. According to the announcement, the card is available through selected Jio-bp points and online platforms.

With fuel prices affecting regular travel expenses in cities like Guwahati, the offering may attract daily car and two-wheeler commuters. The card features 12 reward points per ₹100 spent at Jio-bp Mobility Stations and bonus points on the first transaction. Additionally, UPI capability through

RuPay is included to support digital payments.

Lifestyle benefits include reward points on supermarket, dining and grocery transactions. Officials said the joining fee of ₹499 can be waived if customers complete qualifying spends in the first month. Milestone rewards are also available for annual spending above ₹2 lakh.

Executives from IndusInd Bank and Jio-bp said the card seeks to elevate mobility convenience and bring digital, fuel and retail spending under one platform. Jio-bp added that eligible users could earn fuel value equivalent to nearly 60 litres per year, depending on usage.

Axis Max Life strengthens online insurance presence with faster digital journeys

Guwahati: Axis Max Life Insurance has said that its e-commerce channel has become a core pillar of policy sourcing over the last three years, helping the company build a strong share in the online protection and savings segment. H1 FY26 numbers show sustained momentum in digital sales as the company continues to push direct-to-consumer channels.

At present, more than one-third of the company's new policies are sourced online.

The company has used analytics, performance marketing, AI-powered communication, regulated onboarding systems and account aggregation tools to support customers through a seamless buying experience.

In Guwahati, digital adoption is accelerating in Assam, particularly after mobile banking and UPI payments became more common. As a result, online insurance buying is gaining acceptance among young earners and middle-class families.



Axis Max Life said it will continue investing in mobile-first journeys, digital distribution partnerships and structured buying flows that guide customers from discovery to purchase. The company also noted that trustworthy processes and customer-centric product design remain key to online growth.

ICICI Prudential highlights faster claim settlement as digital usage rises



Imphal: ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has reported that it achieved a 99.33% claim settlement ratio in H1-FY2026, along with an average settlement time of just 1.1 days for non-investigated claims. The company said death claims amounting to over Rs 893 crore were settled during this period.

According to the insurer, its digital tools such as chatbot services, WhatsApp and online claim submission have significantly improved turnaround time. A senior official said the rapid settlement reflects a "customer-first approach" and supports families at critical moments.

Insurance agents in Imphal believe faster processing could encourage more families to consider life insurance as a serious financial protection product. Local financial advisers say many households in the Northeast still rely on savings rather than structured insurance, and the latest performance figures may help change perception.

The company's "Claim for Sure" initiative settled Rs 157 crore in one-day claims alone. ICICI Prudential said digital processes, combined with service assurance, have helped maintain its industry position. The insurer also recorded a high settlement ratio in the previous quarter.

India expands global skilling outreach as NIESBUD trains South Sudan delegation

Guwahati: India's global skilling cooperation received a major boost as NIESBUD launched a 12-day training programme for South Sudanese officials on strengthening PPP-based models in the TVET ecosystem. The programme is sponsored by MEA under the ITEC framework and supported by UNESCO.

The 28-member delegation, comprising senior officials from education, labour, youth, sports, and higher education ministries, will study India's industry-linked skilling architecture, including governance standards, entrepreneurship integration, and digital skilling innovations.

At Kaushal Bhawan, MSDE Secretary Debashree Mukherjee briefed the delegation on India's unified approach through bodies such as DGT, NCVET, NSDC, Sector Skill Councils, and NIESBUD.

Business leaders in Guwahati noted that such international initiatives can strengthen India's skill-export potential and create new opportunities for training collaborations. Local skill centres in Assam believe the programme could help position the Northeast as an active participant in India's growing global skilling network.

Truecaller introduces family protection feature to curb scam calls

Guwahati: Truecaller has announced a new feature called Family Protection, designed to keep family members safe from scam calls and unwanted numbers. The feature allows up to five people to join a trusted group on the Truecaller app, where a Family Admin can manage safety settings, block suspicious calls and help less tech-savvy members deal with unknown numbers.

On Android, the Family Admin can even receive real-time alerts during a potential scam call and remotely disconnect the call if necessary. The feature also lets families monitor device status, including battery level and phone activity, which helps in offering help when needed.

Police officials and digital safety advocates in Guwahati say such technology could be useful in the Northeast, where scam calls and impersonation attempts have increased in recent years. Residents, especially senior citizens, are often targeted by fraudsters posing as bank officials or lottery agents.

Truecaller said the feature will roll out first in Sweden, Chile, Malaysia and Kenya, with India scheduled to receive it in early 2026. The company believes Family Protection will support its long-term plan to build a wider communication safety ecosystem.



Shopsy reports festive boom; Tier-3 cities drive growth

Guwahati: Hype value platform Shopsy by Flipkart has reported a strong festive performance this year, driven mainly by Tier 2, 3 and 4 towns where digital shopping continues to expand. According to the company, orders and new customers saw significant growth, with younger consumers showing high participation across categories.

Consumers aged between 18 and 34 accounted for almost 80 percent of orders during the festive period, with the 25–34 age group contributing the highest share. The company also said that repeat customer contribution rose to 90 percent, indicating rising trust in value-based e-commerce.

In Guwahati and other Northeastern markets, categories such as fashion,



electronics, gift packs and winter products saw notable demand. Retail observers in Guwahati said the platform's low-cost pricing and delivery outreach are attracting new shoppers who are looking for affordable festive purchases.

Electronics remained the highest-growth segment, while beauty, grooming and winter essentials also expanded. Gifting options, particularly nuts and dry fruits, witnessed sharp demand during Diwali.

Sony launches AI-powered ILCE-7V mirrorless camera; Guwahati creators eye upgrade

Guwahati: Sony India has introduced the ILCE-7V, the fifth-generation Alpha 7 full-frame mirrorless camera, equipped with a newly developed partially stacked Exmor RS CMOS sensor and the updated BIONZ XR2 processing engine. The company says the model brings major improvements in autofocus, subject recognition, and video capability, along with AI-assisted tracking and advanced real-time recognition.

The camera delivers up to 30% better autofocus accuracy, supported by 759 phase-detection points and nearly full-frame coverage. Sony also unveiled the FE 28-70mm F3.5-5.6 OSS II lens, which supports high-speed continuous shooting.

Sony India said the device is designed for professional and advanced creators who require speed, precision and advanced controls, especially in wildlife, events, commercial



content and fast-moving environments. With new AI-based colour and auto white balance, the camera also supports improved video performance including 4K 60p and 4K 120p.

Local photography groups in Guwahati noted that demand for high-speed mirrorless systems has grown strongly in the Northeast, particularly among wildlife and documentary photographers working in Assam's national parks and river basins. They expect the new model to attract buyers looking for professional speed without moving to cinema-class equipment.

Guwahati observes rising interest in Gold & Silver Passive FoF

Guwahati: Axis Mutual Fund has launched the Axis Gold & Silver Passive FoF, providing investors an opportunity to invest in gold and silver ETFs through a single scheme. The fund aims to make commodity investing simpler and cost-efficient for retail investors.

Investment advisors in Guwahati said there is increasing interest in mutual funds among young professionals in the city. The introduction of a commodity-based FoF could expand participation in the Northeast, where many households still prefer traditional gold jewellery.

Axis Mutual Fund said both metals offer portfolio stability due to their ability to withstand inflation and market fluctuations.

The NFO will close on December 22, with a low entry barrier for small-ticket investors.

TVS MotoSoul highlights premium strategy; Guwahati expects stronger response

Guwahati: TVS Motor Company used the first day of MotoSoul 5.0 to emphasise its premium motorcycle strategy with the Ronin Agonda and the Apache RTX anniversary edition reflecting a stronger push in the performance-focused segment.

For customers and retailers in Guwahati, the new additions are being viewed as an encouraging sign for premium-segment demand, particularly during the upcoming motorcycle season in the Northeast market.

The Ronin Agonda introduces a special design direction inspired by Agonda Beach in Goa, while the Apache RTX edition marks 20 years of the



Apache brand with a commemorative livery and limited-edition detailing.

The company has also displayed custom motorcycles developed with Smoked Garage, alongside festival-only helmets under the Art of Protection label. TVS said the

series highlights its growing interest in design-centric riding products.

Analysts following the Assam market believe TVS could see better visibility among youth and touring riders in the region following its presence at MotoSoul 5.0.

Renault launches 'Discovery Days' nationwide; Guwahati customers invited to explore new Triber & Kiger

Guwahati: Renault India has announced the nationwide rollout of its flagship customer engagement campaign, 'Discovery Days', inviting buyers to experience the new Triber and new Kiger across all dealerships in India. The 13-day initiative will run from December 10 to December 22, 2025, offering immersive showroom activities and exclusive benefits.

Designed as a festive, interactive experience, Discovery Days will transform Renault dealerships into carnival-like spaces where visitors can enjoy themed games, demonstrations,

and personalised interactions with Renault's product specialists.

Car buyers will also have access to a range of lucrative offers, including 0% interest financing, a 50% waiver on processing fees, exchange benefits of up to ₹35,000, and cash benefits of up to ₹25,000 on new Renault models.

In Guwahati's growing passenger vehicle market, local dealers say interest in compact SUVs and multi-purpose vehicles has been rising steadily. The introduction of upgraded versions of the Kiger and Triber is expected to draw strong



footfall during the campaign period.

Renault India's Managing Director, Venkatram Mamillapalle, said the campaign focuses on creating meaningful, memorable experiences for customers nationwide.

India–Australia roundtable pushes roadmap for joint skill certification

Guwahati: India and Australia have agreed to prepare a time-bound roadmap to strengthen cooperation in skilling and vocational education, with a focus on joint certification and globally recognised assessment standards. The agreement came during a high-level roundtable held in New Delhi as part of the 3rd Australia–India Education and Skills Council meeting.

Officials from NCVET, NSDC, Green Jobs, DGT, NSDC International and Australian institutions including Jobs & Skills Australia and ASQA joined the discussion. The meeting highlighted the need to align training with emerging sectors such as AI, clean energy, digital services and agri-tech.

Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Jayant Chaudhary said the partnership must now move towards measurable outcomes. He said globally mobile



talent development and trusted skill recognition between both nations.

In Guwahati such partnerships could help young professionals looking for international standard qualifications in fields like clean energy and advanced manufacturing, sectors that are growing across the region.

The roundtable also discussed industry-linked training, trainer exchanges and annual India–Australia skill meetings to review progress and share best practices.

Bank of Baroda opens new Zonal Office in Guwahati to strengthen North East operations

Guwahati: Bank of Baroda has inaugurated a new Zonal Office in Guwahati covering the entire North Eastern region, aiming to strengthen its administrative presence and expand banking operations across Assam and neighbouring states. The bank said the move is aligned with its strategy to broaden physical infrastructure in parallel with digital banking initiatives.

The new office was inaugurated by the Managing Director and CEO Dr. Debadatta Chand in the presence of senior officials including Executive Director Beena Vaheed and North East Zonal Head Shiba Pada Nayak. Bank of Baroda said the zonal setup will support improved customer service, faster administrative decision-making and customised banking solutions for the region.

During the event, the bank also highlighted its social outreach by distributing clothes and essentials to special children at Guwahati-based facilities Kalyanai Niwas and Ashneer Home.

Officials said Bank of Baroda currently operates 197 branches and three regional offices in the North East, with over 61% of its outlets located in rural and semi-urban areas.

Shringla calls tea a global heritage, warns of threat to Darjeeling identity

Guwahati: In a parliamentary appeal, Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla emphasised that Darjeeling tea must be treated as a cultural and economic heritage asset. He warned that unregulated imports, labour shortages and declining production are putting pressure on one of India's oldest tea regions.

He pointed out that the import of lower-grade teas has increased significantly and mis-branding practices continue to challenge Darjeeling's internationally recognised identity. He called for protection of GI-tagged varieties and better enforcement to stop misuse of the name "Darjeeling" in domestic and export markets.

Shringla said unresolved land lease matters and unviable estates further complicate the situation and asked the government for immediate intervention to support the tea economy as a whole.

The MP stressed that millions depend on tea-related income and reminded the House that Darjeeling tea was presented to world leaders during India's G20 Summit, underlining global appreciation and symbolic value. "Protecting Darjeeling tea means protecting communities that have nurtured it for generations," he said.

Madhuri Dixit stuns in her Sonepuri silk saree, carries 'quiet grace on every fold'



Mumbai: Bollywood superstar Madhuri Dixit has always been called synonymous with charm and effortless grace for more than three decades. The actress recently took to her social media account in sharing a carousel post with an umpteen number of pictures of herself in her traditional best. The actress captioned it as, "A gentle glow of tradition flows through this mustard and black Sonepuri silk, carrying quiet grace in every fold. Soft ikat bandha patterns, subtle kangala motifs, and delicate woven butis give it a timeless, understated elegance," with heart emoticons. In the pictures, the 'Hum Aapke Hain Koun...!' actress radiates elegance in a stunning mustard and black 'Sonepuri' silk saree.

Kritika Kamra: Women on screen are often boxed into stereotypes



Mumbai: Actress Kritika Kamra, who will be seen in Anusha Rizvi's "The Great Shamshuddin Family", says being at the centre of a story written by a woman, is a privilege she deeply values. Kritika shared her excitement about the film and the journey of portraying a character crafted by a female filmmaker with a distinct voice. Kritika told IANS: "Being at the centre of a story written by a woman, especially someone as sharp, thoughtful and fearless as Anusha is a privilege I deeply value." "When I read the script of The Great Shamshuddin Family, I was instantly drawn to how authentic, layered and unapologetic her characters are. Women on screen are often boxed into stereotypes.

Malti Chahar on Pranit More getting emotional during her eviction & their bond in the 'BB' house

Mumbai: Malti Chahar has been evicted from the 'Bigg Boss 19' house. Speaking exclusively with IANS post eviction, she opened up about her equation with one of the finalists, Pranit More. During her interaction with IANS, Malti was asked, "Viewers felt there was a strong comfort level between you and Pranit. How would you describe your equation with him?" To this, Malti clarified that they are 'simply good friends.



"You saw us for twenty-four hours. When I wasn't feeling well, he took care of me; when he wasn't well, I cooked for him," she said. She added that she has a lot of common personality traits with Pranit,

such as empathy and sense of humour. "He's empathetic, and I'm empathetic too, so we connected. He has a great sense of humour; I'm funny as well. When two funny people talk, it's always enjoyable. I liked sharing my stories with him; he liked listening, and we laughed together," she added.

Dia Mirza receives a special gift from Shabana Azmi which she promises to cherish for life

Mumbai: Dia Mirza received a very special gift from veteran actress Shabana Azmi. Dia took to her Instagram and uploaded several stunning pics posing in the beautiful yellow saree gifted to her by Shabana. Posing amidst nature, Dia said that wearing his saree, she turned into a representative of everything Shabana's mother Shaukat Azmi stood for.



In the caption, Dia also added the poem, "Aurat" written by Shabana's father, Kaifi Azmi, for his beloved better half. She wrote, "Uthh meri jaan mere saath hee chalna hain tujhe" - Aurat by Kaifi Azmi When wearing this saree, I carried with me all that Shaukat Azmi Ji represented. Including this powerful poem written by Kaifi Azmi Saab for his beloved wife. (sic)."

The 'Rehnaa Hai Terre Dil Mein' actress also thanked Shabana for always enriching her life in her unique way.

"@azmishabana18 thank YOU for this saree (red heart, folded hands, and butterfly emojis) You have always enriched my life in ways that only you can. I will cherish and wear this saree for life,"

Kareena Kapoor provides an insight into her parenting philosophy: 'Character is forever'

Mumbai: Actress Kareena Kapoor, who is also a doting mother to her two boys - Taimur and Jeh, used social media to provide the netizens a glimpse into her parenting philosophy. Kareena not just wants her kids to be the smartest in the room, but she also wants them to be the kindest. Bebo wished for her boys to be able to love those who seem a little different, because she feels that, at the end, every professional achievement in life fades, but it is only one's character that stands the test of time. Kareena took to the Stories section of her Instagram handle and re-shared a post that read, "I don't just want my kids to be smart. I want them to be kind. To love people who are different. To use their voices even when they shake. To live with faith even when the world makes fun of it. Because grades fade, jobs change, trophies collect dust - but character? That's forever (sic)." Sharing the post on social media, Kareena wrote, "Happy Sunday Dosts", along with a red heart, rainbow, and star emoji. Kareena tied the knot with actor Saif Ali Khan in October 2012. The



couple was blessed with their first son, Taimur, in 2016, followed by another boy, Jeh, in 2021. Work-wise, Kareena is currently occupied with Meghna Gulzar's forthcoming crime drama, "Daayra".

Backed by Jungle Pictures and Pen Studios, the much-awaited flick will also see Prithviraj Sukumaran in a crucial role.

Gaurav Khanna's team celebrates 'Bigg Boss 19' victory: The trophy is home

Mumbai: After a gruelling three-month-long journey on "Bigg Boss 19", popular television actor Gaurav Khanna lifted the winner's trophy, a moment his team described as an emotional culmination of "every high, every setback, every moment of strength and dignity". Sharing a heartfelt note, Team Gaurav Khanna said on Instagram that the journey had been "overwhelming in the most beautiful way", adding that supporters had often wondered, "What will GK do?" The post read: "The three-month journey has finally come to an end... and what an end it has been. The trophy is home. They kept asking, 'What will GK do?' And like we always said GK will bring the trophy home for all of us. He did. This journey has been overwhelming in the most beautiful way."



It further read: "We have lived every single day with Gaurav every high, every setback, every moment of strength and dignity. And today, this win feels personal. This is a win for every person who believed, who voted, who stood by him, who made his dream theirs. Calling it a celebration of "faith, love and togetherness", the note concluded with: "Today, we are not just celebrating a trophy. We are celebrating faith, love, and togetherness."

Kapil Sharma shares how Hira Warina supported him while filming a romantic track in 'Kis Kisko Pyaar Karoon 2'

Mumbai: Actor-comedian Kapil Sharma has opened up about his experience shooting a romantic song with costar Hira Warina in "Kis Kisko Pyaar Karoon 2." He revealed how she played a key role in making him feel completely at ease on set while shooting for the romantic track 'Ranjhe Nu Heer.' Kapil shared, "It was a romantic song for Warina and me, and the very first day of the shoot in Bhopal was extremely hot. In the song, it may look like I'm lost in her eyes, but the moment the director called 'cut, I'd take off

my kurta and sit in my undershirt just to cool down." "I'd really like to thank Warina for making me feel so comfortable on set. Your performance truly depends on your co-star, and when you get a good response from the person opposite you, it naturally lifts your own performance too," he added.

"Ranjhe Nu Heer" is a soulful romantic track rendered by Jubin Nautiyal. The melody, composed by DigV, carries a gentle, soothing charm, while Lavraj's lyrics bring in the feel of classic, old-school romance. The song beautifully captures



the emotion of a lover pouring his heart out — a Ranjha speaking to his Heer. Notably,

for the first time, Kapil Sharma takes on a full-fledged romantic avatar, sporting a turbaned

look as he romances Warina on screen. On a related note, the upcoming film directed by Anukalp Goswami, is produced by Ratan Jain, Ganesh Jain and Abbas Mustan under the banner of Venus Worldwide Entertainment in association with Abbas Mustan Film Production. The comedy drama also stars Manjot Singh, Tridha Choudhury, Parul Gulati, and Ayesha Khan in lead roles. Gashmeer Mahajani, Saurabh Goyal, Pallavi Ajay, Kuldeep Sareen, and Hardika Sharma will be seen in supporting roles.

1st T20I: Hardik Pandya's unbeaten 59 powers India to 175

Cuttack: Hardik Pandya was the star of the show as the host managed to post 175 runs on the board, riding on the all-rounder's unbeaten half-century, against South Africa in the first T20I of the fivegame series here at the Barabati Stadium. With Shubman Gill making a much-anticipated return after recovering from an injury, all eyes were on him. However, Lungi Ngidi cut his innings short and the vice captain walked back in the first over of the game, scoring just four runs off two deliveries. South Africa got an early breakthrough, and their celebrations doubled when the pacer picked Suryakumar Yadav's wicket in the third over.

The Indian captain looked in

great touch as he notched up a six and a four, including his trademark 'supla' shot, to get things going. However, a mistimed shot led to the opposition skipper Aiden Markram taking a fine catch over mid-on. Opener Abhishek Sharma and Tilak Varma then sailed through the powerplay as India reached 40/2 in six overs. Abhishek looked in good touch and had found the momentum, but Lutho Sipamla got the better of him shortly after the powerplay, giving his side a crucial breakthrough. The next few overs were sluggish as Varma and Axar Patel struggled to find boundaries and juggled between singles and doubles. While the former did hit an 89-meter long six off Anrich Nortje in the



10th over, he couldn't convert his knock into a big innings and was eventually dismissed scoring 26 runs in 32 deliveries.

Axar Patel played a handy knock while forming partnerships with Varma and Pandya,

but it was the Baroda cricketer who stood out during the first innings. Pandya took on the bowlers confidently and notched up six fours and four maximums, giving his best till the final delivery. Shivam Dube and Jitesh Sharma's in-

nings was short but impactful as they contributed 11 and 10 runs in the limited time they spent on the field. Pandya's clutch knock anchored India's innings as the team rose from 50/3 to finish at 175/6 at the end of their 20-over quota.

As for the visitors, Marco Jansen showed a brilliant fielding display and took some magnificent catches, though he went wicketless. Ngidi was the pick of the bowlers for the Proteas as he finished with 3-31, while Sipamla and Donovan Ferreira picked two and one wicket apiece. Brief Scores: India 175/6 in 20 overs (Hardik Pandya 59*, Tilak Varma 26; Lungi Ngidi 3-31, Lutho Sipamla 2-38) against South Africa.

Shardul Thakur says Rohit helped him express himself as pacer reunites with Mumbai Indians



Mumbai: Newly traded Mumbai Indians seamer Shardul Thakur says reuniting with Rohit Sharma will feel like returning to a comfort zone, acknowledging that the former MI captain played a major role in helping him express himself freely on and off the field. Thakur, acquired by MI from Lucknow Super Giants for ₹2 crore ahead of IPL 2026, said he is looking forward to reviving the camaraderie he once shared with Rohit. "Abhi aur pata chalega jab saath mein baithenge toh. Kaafi masti hogi," Shardul said, hinting at the fun times ahead with his "chaos partner."

"He made me comfortable, he allowed me to be free with him, he allowed me to express myself. We became comfortable with each other and he played a major part in it," he told MI's official website. A journey that began in the MI dressing room Shardul's association with Mumbai Indians dates back to 2010, long before he secured an IPL contract. As a young support bowler, he often trained and played practice matches with the senior squad—experiences he believes shaped his career significantly.

350 players to go under the hammer at IPL 2026 auction on Dec 16

Mumbai: A total of 350 players are set to feature in the IPL 2026 mini auction on December 16 at the Etihad Arena in Abu Dhabi as the BCCI revealed the Player Auction list for the 2026 season on Tuesday. A total of 1390 players registered for the Player Auction, out of which 350 players were shortlisted. Of the 350 players shortlisted, 240 are Indian and 110 from overseas. The pool comprises 224 uncapped Indian players and 14 uncapped overseas players, adding significant depth and fresh talent to this year's auction roster. Franchises will compete for 77 available slots overall, including 31 spots reserved for overseas players. As many as 40 players have listed themselves at the maximum base price of Rs 2 crore, with Venkatesh Iyer and Ravi Bishnoi being the only two Indians



among them.

Earlier, a total of 173 players have been retained, across teams, including 49 overseas players. A combined purse of Rs 237.55 crore will be available at the auction for a total of 77 player slots. South African wicketkeepers Quinton de Kock and George Linde, and Sri Lanka's Dunith Wellalage, who were not part of the

longlist, have been included in the final list.

Heading into the auction, Kolkata Knight Riders will have a purse of Rs 64.3 crore, the largest among the group, to fill a maximum of 13 slots with six overseas spots available. Chennai Super Kings will have the second-biggest kitty of Rs 43.4 crore to fill a maximum of nine available slots.

Brave fightback! India claim Junior Hockey World Cup bronze

Chennai: India produced a brave-heart performance, nullifying a two-goal deficit to beat Argentina 4-2 and clinch the bronze medal in the FIH Men's Junior World Cup, in Chennai, on Wednesday. India, who won the title in 2016 in Lucknow, failed to finish on the podium on the last two occasions, ending fourth in 2021 in Bhubaneswar, and two years later in Kuala Lumpur. India produced a valiant fightback with Ankit Pal (49th minute), Manmeet Singh (52nd) and Anmol Ekka (58th) converting penalty corners, while Sharda Nand Tiwari finding the net from the spot in the 57th minute.

Argentina were the better side at least in the first two quarters, scoring through Nicolas Rodriguez (3rd minute) and Santiago Fernandez (44th). The Argentines controlled the possession of the match in the first quarter as India struggled to get a foothold. Argentina secured their first chance in the third minute in the form of a penalty stroke following a foul by Anmol Ekka and Rodriguez made no mistake to hand his side the lead. The Indians were guilty of giving away the ball too easily, which put paid to their chances in the first 15 minutes.

India had their best shot at the goal in the 20th minute but Dilraj Singh's shot from top of the circle was finely saved by Argentina goalkeeper Joaquin Ruiz. The Indians started brightly after the change of ends and secured four back-to-back penalty corners in the 31st minute but failed to execute a single one with Anmol Ekka flicking the final one over the post.

FIFA to mandate 3-minute hydration breaks in every World Cup match

Zurich: FIFA has announced that all matches at next year's World Cup will feature mandatory three-minute hydration breaks in both halves, standardising a practice previously dependent on extreme weather conditions. Under the revised protocol, referees will stop play at around the 22-minute mark of each half so players can rehydrate, regardless of temperature, venue location across the United States, Canada or Mexico, or whether the stadium

is climate-controlled.

The global body said the decision also brings added scheduling certainty for broadcasters. The update was first shared publicly when Manolo Zubiria, FIFA's chief tournament officer for 2026, addressed broadcasters at a recent meeting. He noted that referees would retain some discretion if a natural stoppage occurs close to the planned break. "This will be addressed on the spot with the referee,"



Zubiria said. FIFA described the move as a simpler, more

consistent version of its previous cooling-break system, which required pauses only when temperatures surpassed the wetbulb global temperature threshold of 32°C (89.6°F).

The shift follows lessons from last year's Club World Cup in the United States, where high heat and humidity affected several games. In response, FIFA temporarily lowered the threshold for water breaks and increased access to hydration stations

and towels around the pitch. Concerns about heat at major tournaments are longstanding. Ahead of the 2014 World Cup, a Brazilian court compelled FIFA to enforce hydration breaks or face fines, highlighting the rising importance of player safety in extreme conditions.

By adopting mandatory breaks in every match, FIFA aims to prioritise athlete welfare while ensuring uniformity across the expanded 2026 tournament.