

# NORTH EAST BUSINESS MIRROR

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## UPI frauds worth Rs 805 crore witnessed this fiscal so far: Minister

**New Delhi:** India witnessed digital payment frauds worth Rs 805 crore via Unified Payments Interface (UPI), involving 10.64 lakh incidents, till November this fiscal (FY26), which has gone up compared to previous fiscals as the UPI adoption rises, the Parliament was informed on Monday. In FY 2024-25, the country saw UPI-related frauds at Rs 981 crore (involving 12.64 lakh incidents) and in FY 2023-24, such frauds resulted in the loss of Rs 1,087 crore (13.42 lakh incidents), Union Minister of State for Finance, Pankaj Chaudhary, told the Lok Sabha.

“With increasing digital payment transactions in the country, incidences of fraudulent practices, including digital payment frauds and Unified Payments Interface (UPI) frauds, have also gone up in the last few years,” he noted. The FY 2022-23 saw UPI-related frauds at Rs 573 crore, up from Rs 242 crore in FY 2021-22. In order to prevent payment-related frauds, including UPI transaction frauds, various initiatives have been taken up by the government, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) from time to time.



These include device binding between the customer's mobile number and the device, two-factor authentication through PIN, daily transaction limit, limits and curbs on use cases, said the minister. Additionally, the NPCI provides a fraud monitoring

solution to all the banks to generate alerts and decline transactions by using AI/ML-based models. RBI and banks have also been taking up awareness campaigns through short SMS, radio campaigns, publicity on the prevention of 'cyber-crime', etc.

## Battery storage costs fall from Rs 10.18 to Rs 2.1 per unit in 2 years: Govt



**New Delhi:** Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), which play a key role in supporting renewable energy, are becoming much cheaper in India due to falling costs and strong government support, the Ministry of Power said on Monday. According to the ministry, the cost of battery storage discovered through tariff-based competitive bid-

ding in 2022-23 was around Rs 10.18 per unit of electricity when the batteries were used twice a day. In recent tenders, this cost has dropped sharply to about Rs 2.1 per unit even without any government subsidy, assuming two charging and discharging cycles daily.

“The cost of Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) discovered through tariff based

competitive bidding during 2022-23 was about Rs 10.18 / kWh, if the storage is used for 2 cycles daily,” the ministry said. “The cost of BESS discovered through competitive bidding in the recent past has substantially reduced to about Rs 2.1 / kWh without VGF, if the storage is used for.

However, based on current market trends, batteries are expected to be used around 1.5 times a day on average. At this level of usage, the storage cost works out to nearly Rs 2.8 per unit. This is close to the price of electricity generated from solar power projects, which currently ranges around Rs 2.5 per unit. This narrowing gap shows that battery storage is becoming more viable and competitive alongside renewable energy.

## Sensex, Nifty end lower on weak global cues

**Mumbai:** Indian equity benchmark indices ended lower on Tuesday as weak global cues and selling pressure in metal, realty and financial stocks weighed on market sentiment. At the close of trade, the Sensex slipped 533.50 points, or 0.63 per cent, to settle at 84,679.86, while the Nifty declined 167.20 points, or 0.64 per cent, to end at 25,860.10. “On the downside, the support at 25,870 was breached, intensifying bearish sentiment in the market,” experts said.

“In the short term, the index may drift lower towards 25,700 and lower. On the upside, the 25,950-26,000 zone is likely to act as a crucial resistance in the near term,” they added. Banking and financial stocks led the losses, with Axis Bank and Eternal emerging as the top laggards among the Sensex constituents, falling up to 5 per



cent. Other heavyweights such as HCL Technologies, Tata Steel, Bajaj Finserv, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finance and NTPC also ended more than 1 per cent lower, adding to the overall pressure on the indices.

## India has 29,151 electric vehicle charging stations, 8,805 fast-charging ones: Govt

**New Delhi:** India now has 29,151 electric vehicle charging stations (EVCS) all over the country, the Parliament was informed on Tuesday. Out of these, 8,805 EV charging stations are fast charging stations and 20,346 EV charging stations are slow charging stations, said Minister of State for Heavy Industries, Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma, in a written reply in Lok Sabha. An allocation of Rs 2,000 crore has been made under the PM E-DRIVE Scheme for deployment of EV charging infrastructure on pan-India basis, he added. The second phase of FAME India scheme was implemented for a period of 5 years (till 31.03.2024) with an outlay of Rs 11,500 crore.



A total of 16,71,606 lakh EVs have been sold under the scheme and 6,862 e buses have been sanctioned under the scheme. Besides this, 8,932 EV Public Charging stations (EVPCS) have been installed by three oil marketing companies (OMCs), according to the minister.

## India's textiles exports see 4.6 pc growth in last 4 fiscals, exports rise in over 100 nations

**New Delhi:** India's exports of textiles and apparel, including handicrafts, saw 4.6 per cent CAGR growth, from \$31.58 billion in 2020-21 to \$37.75 billion in 2024-25, with export growth recorded



across more than 100 countries during the same period, the Parliament was informed on Tuesday. Union Textiles Minister Giriraj Singh told Rajya Sabha that despite postpandemic global supplychain shifts, India's export performance has remained resilient, driven by growth in ready-made garments, cotton and man-made fibre (MMF) textiles, carpets, and handicrafts.

“The government has adopted a multi-pronged strategy to enhance global competitiveness, in the entire value chain, including the high value segment, while modernising the domestic textile value chain,” he noted. He further stated that the government has approved seven ‘PM MITRA Parks’ with an outlay of Rs 4,445 crore to create integrated textile infrastructure, and is implementing the PLI Scheme for Textiles (Rs 10,683 crore) to promote MMF apparel, fabrics and technical textiles, which has been liberalised in October 2025 to attract wider investment.

The National Technical Textiles Mission (Rs 1,480 crore) supports R&D, innovation and market development, while SAMARTH and Silk Samagra-2 (Rs 4,679.86 crore) strengthen skilling, technology upgradation and sectoral development. Further, the government has approved the Export Promotion Mission implemented through NIRYAT PROTSAHAN and NIRYAT DISHA for trade finance, market access, branding and compliance and Credit Guarantee Scheme for Exporters providing 100 per cent credit guarantee, particularly benefitting MSMEs, said the minister.

To sustain the livelihoods of traditional artisans, the ministry is implementing the National Handloom Development Programme and Raw Material Supply Scheme, providing support for raw materials, upgraded looms, solar lighting, workshops, design innovation, marketing assistance, concessional credit and social security.

## GST cuts boost retail credit demand led by auto, consumer durable loans



**New Delhi:** The Goods and Services Tax rationalisation has boosted the retail credit market amid better affordability as indicated by a Credit Market Indicator (CMI) that rose to 99 in Q2FY25 from 98 in the prior quarter, a report said on Monday. Increased retail loan demand signalled renewed consumer confidence and market optimism, the report from TransUnion CIBIL said.

CMI's demand pillar climbed to 95 in the quarter ended September 2025, from 93 in the quarter ended September 2024, led by vehicle finance and consumer durables, it added. Daily average indexed demand for consumer durable loans jumped to 189 in October 2025 from 128 in October 2024, while two wheeler loan demand rose to 272 from 249, and auto loan demand rose to 133 from 115, the report said. The CMI for supply rose to 97 during the third quarter of 2025, compared to 91 in the same quarter of 2024, primarily driven by consumption loans (except credit cards) and gold loans.

## Guwahati's growing SME sector faces insurance gaps, says TATA AIG

**Guwahati:** A series of fire incidents across the country, including recent cases in Goa, has renewed concerns over the preparedness of small enterprises, particularly in Guwahati, to withstand major disruptions. Industry observers note that while the city hosts a wide mix of businesses from tea warehousing and logistics to retail, hospitality, and small manufacturing many units remain either underinsured or inadequately insured, increasing their exposure to fire, natural disasters, and business interruption risks.

TATA AIG has called for immediate reassessment of insur-

ance protection among SMEs. Its SME Business Insurance Solutions offer cover for fire and allied perils, machinery breakdown, employee hospitalization due to accidents, and loss of income arising from insured interruptions. The company stresses that regular evaluation of the sum insured is essential to ensure claims match potential losses.

"Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, yet the most vulnerable when disaster strikes," said Pranay Shah, Head – SME Products, TATA AIG General Insurance. He added that the company



aims to help enterprises maintain operational continuity and safeguard livelihoods.

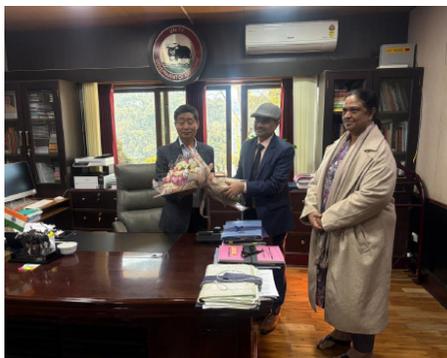
For Guwahati's tightly packed commercial markets, the message is clear: comprehensive insurance remains a critical pillar for long-term resilience.

## Bank of Baroda expands North East strategy through Hornbill Festival partnership

**Kohima:** Bank of Baroda's partnership with the Hornbill Festival 2025 marks a significant step in its push to deepen financial inclusion, boost credit access and expand its branch network across Nagaland and the Northeast. The Bank's presence at the iconic cultural event highlighted its strategy to strengthen engagement with communities and promote digital banking adoption.

The Bank set up an interactive engagement stall inaugurated by Minister Temjen Imna Along, showcasing product information, digital banking tools and services designed for entrepreneurs, artisans and youth. Top executives, including MD & CEO Dr. Debadatta Chand and Executive Director Beena Vaheed, participated in the event and held discussions with tourism officials and community representatives.

Dr. Chand and Ms. Vaheed also met DoNER Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia to explore ways to accelerate financial inclusion and credit flow



into priority sectors, including rural enterprises, self-help groups and youth-led initiatives.

With 197 branches in the region and a newly opened Zonal Office in Guwahati, Bank of Baroda aims to drive entrepreneurship and economic growth through improved access to credit, digital services and development-focused banking solutions.

## 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 plat-

forms.

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

## Biscuit snacking gets a playful twist in Shillong

**Shillong:** Biscuit snacking gets a playful twist as Britannia 50-50 Golmaal introduces new ideas for quick, fun and fuss-free evening bites that have become popular among young snack lovers in the city. The product combines savoury and nostalgic flavours such as Buttery Bites and Kala Jeera, making it suitable not only for tea-time but also for at-home gatherings.

According to the brand, Golmaal can be used beyond regular biscuits, from replacing canapés at house parties to turning into a base for small chaat servings. The idea fits well with Shillong's growing trend of informal home snacking, where friends often gather for adda sessions around hot tea and local favourites.

The suggested "Golmaal Biscuit Chaat" uses boiled potato, onion, tomatoes, chutneys and sev placed on the biscuit, giving a street-food style taste without complicated ingredients. The recipe highlights quick preparation something many Shillong households prefer during weekends.

With winter gatherings becoming more frequent in Shillong, brands introducing quick snack hacks are likely to get attention among young families and home hosts. For many, the appeal lies in enjoying something warm and flavourful without long cooking time, especially during chilly evenings across the hills.

## Flipkart Minutes sees surge in Guwahati as quick-commerce adoption rises

**Guwahati:** Flipkart Minutes reported extraordinary growth in 2025, marked by a 16X year-on-year jump in orders and more than 53 million unique visitors nationwide. Guwahati emerged as one of the key expansion markets, with the platform extending its 10-minute delivery services across major neighbourhoods. Company officials said the city's young population and growing digital dependency helped accelerate adoption.

Gen-Z users between 15 and 25 years were the largest driver of growth, followed by students who relied on rapid restocking of essentials. Fresh produce dominated customer baskets, accounting for 45% of orders. Flipkart Minutes now sources fruits and vegetables directly from over 2,000 farmers, strengthening its supply chain across Assam and supporting local growers.

The platform also onboarded regional and national brands, boosting hyperlocal market access for businesses. With rising demand in Guwahati, executives highlighted increasing repeat orders and stronger trust in the 10-minute delivery model. Sustainability efforts, including green packaging and EV-based deliveries, further enhanced customer engagement.

Officials said the company aims to deepen its footprint in Guwahati through better inventory planning, city-specific assortments and an expanded last-mile network.

## Aizawl cited in national dialogue on illicit cigarette circulation

**Aizawl:** With the Northeast identified as a major route for illicit cigarette entry into India, Philip Morris India has reinforced efforts to support authorities through capability building and global knowledge-sharing, highlighting the region's role in national enforcement discussions.

The company says that illegal cigarettes avoid taxation while legal brands face high tax pressures, contributing to a wider market gap. Intelligence-led mapping across multiple states has shown that border-linked markets, including Nagaland and neighbouring areas, are often targeted by smuggling networks.

Philip Morris India has also supported training programmes for customs and tax officials to help them identify illegal products. For markets such as Dimapur—where cigarettes are commonly sourced across state boundaries—greater awareness of packaging, labeling and regulatory markers has become increasingly important.

The company stated that advanced track-and-trace frameworks used internationally could provide useful guidance as India expands digital monitoring across the tobacco sector.

## Winter dryness rising in Northeast, experts urge nutrition-based skincare

**Guwahati:** As winter settles over the Northeast, the familiar problem of dry and sensitive skin has resurfaced for many residents. Experts say the drop in humidity is stripping moisture from the skin, leaving it dull and irritated. Nutritionist Ritika Samaddar stresses that while topical creams help, long-term nourishment must begin



from within. She highlights that the most effective winter skincare involves choosing foods that strengthen the skin barrier naturally.

Samaddar explains that winter dryness is not just a cosmetic concern but a nutritional one. She recommends including foods rich in protein, healthy fats, vitamin E and omega-3 in daily diets, especially fatty fish and California Almonds, which offer sustained internal hydration.

In Guwahati, dermatologists also note an uptick in people seeking help for rough and flaky skin during peak winter. Almonds, known for their high vitamin E and healthy fat content, can support moisture retention and improve skin elasticity. Their protein, riboflavin and zinc further help restore glow and reduce dullness.

Samaddar also refers to studies linking almonds to better gut health, which may reduce inflammation and breakout issues commonly reported in Guwahati during the colder months. She recommends consuming a handful of almonds each morning for better nutrient absorption.

## Vi launches recharge-linked handset theft and loss insurance for prepaid users

**Guwahati:** Telecom operator Vi has rolled out India's first recharge-linked handset theft and loss insurance plan for prepaid customers, offering much-needed protection for smartphones lost or stolen. The move is expected to benefit a large number of mobile users in Meghalaya, where prepaid connections dominate the telecom market.

The new insurance facility is available for both Android and iOS devices and comes bundled with select prepaid

recharge packs. Under the plan, customers can claim insurance coverage of up to ₹25,000 in case of handset loss or theft. This is significant, as traditional handset insurance policies usually cover only accidental damage and often exclude theft or loss. Students, shop owners and working professionals depend heavily on their phones, and replacing a lost handset can be financially difficult. With mid-range smartphones costing between ₹20,000 and



₹25,000, the new plan offers timely relief.

Vi has introduced three recharge options priced at ₹61 for 30 days, ₹201 for 180 days, and ₹251 for 365 days. Along

with insurance, these packs also include data benefits. The company said the digital-first claim process will simplify paperwork and help customers receive quicker settlements.

# India likely to touch 5 million metric tonnes of green hydrogen capacity by 2030

**New Delhi:** India's green hydrogen production capacity is likely to reach 5 million metric tonnes per annum by 2030, the Parliament was informed on Tuesday. The National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM) aims to make India a global hub for production, usage and export of green hydrogen and its derivatives, Minister of State for New and Renewable Energy, Shripad Yesso Naik, told the Rajya Sabha in a written reply. The minister also listed the incentives and manufacturing initiatives under the NGHM to reduce the cost of green hydrogen. Under the incentive scheme for electrolyser manufacturing, 15 companies have been awarded a total manufacturing capacity of 3,000 MW per annum, with incentives worth Rs 4,440 crore. Under the incentive scheme for green hydrogen production, 18 companies have been awarded a cumulative



production capacity of 8,62,000 tonnes per annum.

Two companies have been awarded 20,000 tonnes per annum worth of incentives for refineries, the minister added. Additional measures to reduce costs include exemptions from inter-

state transmission system charges for 25 years for plants commissioned on or before December 31, 2030, an official statement said.

Further, duty benefits have also been allowed under Section 26 of the Special Economic Zones Act, 2005, for

installation as well as operation and maintenance (O&M) of renewable energy equipment exclusively for captive consumption of the unit. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy is also supporting a research and development project titled 'Scale-up of Perovskite Tandem Solar Cells (Phase-I)' with a total project cost of Rs. 83.19 crore to scale up and indigenise perovskite tandem solar cell technology. Naik said last month that India is steadily advancing toward 500 GW of non-fossil capacity by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2070.

The minister highlighted the National Green Hydrogen Mission's transition from planning to implementation, with incentive schemes worth Rs 17,000 crore and projects awarded for 3,000 MW per annum of domestic electrolyser manufacturing and 862,000 tonnes per annum of green hydrogen production.

## India's GDP growth expected to accelerate to 7.5 pc in FY27: Report



**Mumbai:** India's economic growth is expected to pick up pace and remain strong in the coming years, with GDP likely to expand at 7.5 per cent in FY27, even as inflation stays under control, according to Axis Bank's Economic Outlook 2026 on Tuesday. The report, authored by Neelkanth Mishra, Chief Economist at Axis Bank and Head of Global Research at Axis Capital, says India can grow faster than its longterm trend without triggering inflationary pressures. This is because the economy still has enough unused capacity, or slack, which allows growth to rise smoothly.

Axis Bank expects India to grow faster than most global peers and even above market expectations, making it the world's fastest-growing large economy. The strong outlook is supported by easing pressure from government finances, lower borrowing costs, and supportive monetary policy. The report also highlights that ongoing structural reforms and regulatory easing will help sustain growth over the medium term.

A key driver of this growth

will be a fresh rise in investment activity. With company balance sheets in better shape, the cost of capital remaining low, and factories running at high capacity, businesses are likely to increase capital expenditure in FY27. This new investment cycle is expected to further strengthen economic momentum. The bank's economists also see steady gains in productivity and a revival in capital formation, which together support a long-term trend growth rate of around 7 per cent.

Even with growth moving above this trend, inflation is expected to remain well behaved. Axis Bank forecasts headline inflation at around 4 per cent in FY27. While food prices may see some rebound, underlying price pressures remain muted.

The report notes that median inflation, which better reflects core price trends, has stayed close to 3 per cent for the past 18 months. This suggests that demand pressures are still limited and the economy has room to grow without overheating.

## PM-KUSUM scheme boosts incomes of over 20.42 lakh farmers: Minister



**New Delhi:** Over 20.42 lakh farmers have benefited through the PM-KUSUM scheme that enables them to set up solar power plants and irrigation pumps on their land, Parliament was informed on Tuesday. In a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for New and Renewable Energy, Shripad

Yesso Naik, informed Rajya Sabha that the PMKUSUM is a demand-driven scheme. The capacities and funds are allocated based on demand received and progress shown by states and UTs.

The minister tabled figures in the Upper House which show that the funds released over the last three years have

shown a steady increase, reflecting the success of the scheme. During the first half of the current financial year (2025-26), a sum of Rs 2,031.5 crore has already been released under the PM-KUSUM scheme, compared with Rs 2,564.14 crore in 2024-25. The amount has gone up from Rs 996.33 crore released under the scheme in 2023-24.

The government launched the PM-KUSUM scheme in March 2019, which was scaled up in January 2024 to provide energy and water security to farmers, enhance their income, de-dieselize the farm sector, and reduce environmental pollution. The scheme has three components -- A, B and C.

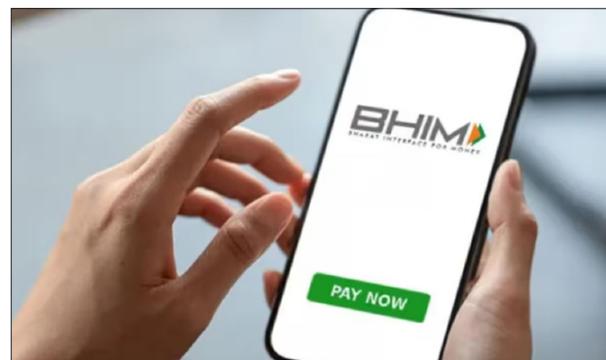
## BHIM launches 'Garv Se Swadeshi' campaign with Rs 20 cashback for new users

**New Delhi:** India's indigenous digital payments platform BHIM Payments App (BHIM) on Monday announced the launch of its "Garv Se Swadeshi" campaign with a cashback offer to encourage new users across the country to adopt digital payments. BHIM enters its 10th year of inauguration later this month, and to mark the milestone, it offered a flat Rs 20 cashback on any transaction of Rs 20 or more for new users, a release said. The campaign aims to "lower entry barriers for first time users and strengthen digital payments

adoption across diverse sections of society," the platform said.

NPCI BHIM Services Limited (NBSL), which developed BHIM, said users who adopt the application for everyday expenses such as groceries, bus or Metro tickets, prepaid recharges, electricity and gas bill payments, and fuel charges can earn up to Rs 300 cashback in a month on eligible transactions.

"BHIM represents the confidence of a digital, self-reliant India and the way Indians choose to pay every day. The 'Garv Se Swadeshi' campaign is rooted in the idea that a



homegrown, sovereign payments platform should be built around the real needs of Indian users," said Lalitha Nataraj, MD and CEO, NBSL. "Our

## POCO C85 5G 1st sale goes live, with best battery experience at a disruptive price

**New Delhi:** POCO, one of India's most trusted consumer technology brands, has kicked off the first sale of its all-new POCO C85 5G, exclusively on Flipkart. Equipped for the best battery experience, the POCO C85 5G packs a 6000mAh battery that delivers over two days of power. It offers 33W fast charging, where individuals can get a 50 per cent charge in just about 28 minutes. In addition, a 10W wired reverse charging allows the device to double as a portable power bank for mobiles, TWS earbuds, smartwatches, and other accessories. This power-packed phone sets a new benchmark under Rs 12,000.

The POCO C85 5G lets you flaunt your style effortlessly, boasting a sleek, modern design with a quad-curved back, a slim 7.99mm profile, and a premium dual-tone finish in Mystic Purple, Spring Green, and Power Black. Powered by the highly efficient MediaTek Dimensity 6300 chipset, it delivers ultra-smooth, lag-free performance for everything from gaming to multitasking. Meanwhile, the 50MP AI dual-camera setup ensures your most meaningful moments are captured in stunning clarity.

The POCO C85 sale is live exclusively on Flipkart at an introductory price of Rs 10,999 for the 4GB+128GB variant, Rs 11,999 for the 6GB+128GB variant, and Rs 13,499 for the 8GB+128GB variant.

focus is on bringing first-time users into digital payments and helping them build lasting payment habits for everyday needs," she added

## Amway's Rs 100-crore investment plan draws interest in Kohima

**Kohima:** Amway President and CEO Michael Nelson reaffirmed India's importance in the company's global strategy during his visit, announcing a Rs 100-crore investment to enhance distributor capabilities and customer experience. In Kohima, local direct sellers say the move could strengthen digital training and product availability as Amway expands its physical footprint nationwide. The company marked 10 years of local manufacturing, with plans to boost innovation, wellbeing solutions, and entrepreneurship support across emerging markets like Kohima.



## 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.

## Ai+ Smartphone announces NovaFlip, at a price point of under 40,000

**Guwahati:** Ai+ Smartphone has announced NovaFlip, an innovative addition to the premium flip smartphone market, at a price point of under 40,000. This is in line with the company's mission to make high-quality technology accessible for everyone. Scheduled for release in Q1 2026, this device marks the beginning of Ai+ Smartphone flagship Nova Series, a collection that merges cutting-edge innovation with affordability. Building on the success of the Nova 5G launch in July 2025, Ai+ Smartphone is expanding its flagship offerings with the Nova Series, featuring models like the Nova Pro, Nova Ultra, Nova Flip, and

even a future Fold variant. Each device is intentionally crafted to provide outstanding performance, unique features, and a user experience that sets a new benchmark in the smartphone industry. Unlike conventional smartphones that treat the flip form factor as a hardware novelty, NovaFlip runs on NxtQuantum OS, designed to adapt intelligently across folded and open states.

The privacy-first architecture of NxtQuantum OS ensures zero pre-loaded bloatware, no invasive trackers, and complete user control over personal data, prioritising long-term trust over short-term engagement tactics. "Flip smartphones bring back things people

## For the treatment of obesity and type 2 diabetes, Cipla launches Yurpeak® (tirzepatide)

**Shillong:** Cipla Limited (BSE: 500087; NSE: CIPLA; and hereafter referred to as "Cipla") has announced the launch of Yurpeak® (tirzepatide), a one-weekly injectable therapy for managing obesity and type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM)—two of the country's most pressing health challenges. Cipla has the rights to distribute and promote Yurpeak®—the second brand of Lilly's tirzepatide in India, after Lilly received DCGI approval. Commenting on the launch, Achin Gupta, Global Chief Operating Officer, Cipla Limited, said: "The launch of Yurpeak® marks a transformative moment in the fight against obesity and type 2 diabetes mellitus, two of India's chronic conditions with a heavy burden. Cipla is entering this space with the same depth of expertise and scientific commitment that

define our leadership in chronic diseases and in respiratory care. Our focus remains on accelerating access to globally benchmarked, future-ready therapies through collaborations like ours with Lilly, which bring together innovation, purpose, and scale to ensure advanced care reaches patients wherever they are."

Tirzepatide is the first and only dual agonist glucose-dependent insulinotropic polypeptide (GIP) and glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptors, indicated as an adjunct to diet and exercise for the treatment of Type 2 diabetes and Chronic weight management in adults with obesity (BMI ≥ 30) or overweight (BMI ≥ 27) with at least one weight-related comorbidity. Yurpeak® will be available on prescription in the KwikPen® device format in six strengths: 2.5 mg, 5 mg, 7.5 mg,



10 mg, 12.5 mg, and 15 mg, allowing for precise, convenient, and patient-friendly dosing. Launch of Yurpeak® in India will help expand access to tirzepatide so that more patients can benefit from this innovative therapy. Lilly will manufacture and supply Yurpeak® to Cipla, and the price will be the same as Mounjaro®. Cipla will complement the launch of Yurpeak® with comprehensive patient education and support programs, including guidance on dosing, self-administration, and safe, informed use of the therapy.

## Oriflame marks thirty years of its journey in India

**Guwahati:** Oriflame, the leading Swedish beauty and well-being brand, has marked thirty years of its journey in India. The brand entered the country in the early 1990s and has progressively shaped a distinct position within a rapidly evolving beauty market. Over the past three decades, the brand has built a strong presence in the country, shaped by science-backed innovation, consistent product quality and a deep commitment to supporting entrepreneurship. Rooted in its Swedish heritage, Oriflame has developed a wide and trusted product portfolio of more than 500 offerings across skincare, wellness, colour cosmetics, haircare, personal care and fragrance, including icons such as its Tender Care balm and Milk and Honey Body Creams. Tender Care, originally one of the brand's most recognised global products and now also manufactured in India, continues to be a bestseller with one



unit sold every fifteen seconds.

Every formulation reflects the brand's focus on safety, performance and responsible ingredient choices, which continue to define its product philosophy in India and globally. The brand's network of independent Brand Partners, 80 percent of whom are women, has created meaningful avenues for flexible and self-driven income, contributing to a wider democratization of wealth. "Three decades in India have given us a very clear view of the market and how our consumers are evol-

ing," said Edyta Kurek, Senior Vice President & Head, Oriflame India and Indonesia. "The scale of the market and the diversity of its consumers has pushed us to strengthen our capabilities across science, product development and local operations." The brand's patented bioactivating technology, Oriptide 3, is the result of close to twenty years of study in cellular health. This research continues to strengthen the NovAge+ range as one of Oriflame's most advanced skincare lines.

## Tea imports raise concern in Parliament

**Guwahati:** During Zero Hour in the Rajya Sabha, MP Harsh Vardhan Shringla highlighted growing uncertainty in India's tea sector and asked the Union Government to urgently address issues impacting tea-producing regions including Assam, Darjeeling and the North-East. He said the sector currently employs more than a million workers and sustains the livelihood of about six million people across eastern India.

Shringla pointed out that imports from Nepal and African countries rose by almost 45 per cent in the first half of 2025, weakening demand for Indian-grown tea. He said this has hit traditional producers, especially Darjeeling and Assam, where tea has been a central part of the plantation economy for generations.

The MP said declining forest cover, labour shortages, price fluctuations and misbranding of foreign tea as Indian tea have together created a "multi-layered crisis". He called for stronger regulatory measures to protect premium GI-tagged teas including Darjeeling, Assam and the Nilgiris.

Shringla said tea-growing regions in Assam require enhanced support because they account for a major share of domestic tea production and are central to India's rural economy. He said mislabelling and low-quality imports could undermine India's longstanding global reputation in tea if not contained immediately.



## 'Fashion's Next Move': Blenders Pride Fashion Tour drives fashion into the fast lane

**Shillong:** Blenders Pride Fashion Tour has shifted gears in Jaipur, transforming into an intersection of high-fashion and motorsport. Pushing boundaries, the Jaipur edition explored motorsports-inspired design, glamorous performance wear, and high-octane fashion showcase that marked 'Fashion's Next Move' – racing forward with speed and precision. In collaboration with Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI), the showcase reimagined the runway into a high-speed circuit of style and power. Leading designers Namrata Joshipura and Abhishek Paatni reinterpreted high-octane motorcore aesthetics, transforming racing culture into statement-making fashion. Bollywood star Harnaaz Sandhu commanded the runway as the finale showstopper, embodying the fusion of glamour and speed, while rap sensation Raftaar closed the night with an electrifying performance that matched the show's pulsating energy. The show unfolded with a three-lap runway experience that transformed the stage into an immersive motorsport arena. From The Start Line's racing silhouettes to The Pit Lane's chrome-driven sleek and tactical looks to The Glam Night's high-octane glamour, ending with a thrilling sports car stunt that uplifted that shot up the whole vibe of the show.

The experience amplified the cultural and creative pulse of India – fast, sharp and unstoppable, and positioned Blenders Pride Fashion Tour as the engine driving fashion forward with unprecedented pace. Debasree Dasgupta, CMO, Pernod Ricard India, said, "Blenders Pride Fashion Tour has always been at the forefront of shaping fashion and cultural conversations."



Designer Abhishek Patni said, "With this collaboration, together we shifted fashion into new gears and fused speed with style to present a bold glimpse of where fashion is headed next." Designer Namrata Joshipura said, "Blenders Pride Fashion Tour has inspired me to bring high-octane couture into a distinctive, fashion-forward space." Showstopper Harnaaz Sandhu said, "Taking the runway for Blenders Pride Fashion Tour in Jaipur felt like stepping onto a racetrack – pure adrenaline and confidence, bringing alive a showcase that championed bold & fearless fashion." Rapper Raftaar said, "Blenders Pride Fashion Tour has taken fashion onto a whole new track, making fashion move forward with speed, power and attitude." Sunil Sethi, Chairman, FDCI, expressed, "FDCI is delighted to collaborate with Blenders Pride Fashion Tour, uniting two powerhouses of fashion to shape its future." The tour is now headed to Kolkata where designers Anamika Khanna will present craftsmanship from a contemporary lens with showstopper Ishaan Khatter on December 20th.

## JSW MG Motor India announces the launch of the all-new MG Hector



**Mumbai:** JSW MG Motor India has announced the launch of the All-New MG Hector, marking a significant step forward in bold design, unrivalled comfort, pioneering technology and dynamic driving experience in the SUV segment. The All-New Hector features a striking exterior with a new front and rear bumper design, an all-new grille design, new alloy wheels, and offers two new colours-Celadon Blue and Pearl White. The interiors sport Dual Tone Ice Grey Theme in the 5-seater trim and Dual Tone Urban Tan for the 6 and 7-seater trims, creating a more premium and inviting cabin ambiance. The All-New MG Hector range comes at a starting price of INR 11.99 lakh (Ex-Showroom) for limited units only. The All-New MG Hector features the new Aura Hex Grille, a bold hexagonal structure that symbolises strength and precision. Adding to its confident road presence are the newly designed Aura Sculpt Bumpers at

the front and rear, shaped to deliver a muscular, assertive stance from every angle. The SUV also sports the dynamic Aura Bolt Alloy Wheels, strong and expressive alloys designed to convey power even at standstill.

Two contemporary new exterior colours, Celadon Blue and Pearl White, further elevate its modern design appeal, making The All-New Hector more stylish and attention-grabbing than ever. The plush interiors of the All-New MG Hector will now offer two new colour themes- Dual Tone Urban Tan for the 6 and 7-seater variants, inspired by modern urban aesthetics to create a warm, upscale, and inviting ambiance, and Dual Tone Ice Grey for the 5-seater variant, featuring a sleek black-and-grey palette that delivers a refined and tech-forward environment. Speaking on the launch, Anurag Mehrotra, Managing Director, JSW MG Motor India, said, "The Hector was our maiden nameplate and quickly became synonymous with the MG brand, emerging as one of India's most loved SUVs with 1,50,000 customers since its debut." It boasts best-in-class features such as a dual-pane panoramic sunroof, an immersive 35.56 cm (14-inch) HD infotainment system, 8-colour Ambient Mood Lighting and MG's advanced i-SMART connected technology with 70+ features, and an advanced ADAS suite, offering a truly intelligent and distinctive driving experience. The All-New Hector comes with the unique car ownership program "MG SHIELD," offering after-sales service options.

## Amazon announces \$35 billion investment plan; Guwahati expect boost

**Guwahati:** Amazon has announced that it will invest more than USD 35 billion in India by 2030, expanding digital infrastructure and strengthening its role in the country's economic growth. The announcement was made during the sixth edition of the Amazon Smbhav Summit, where the company also highlighted that its cumulative investment since 2010 has already reached about USD 40 billion.

According to a new Keystone Strategy report released at the event, Amazon has become the largest foreign investor in India and among the biggest job creators. The report outlines that the company has supported nearly 2.8 million direct and indirect jobs across the country, digitised almost 12 million small businesses and enabled USD 20 billion worth of ecom-



merce exports till now.

The company plans to focus on AI-driven digitisation, export growth and job creation. It also aims to empower small entrepreneurs across the Northeastern markets, including Guwahati, where online retail adoption has been steadily rising. Local sellers in Assam hope the new investments will bring better logistics and faster delivery services to the region.

Amazon also announced fresh initiatives supporting MSMEs, job creation and AI education. Officials said the new investment aligns with India's Atmanirbhar Bharat goals.

## Japanese language centre aims to link Northeast youth with global careers



**Guwahati:** A new Japanese Language Training Center to be set up at Manipur University is expected to create fresh global career opportunities for youth from the Northeast, including Assam. The centre will be established through a partnership between NSDC International and Manipur University.

The programme focuses on equipping young people with internationally recognised Japanese language skills, making them employable in Japan's fast-growing sectors. NSDC International will oversee curriculum design, assessments, and training delivery, while the university will provide the necessary campus infrastructure.

Officials said the training will cover multiple job-linked sectors such as caregiving, hospitality, agriculture, and manufacturing. Courses will guide learners from foundational language skills to advanced proficiency levels.

Skill development experts in Guwahati said the centre could play a key role in linking regional talent with international labour demand while strengthening India's position as a global talent hub.

## Tata Motors celebrates India's ICC Women's World Cup 2025 triumph with Tata Sierra gift

**Mumbai:** Tata Motors marked India's historic victory at the ICC Women's World Cup 2025 by felicitating the champion women's cricket team in the presence of N. Chandrasekaran, Chairman, Tata Sons and Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd. (TMPVL), and Shailesh Chandra, Managing Director & CEO, TMPVL.

During the celebration, the winning team was seen alongside the newly launched Tata Sierra, an iconic nameplate reintroduced in a contemporary avatar. As a gesture of recognition and pride, Tata Motors announced that each member of the victorious team will be gifted a Tata Sierra.

The initiative reflects Tata Motors' continued commitment to supporting sporting excellence



and celebrating achievements that inspire the nation. By associating the landmark victory with the relaunch of the Tata Sierra, the company underscored values of resilience, progress and national pride.

## Samsung announces the first edition of Galaxy Days on Flipkart

**SAMSUNG**

**Mumbai:** Samsung, India's largest consumer electronics brand, has announced the first edition of Galaxy Days on Flipkart. The three-day event from December 16 to 18 promises the highest exchange offers, exclusive pair-up deals, Samsung Care+ benefits, and surprise rewards. During Galaxy Days, customers can avail increased exchange values on a select range of Galaxy smartphones with a bonus of up to INR 12000. Pair-up deals allow them to save up to INR 5000 on Galaxy wearables and accessories when purchased with eligible Galaxy smartphones. Additionally, consumers can enjoy exciting offers and discounts on select Galaxy wearables, tablets, and laptops.

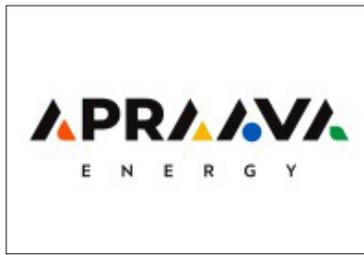
Customers can add Samsung Care+ to their purchase on Flipkart. The plan provides accidental and liquid damage protection on eligible Galaxy smartphones for greater confidence and convenience when they upgrade. Customers visiting the Samsung Brand Store on Flipkart can earn SuperCoins, while lucky visitors can avail coupons on eligible models by unlocking mystery boxes. Galaxy Days make the upgrade journey smoother and more rewarding for online shoppers. Samsung is bringing a wide range of benefits to customers this season with attractive exchange options, convenient protection plans, and limited-period surprises.

## Apraava Energy's AI-ML solution recognised by Ministry of Power to improve India's power distribution sector

**Guwahati:** Apraava Energy, India's leading integrated energy solutions provider, has received national recognition for its pioneering Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) solution aimed at building data-driven, consumer-centric, and future-ready energy solutions for India. The recognition was conferred at the Ministry of Power's 'National Conference on the Use of AI and ML in the Power Distribution Sector' under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS). The two-day conference demonstrated cutting-edge use cases to drive innovation, improve operational efficiencies, and enhance consumer satisfaction across DIS-

COMs in India. The runner-up award was presented to the Apraava Energy team by the Hon'ble Union Minister for Power and Housing and Urban Affairs, Shri Manohar Lal Khattar. Nearly 200 solutions were presented by the DISCOMs, AMISPs (Advanced Metering Infrastructure Service Providers), Technology Solution Providers (TSPs) and Home Automation Solution Providers (HASPs). Under the AMISP category, Apraava Energy showcased its solution, Discom GPT (Grid.), developed in partnership with WorkOnGrid.

By integrating generative AI, advanced machine learning and a robust data architecture, Grid. unlocks new



levels of value, efficiency, and reliability in the power distribution sector, setting the course for smarter decisions, agile responses, and transformative change across India's evolving digital energy landscape. Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, Managing Director, Apraava Energy, said, "Grid. represents Apraava's effort to reimagine the future of

power distribution for India. It is not merely a technology upgrade but a bold step towards embedding AI and machine learning deeply into power utility operations." Through Grid., Apraava demonstrated how utilities can: Predict transformer faults using anomaly detection, enabling proactive maintenance. Automate operational workflows, delivering instant insights and decision-making support, etc. Apraava offers a comprehensive, end-to-end AMI solution and is well placed to accelerate the smart metering adoption in the country under the RDSS. Its AMI footprint spans across several states with a target of installing around 7.8 million smart meters.

## New Japanese language centre in Imphal opens global career doors for Manipur youth

**Imphal:** A new opportunity for young people in Manipur to build careers abroad has emerged with NSDC International partnering Manipur University to set up a Japanese Language Training Centre in Imphal. The initiative focuses on preparing youth from the state and the wider Northeast for employment opportunities in Japan through structured language training.

The centre will offer courses designed to meet Japan's workforce requirements, helping students develop strong language proficiency and job readiness. Training will cater to multiple sectors such as caregiving, hospitality, manufacturing and agriculture, offering learners flexibility in choosing career paths.

NSDC International will manage curriculum design, assessments and learner support, while Manipur University will provide training facilities on campus. This arrangement ensures that students in Imphal can access international-standard education without leaving the state.

By bringing globally recognised training closer to home, the initiative aims to empower young people with practical skills, confidence and international exposure, enabling them to pursue stable and rewarding careers beyond India's borders.

## Godrej initiative puts focus on contemporary Indian Christmas celebrations

**Guwahati:** Christmas celebrations in Guwahati are changing, and a new campaign by Godrej Vikhroli Cucina is reflecting that shift. Titled "Jingle Bells Unwrapped," the campaign captures how young Indians are creating their own festive moments, far from the picture-perfect scenes seen in films.

Instead of snow-filled streets and large family dinners, many Guwahati residents celebrate Christmas with flatmates, friends and colleagues. Shared snacks, video calls with family and small rituals now define the season. The new Christmas track, created with Voctroni-

ca and featuring Godrej Yummiez, mirrors this reality.

The campaign also includes well-known chefs Amrita Raichand and Ajay Chopra and focuses on how food plays a quiet but important role in celebrations. A warm snack or a familiar flavour often becomes the emotional centre of the festival.

Godrej says the idea behind the campaign is to show that festivals today are about personal choices and comfort. In a fast-growing city like Guwahati, where lifestyles are increasingly urban and busy, the message connects with young people balancing work, friendships and festive joy.

## Airbnb offers Guwahati music fans a rare look inside Lollapalooza India

**Guwahati:** Music enthusiasts from Guwahati can now experience Lollapalooza India 2026 from behind the scenes, as Airbnb launches exclusive Experiences that bring fans closer to artists and festival creators.

The Experiences allow participants to join artist entourage, witness creative rehearsals and explore the planning that goes into a large-scale music festival. Led by AnkurTewari, OAFF and Savera, and insider Raas-hiSanghavi, these sessions focus on storytelling, collaboration and live music culture.

For Guwahati's youth and creative community, the initiative offers a valuable

learning opportunity. Many aspiring musicians and event professionals can gain insights into the workings of the music industry through these curated interactions.

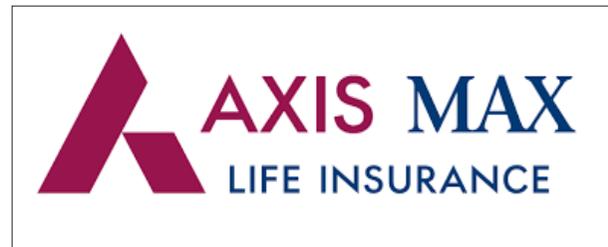
Each Experience is priced at ₹5,850, with bookings opening on December 15 at 10 am IST. Seats are limited and will be allotted on a first-come basis. Guests must arrange their own travel to Mumbai.

Airbnb said the initiative aims to turn music festivals into shared cultural experiences rather than one-time events. For fans from Guwahati, it offers a chance to combine travel, learning and music into a single memorable journey.

## 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 agree-



ment 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.

## Podcast breaks down the science behind India's street food oils

**Mumbai:** A new podcast series featuring culinary explorer and Delhi Food Walks founder AnubhavSapra is drawing attention for simplifying the science behind Indian street food and the confusion surrounding food labels. The series explains why oils especially palm oil play a central role in the taste and texture of snacks like samosas, pakoras and kachoris.

In the first episode, Sapra highlights palm oil's high heat stability, neutral taste and reliable frying performance. The next episode focuses on misleading "No Palm Oil" labels, urging consumers to read

full ingredient lists and not rely on bold front-of-pack claims. Local vendors say affordability and consistent performance often guide their choices, making Sapra's explanations relevant to both sellers and consumers.

The podcast also reiterates scientific facts: palm oil is naturally cholesterol-free, contains vitamin E compounds and has a neutral effect on blood cholesterol when consumed as part of a balanced diet. The discussion also aligns with ICMR-NIN 2024 dietary guidelines advocating appropriate use of oils and variety in diets.

