

# NORTH EAST BUSINESS MIRROR

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## Sensex, Nifty extend gains for 2nd day; metal and auto stocks lead rally

**Mumbai:** Indian equity benchmark indices continued their recovery for the second straight session on Tuesday, ending higher after a volatile trading day that saw markets swing between gains and losses. The Nifty closed 0.74 per cent, or 172.35 points higher, at 23,581.15. Similarly, the Sensex gained 568 points, or 0.75 per cent, to settle at 76,070.84. Commenting on Nifty technical outlook, experts said that a decisive move above 23,600 could open the path towards 23,800–24,000, although this range is likely to act as a strong supply zone. “On the downside, failure to sustain higher levels may lead to a pullback towards 23,500, followed by 23,300–23,350, where strong support is expected due to prior demand and



open interest build-up,” an analyst stated.

Among the top performers on the Nifty were shares of Tata Steel, Ma-

hindra & Mahindra and Eternal, which supported the upward momentum in the market. Market volatility eased during the session, with the In-

dia VIX declining sharply. The index fell over 9 per cent during the day and eventually settled 8.39 per cent lower at 19.79. The broader markets also mirrored the positive trend. Both mid-cap and smallcap stocks ended in the green. On the sectoral front, metal and auto stocks outperformed the benchmark indices, driving much of the gains. However, IT and FMCG stocks lagged behind and emerged as the top sectoral losers during the session.

Analysts said that the market showed resilience despite intra-day volatility, with gains supported by selective buying in key sectors and easing volatility indicators. “The current market setup reflects a phase of tactical recovery rather than a full trend reversal,” a market expert said.

## Govt acts against LPG hoarding, seizes 15,000 cylinders in 12,000 raids

**New Delhi:** The government on Tuesday said it has conducted 12,000 raids and seized more than 15,000 LPG cylinders to curb hoarding amid rumours of shortages and panic bookings, while maintaining that there is no supply shortage across the country. Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry’s Joint Secretary, Marketing and Oil Refinery, Sujata Sharma, said LPG availability remains adequate despite increased demand. She said around 70,000 bookings were made on Monday due to panic buying and appealed to consumers to avoid unnecessary bookings and consider alternative arrangements where feasible. According to Sharma, digital adoption remains high, with nearly 94 per cent of domestic LPG bookings being made online. She urged consumers to continue using online platforms and avoid panic-driven demand.

Sharma also noted that Delivery Authenticity Code (DAC) compliance has improved to 76 per cent. The official further said several states, including Bihar, Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Manipur, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Uttarakhand, have taken steps to allocate non-domestic LPG for essential services. Meanwhile, Special Secretary, Shipping, Rajesh Kumar Sinha, said all 22 vessels and Indian crew members in the Gulf region are safe.

## FSSAI analyses over 5.18 lakh food samples in 3 years; 88,192 penalties imposed



**New Delhi:** Surveillance drives, inspections and random sampling of food products, done by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), include 5,18,559 sample analysis which led to 88,192 penalties and 3,614 convictions, the

government said on Tuesday. The measures taken by FSSAI led to 1,161 licence cancellations over 2022–23 to 2024–25 after random sampling of various food products including milk, ghee, spices, honey, paneer and other foods, Minister of

State for Health and Family Welfare, Prataprao Jadhav, said in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha.

The surveillance drives are conducted throughout the year by the officials of Food Safety Departments of the respective States/UTs and Regional Offices of FSSAI to check compliance with the quality and safety parameters and other requirements as laid down under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. A total of 56,259 risk-based inspections were carried out in the period, where frequency of inspection is decided based on risk associated with Food businesses and issued guidelines, the minister said.

## Govt has claimed \$2.81 bn from Reliance, BP for allegedly siphoning ONGC gas: Minister

**New Delhi:** The government has made a claim of \$2.81 billion from Reliance Industries Limited and UK oil giant BP for allegedly siphoning out gas from ONGC’s fields in India’s eastern offshore KG basin, the Parliament was informed on Monday. “The Government has made a claim of \$2.81 billion from Reliance Industries Limited and BP. The matter is presently sub judice before the Supreme Court of India,” Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Suresh Gopi said in a written answer to a question in the Rajya Sabha.

The minister’s reply came in answer to a question raised by Rajya Sabha member Deepak Prakash, who asked: “Whether it is a fact that the Government has claimed more than \$2.00 billion from private companies for alleged gas pilferage/theft from ONGC’s blocks off the eastern coast” The MP also asked for “complete details thereof with the names of private companies involved and the latest status of payment received from these private companies so far”. As of March, the Indian government has demanded approximately \$2.81 billion (around Rs 25,983 crore) from Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) and its partner BP following a February 2025 Delhi High Court ruling, which set aside a 2018 arbitration award that initially cleared RIL of liability for alleged migration of gas from ONGC fields in the KG basin.

## India is entering new phase in global trade, says Piyush Goyal

**New Delhi:** Union Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday said India’s overall economic fundamentals remain strong, with exports holding steady and multiple factors supporting the country’s external position. Speaking in the Lok Sabha, the minister also said India is entering a new phase in international trade, which will help expand its global footprint and bring long-term economic benefits.

“While services exports continue to grow consistently every month, merchandise exports have remained flat till February, which means they have not declined,” he said. In March, there was some weakness in the first week, but exports turned positive in the second week and are expected to stabilise by the end of the month, he added. Highlighting the broader external sector, Goyal said the

current account deficit comprises several components, including the goods trade deficit and the services trade surplus. He noted that the services surplus remains significant and helps offset the merchandise trade gap.

He also pointed out that India receives large remittance inflows and continues to attract strong foreign direct investment (FDI), with the country setting new records year after year.

## Indian Americans rank as top earners in US among major ethnic groups: Report

**New Delhi:** Indian American households reported a median annual income of about \$151,200, far above the US median of roughly \$83,700 and ranked first among all major ethnic groups in the country, a new report has said. The report from The Australia Today, which cited Pew Research Center findings, said that Indian-American households earn roughly \$67,000 more per year or nearly 80 per cent higher than the typical American household. Indian Americans, roughly 4.8 million people, make up a relatively small portion of the US population, just about 1.4 per cent of the country’s total population. Despite this modest share, their economic footprint, however, is significant due to high participation in professional, technical, and specialised fields, the report



said, citing Pew findings.

“Even among other high-earning Asian communities, Indian Americans maintain a clear lead,” it added. Taiwanese-American households rank second with a median income of about \$133,300, indicating that Indian-American households earn roughly \$17,900 more, or about 13–14 per cent higher.

## GCPL's waste management project diverts 3,200 tonnes of waste in Palashbari



**Guwahati:** Godrej Consumer Products Limited (GCPL) has successfully transformed waste management in Palashbari, one of Assam's oldest towns, through a three-year community-led initiative that diverted more than 3,200 tonnes of waste and significantly improved local sanitation systems.

Implemented under GCPL's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme in partnership with the Palashbari Municipal Board and Feedback Foundation Charitable Trust, the project also remediated 1,550 tonnes of legacy waste and achieved 98.5 per cent source segregation across households, institutions and markets.

Earlier, Palashbari generated nearly two tonnes of mixed waste daily, most of which was dumped in open sites, causing environmental damage and health concerns, particularly along the Kalbhug River. Under the initiative, a Mini Sanitation Park comprising a Material Recovery Facility and a Micro Composting Centre was established, while SwachhataSathis were deployed across all 10

wards for door-to-door collection of segregated waste.

Pakzan Dastoor, Head – Sustainability & CSR, Godrej Industries Group, said the initiative demonstrated how collaboration between citizens, authorities and partners can create sustainable community systems.

The programme also focused on behavioural change, conducting nearly 30,000 awareness sessions reaching over 92,000 residents. Around 25 garbage-vulnerable points were cleared, and four-bin segregation along with home composting was introduced.

The success of the Palashbari model is also drawing attention from other urban bodies, including the North Guwahati Municipal Board, and could influence waste management approaches in Guwahatis well where rapid urbanisation has increased pressure on municipal waste systems. Experts say the decentralised approach adopted in Palashbari may offer a practical model for improving waste segregation and processing in growing urban centres such as Guwahati.

## Air India, Air India Express to shift operations to Guwahati airport's New Terminal 2 from March 16

**Guwahati:** Air India and Air India Express will commence operations from the newly inaugurated Terminal 2 (T2) of Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport in Guwahati starting March 16, 2026, marking a key operational shift for the airlines in the region.

According to an official release issued from Gurugram on March 14, both airlines will move their operations from Terminal 1 (T1) to the new terminal with effect from March 16. Together, Air India and Air India Express will operate a total of 38 daily flights to and from Terminal 2 at the Guwahati airport.

The first Air India flight to arrive at the

new terminal will be flight AI879 from Delhi, while the return flight AI880 to Delhi will mark Air India's first departure from Terminal 2 in Guwahati. Meanwhile, Air India Express flight IX1517 from Kolkata will be the airline's first arrival at the new terminal, and its onward journey to Imphal will become the first Air India Express departure from T2.

Currently, Air India operates two daily return flights between Delhi and Guwahati. Air India Express, on the other hand, connects Guwahati with 17 daily flights to cities including Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Dibrugarh, Dimapur, Hyderabad, Imphal, Jaipur, and Kolkata.

**AIR INDIA**

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

In Guwahati, the shift to the modern Terminal 2 is expected to improve passenger experience and enhance connectivity for travellers from the Northeast. Aviation industry observers believe the expanded operations and improved airport infrastructure could boost tourism, business travel, and regional trade, further strengthening Guwahati's position as a key aviation hub in eastern India.

## Truecaller launches 'Family Protection' in India to help households fight rising online scams

**Guwahati:** Global communications platform Truecaller has launched Family Protection in India, introducing a new household-focused safety feature aimed at protecting users from the growing threat of digital scams such as digital arrests, impersonation fraud and AI voice cloning. The rollout marks a shift in the company's strategy from basic caller identification to proactive protection for families.

The feature creates a "Safety Circle" for up to five people and is powered by the collective intelligence of more than 450 million users worldwide. The launch in India follows successful deployments in several international markets including Sweden, Chile, Malaysia and Kenya.

Family Protection allows a digitally aware family member—referred to as the household's "CTO" (chief technology officer)—to manage



the digital safety of relatives. The system provides real-time fraud alerts and a remote call hang-up feature that enables suspicious calls to be ended instantly for any group member. It also includes shared block lists, customizable security levels and a dashboard to monitor device safety settings across both Android and iOS devices. The service is free to use, while users opting for the Premium Family Plan

gain access to a broader suite of advanced safety features.

"Just knowing who is calling is no longer enough. Today, the real question is whether the call is safe to answer," said Rishit Jhunjhunwala. He added that the new feature empowers digitally aware family members to act as safety anchors for their households as scams become increasingly sophisticated and emotionally manipulative.

## Amazon Air expands to Northeast India, enhances logistics connectivity

**Mumbai:** Amazon on Monday announced the expansion of its dedicated air cargo service, Amazon Air, to Northeast India, introducing new air cargo routes connecting Kolkata and Guwahati to strengthen logistics connectivity and improve delivery speed across the region.

The expansion is expected to significantly enhance delivery reliability and speed, with Amazon projecting up to five times faster deliveries for customers across the Northeast. The service will support shipments to all seven sister states—Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura—through Amazon's integrated air and surface transportation network. Customers in the region will gain quicker access to a wide selection of products ranging from everyday essentials to smartphones, consumer electronics, fashion and beauty items.

The inaugural Amazon Air flight to Guwahati was flagged off from Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi, by Union Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu in the presence of Abhinav Singh, Vice President (Operations), India and Australia, Amazon, and Chetan Krishnaswamy, Vice President (Public Policy), Amazon India.

Assam Chief Secretary Dr Ravi Kota said the improved logistics connectivity will help local enterprises expand market access and generate employment opportunities for youth.

## Sterlite EdIndia backs digital school monitoring in Namsai; 133 schools onboarded on 'Hamara Vidyalay' app

**Itanagar:** Sterlite EdIndia Foundation has supported the implementation of the Hamara Vidyalay App across 133 schools in Arunachal Pradesh's Namsai district, aiming to strengthen digital monitoring of teacher attendance and student performance. The initiative was highlighted during an awareness and culmination event held at the Multipurpose Cultural Hall in Namsai.

The programme was attended by Namsai Deputy Commissioner C.R. Khampa, Deputy Director of School Education PokdeyYomgam, and District Planning Officer Keshab Sharma, along with district-level education officials and school leaders.

Addressing the gathering, Pokdey

Yomgam said, "Schools are shaped by the people who lead them. Accurate and timely data entry on the Hamara platform will help strengthen both schools and the education system." District Planning Officer Keshab Sharma highlighted the role of digital tools and proper data management in improving learning outcomes.

The event also served as the Hamara Vidyalay Appreciation Programme, recognising schools for digital adoption and classroom commitment. Four schools — KGBV Kasik, GSS Namsai, GUPS Tissue and GPS Bokabeel — received the Digital Champion Award for maintaining academic and examination data on the platform. Under the Committed

Classroom Award, honours were given to GHSS Chongkham, GHSS Ningroo, GSS Manmow, GSS Kumari, GUPS Podumoni, GUPS Gunanagar, GPS Dirak Deori and GPS Ita-Bhatta for ensuring consistent teacher presence during the 2025–26 academic year. Each winning school received ₹20,000 along with trophies and certificates.

The programme was hosted by Smti. Sushila Gurung, DTO, Department of Education, Namsai, and began with a welcome address and felicitation ceremony by Smt. KhyatiVed, Chief Manager (Operations), Sterlite EdIndia Foundation. Ven. Sivali Bhante, Director of Mahabodhi Lord Buddha College, also appreciated the Founda-

tion for signing anMoU with the institution and stressed the role of education in promoting social equality. A report on the evaluation process was presented by Pankaj Gurav, Assistant Manager, Operations, Sterlite EdIndia Foundation.

In Itanagar, the growing adoption of digital education tools such as the Hamara Vidyalay App signals expanding opportunities for edtech solutions and institutional partnerships across Arunachal Pradesh. Education stakeholders in the state capital note that technology-driven monitoring systems are increasingly being viewed as essential for improving school governance, transparency and learning outcomes.

## SEBI gives nod to intraday borrowing by mutual funds with conditions

**New Delhi:** Capital markets regulator, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), declared that it has allowed mutual funds to undertake intraday borrowings under specified conditions to manage short-term liquidity mismatches. In a circular, SEBI said the new framework will come into effect from April 1, 2026. According to the regulator, mutual funds -- particularly liquid and overnight schemes -- often face an intraday mismatch between redemption payouts to investors and the receipt



of maturity proceeds from instruments such as TREPS and reverse repo transactions.

To address this issue, SEBI has permitted mutual funds to access intraday borrowing facilities from financial institutions such as banks to bridge the temporary gap between inflows and

outflows of funds. The market watchdog also clarified that while borrowings by mutual fund schemes are generally capped at 20 per cent of the scheme's net assets and limited to a maximum duration of six months, this limit will not apply to intraday borrowings, subject to certain safe-

guards.

Under the new framework, asset management companies (AMCs) must obtain approval from their board as well as the board of trustees for the use of intraday borrowing facilities. The policy governing such borrowings must also be disclosed on the AMC's website. SEBI said intraday borrowings can only be used for specific purposes such as repurchase or redemption of units, payment of interest, or income distribution payouts to unitholders.

### Ishan Kishan partners Ai+ Smartphone ahead of Nova series launch

**Mumbai:** Ai+ Smartphone has announced an exclusive brand alliance with Indian cricketer Ishan Kishan, aligning its technology-driven identity with the player's aggressive, boundary-pushing approach to the game. The company said the partnership reflects a shared belief that ambition should not be limited by access, positioning both the brand and the cricketer as symbols of performance without compromise.

Ai+ Smartphone, which focuses on delivering modern technology at accessible price points, said the collaboration comes at a time when it is preparing to launch its upcoming Nova Series. As part of the association, Kishan will feature in the brand's campaigns and initiatives, including exclusive behind-the-scenes cricket content created using Ai+ devices.

Commenting on the development, Madhav Sheth, CEO of Ai+ Smartphone and Founder of NxtQuantum Shift Technologies, said, "Ishan Kishan represents something that resonates deeply with what Ai+ Smartphone stands for. He didn't wait for permission to back himself... Bringing Ishan on board reflects the kind of brand we are becoming as we prepare for the next phase of our journey."

### Coke Studio Bharat unveils Season 4 line-up, expands focus on regional soundscapes

**Mumbai:** Coca-Cola India on Tuesday announced the artist line-up for Season 4 of Coke Studio Bharat, marking the return of the music platform that has gained prominence for blending regional traditions with contemporary sounds. The new season opens with 'The List,' featuring a diverse mix of artists including Rekha Bhardwaj, Aditya Rikhari, Kutle Khan, Faheem Abdullah, Arsalan Nizami, Madhur Sharma, Mohammad Faiz and Mame Khan, among others.

After three seasons that reshaped India's streaming music landscape, the platform aims to deepen its engagement with local musical traditions. Season 3 tracks such as ArzKiyaHai and HoliAayi Re



had topped charts, setting high expectations for the upcoming edition.

According to the organisers, Season 4 will explore themes of devotion, memory, longing and storytelling, drawing from Rajasthani folk, Kashmiri narratives, Banaras-rooted traditions and Sufi influences. Rekha Bhardwaj said the platform allows "rediscovery of roots through collabora-

tion," while Aditya Rikhari highlighted its ability to retain emotional depth while expanding musical scale.

Shantanu Gangane of Coca-Cola India said the initiative continues to amplify regional languages and untold stories at scale, while Universal Music Group's Devraj Sanyal emphasised the role of authentic storytelling in shaping India's global music identity.

### Tata Motors to increase commercial vehicle prices from April 1



**New Delhi:** Leading automobile manufacturer Tata Motors on Monday announced price increase of up to 1.5 per cent across its commercial vehicle (CV) range, effective from April 1. The company said that price increase is being undertaken to partially offset the impact of rising commodity prices and other input costs. The increase will vary depending on the model and variant, a company statement said.

Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd's (TMPVL) Managing Director and CEO Shailesh Chandra had in February said that the company has been facing higher input costs for nearly a year, and the impact is now necessitating a price hike. In a quarterly earnings call, Chandra had said the rise in commodity prices, especially precious metals and copper, has added pressure on the company's cost structure. Tata Motors Limited reported a sharp 32 per cent year-on-year (YoY) rise in total sales for February 2026, as it sold 42,940 vehicles in domestic and international markets during the month, compared to 32,533 units in February 2025. Domestic sales stood at 40,893 units, marking a strong growth of 32.8 per cent from 30,797 units in the same month last year.

The company's international business also showed steady improvement, with sales rising 17.9 per cent to 2,047 units from 1,736 units a year ago. The growth was led by strong performance across various truck and commercial vehicle categories.

### Walmart Opens Registrations For Its 2nd India Growth Summit 2026

**Guwahati:** Walmart has opened registrations for its second India Growth Summit, set for May 7, 2026, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. The summit aims to empower Indian businesses, particularly micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), by exploring global trade opportunities.

Running until April 23, 2026, registrations are available for businesses looking to join the Walmart Marketplace and expand internationally. The event aligns with the Make in India initiative, focusing on key export categories like food and apparel.

Attendees will gain insights from Walmart and Flipkart leaders, participate in curated sessions, and access a Resource Center for one-on-one support with onboarding and cross-border trade.

Manish Joneja, Senior VP of Walmart Marketplace, emphasized the company's commitment to helping Indian entrepreneurs succeed globally. Since 2019, Walmart's Vriddhi Supplier Development program has trained over 70,000 MSMEs, with plans to train 100,000 more by 2028.

Select applicants will receive invitations to attend in person, facilitating connections with Walmart leadership and industry experts.

### Swiggy, HDFC Bank launch two new co-branded credit cards to boost lifestyle and travel rewards

**Mumbai:** Swiggy and HDFC Bank have expanded their co-branded credit card portfolio with the launch of two new variants — the Swiggy BLCK HDFC Bank Credit Card and the SwiggyOrnge HDFC Bank Credit Card — aimed at enhancing rewards across food delivery, quick commerce, lifestyle shopping, and travel spending. The new cards are designed to integrate seamlessly with consumers' everyday spending patterns, offering enhanced cashback and lifestyle benefits across Swiggy and leading online platforms. Existing users of the Swiggy HDFC Bank Credit Card continue to receive cashback benefits across Swiggy and more than 30 online platforms including Cleartrip, Nykaa, Paytm Travel, Amazon, Flipkart and Mynta.

As part of the enhanced rewards ecosystem, card members will receive instant discounts and cashback on partner platforms. This includes flat 19% off plus 5% cashback on hotel bookings through Cleartrip, 6% off plus 5% cashback on flight

bookings, and 5% off plus 5% cashback on Nykaa apps. The expanded portfolio offers potential annual savings of up to ₹48,000. The Swiggy BLCK card targets lifestyle spenders with 10% cashback on Swiggy, up to 5% cashback on entertainment, travel and e-commerce platforms, and 1% on other transactions, along with a complimentary three-month Swiggy One BLCK membership. Meanwhile, the SwiggyOrnge card offers 5% cashback on Swiggy and essential online categories, 1% cashback on other spends, and a 12-month Swiggy One membership.

Phani Kishan Addepalli, Chief Growth Officer and Co-Founder of Swiggy Ltd., said the cards are designed to make everyday spending more rewarding as consumers increasingly spend across lifestyle categories. Vidya Pradeep, Head of Credit and Debit Cards Product and Portfolio at HDFC Bank, said the expanded partnership aims to provide customers with greater flexibility and deeper rewards.

## Renault bets big on SUV comeback with new Duster launch; prices start at Rs 10.49 lakh



**Guwahati:** Renault India on Tuesday launched the all-new Duster, marking a major push in the competitive SUV segment, with turbo petrol prices starting at ₹10.49 lakh (ex-showroom). The company has also offered a limited-period introductory price of ₹10.29 lakh under its R-Pass pre-booking programme valid till March 31, while dispatches have begun nationwide.

Built on the Renault Group Modular Platform (RGMP), the SUV combines structural strength with improved ride and handling, tailored for Indian road conditions. The Turbo TCe 160 engine delivers 163 PS and 280 Nm, paired with manual and DCT options. The model comes in five trim; Authentic, Evolution, Techno, Techno+ and

Iconicoffering features such as Google-integrated infotainment, panoramic sunroof, ventilated seats, 17 ADAS features and a 360-degree camera.

Renault India Vice President Francisco Hidalgo said the new Duster is designed to meet evolving customer expectations around performance, durability and everyday usability.

In Guwahati, the launch is expected to strengthen Renault's position amid rising SUV demand driven by terrain conditions and aspirational buyers. Dealers report growing interest in feature-rich and rugged vehicles, with the Duster's high ground clearance, hybrid option and ADAS features likely to appeal to urban and semi-urban customers across Assam and the Northeast.

## Ambuja Cements, Adani Foundation strengthen rural connectivity in Assam's Umrangso

**Umrangso:** Ambuja Cements, part of the diversified Adani Portfolio, along with the Adani Foundation, has restored a key connecting road between Tharvelangso and Borolokhindong villages in Umrangso in Assam's DimasHasao district, significantly improving rural connectivity in the area.

The initiative involved the restoration of a 2.5 km stretch that had severely deteriorated over the years, making travel difficult for local residents and affecting mobility, safety and livelihoods. The poor condition of the road had created challenges for daily commuting, access to essential services and the transportation of agricultural produce.

Responding to the needs of the community, the Adani Foundation undertook critical patchwork restoration work to improve the road and ensure smoother movement for villagers.

With the improved infrastructure, residents can now experience safer and more reliable travel throughout the year. Schoolchildren are able to commute more comfortably, villagers can access nearby services more efficiently, and farmers can transport their produce to markets with greater ease.

Around 157 villagers are now benefiting from the improved connectivity, which has strengthened access to essential services and market linkages.

## Trust and creative freedom shape Arifin Shuvoo's role in Sony LIV's upcoming series Jazz City

**Mumbai:** The upcoming Sony LIV series Jazz City is set to bring the intrigue of 1970s Kolkata to screens, blending espionage, rebellion, and layered storytelling. At the centre of the series is actor Arifin Shuvoo, who plays the complex character Jimmy, developed through a close creative partnership with creator-director Soumik Sen.

Speaking on the experience, Shuvoo said, "Stepping into a world as layered as Jazz City required a director who didn't just give instructions but shared a vision. Soumik Da had complete faith in me from day one. He created a space where I could improvise, follow Jimmy's instincts, and truly embody him. When an actor knows the filmmaker trusts their gut, performances go beyond the ordinary."

Created, written and directed by Sen and produced by Studio 9 and Studio Next, Jazz City also features Sauraseni Maitra, Shantanu Ghatak, Aniruddha Gupta, Sayandeep Sen, Shreya Bhattacharya, Shataf Figar, Alexandra Taylor and Amit Saha. The series is scheduled to premiere on the streaming platform SonyLIV on March 19.

## Disney Cruise Line unveils 'Disney Adventure' in Singapore with grand star-studded christening

**Mumbai:** Disney Cruise Line officially christened its newest and largest ship, Disney Adventure, in a dazzling celebration in Singapore, marking the company's first vessel to homeport in Southeast Asia and signalling a major step in its global expansion strategy. The spectacular ceremony, held at the Walt Disney Theatre onboard the ship, blended music, storytelling and technology to showcase the magic of Disney, Pixar and Marvel.

Guests witnessed a star-studded performance featuring a 23-piece orchestra, Hollywood Performing Arts Hall of Fame inductee Jed Madela and international recording artist Damifm. The event also featured special appearances by Captain Mickey Mouse and Captain Minnie Mouse, alongside immersive visual effects that transformed the theatre into a vibrant celebration of Disney storytelling.

Chairman of Disney Experiences and incoming Chief Executive Officer of The Walt Disney Company, Josh D'Amaro, and President of Disney Signature Experiences, Joe Schott, joined performers on stage to mark the occasion. "The Walt Disney Company has always been built on storytelling and innovation. Disney Adventure represents a new chapter for Disney Cruise Line as we introduce our magic to new audiences across Asia," said D'Amaro.

Hollywood actor Robert Downey Jr., the ship's official godparent, delivered the ceremonial blessing, declaring: "I christen thee, Disney Adventure, may God bless this ship and all who sail upon her."

The ship features seven immersive themed zones, including San Fransokyo Street from Disney's Big Hero 6, a Broadway-style musical titled Remember, signature fireworks at sea, kids' clubs, adult lounges and the cruise line's first roller coaster at sea, Ironcycle Test Run.

## Post-Budget Webinar: MSDE to coordinate breakout session on 'Skilling in the Care Ecosystem' during the Post-Budget Webinar

**Guwahati:** Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) will host a dedicated Breakout Session on 'Strengthening India's Care Ecosystem: Skilling 1.5 Lakh Multiskilled Caregivers' as part of the Post-Budget Webinar series on key themes being organised by the Ministry of Finance following the Union Budget 2026-27. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare will lead and coordinate the whole-day webinar on the overarching theme 'Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas - Fulfilling Aspirations of People'. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will address the post-Budget webinar 2026-27 on "Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas - Fulfilling Aspirations of People" on March 9, 2026. The Webinar is expected to serve as a collaborative platform for all stakeholders to deliberate on implementation strategies outlined in Para-54 of the Budget Speech 2026-27, which states: "A strong Care Ecosystem, covering geriatric and allied care services will be built. A

variety of NSQF-aligned programmes will be developed to train multiskilled caregivers combining core care and allied skills, such as, wellness, yoga and operation of medical and assistive devices. In the coming year, 1.5 lakh caregivers will be trained."

The Union Budget 2026-27 has announced a significant push to strengthen the care ecosystem by expanding geriatric and allied care services and introducing NSQF-aligned training programmes that combine core caregiving competencies with allied skills, including wellness support, yoga, and the operation of medical and assistive devices. The initiative aims to train 1.5 lakh caregivers in the coming year, thereby enhancing India's healthcare and allied care support workforce. India's skilling ecosystem - supported by institutions such as the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET), Sector Skill Councils (SSCs), Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs)/National Skill Training

Institutes (NSTIs) and training partners under flagship schemes like Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PM-KVY), PM National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (PM-NAPS) and Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) - are being strengthened to meet these evolving workforce requirements. The breakout session will bring together experts from healthcare institutions, state governments, international organisations, and academia to deliberate on key priorities for strengthening India's care workforce. Insights emerging from the breakout discussions will be presented during the concluding session of the webinar. Shri Jayant Chaudhary, Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education, Government of India, will deliver the concluding remarks, offering key insights and perspective for strengthening the skilling ecosystem to serve the need of Care Economy, on behalf of MSDE.

## MSDE signs MoU with GATI Foundation to boost overseas job opportunities for skilled Indian workers



**Guwahati:** The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Government of India, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the GATI Foundation, a project under the SFI Impact Foundation, to strengthen institutional mechanisms supporting overseas employment and global mobility for skilled Indian workers.

The partnership aims to establish a strategic framework that advances India's position as a global hub of skilled talent while enabling Indian youth to access international employment opportunities in a structured and sustainable manner. As part of the collaboration, both organisations will develop a comprehensive, data-driven

roadmap for overseas skilling and mobility, identifying high-demand international job roles, priority destination countries and sectoral opportunities for Indian workers.

MSDE Secretary Debashree Mukherjee said India's demographic dividend can translate into global economic strength when the workforce is equipped with internationally recognised skills. She noted that the partnership will help build a structured ecosystem for global skill mobility by preparing youth with the right skills, language capabilities and cultural readiness.

Arnav Bhattacharya, Chief Executive Officer of GATI Foundation, said the initiative would strengthen coordination

between the Centre and states while aligning skilling efforts and implementation across India's workforce ecosystem.

Under the agreement, the GATI Foundation will establish a Project Management Unit at Kaushal Bhawan in New Delhi to support research, international partnerships and monitoring frameworks. The collaboration will also strengthen Skill India International Centres, expand partnerships with ITIs and polytechnics and facilitate global employer engagement.

The MoU will remain valid for three years, with both organisations bearing their own operational costs, supporting the broader vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

## Indus Towers strengthens sanitation infrastructure in Meghalaya schools under CSR initiative

**Shillong:** Indus Towers, one of India's largest telecom infrastructure companies, has strengthened sanitation infrastructure in government schools in Meghalaya by inaugurating girls' washroom facilities across 11 schools in Ri-Bhoi district under its flagship CSR initiative Pragati. The inauguration ceremony was held at Nehru Memorial Higher Secondary School and was attended by Andrew L. Myrthong, BDO of Umsning C&RD Block and in-charge Assistant Commissioner of Ri-Bhoi. The event was also live-casted to six additional schools where the facilities have been developed.

Speaking on the occasion, Myrthong said that providing



proper sanitation facilities in schools is vital to ensure a safe and comfortable learning environment for students, particularly young girls. "Initiatives such as these strengthen basic infrastructure in our education system and support the overall wellbeing of students. We appreciate the contribution made

by Indus Towers and its partners in supporting schools in the region," he said.

Highlighting the initiative, Rajender Gurung, Circle CEO – NES, Indus Towers Ltd., said access to hygienic sanitation facilities is crucial for the dignity, health and confidence of young girls. He added that

the Pragati initiative reflects the company's commitment to strengthening school infrastructure and addressing gaps that affect girls' education in underserved regions.

In Shillong, corporate social responsibility initiatives by large companies such as Indus Towers are increasingly supporting education and social infrastructure across Meghalaya. Such projects are also seen as encouraging greater corporate engagement in the region, with stakeholders noting that investments in school infrastructure and community wellbeing can strengthen long-term social development alongside economic activity in the Shillong market and surrounding districts.

## Hyatt signs 140-key Hyatt Place hotel in Ahmedabad, expands India portfolio



**Mumbai:** Hyatt Hotels Corporation on Tuesday announced the signing of an agreement for Hyatt Place Ahmedabad Nikol, marking a fresh step in its expansion across India's high-growth urban markets. The 140-key property, being developed by Golden Buildcon, will strengthen Hyatt's presence in Ahmedabad, a key administrative and commercial hub of Gujarat.

The upcoming hotel will feature multiple dining options, including a main restaurant and a grab-and-go market. It will also house a 3,455-square-foot ballroom, along with conference rooms and a boardroom, catering to meetings and events. Additional facilities such as a

fitness centre and swimming pool are expected to attract both business and leisure travellers.

Commenting on the development, Dhruva Rathore, Vice President – Real Estate & Development, India & Southwest Asia at Hyatt, said Ahmedabad's strong economic growth, driven by infrastructure, manufacturing, and financial services, continues to boost demand in the hospitality sector. He added that the signing underlines Hyatt's commitment to expanding in emerging and high-potential markets. Hyatt Place hotels are designed for modern travellers, offering flexible spaces, contemporary rooms, and round-the-clock conveniences.

## Bajaj General Insurance Unveils 'Eco Assure' for Commercial Vehicles

**Mumbai:** Bajaj General Insurance Limited has launched Eco Assure, an add-on cover for commercial vehicles aimed at reducing repair costs and operational downtime. With rising repair costs and maintenance challenges, Eco Assure offers two options—Eco Assure Essential and Eco Assure Advantage—providing flexible coverage to vehicle owners.

Key features include a 100% depreciation waiver for reconditioned parts, up to 25% for new parts, and elimination of compulsory deductibles at claim time. Additional benefits cover routine repairs, overturning scenarios, and towing assistance. The Advantage plan includes retrieval for stranded vehicles, support for electric vehicles, and legal expense coverage.

Dr. Tapan Singhel, MD & CEO, emphasized the importance of commercial vehicles in India's economy and how Eco Assure enhances repair efficiency, enabling quicker claim resolutions. Claims can be initiated via a toll-free helpline, ensuring easy accessibility for policyholders.

With Eco Assure, Bajaj General Insurance continues to strengthen its motor insurance offerings, addressing the needs of commercial vehicle owners in managing repair expenses effectively.

## Nissan ties up with KPKB, offers exclusive benefits on Magnite for police and paramilitary personnel

**Guwahati:** Nissan Motor India Pvt. Ltd. (NMI-PL) has announced a collaboration with the Kendriya Police KalyanBhandar (KPKB), a welfare initiative under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), to provide exclusive mobility benefits to serving and retired police and paramilitary personnel and their families across the country.

Under the association, KPKB beneficiaries will receive special benefits on the New Nissan Magnite over and above existing customer offers. The benefits will be available at all Nissan dealerships in India. In addition, buyers can avail an attractive finance scheme at an interest rate of 5.55%, aimed at making vehicle ownership more affordable. Nissan is also offering a complimentary three-year prepaid maintenance programme for KPKB beneficiaries as part of the initiative.

Commenting on the partnership, Nissan Motor India Managing Director Saurabh Vatsa said the company holds "utmost respect for the men and women who serve and protect the nation" and that the association with KPKB reflects Nissan's commitment to providing safe and reliable mobility solutions to security personnel and their families.



The company said the continued success of the Nissan Magnite has strengthened its growth momentum, while the launch of the all-new Nissan Gravite marks another milestone in expanding its product portfolio and customer base.

In Guwahati, automobile dealers say the collaboration could boost interest among police and paramilitary personnel stationed across Assam and the Northeast. With several CAPF units and security establishments operating in the region, the special benefits and finance offers are expected to increase enquiries for compact SUVs such as the Magnite in the Guwahati automobile market.

## MSDE to host breakout session on skilling 1.5 lakh caregivers at post-budget webinar

**Guwahati:** The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) will host a breakout session on "Strengthening India's Care Ecosystem: Skilling 1.5 Lakh Multiskilled Caregivers" during the Post-Budget Webinar on the theme 'Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas – Fulfilling Aspirations of People'. The webinar is part of a series organised by the Ministry of Finance following the Union Budget 2026–27. The day-long webinar will be led and coordinated by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Prime Minister Narendra

Modi is scheduled to address the Post-Budget Webinar 2026–27 on March 9. The platform will bring together key stakeholders to discuss implementation strategies outlined in Para-54 of the Union Budget speech, which proposes building a strong care ecosystem covering geriatric and allied care services. India's skilling ecosystem—including NCVET, Sector Skill Councils, ITIs, NSTIs and flagship schemes such as PMKVY, PM-NAPS and Jan Shikshan Sansthan—will support the initiative. Thousands of candidates

have already been trained in roles such as Geriatric Caregiver, Home Health Aide and General Duty Assistant. In Guwahati, the initiative is expected to create new opportunities for skill development institutes and healthcare service providers in Assam and the wider Northeast. With the region witnessing growing demand for geriatric care and home-based healthcare services, training programmes for caregivers could open employment avenues for local youth while strengthening the healthcare support ecosystem in cities like Guwahati.

## BHIM App names MS Dhoni as brand ambassador to boost digital payments push

**Itanagar:** NPCI BHIM Services Limited (NBSL) has announced the appointment of former Indian cricket captain and World Cup winner Mahendra Singh Dhoni as the brand ambassador for the BHIM Payments App, reinforcing its strategic focus on scale, inclusion, and long-term user confidence.

The collaboration brings together two entities associated with trust, consistency, and dependability. Built on NPCI's robust infrastructure, BHIM has evolved into a widely used digital payments platform, while Dhoni's journey from a small town to national leadership mirrors the app's growth across geographies and demographics.

Lalitha Nataraj, MD & CEO, NBSL, said the partnership aligns with the company's vision to strengthen user preference in the next phase of digital payments growth. "Our objective is to position BHIM Payments App not just as a payments option but as the preferred app for every member of the Indian household. Trust remains central to everything we do, and Dhoni represents that same trust," she said.



Mahendra Singh Dhoni said the app's simplicity and accessibility were key factors in his association, noting that digital platforms must ensure users feel comfortable and confident while transacting.

Repositioned as "Bharat Ka Apna Payments App," BHIM continues to expand across Tier 1, 2, and 3 markets, offering services in over 15 regional languages and optimised features for low-connectivity environments, while leveraging rewards and merchant partnerships to drive adoption.

## 75.8% Indians now active dairy consumers, multi-product dairy basket driving household nutrition: Godrej Jersey Report

**Guwahati:** A new Lactography Report released by Godrej Jersey has revealed that 75.8% of Indians are now active dairy consumers, indicating that milk and dairy products have become deeply embedded in everyday household nutrition across the country. The report highlights that Indian households increasingly consume multiple dairy products alongside milk, including curd, paneer, ghee, butter, lassi, yogurt and cheese.

According to the findings, Indian homes are gradually building what the report calls a “dairy basket”, where several dairy products are consumed regularly rather than relying solely on milk. Among active dairy consumers, curd leads with 80% preference, followed by paneer (76%), butter (74%) and ghee (71%). Other widely consumed items include lassi (63%), cheese (58%), yogurt (57%) and traditional milk-based sweets (55%), reflecting

dairy’s role across cooking, snacks and festive dishes.

Commenting on the findings, Shantanu Raj, Head of Marketing at Godrej Jersey, said India has moved beyond the idea of “just a glass of milk,” with dairy evolving into a value-added nutrition category spanning traditional staples and modern high-protein beverages. He added that the company is focusing on delivering products that combine taste, protein and convenience for modern



consumers.

The trend is also visible in Guwahati, where demand for paneer, curd, yogurt and packaged dairy beverages has grown steadily in recent years. Retailers

report increasing consumer preference for ready-to-consume dairy products, protein drinks and flavored milk, particularly among young urban consumers and fitness-focused buyers. The city’s expanding supermarket and café culture has further boosted dairy consumption beyond traditional household use, aligning Guwahati with the broader national shift toward a diversified dairy basket.

## Rasna bets on Nutri+ launch and ‘Prankies’ revival to drive 15–20% growth



**Guwahati:** India’s iconic beverage concentrate brand Rasna has unveiled Rasna Nutri+, a nutrition-enriched powder concentrate, as part of its strategy to redefine the summer beverage segment and capture rising demand for healthier drinks. Developed by Rasna’s R&D division, the new product blends the brand’s signature taste with added vitamins and minerals aimed at modern Indian families seeking both refreshment and wellness.

The launch comes as India’s health drinks market, valued at USD 9 billion in 2024, is projected to grow at 11–12% CAGR over the coming decade, creating strong opportunities for functional beverages fortified with nutrients.

As part of the 2026 summer campaign, Rasna has revived its popular collectible toy characters called “Prankies”, including snakes, lizards and rats, placed inside Rasna Nutri+ 32-glass packs and Rasna Insta Nutri+ 500g packs. The brand has also launched a digital challenge encouraging users to upload prank videos on social media for prizes and recognition on Rasna’s official platforms.

The campaign features Bollywood actor Rakul Preet Singh as brand ambassador, alongside the debut of seven-year-old Areez Khambatta, son of Rasna Group Chairman Piruz Khambatta, as the new Rasna Boy. Rasna will also run a major media blitz across digital platforms, influencer networks, television and live broadcasts of the Indian Premier League to maximise nationwide reach.

Piruz Khambatta said Rasna Nutri+ bridges the gap between taste and nutrition while supporting local agriculture. “We source fruits from farmers across India and export our products to more than 60 countries, staying true to the ‘Make in India’ vision,” he said. Rakul Preet Singh added that Rasna Nutri+ combines childhood nostalgia with the nutritional needs of today’s families.

In Guwahati, strong seasonal demand is expected for Rasna Nutri+ during the upcoming summer months, especially among households and small retailers. With Rasna already enjoying strong brand recall in Assam, traders say the combination of added nutrition, aggressive marketing and the revival of collectible Prankies could further strengthen the brand’s presence in Guwahati’s fast-growing packaged beverage market.

## HSBC Mutual Fund launches first Gold ETFs in India; NFO opens this week

**Guwahati:** HSBC Mutual Fund has announced the launch of its maiden Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) offerings in India with the introduction of the HSBC Gold ETF and the HSBC Gold ETF Fund of Fund (FoF), marking the company’s entry into the ETF segment in the country. The New Fund Offer (NFO) for the schemes opens this week.

The HSBC Gold ETF NFO will remain open for subscription from March 16 to March 18, 2026, while the HSBC Gold ETF Fund of Fund will accept investments from March 19 to March 25, 2026. Both schemes will be managed by Dipan Parikh of HSBC Mutual Fund.

The HSBC Gold ETF will invest primarily in physical gold or gold-related instruments and its performance will be benchmarked against the domestic price of gold. Meanwhile, the HSBC Gold ETF FoF will invest mainly in the units of the HSBC Gold ETF. During the NFO period, investors can participate with a minimum investment of Rs 5,000 and in multiples of Re 1 thereafter.

Commenting on the launch, Kailash Kulkarni, CEO of HSBC Mutual Fund, said gold has long been an important asset in Indian households and is increasingly being viewed as a key pillar of asset allocation and portfolio di-



versification. He noted that gold ETFs enable investors to gain exposure to gold without the complexities of physical storage or handling.

Venugopal Manghat, CIO – Equity at HSBC Mutual Fund, said gold’s low correlation with equities makes it an effective hedge during periods of market volatility and can help investors manage portfolio risk and maintain long-term stability.

In Guwahati, investor interest in gold-linked investment products has been rising steadily in the region, particularly among young investors and salaried professionals seeking diversification beyond traditional gold purchases. With gold continuing to hold strong cultural and investment value in Assam, the launch of digital gold investment options such as ETFs is expected to attract investors in the Guwahati market, offering them a regulated and convenient route to participate in gold price movements without buying physical bullion.

## Gen Z drives shift to coffee gifting, brands tap into experiential trend

**Guwahati:** A growing shift in consumer behaviour is reshaping India’s gifting market, with Gen Z increasingly turning to coffee as a preferred choice for thoughtful and experience-led presents. Moving away from conventional, last-minute gifting, this generation is prioritising intentional purchases that reflect personality, shared moments, and everyday meaning.

Market trends indicate that coffee is no longer viewed as a routine beverage but as an immersive experience. From long conversations and creative brainstorming sessions to slow weekend mornings, coffee is becoming central to social interactions. Industry players note that rituals such as brewing together, experiment-



ing with blends, and recreating café-style drinks at home are driving this transition towards more personal gifting habits.

The trend also aligns with Gen Z’s focus on individuality. Variants ranging from strong and bold to smooth and balanced allow consumers to curate gifts that mirror moods and preferences. As a result, premium coffee hampers paired with stylish mugs are emerging as popular options, offering not just prod-

ucts but shared experiences.

In Guwahati, the evolving trend is gaining traction among urban youth and young professionals. Retailers and café operators report a steady rise in demand for premium coffee products and curated gifting hampers. With the city’s café culture expanding and consumers becoming more brand-aware, businesses see significant potential for coffee-led gifting to grow into a strong niche segment in the local market.

## ISUZU rolls out nationwide pre-summer service camp from March 23

**Mumbai:** Isuzu Motors India has announced a nationwide ‘ISUZU I-Care Pre-Summer Camp’, aimed at enhancing customer service experience and ensuring vehicle readiness ahead of the summer season. The service initiative will be conducted across all authorised ISUZU dealer service outlets from March 23 to March 28, 2026.

The camp, part of the company’s ‘ISUZU Care’ programme, will cover ISUZU D-MAX pick-ups and SUVs, offering preventive maintenance checks along with special service benefits for customers. The initiative is designed to provide a hassle-free driving experience during peak summer conditions, with a focus on vehicle performance and safety.

The service camp will be held across a wide network of locations, including major cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Guwahati, and Kolkata, along with several tier-2 and tier-3 markets. Customers can avail offers and schedule service appointments through authorised dealerships or via the company’s official website and toll-free support.

## Bandhan Mutual Fund Expands Presence in Guwahati

**Guwahati:** Bandhan AMC Limited has opened a new branch office in Guwahati to enhance services for investors and mutual fund distributors. Located at Ganapati Enclave, Ulubari, the branch features a training room aimed at boosting customer service and financial awareness in the region.

Chief Business Officer Gaurab Parija and Founder Chandra Shekar Ghosh emphasized Guwahati’s growth potential, expressing confidence that the new office will further their commitment to the market. Established in 2000, Bandhan AMC offers a variety of investment products and serves over three and a half million clients across more than 790 cities.