

Police Personnel Trained in Haflong Ahead of Forthcoming Assembly Elections

Haflong, Feb 11: In preparation for the forthcoming Assembly elections, a Level-1 training session was conducted for police personnel at the Police Reserve, Haflong. The programme aimed to strengthen election preparedness and ensure smooth and lawful conduct of the electoral process in the district. During the session, personnel were comprehensively briefed on the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and the critical role of the police in maintaining law and order during the election period. Emphasis was laid on neutrality, vigilance, and coordination with civil administration to



uphold free and fair polling. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Ripunjoy Kakati, APS, addressed the gathering and highlighted the importance of professional conduct and strict adherence to election guidelines. He urged the personnel to remain alert and proactive throughout the election cycle. Also present on the occa-

sion were Additional District Commissioner Shaurya Sharma, ACS, and Additional Superintendent of Police Luit Talukdar, along with other key officials. The training concluded with a renewed commitment from the police force to ensure peaceful, transparent, and incident-free Assembly elections in Dima Hasao district.

MoS Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar to Visit Dima Hasao on March 5; High-Level Preparatory Meeting Held in Haflong

Haflong, Feb 18: A crucial preparatory meeting was convened at the Council Conference Hall in Haflong ahead of the proposed visit of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, who is scheduled to tour Dima Hasao district on March 5, 2026. The meeting was chaired by Principal Secretary, Partha Sarathi Jahari, ACS, who reviewed the arrangements and departmental preparedness for the Minister's visit. During the session, detailed briefings were presented outlining responsibilities of various departments to ensure smooth coordination and effective execution of duties, particularly in view of the review meeting that will be conducted by the Union Minister during his visit. Officials were instructed to ensure proper documentation, status updates of ongoing developmental works, and readiness for presentations before the Minister. Emphasis was laid on inter-departmental coordination, protocol management, security arrangements, and logistical planning to make the visit seamless and productive. Council Joint Secretaries Rebecca Changsan, ACS, and Amit Porbosa, ACS, along with other



senior officials, attended the meeting. Representing the District Administration, Additional Deputy Commissioner Shhaurya Sharrma, ACS, and Additional Superintendent of Police Luit Talukdar were also present. They assured full administrative and security support to ensure the visit proceeds without any inconvenience. The upcoming visit of the Union Minister is expected to provide an opportunity for reviewing key developmental initiatives, strengthening coordination between the Centre and local administration, and addressing district-specific issues concerning governance and internal security.

AIOCD Flags AI-Generated Fake Prescriptions as Major Public Health Risk

Guwahati, Feb 17: The All India Organisation of Chemists and Druggists (AIOCD) has expressed serious concern over the rising misuse of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to generate fake medical prescriptions, warning that the trend poses a significant threat to public health. In a statement, AIOCD President J. S. Shinde and General Secretary Rajiv Singhal said recent media investigations—including reports in a reputed national newspaper—have revealed that AI-generated prescriptions bearing fabricated hospital details are being accepted by certain online platforms. According to the organisation, this loophole is enabling the illegal online sale of antibiotics, psychotropic drugs, opioids, and Schedule H & X medicines. The AIOCD alleged that some illegal e-pharmacies are misusing Government Notifications GSR 817(E) and GSR 220(E) to bypass safeguards mandated under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940. The body noted that, unlike offline chemists who follow strict verification procedures, many online platforms lack effective human scrutiny, making detection of AI-fabricated prescriptions extremely difficult. Raising the alarm, the organisation urged the Government of India to immediately withdraw the said notifications, take strict action against illegal e-pharmacies, and declare AI-generated prescriptions invalid across the country to safeguard public health. The press release was issued by Haladhar Deka, Secretary, Chemists and Druggists Association of Assam.

CEM Debolal Gorlosa Inaugurated Cancer Care Facility in Haflong, Boosting District Healthcare



Haflong, Feb 20: In a major boost to healthcare services in Dima Hasao, Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC), Debolal Gorlosa, formally inaugurated the Cachar Cancer Hospital & Research Centre Haflong Campus (CCHRHC) at the Dima Hasao TB Centre within Haflong Civil Hospital on Thursday. The inauguration ceremony was attended by NCHAC Chairman Mohet Hojai, Executive Members Samuel Changsan, Donpainon Thaosen and Probita Johori, MACs Dhriti Thaosen and Monjoy Langthasa, and Joint Secretary Rebecca Changsan, ACS, among other dignitaries. Addressing the gathering, CEM Gorlosa reiterated his administration's commitment to strengthening the district's medical infrastructure to ensure quality healthcare access for all citizens. Stressing the importance of prevention, he urged the public to adopt healthy lifestyles through regular physical activities such as gym and yoga. He also made a strong appeal to citizens to avoid tobacco consumption to reduce the growing incidence of cancer and prevent premature deaths. Speaking on the occasion, Executive Member Samuel Changsan highlighted the

transformative significance of the new centre, noting that it will provide essential services such as early cancer detection, chemotherapy, and palliative care within the district. He emphasized that the facility will substantially reduce the physical and financial burden on patients who previously had to travel to Silchar or Guwahati for treatment. Dr. Iqbal Bahar, representing the Cachar Cancer Hospital & Research Centre, expressed gratitude to CEM Debolal Gorlosa for his pivotal support in establishing the Haflong campus. He informed that the facility has been developed in collaboration with NCHAC, Haflong, with support from HDFC Ergo General Insurance Company Limited under its CSR initiative. Dr. Bahar further stated that the project is guided by the vision of Ravi Kannan, Director of CCHRHC, to extend cancer care services to remote and underserved communities. He noted with concern that a significant number of cancer cases in Dima Hasao are related to oral and throat cancers. The programme was attended by health officials, NGOs, Gaon Burahs, media persons, and members of the public, marking a significant step forward in improving specialized healthcare access in the hill district.

Pension & GPF Samadhan Sabha' Held in Haflong to Resolve Pending Retirement Cases

Haflong, Feb 20: The Office of the Accountant General (A&E), Assam, in collaboration with the District Commissioner, Dima Hasao, organized a two-day Pension & GPF Samadhan Sabha at the District Commissioner's Conference Hall in Haflong on February 19 and 20, 2026. The initiative was aimed at providing on-the-spot solutions to retired government employees facing difficulties in the settlement of their pension and General Provident Fund (GPF) claims. The programme was chaired by Deputy Accountant General (Pension, GPF & GE) Snehasis Mukherjee, IA&AS. He was joined by Additional District Commissioner Shaurya Sharma, ACS, along with a specialized team from the Accountant General's office compris-



ing Sanjoy Bhattacharjee, Senior Accounts Officer (PF); Ranoi Barman, Senior Accounts Officer (Pension); Narayan Das, Senior Accounts Officer (PF); Bedabyas Bhattacharjee, Assistant Accounts Officer (Accounts); and Sanjit Parasar, Accountant (Pension). Other

senior district officials were also present. Addressing the session, Mukherjee stated that the primary objective of the Samadhan Sabha was to extend direct assistance to retired employees whose pension or GPF cases had either been returned or remained unset-

tled for a prolonged period after retirement. He emphasized that the initiative seeks to streamline the settlement process and ensure that pensioners receive their legitimate dues without further administrative hurdles. The programme also featured capacity-building sessions focusing on correct procedures for processing GPF Final Payment applications and pension papers to minimize errors and delays. Officials addressed various accounting issues and held one-on-one interactions with Drawing and Disbursing Officers (DDOs) and concerned staff to resolve specific pending cases. The two-day exercise was widely appreciated as a proactive step towards expediting pension and GPF settlements in Dima Hasao district.

CAA Legal Battle: Final SC hearings start May 5

Chief Justice Kant said that the bench would conclude the hearing on May 12

New Delhi, Feb 20: The Supreme Court on Thursday said that it will start the final hearing on May 5 on over 200 pleas challenging the constitutional validity of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA). A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalaya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi issued procedural directions regarding the final hearings on the petitions, which have been pending since 2019-2020. The bench said that it would hear the petitioners, including the lead petitioner, the Indian Union of Muslim League (IUML), for one-and-a-half days, while the Centre will be given one day to present its arguments. The bench has also asked the parties to file additional documents and submissions within four weeks.

Chief Justice Kant said that the bench would conclude the hearing on



May 12. The bench also said that it would first hear pleas relating to the pan-India application of CAA and thereafter take up petitions concerning Assam and Tripura in line with an

earlier 2020 order directing segregation of the matters.

The apex court on Thursday also disposed of a PIL challenging the Election Commission of India's de-

cision to conduct Special Revision of electoral rolls in Assam instead of a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections, terming it as infructuous. The bench of CJI Surya Kant, Justices Bagchi and Pancholi passed the order, after hearing advocate Vijay Hansaria (for petitioner) and advocate Dama Ses-hadri Naidu (for poll panel). During the hearing, Hansaria argued that the only reason given by the ECI for not conducting SIR was that there is National Register of Citizens (NRC) in the State, which is being monitored by the Supreme Court. However, there is no case pending as such. Naidu, on the other hand, informed that the SR was already complete and therefore the case has been rendered infructuous. The PIL was filed by Mrinal Kumar Choudhary, former president of the Gauhati High Court Bar Association.

Shah: Congress failed Assam on border security



Nathanpur, Feb 20: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday accused the Congress of leaving the country's borders open, which led to infiltration in Assam, and asserted that the BJP government, headed by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, has effectively dealt with the problem. Addressing a programme in Assam's Cachar district, Shah also alleged that the Congress did not initiate any development programme during its rule in the state, but "now 14 kms of road are being constructed daily, which is the highest in the country". He launched the second phase of Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP) from the Cachar district, which will cover 15 states and 2 Union Territories across the country.

Shah said the development of border villages of the country is a priority for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and the programme is "a step towards achieving this goal".

The programme has been launched to stop migration from the border villages and prevent infiltration through these international boundaries, Shah said. He also said the Rs 6900-crore second phase of the VVP will cover 1954 villages across the country. "In the last 10 years, the BJP has ensured Assam's development and will make the state flood-free in the next five years," he added.

3 dead, 4 injured in Maharashtra pre-wedding clash

Mumbai, Feb 20: Three people were killed in a clash between the bride's and the bridegroom's relatives over a WhatsApp message in Maharashtra. During the pre-wedding ceremonies held at Pimpalner in Sakri Tehsil in Dhule district, relatives started arguing over a WhatsApp message which soon escalated into an argument. According to police, the tensions further intensified and relatives attacked one another with sharp weapons at the wedding venue.

Three people succumbed to injuries sustained during the sudden attack. The victims are Devendra Dnyaneshwar Pawar (35), Suresh Gosavi (55), and Sahil Suresh Gosavi (22). Four others have been critically injured and undergoing treatment at the hospital.

After reports of a fatal clash between two groups at Pimpalner, the local police rushed to the spot and tried to pacify the gathered crowd. The police deployed additional security to maintain law and order in this village. The local police have arrested three suspects—Kantilal Gosavi (42), Jaswant Gosavi (36), and their driver. The trio fled the scene but were intercepted on the Gujarat-Navapur border.

The police also recovered a knife from the suspects, and all of them hailing from Son-gad in Gujarat. The situation in the area is currently calm, according to police reports.

Priyanka Gandhi Slams Assam CM's 'Pak Link' Remark as Dirty Politics

Guwahati, Feb 20: Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Friday criticised Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for attacking Gaurav Gogoi over alleged Pakistan links, asserting that dragging his family and children into it is "wrong politics." After paying homage to Zubeen Garg at his cremation ground 'Zubeen Khetra' at Sonapur on the outskirts of Guwahati, Vadra said the singer was "above politics" and spread the message of love throughout his life. "There are two types of leaders in politics -- one who does positive politics and the other who does polarisation. Gaurav Gogoi is do-

ing the politics of love," she said when asked about Sarma's repeated attacks on the Assam Congress chief over



alleged Pakistan links.

Vadra asserted that Gogoi is "a positive person, and wants to bring positivity in politics."

"That is why such attacks on him are taking place. People of Assam understand this. But the attacks on Gaurav

said. Instead of such politics, the Assam CM should "talk about the youth and women of the state, who are looking for jobs", the Wayanad MP said. "You are seeing how much corruption is taking place. It is just a betrayal of the people of the state," she told reporters. Talking about her visit to 'Zubeen Khetra' in the morning, Vadra said that she went to the cremation ground to pay her respect to the singer and not do any politics over it. "Zubeen Garg was above politics. His cremation ground should be a sacred place and should not be used for politics," she added.

and his family are the wrong politics. Nobody should attack the family and children (of a political leader)," Vadra

Hemant Soren: Kerala baby "immortal" after organ donation



Ranchi, Feb 20: Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren paid tributes to Aalin Sherin Abraham, the 10-month-old girl from Kerala whose parents donated her organs af-

ter her death, saying that the child has become immortal. Soren said that his government would take all steps to strengthen the state's organ donation policy. Losing a

child is the most unbearable moment for the parents, Soren said in a post on X. "At a time of grief, the decision of Mrs Sherin N John and Mr Arun Abraham to donate the organs of their beloved child is not ordinary, but an example of remarkable courage, sacrifice, and compassion. This wasn't just organ donation; it was a living testament to their unwavering faith in humanity," Soren said on Thursday. "Though Alin's life was brief, today she lives on as hope in many homes - and has become immortal," he said. The Jharkhand chief minister also said he saluted the sensitivity shown by his Kerala coun-

terpart, Pinarayi Vijayan, for according state honours to the last rites of the child. Describing organ donation as the greatest act of giving life to others, Soren said the Jharkhand government would take all steps to strengthen the state's organ donation policy further to encourage more such life-saving initiatives.

He said the example set by Aalin's parents transcends borders, languages and all distinctions, and stands as an enduring message for humanity. Aalin Sherin was critically injured in a road accident on February 5 while travelling with her mother and maternal grandparents

at Pallam near Kottayam. Despite intensive medical efforts, doctors confirmed her brain death on February 12. With her parents' consent, the organ donation process was coordinated through the Kerala State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (K-SOTTO).

Her heart valve was sent to the Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram; her liver to KIMS Hospital, Thiruvananthapuram; and her kidneys to the Government Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram. Her eyes were donated to an eye bank.

Shah: Language is for Development, Not Dispute



Agartala, Feb 20: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday asserted that language should not be a subject of dispute but a powerful instrument of development, urging northeastern states, including Tripura, to preserve their indigenous languages through the Nagari script. He was addressing the Joint Regional Official Language Conference of the eastern, northeastern and northern regions. Emphasising the importance of script in language preservation, the Union Home Minister said that indigenous languages cannot be effectively safeguarded through foreign scripts. Referring specifically to Tripura, he stated that those seeking to preserve their native languages in foreign scripts should consider adopting the Nagari script in the larger interest of long-term conservation and growth. He added that several other northeastern states

have already recognised the significance of this issue and have moved forward, and Tripura should also take a clear and positive decision without creating confusion.

Shah claimed that more than 2,000 languages across the country can be preserved using the Nagari script. He observed that many languages do not have their own scripts and that Nagari can play a constructive role in their preservation and institutional development. He called upon policymakers, scholars and administrators to take proactive steps for the advancement of both official and local languages, underlining their critical role in governance and nation-building.

On the subject of Hindi, he said that there has been sustained propaganda against the language for decades. However, he maintained that Hindi and regional languages are not in conflict, describing their relationship as akin to “two sisters from the same mother.” According to him, the growth of Hindi does not undermine regional languages; rather, it can facilitate their wider reach and mutual enrichment. He noted that under the leadership of Narendra Modi, the government has placed renewed emphasis on education in native languages, and communication through Hindi has become easier

across different parts of the country, thereby strengthening national unity. Highlighting the rich cultural diversity of the Northeast, Shah said the region is home to over 200 languages, 160 tribes, nearly 50 distinct festivals and more than 30 traditional dance forms spread across eight states. He observed that a region once associated with insurgency has witnessed a transformative decade marked by peace agreements and cultural resurgence. As a result, large-scale events such as Rajbhasha Sammelans can now be organised smoothly.

The Home Minister also stressed the necessity of imparting primary education in the mother tongue, stating that foundational learning is most effective when delivered in a child’s native language. He urged families to encourage their children to pursue studies in their mother tongue to ensure stronger cognitive development and cultural continuity. Calling upon dignitaries and officials present at the conference, Shah appealed for collective efforts to further strengthen official and local languages to ensure their preservation, systematic development and contribution to national integration. Shah was accompanied by Chief Minister Prof Dr Manik Saha, MP Biplab Kumar Deb, MP Rajib Bhattacharjee, and others.

NSCN-IM Terror Plot Foiled in Arunachal

Itanagar, Feb 20: An FIR has been registered and investigation under way after security forces in Arunachal Pradesh foiled a major terror incident by arresting an NSCN-IM militant and recovering a cache of arms and ammunition during a joint operation in the border district of Longding. The arrested militant has been identified as self-styled ‘captain’ Ponglem Wangpan (35), a cadre of the Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim. During the search, the security forces recovered one 5.56 mm INSAS rifle along with a magazine, one 9 mm pistol with a magazine, 18 rounds of 5.56

mm ammunition and two rounds of 9 mm pistol ammunition. and search operations in other suspected locations across the district to trace remaining militants. Meanwhile, in a separate operation, Arunachal Pradesh Police in Namsai district seized 133 grams of suspected heroin worth around Rs seven lakh and arrested a woman, following due legal procedure. A case has been registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. The seizure reflects the Arunachal Pradesh Police’s strong commitment to combating drug trafficking and ensuring a drug-free society, another police official said.

ed the operation and successfully thwarted a major terror plot by arresting an NSCN-IM (National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak-Muivah) extremist.

A police official in Itanagar on Friday said that the operation was carried out by a joint team of the Assam Rifles, Special Task Force and Longding police. Security forces have also intensified combing



Prime Minister Modi Plans Trip to Barak Valley, Assam



Guwahati, Feb 20: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Assam’s Barak Valley on March 14 to inaugurate the Rs 22,000-crore Guwahati-Silchar expressway, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced on Friday. Assam Travel Packages The six-lane expressway will cut travel time between Guwahati and Silchar from over eight hours to around four-and-a-half hours. Sarma said construction is set to begin soon, with tenders finalized, wildlife board clearance obtained, and land acquisition progressing smoothly. During the visit, the Prime Minister will also inaugurate a key flyover in Silchar. Regarding the proposed greenfield airport in Silchar, Sarma said the state has received environmental clearance and aims for cabinet approval by March, or shortly after the assembly elections if needed.

The announcement comes ahead of Assam’s assembly elections, with BJP candidate declarations expected following the Prime Minister’s visit.

MLA Passes After Illness

Imphal, Feb 20: BJP MLA from Thanlon Assembly Constituency, Vungzagin Valte, passed away this evening following a prolonged medical battle stemming from injuries he sustained during the May 2023 violence in Imphal. Valte, a Kuki-Zo legislator, had suffered grievous injuries amid the outbreak of violence in the state in May 2023. He had undergone extensive treatment in New Delhi and was later staying in Churachandpur after being discharged.

On February 7, his health condition suddenly deteriorated, prompting his immediate admission to the ICU at Churachandpur Medical College Hospital for stabilisation. In view of the seriousness of his condition, he was airlifted on February 8 from Imphal to Medanta – The Medicity in Gurugram for advanced treatment. Brahmaputra River Tours Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh closely monitored Valte’s health condition through the

night and arranged for an advanced life-support ambulance along with a team of doctors from Imphal to be dispatched to Churachandpur around midnight to facilitate his transfer.

Despite sustained medical efforts, Valte succumbed to his condition this evening. His passing has triggered an outpouring of grief from political leaders, party workers, and supporters across the state. Further details regarding funeral arrangements are awaited.

Mizoram assembly passes bill to curb unauthorized occupation of government and public lands

Aizawl, Feb 20: In a significant move to protect the state’s shrinking public spaces, the Mizoram assembly on Thursday passed a fresh bill seeking an overhaul of land administration with a more aggressive, robust legal framework aimed at curbing unauthorized occupation of both government and community-held assets. The Mizoram (Prevention of Public Land Encroachment) Bill, 2026, introduced by Land Revenue and Settlement Minister B. Lalchhanzova, seeks to replace the existing Mizoram Prevention of Government Land Encroachment Act, 2001, which has several flaws in protecting public lands and handling the state’s rapid urbanization. Lalchhanzova said that the existing act remained limited in both scope and enforceability, and the major flaw is its narrow definition of “government land,” which often left village council lands, community playgrounds, and grazing areas vulnerable to private takeover without clear legal protection. “The encroachment of such land does not just result in a loss of assets, but also sows seeds of conflict and disturbs planned development,” he said.

The Minister added that the existing act also lacked procedural safeguards, such as timelines for eviction,



structured inquiry processes, or opportunities for appeal. Penalties were not graded or aligned with the scale of encroachment, and there was no provision to deal with repeated encroachers or abatement of offenses, he said.

Lalchhanzova said that the new bill seeks to provide comprehensive definitions of public land, procedural clarity, graded penalties, and a structured adjudicatory mechanism to protect government and public lands. He explained that the bill seeks to classify community and village lands as “public land,” bringing them under statutory protection. It also seeks to expand the

definition of protected land to include grazing areas and lands held by various government-backed bodies. “The bill, when enacted, will prohibit unauthorized occupation, possession, construction, or use of government and public lands for personal or private gain,” Lalchhanzova said.

It will also empower Deputy Commissioners and other notified Revenue Officers to oversee eviction, demolition of unauthorized construction, assessment of penal rent for encroachers for the duration of their illegal stay, and initiate criminal prosecution against offenders, he added. Fines will now be “graded,” meaning repeat offenders or those involved in large-scale encroachment will face significantly harsher punishments. The bill, if enacted, will extend to the whole of Mizoram, barring the areas of the Autonomous District Councils under the Sixth Schedule in the southern part of the state, Lalchhanzova said. As Mizoram undergoes rapid urbanization, land disputes, once limited, have become a major administrative challenge. The Minister argued that a robust institutional framework is essential to effectively protect government and public lands.

Editorial

AI-Generated Prescriptions - A Looming Threat to Public Health

The warning sounded by the All India Organisation of Chemists and Druggists (AIOCD) over the misuse of Artificial Intelligence to fabricate medical prescriptions deserves urgent national attention. What may appear at first glance as a technological loophole is, in reality, a potentially dangerous gateway to uncontrolled drug misuse, antibiotic resistance, and substance abuse. If left unchecked, AI-generated fake prescriptions could undermine decades of regulatory progress in India's pharmaceutical sector.

Recent media investigations cited by AIOCD President J. S. Shinde and General Secretary Rajiv Singhal reveal a deeply troubling trend: fabricated prescriptions—complete with fake hospital details—are reportedly being accepted by certain online medicine platforms. This development exposes a structural weakness in the digital medicine supply chain.

Why the Risk Is Serious

The implications for public health are profound. Unregulated access to antibiotics accelerates antimicrobial resistance, already a major global health crisis. Easy availability of psychotropic drugs and opioids without proper medical supervision increases the risk of addiction, overdose, and illegal diversion. Schedule H and X medicines are tightly regulated for good reason—they can cause severe harm when misused.

Unlike traditional brick-and-mortar chemists, who typically

verify prescriptions physically and exercise professional judgment, many online platforms rely heavily on automated systems. The absence of robust human verification creates fertile ground for AI-generated forgeries to slip through undetected. This is not merely a regulatory gap; it is a patient safety emergency in the making.

Regulatory Grey Areas

AIOCD's allegation that certain operators are exploiting Government Notifications GSR 817(E) and GSR 220(E) to bypass safeguards under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, highlights the urgent need for policy clarity. Digital health innovation is welcome, but regulatory ambiguity cannot come at the cost of public safety.

India's pharmaceutical regulatory framework was designed in a pre-AI era. Today's reality—where sophisticated tools can generate convincing fake prescriptions within seconds—demands an equally sophisticated policy response.

What Must Be Done

First, the Government of India must immediately review and tighten the regulatory framework governing e-pharmacies. If specific notifications are being misused, they should be amended or withdrawn without delay.

Second, mandatory multi-layer verification should be enforced for all online prescription drug sales. This should include real-time doctor authentication, digital

signature validation, and human pharmacist oversight for high-risk medicines.

Third, AI-generated prescriptions must be explicitly declared invalid unless issued through certified, traceable digital health systems. Technology should be part of the solution, not the problem.

Fourth, enforcement agencies must act decisively against illegal e-pharmacy operators. Without visible penalties, regulatory advisories alone will have limited deterrent effect.

Fifth, public awareness is essential. Patients must understand the dangers of purchasing prescription medicines from unverified online sources. Convenience should never outweigh safety.

A Call for Balanced Innovation

India stands at a critical intersection of digital health expansion and patient safety. E-pharmacies and AI tools can greatly improve healthcare access, especially in remote regions—but only within a robust regulatory framework.

The AIOCD's warning should be treated not as industry resistance to technology but as an early alarm bell. Policymakers, regulators, healthcare professionals, and digital platforms must act collectively and swiftly.

Public health safeguards, once weakened, are difficult to rebuild. The time to close this dangerous loophole is now—before AI-driven prescription fraud evolves from a warning sign into a full-blown public health crisis.

What's in name? Significance of the new signifiers

Names can be as unexceptional as symbolic. However, politics takes the ritual of christening to another level, where nomenclatures are imbued with messaging, consonant with ideologies, roots and beliefs. When the Modi regime renamed the Union government's citadels of power vested for nearly eight decades in the South and North Blocks respectively as Seva Teerth and Kartavya Bhavan, the names signified the ruling BJP's grandiose sense of purpose—at least for popular consumption. Seva Teerth, which houses the Prime Minister's Office, National Security Council and the Cabinet Secretariat, translates as a place sanctified by 'service to citizens', while Kartavya Bhavan, which means 'house of duty', is home to several key ministries including finance, defence and information & broadcasting. The etymologies are entrenched more in Sanskrit than colloquial Hindi. From the start, the BJP and some of the newer parties in the Hindi heartland such as Samajwadi Party were inclined towards purging the Hindi language of the influence of Urdu, Maithili, Awadhi and Bhojpuri, and bringing its usage as close to Sanskrit as was conceivable. To the BJP, the change represented unshackling names that originated in the colonial era. But honestly, were South and North Blocks difficult to pronounce? Drivers in the national capital, who understood the earlier names perfectly well, might take time to internalise their earnest-sounding replacements. But that's how the BJP wants the new order to be. In 2016, two years after Narendra Modi was first sworn in as Prime Minister, Race Course Road, which housed the PM's official residence, was renamed Lok Kalyan Marg to convey a sense of openness and accessibility because the phrase means people's welfare. For all intent and purpose, the sprawling housing complex is one of the most tightly-guarded areas in Delhi, and with good reason too. In 2022, Rajpath or King's Way (music to the erstwhile colonialists' ears), the premier ceremonial boulevard that runs from Rashtrapati Bhavan to National Stadium via India Gate, was rechristened Kartavya Path (to signal duty-based governance). This 3-km stretch hosts the Republic Day pageant and was part of the ambitious revamped Central Vista Avenue.

The renaming project was not simply intended to obliterate the vestiges of British colonial rule. If that was the case, the target would be confined to the elite zones containing the repositories of power. Remember, the palimpsests holding together Indian history are voluminous and have been rewritten over and over again. The BJP's aspiration to stamp its own version of history will be realised if and when Delhi gets the name some want: Indraprastha. So far, it's the Delhi MPs and MLAs who have flagged this demand, claiming Indraprastha was the capital of the Pandavas. They urged the Centre to rename the Old Delhi railway station and the international airport as Indraprastha. But historians such as Swapna Liddle, who have researched and written about Delhi's history, maintained it was not supported by archaeological evidence.

Facts—or their absence—do not deter the BJP's elected representatives in their crusade, if it can be called that, to change names. Senior Delhi minister Praveesh Sahib Singh insisted that Talkatora Stadium should be called Bhagwan Maharishi Valmiki Stadium, ostensibly to wipe out a 'Mughal' resonance. Talkatora is a portmanteau of 'tal' meaning tank and 'katora' indicating a bowl. During Feroz Shah Tughlaq's reign, it was a natural depression that functioned as a water harvesting system fed by different streams. The BJP remembers it as a battlefield where the Marathas clashed with the Mughal army when they raided Delhi. Singh's choice of name was dictated by politics: Valmiki was the author of the Ramayana and a Dalit.

India's economic ambitions rest on empowering women in manufacturing

-This article is authored by Parmesh Shahani, head, Godrej DEi Lab.

India's factory shop floors are steadily becoming more gender diverse, but genuine inclusion remains unfinished work. Women today constitute over a third of India's manufacturing workforce, up from less than a quarter in 2000. Between 2017–18 and 2023–24, they accounted for nearly three-quarters of net new jobs created in the sector. Women are clearly driving manufacturing growth and contributing significantly to India's Viksit Bharat ambitions.

Yet most shop floors are still not built to meet their needs. From inadequate security and privacy to insufficient wash-

rooms and basic facilities, structural gaps persist. While several large corporations have made deliberate efforts to create women-friendly workplaces, a substantial share of manufacturing employment lies in the informal sector, where enterprises often lack the scale or commitment to make necessary changes.

At Godrej, focused DEI initiatives have begun transforming shop floors. At the Godrej Chemicals facility in Ambarnath, the number of women employees increased tenfold, from four to 40—between April 2022 and October 2023. However, such examples remain exceptions rather

than the norm. The absence of inclusive infrastructure leads to preventable attrition, limiting female participation and imposing an economic cost.

The economic case is clear. In 2018, the World Bank noted that India could add 1.5 percentage points to annual GDP growth if women's workforce participation rose to 50%. As of 2023–24, female workforce participation stands at 41.7%, according to the Periodic Labour Force Survey. With manufacturing positioned as a core engine of India's economic strategy, shop floors must evolve to unlock their full growth potential.

Security is the starting point. Factories must ensure safe, bias-free environments supported by strong anti-harassment mechanisms and credible reporting systems. Well-lit premises, women wardens in dormitories, and sensitisation workshops for male employees are practical measures that strengthen workplace culture and safety.

Safety must also extend beyond factory gates. With round-the-clock operations and late shifts, secure commuting arrangements are critical. Flexible shift structures are equally important. Many women balance professional responsibilities with primary

caregiving roles at home. Accommodating these realities through thoughtful scheduling can significantly improve retention and morale.

Basic facilities cannot be overlooked. Adequate clean washrooms, women-only changing spaces, paid menstrual leave policies, and accessible medical support uphold dignity at work. Beyond essentials, shop floor design itself requires reconsideration, adjusting console heights, redesigning protective equipment, and ensuring tools are ergonomically suited for women can make meaningful differences.

Finally, allyship, particular-

ly from families and communities, plays a decisive role. Support at home can determine whether women pursue opportunities in traditionally male-dominated sectors like manufacturing. Initiatives that engage families and celebrate women's achievements help extend inclusion beyond factory walls.

Nari Shakti is more than a slogan. It is a recognition of women's growing role in shaping India's industrial and economic future. To fully realise that potential, India's shop floors must become spaces where women feel secure, valued, and empowered to thrive.

Nissan Drives Growth in India with All-New GRAVITE MPV at ₹5.65 Lakh



Dimapur: Nissan Motor India has rolled out the all-new GRAVITE, a seven-seater MPV priced at an introductory ₹5.65 lakh (ex-showroom). This marks the first model under the company's renewed product offensive, signalling a fresh growth phase in the Indian market.

Manufactured at Nissan's Chennai facility, the GRAVITE is tailored for Indian families. It offers flexible seating for two to seven occupants, best-in-class luggage space of up to 625 litres, and 30+ standard safety features including six airbags, Electronic Stability Control, Traction Control, Hill-Start Assist, and Brake Assist.

The MPV adopts Nissan's signature 'C' design language, highlighted by LED lighting, a bold grille, functional roof rails, and modular interiors. Premium touches include suede-leatherette seating, multi-row AC vents, and advanced connectivity with wireless Android Auto/Apple CarPlay, a digital instrument cluster, and wireless charging.

Under the hood, the GRAVITE runs on a 1.0-litre petrol engine paired with manual and AMT transmissions, delivering fuel efficiency up to 19.6 km/l. Buyers can choose from five colour options, along with a limited launch edition featuring premium accessories.

Nissan also announced plans to expand its dealer network across Tier-I and Tier-II cities, reinforcing its long-term commitment to accessibility and customer experience in India.

Godrej Enterprises wins major aviation security upgrade contract at Cochin airport



Guwahati: The Security Solutions business of Godrej Enterprises Group has secured a major contract from Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) to deploy next-generation gate and perimeter security systems across key access points of the airport, marking a significant step in aviation security modernisation. The project includes installation of advanced Under Vehicle Scanning Systems (UVSS) integrated with Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology and high-performance tyre killers to strengthen vehicle screening, deterrence, and access control.

The installations will cover entry and exit points of both Terminal 1 and Terminal 2, enabling automated under-carriage scanning, real-time threat detection, and enhanced traceability of vehic-

ular movements in line with Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) guidelines. This will be CIAL's first large-scale vehicular access management deployment.

Godrej Enterprises Group said the project reinforces its growing presence in the aviation security segment, following similar deployments at several major airports across India. Company officials noted rising demand for automated access management and smart vehicle screening solutions across critical infrastructure sectors.

The growing adoption of advanced aviation security technologies at major airports is expected to drive demand in emerging aviation hubs such as Guwahati, where airport modernisation and expansion projects are creating opportunities for security technology providers and infrastructure solution firms.

TVS iQube Rolls into Vatican, Strengthening Global Green Mobility Push

Guwahati: TVS Motor Company has delivered two TVS iQube electric scooters to the Governorate of Vatican City State, marking a fresh milestone in its global sustainable mobility journey. The official handover on February 5 was part of an ongoing collaboration between the Vatican and Exelexia, a specialist in last mile mobility solutions.

Driven by Exelexia in partnership with TVS Motor Italia, the initiative supports the Vatican's ecological transition towards zero emission transport. The scooters will serve daily operational needs within the historic and sensitive environment of Vatican City, where efficiency, reliability, and environmental respect are



paramount.

Giovanni Notarbartolo di Furnari, General Manager, TVS Motor Italia, said deployment in "a prestigious setting such as the Vatican validates our vision for urban electric mobility." Giovanni Zappia, Founder of Exelexia, added that the

partnership reinforces its commitment to reliable institutional mobility.

The TVS iQube offers up to 100 km range in eco mode, SmartXconnect technology with TFT display and app connectivity, and combines riding comfort with silent, zero emission performance.

This Vatican deployment enhances the iQube's global credibility and could positively influence premium electric scooter demand in emerging urban centres such as Guwahati. With rising interest in clean mobility and expanding charging infrastructure, the endorsement is expected to strengthen brand perception among environmentally conscious buyers in the Northeast market.

MSDE showcases inclusive AI skilling vision at India AI Impact Summit 2026

Guwahati: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has set up a dedicated pavilion at the India AI Impact Summit 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, placing skilling at the centre of India's inclusive artificial intelligence strategy. The pavilion, located at Booth Nos. 3F 26 and 3F 20, highlights the theme "AI for Inclusive Development" and demonstrates how artificial intelligence can enhance livelihoods rather than displace jobs.

Addressing the summit, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Jayant Chaudhary, said hosting one of the largest AI gatherings in the Global South reflects India's commitment to building a responsible and inclusive AI future while equipping youth with AI-ready skills. The pavilion presents initiatives under three pillars—skilling in AI, skilling with AI and skilling for AI—featuring programmes such as SOAR (Skilling for AI Readiness), AI-enabled career guidance tools, personalised course recommendation engines and computer vision-based assessment systems.

Interactive demonstrations illustrate how AI tools can support farmers, electricians, construction workers and weavers, showing the technology's role in boosting productivity across sectors.

In Guwahati, expanding AI-focused skill programmes could accelerate demand for digital training institutes, tech-enabled services and startup innovation in Assam, potentially creating new employment avenues and strengthening the region's participation in India's growing AI-driven economy.

Jayant Chaudhary flags off Amazon's AI skills vans to boost government school learning

Guwahati: Jayant Chaudhary has flagged off two AI Skills Vans in New Delhi, an initiative by Amazon aimed at expanding AI and cloud education access to government school students across Delhi-NCR and Haryana.

The mobile learning labs, launched under Amazon's Think Big initiative, were inaugurated in the presence of David Zapolsky, Chief Global Affairs and Legal Officer, Amazon. The vans are designed to function as fully equipped mobile ecosystems delivering curriculum-aligned modules on cloud computing, AI fundamentals, computational thinking and ethical AI principles.

In 2026, the two vans are expected to directly engage over 9,000 students and 100 teachers. The teacher training component is projected to create a multiplier effect, reaching an additional 100,000 students over the next five years through classroom integration and peer learning networks.

Chaudhary said the initiative supports national missions such as Skill India and the AI Mission, ensuring equitable access to future-ready digital skills. Zapolsky said Amazon has committed to bring AI education to 4 million government school students by 2030.

The programme is being implemented with Learning Links Foundation and builds on Amazon Web Services' training of over 6.2 million individuals in India since 2017.

In Guwahati, such mobile AI labs could accelerate digital literacy adoption in Assam. With growing interest in STEM learning and government school digitisation in the Guwahati market, similar initiatives may create new partnerships between technology firms and public institutions in the region.

AI for inclusion: Pradhan, Chaudhary highlight inclusive skilling at India AI Impact Summit

Guwahati: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Jayant Chaudhary visited the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) Pavilion at the India AI Impact Summit 2026 held at Bharat Mandapam, underlining the government's focus on using artificial intelligence to drive inclusive growth and human capital development.

The pavilion showcased India-first AI solutions demonstrating how artificial intelligence can improve productivity, strengthen livelihoods and expand access to opportunities across sectors. A key highlight was the skilling framework built around "Skilling in AI, Skilling with AI and Skilling for AI," featuring initiatives such as SOAR (Skilling



for AI Readiness), industry-aligned nano-credentials and NSQF-approved emerging job roles. Visitors also experienced micro-learning modules, interactive installations and AI-enabled dashboards aimed at expanding AI literacy.

A major attraction was the AI-powered recommendation engine developed by the National Skill Development Corporation under SIDH, which offers personalised career and training guidance by integrating learning, certification and employment path-

ways. Interactive demonstrations also showed how AI tools can assist farmers, electricians, construction workers and weavers in improving productivity and income.

In Guwahati, AI-driven skilling platforms and recommendation systems can significantly benefit youth and informal workers in the Northeast by improving access to training, certification and industry-linked employment opportunities, helping regional markets align with emerging technology-led job demands.

Couple Rises to Top Leadership in Oriflame India, Turning Shared Dreams into Success

Guwahati: A remarkable journey of perseverance and partnership is inspiring many in the direct selling industry. Shanyo Horam and her husband Worchinan Kasar have climbed into the Top 13 Leaders of Oriflame India, transforming modest beginnings into a celebrated success story.

Shanyo, raised in a small village with limited opportunities, had to discontinue her education early to support her family. Determined to achieve financial independence, she worked across roles before being introduced to Oriflame in 2011 by her aunt. The company's social selling model and structured success plan offered her a flexible pathway to build a career while balancing family responsibilities.

Her husband Worchinan, a banker by profession, initially supported her ambitions while continuing his own career. Inspired after attending a Director Seminar, he later joined her full time, turning



their professional journey into a joint venture. Together, they steadily advanced from Gold Director to Diamond Director, strengthening their leadership network and mentoring others along the way.

Today, the couple has earned multiple rewards, travelled to

over 16 international destinations, purchased their dream car, and built a stable life while raising their children. Their story demonstrates how shared vision, resilience, and teamwork can shape long term success in the direct selling industry.

Mizoram social activist Sangkhumi Bualchhuak honoured with Mahaveer Award 2026

Aizawl: Distinguished Mizoram social activist Smt. Sangkhumi Bualchhuak has been conferred the Mahaveer Award 2026 for Community and Social Service by the Bhagwan Mahaveer Foundation, recognising her decades-long contribution to women's empowerment, social justice, and grassroots community development. The annual award, presented in four categories—Non-Violence & Vegetarianism, Education, Medicine, and Community & Social Service—carries a cash prize of Rs. 10 lakh, along with a citation and memento.

A pioneer of the women's movement in Mizoram, Bualchhuak played a key leadership role in the Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl, the state's largest women's organisation. Her efforts significantly contributed to legislative advancements related to marriage, inheritance rights, and local governance, while also promoting health awareness, education, and social welfare initiatives across communities.

Other recipients of the 29th Mahaveer Awards include Sarhad (Maharashtra), CORD (Himachal Pradesh), Sri Shankara Cancer Foundation (Karnataka), and NIRMAL (Odisha). The awardees were selected from 267 nominations evaluated by an eminent jury chaired by former Chief Justice of India Justice M. N. Venkatachaliah.

In Aizawl, local civil society groups, educational institutions, and business communities welcomed the recognition, noting that Bualchhuak's advocacy for women's participation in governance and economic activities has strengthened grassroots entrepreneurship and community-led development across the city and surrounding districts.

Nestlé India marks 50 years of MAGGI with commemorative postal stamp

Kohima: Nestlé India celebrated the completion of 50 years of MAGGI in India with the unveiling of a commemorative postage stamp, highlighting the brand's long-standing presence in the country's processed food market. The stamp was unveiled by Manish Tiwary, Chairman and Managing Director of Nestlé India, along with Chirag Paswan, Union Minister of Food Processing Industries. The commemorative stamp honours MAGGI's five-decade journey, during which the brand expanded

from instant noodles to a wide portfolio that includes masalas, sauces, soups and ready-to-cook products. The initiative, titled "50 Years of Togetherness," recognises the brand's role in shaping convenience food consumption across generations in India.

Congratulating the company, Chirag Paswan said pioneering food brands have played a key role in building consumer trust and strengthening India's processed food ecosystem over the decades. Manish Tiwary described the milestone as a



reflection of the enduring trust and affection of millions of Indian consumers. In Kohima, local distributors and retailers report sustained demand for MAGGI products, particularly among students and working

Croma Summer Sale 2026 offers up to 71% discounts on ACs and Premium TVs

Guwahati: Infiniti Retail Ltd's electronics retail chain Croma has launched its Summer Sale 2026, offering discounts of up to 71% on air conditioners, premium televisions, and seasonal appliances across stores nationwide until February 28. The omni-channel retailer is providing exchange benefits, cashback offers, easy EMI options, and up to 10% additional discount for HDFC Tata Neu credit card users, subject to partner bank and finance terms.

The sale features major price cuts on cooling solutions, including the Lloyd Inverter AC (1.25T) starting at ₹26,990, LG Inverter AC (1.0T) at ₹30,490 with cashback benefits, Croma Inverter Split AC (1.5T) at ₹29,990, Samsung 2026 Inverter AC (1.0T) at ₹28,990, Bluestar Inverter AC (1.5T) at ₹40,990, and Voltas Inverter Split AC (1T) at ₹24,990. Attractive offers are also available on Symphony and Croma air coolers.

Croma is also offering deals on big-screen televisions, including Samsung's 100-inch Neo QLED TV priced from ₹3,84,990, TCL's 85-inch QLED TV from ₹1,23,990, LG's 86-inch Nano TV from ₹1,68,490, and Samsung's 55-inch LED Frame TV from ₹64,990.

Regions like Guwahati is witnessing early seasonal demand for cooling appliances and large televisions, with exchange offers, cashback schemes, and flexible financing expected to drive higher consumer purchases ahead of the peak summer months.

NPCI flags rising cyber frauds targeting seniors, urges caution in digital payments

Aizawl: National Payments Corporation of India has intensified its digital safety awareness campaign to protect senior citizens amid growing adoption of digital payments. The payments body warned that elderly users are increasingly being targeted by cybercriminals through digital arrest scams, fake investment schemes, phishing and vishing calls, tech support frauds, and fraudulent refund links. NPCI said fraudsters often pose as law enforcement officials threatening arrest, or impersonate financial experts promising extraordinary returns. In phishing and vishing attempts, scammers disguise themselves as banks or government agencies to extract OTPs and login details. Tech support frauds involve calls about fake viruses, pushing victims to install remote access apps. Fraudulent refund links redirect users to fake payment pages that steal sensitive data.

The organisation advised seniors never to share UPI PINs, OTPs, passwords or bank details, and to avoid clicking unknown links or downloading apps from strangers. It stressed verifying investment firms through SEBI or RBI websites and ignoring urgent messages about KYC, SIM blocking or pension suspension. Suspected fraud should be reported immediately to the national cybercrime helpline 1930 or to banks. In Aizawl, where digital payments are steadily expanding across retail stores and local markets, traders say awareness among senior citizens remains crucial. With QR-based transactions becoming common, financial literacy and timely verification can help prevent fraud while ensuring safe participation in the city's growing digital economy.

Organic India Launches Wellness-Themed Valentine's Gift Edit to Capture Premium Demand



Guwahati: Organic India, part of Tata Consumer Products Limited, has unveiled a curated "Valentine's Day Gifting Edit" designed to blend mindful indulgence with everyday nutrition. The collection highlights health conscious gifting, offering organic pantry staples and herbal tea experiences as meaningful alternatives to conventional presents.

The Savoury Sweetheart Gift Box (₹1,999) features certified organic essentials including Himalayan multifloral honey, premium cow ghee, quinoa, brown rice, chia and flax seeds, jaggery powder, nuts, raisins, and Organic India's signature Tulsi detox kahwa—encouraging nourishing meal and tea rituals. The Wooden Gift Box – 100 Tea Bags (₹1,299) presents assorted Tulsi tea variants such as Original, Ginger, Masala Chai, and Green Tea Classic in an elegant wooden case. Meanwhile, the Exotic Brew Gift Box (₹1,079) offers select Tulsi loose leaf blends with a stainless steel infuser, catering to refined tea enthusiasts. Retailers in Guwahati report steady growth in demand for premium organic hampers, particularly during festive and seasonal occasions. Industry stakeholders note that rising awareness of wellness products and conscious consumption is driving urban buyers toward organic food and herbal tea gift boxes—a trend expected to boost Valentine's Day sales across the region.

professionals. Market observers note that the commemorative stamp and anniversary campaigns are expected to enhance brand visibility and stimulate retail sales across Meghalaya in the coming months.

CDSL hosts 'Reimagine' Symposium, highlights data-driven future of securities markets



Guwahati: Central Depository Services (India) Limited (CDSL) hosted the third edition of its annual symposium, "Reimagine: Securities Market through Data Synergy," bringing together policy-makers, regulators, market infrastructure institutions and technology leaders to discuss the growing role of data in shap-

ing India's securities markets. Central Depository Services (India) Limited said the event also marked the launch of the inaugural Reimagine Ideathon, rewarding five student teams with prizes worth ₹12 lakh.

Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Chairman of Securities and Exchange Board of India,

who attended as Chief Guest, emphasised that "data is the new plumbing of capital markets," highlighting the importance of governance, security and quality of market data. The symposium also featured an AI-powered panelist providing real-time insights, reflecting the increasing integration of artificial intelligence in financial market decision-making.

A key highlight included the launch of the CDSL Investor Protection Fund's Amar Chitra Katha comic series in 12 languages to promote investor awareness. The Ideathon winner, Project Sahayak from Goa Institute of Management, secured the top ₹5-lakh prize among over 1,000 participating entries nationwide.

Initiatives focusing on investor education and data-driven infrastructure could further deepen retail participation in emerging regional markets such as Guwahati. With rising demat account penetration in the Northeast, enhanced investor awareness programmes and digital financial infrastructure are expected to support broader capital market participation from the region.

Companies push inclusive workplace policies as mental health becomes key business priority

Guwahati: Indian companies are increasingly recognising that inclusive workplace practices and employee mental wellbeing are closely interconnected, particularly for LGBTQIA+ employees whose sense of belonging and identity significantly shapes their work experience. Industry experts note that progressive organisations are moving beyond traditional mental health programmes and adopting inclusive frameworks that acknowledge how gender,

sexuality, disability, and neurodiversity influence employee wellbeing.

Businesses are being encouraged to embed inclusion into everyday policies rather than relying on symbolic diversity campaigns. Key initiatives gaining traction include extending healthcare benefits to partners, offering access to mental health professionals trained in LGBTQIA+ issues, implementing gender-affirmation policies, and establishing safe channels for dialogue and

grievance redressal. Organisations are also advised to respect employee privacy and avoid pressuring individuals to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity, ensuring support systems remain accessible to all employees.

In Guwahati, HR consultants and corporate leaders report a gradual rise in companies integrating inclusive benefits and psychological-safety programmes as part of workforce-retention strategies. Local businesses

say such policies are helping improve engagement, attract diverse talent, and strengthen organisational productivity in a competitive hiring environment.

Corporate leaders believe that sustained leadership commitment, cultural change, and continuous learning will be essential to building resilient and inclusive workplaces, contributing to long-term economic growth and the broader vision of a developed India by 2047.

TAKE Solutions unveils unified AI platform plan to power India's \$370 billion healthcare sector

Guwahati: TAKE Solutions Limited on Wednesday announced plans to build a scalable Unified AI Platform aimed at transforming India's USD 370 billion healthcare ecosystem, aligning with the government's IndiaAI Mission. The announcement comes amid the ongoing India AI Impact Summit 2026 in New Delhi. The proposed platform will act as a one-stop digital infrastructure layer, enabling hospitals, diagnostic laboratories, clinical trial organisations and clinics to seamlessly adopt artificial intelligence solutions. The company said the initiative supports the vision of "Sarvajana Hitaya,



Sarvajana Sukhaya" by ensuring AI-powered healthcare tools reach both urban and underserved communities. The Healthcare AI Marketplace and Integration Layer

will reduce adoption barriers and upfront costs. It will support diagnostics and pathology automation, clinical decision support systems, hospital workflow automation, clinical

trial optimisation, and preventive healthcare scaling. With the global AI in healthcare market projected to cross USD 180 billion by 2030, TAKE Solutions aims to position itself as a key enabler of India's AI-led healthcare transformation while generating scalable revenues. In Guwahati, hospitals and diagnostic centres in the city are steadily increasing investments in digital health tools. Industry observers say a unified AI platform could help mid-sized healthcare providers in Guwahati improve efficiency, manage rising patient loads and adopt advanced diagnostics without heavy infrastructure spending.

Assam govt, Walmart Vriddhi ink MoU to empower MSMEs, target 1 lakh enterprises by 2028

Guwahati: The Government of Assam has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Walmart Vriddhi to boost growth and digital empowerment of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the state. The agreement was signed with the Department of Industries, Commerce and Public Enterprises and implemented through Walmart Vriddhi's program partner, Ideas to Impact Foundation. Under the partnership, MSMEs will receive free training, mentoring and business tools to modernise and scale operations, including onboarding on eCommerce platforms such as Flipkart. The initiative supports Walmart Vriddhi's national target to empower an additional 100,000 MSMEs by 2028. The Assam government will facilitate outreach through District Industries Centres to strengthen the state's MSME ecosystem. The program will focus on sectors such as bamboo, cane, handloom and food processing, with rollout in Kamrup, Sonitpur, Cachar, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and Jorhat districts. Commissioner of Industries and Commerce M.N. Dahal said the MoU reflects a shared commitment to enhance market access and technology adoption. Jason Fremstad, Senior Vice President, Supplier Development, Sourcing, Walmart International, said the collaboration will help small businesses scale and compete. In Guwahati, the initiative is expected to give local MSMEs greater access to national and global buyers, strengthen supply chains and boost digital trade participation in Assam's commercial hub. Walmart Vriddhi, launched in 2019, has trained over 70,000 MSMEs across India. Interested enterprises can register through the official Walmart Vriddhi portals.

A major milestone: L&T Finance Ltd. scales Gold Loan footprint to over 260 branches



Guwahati: L&T Finance Ltd. (LTF), (formerly known as L&T Finance Holdings Ltd.), one of the leading Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) in the country, has announced a major milestone in its retail strategy by doubling its Gold Loan branch network to over 260 branches nationwide. This rapid expansion was marked by the launch of its 130th new branch earlier this month since the acquisition of the gold loan business in June 2025. By matching its acquired portfolio with over 130 new branches in under a year, LTF has signalled a high-velocity play in India's secured credit landscape. By scaling operations across the North, West, East, and South regions, LTF is pursuing geo-expansion to capture increasing demand for secured credit. LTF's Gold Loan business has expanded its footprint to 18 States and Union Territories, marking its strategic entry into Assam, Karnataka, Telangana, Maharashtra, Odi-

sha, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, and Rajasthan.

By seamlessly integrating physical proximity with digital agility, LTF continues to redefine the gold loan experience through rapid turnaround times and flexible credit solutions. Commenting on this development, Mr. Raju Dodi, Chief Operating Officer, LTF, said, "We are elated to share that we have successfully doubled the Company's dedicated gold loan branch network in record time since our entry into this business, bringing the total count to over 260 branches nationwide, which will continue to increase given our aggressive branch expansion policy. Our rapid expansion is a testament to our 'Lakshya' strategy—transforming into a top-class, digitally-enabled, customer-centric retail powerhouse. By adding nearly 1 branch per day over the past few months, we aren't just increasing our footprint; we are building a robust ecosystem of security and trust."

Tamil Chicken Pepper Broth: The Ultimate Remedy for Winter Colds

Hot chicken pepper bone broth is a comforting dish that warms the body and strengthens immunity during episodes of cold, cough, or seasonal flu. Made with fresh pepper, turmeric, garlic, and homemade spices, this flavourful soup acts as a natural remedy as well as a hearty, nourishing drink. In many Indian households, it is prepared just like rasam and is known for offering quick relief from congestion, blocked nose, sore throat, and general winter fatigue. Here's how to make it at home.

Chicken bone broth is naturally rich in glucosamine, carnosine, and collagen. Research indicates that it helps reduce inflammation, alleviate upper respiratory congestion, and promote faster recovery. The collagen released while cooking helps relax the body and promotes healing. Black pepper, on the other hand, provides instant relief



from nasal blockage and is particularly effective against cold and flu symptoms.

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon black pepper
2 teaspoons coriander seeds
1 teaspoon fennel seeds
2 dried red chillies
1/4 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 sprig curry leaves
2 tomatoes
6 garlic cloves
For cooking the chicken:
500 g bone-in chicken
3/4 teaspoon turmeric
3/4 teaspoon salt
3 cups water
2 tablespoons sesame oil
1/4 teaspoon mustard seeds

1/4 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 sprig curry leaves
1/4 cup sliced shallots
1 cup coconut milk
3 sprigs coriander leaves, finely chopped

How To Make Tamil-Style Chicken Pepper Broth?

Prepare the Spice Paste: Lightly toast all the spices in a pan on low heat until fragrant and golden. Transfer them to a mixer and grind to a fine powder. Add the tomatoes and garlic, then grind again to a smooth paste, adding a little water if necessary.

Cook the Chicken: Place the bone-in chicken in a pressure

cooker. Add turmeric, salt, and the spice paste. Rinse the mixer jar with a little water and pour it in. Add about 3 cups of water and cook on low heat for 20 minutes. Once the pressure settles, remove the chicken, shred it, and discard the bones.

Temper and Prepare the Soup: Heat sesame oil in a pan. Add mustard seeds, cumin seeds, and curry leaves. When they splutter, add shallots and sauté until soft. Add the shredded chicken and stir briefly. Pour in the chicken stock and coconut milk. Adjust salt as needed. Sprinkle chopped coriander and bring the broth to a gentle boil. Serve this hot, aromatic chicken pepper broth with steamed rice or enjoy it as a warming soup on its own.

This dish works wonders when you're suffering from cold, flu, or general weakness. Simple to prepare, deeply comforting, and exceptionally good for health, this winter recipe is a must-try.

Homemade Snickers Bar

This delicious bar can be easy to make at home. It is a great treat for kids.

Ingredients of Homemade Snickers Bar: 1 Cup dates 1.5 tbsp peanut butter Salt, to taste 1 tsp vanilla essence 1 cup oats 1/4 cup roasted peanuts 150 gram dark chocolate, melted.

How to Make Homemade Snickers Bar: First, we need to make caramel. For this, add dates in a bowl of boiling water and leave it for around 20-25 minutes. Now, drain the water and transfer the dates to a mixer grinder. Add peanut butter, vanilla essence and salt. Blend well to make a smooth caramel sauce. Transfer to a bowl and keep aside 1/4 of the mixture. To prepare the bottom layer of the bar, add oats and the caramel mixture that we had kept aside to the grinder. Grind well till a dough-like structure forms. Now, take a rectangular baking tin and line it with baking paper. Spread the oats mixture evenly on it. Gently press it using your fingers and top it with the caramel sauce. Garnish some sliced peanuts on top and freeze for around 3 hours. Once done, slice the prepared bar into even slices. Dip them in a bowl of melted dark chocolate and transfer to a baking paper. Freeze for about an hour before serving. Homemade snickers bar is ready!



Sweet Potato is the Secret to These Ultra-Fudgy Brownies

If you're craving a fudgy chocolate brownie but want something that teeters on the edge of the healthy side, sweet potatoes might be the answer to your question. This nutrient-rich vegetable can be blended seamlessly into a brownie batter, and it will add natural sweetness and moisture to the bake without altering the fan-favourite chocolatey flavour. In fact, you'd never guess there's a vegetable hiding inside. Sweet potato brownies are a clever twist on dessert, offering more fibre, vitamins, and slow-release energy while keeping the indulgence intact. They are perfect for guilt-free snacking and satisfying weeknight cravings.

Health Benefits of Sweet Potato

Sweet potatoes are a seasonal vegetable that floods the market in the winter. While you can eat them simply by roasting them with salt and pepper, it is fun to try different recipes with them. These potatoes support eye and immune health, as they are an excellent source of beta-carotene, which the body converts to vitamin A. Its high fibre content aids digestion and promotes regular bowel movements. Sweet potatoes contain vitamin B6, which supports brain function and helps regulate mood and improve memory. Its complex carbohydrates also provide sustained energy, and antioxidants help protect against cell damage.

Recipe for Sweet Potato Chocolate Brownie

Ingredients
1 cup roasted sweet potato
2 tablespoons jaggery or maple syrup
2 tablespoons peanut butter
1/4th cup cacao powder
1 tablespoon chopped walnuts



20–30 grams chopped dark chocolate chunks

Method: Chop the washed sweet potato and roast it in the air fryer at 180°C for 15–20 minutes. If using an oven: roast at 200°C for 25–30 minutes. Peel the roasted sweet potato and blend it with jaggery/maple syrup, peanut butter, cacao powder, walnuts, and chocolate chunks into a smooth paste. Spread the batter in a baking tray lined with parchment paper. Add extra chocolate chunks and walnuts on top. Air fry at 175°C for 20–25 minutes. If using an oven: bake at 180°C for 20–25 minutes. Let it cool fully before slicing. Enjoy.

This innovative recipe has become particularly popular among bakers catering to dietary restrictions, as the sweet potato can often be used to create delicious gluten-free or dairy-free versions without sacrificing the classic chocolate experience. The growing popularity of the Sweet Potato Brownie highlights a broader shift in modern baking towards mindful eating and creative ingredient substitutions. As winter sets in, this surprisingly simple hack offers a delicious, comforting way to enjoy a classic treat while embracing seasonal produce.

3 Matcha Desserts Better Than Any Latte

Whether it is K-pop singer BTS' Kim Taehyung, aka V, going viral for drinking a strawberry matcha latte or Bollywood actor Sanya Malhotra launching her own brand, Bree, matcha has people in a chokehold. In fact, this has even caused a global shortage as the demand for this green tea soars. In 2024, the matcha market was valued at USD 3.66 billion, and it is expected to more than double. Matcha, a powdered form of Japanese green tea, which has to be carefully grown in special weather conditions, also has various health benefits. It has an enhancing effect on cognitive function, cardiometabolic health, and anti-tumorigenesis. Some studies show that it may help protect the liver, and it is rich in catechins, a type of natural antioxidant. This can help stabilise harmful free radicals, compounds that can damage cells and cause chronic disease. While everyone seems to be sipping on matcha lattes, Chef Tejasvi Chandela, founder and chef, Dzurth Jaipur, believes in going a step further. She has worked on a dessert menu that includes this tea. "Matcha is one of those ingredients that

invites both respect and creativity. I've loved using it in ways that challenge the idea of matcha being limited to lattes and beverages.

Its earthy profile pairs beautifully with citrus, berries, and even white chocolate, so we explore those combinations in tarts, cookies, lamingtons, and more. Our goal is always to introduce matcha in a way that feels exciting, modern, and accessible for the Indian palate," she says. Here are 3 different ways to try matcha, which is a step ahead of the typical beverages:

Matcha Strawberry Tart: A modern interpretation of a classic tart, this dessert pairs a silky ceremonial-grade matcha cream with fresh seasonal strawberries. The tartness of the berries lifts the earthy flavour profile. The idea was

to bring a refreshing, bright contrast to matcha, a flavour often seen in warm beverages but rarely showcased in cold-set patisserie.

Matcha Lemon

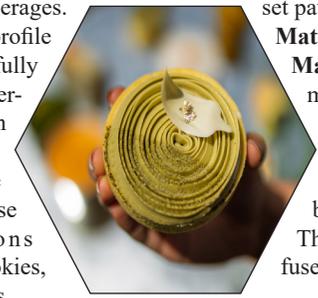
Macaron: The macaron takes the familiarity of matcha and pairs it with a bold citrus edge. The shells are infused with fine Japanese matcha, while

the filling is a tart lemon curd cream cheese that

cuts beautifully through the richness. This combination was created to highlight how matcha can work in sharper, more playful formats, far beyond the typical creamy pairings.

Matcha Strawberry

Lamington: A nostalgic lamington reimagined with a green-tea twist. Soft vanilla sponge is dipped in a matcha glaze, rolled in coconut, and layered with a homemade strawberry compote. It celebrates the meeting of Australian café culture and Asian tea traditions – something you rarely see in Indian patisserie.



CEM Debolal Gorlosa Engages Media, Unveils Roadmap for a Cleaner and Better-Connected Dima Hasao

Haflong, Feb 18: In a notable outreach effort, Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Dima Hasao Autonomous Council, Debolal Gorlosa, held an interactive session with accredited journalists of Dima Hasao at his residence on Wednesday. The meeting coincided with the distribution of goodwill gift packs from Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to members of the local media fraternity. The programme was coordinated by the District Information & Public Relations Office (DI&PRO), Haflong.

The event began with a welcome address by DI&PRO Officer Purabi Phonglo, followed by the felicitation of the CEM and Executive Members of the Council. The interaction created a platform for constructive dialogue between the district administration and the media.

Emphasis on Journalists' Welfare

During the discussion, CEM Gorlosa underscored the pivotal role played by journalists in shaping public opinion and strengthening grassroots democracy. He urged media professionals to practice responsible reporting and highlight constructive developments taking place across the district. While reaffirming respect for press freedom, he advised against unnecessary sensationalism that could create misun-



derstanding or hinder developmental efforts. The CEM also indicated that initiatives for the welfare of local journalists and media houses would be taken up in a phased manner. He assured that a structured roadmap is being planned and that a separate consultative meeting with media representatives would be convened soon.

Vision for Cleanest District and Infrastructure Push

Highlighting his administration's priorities, Gorlosa reiterated his vision to transform Dima Hasao into one of the cleanest districts in Assam and the region. He called upon the media to

actively promote awareness on cleanliness, civic responsibility, and public participation.

He further informed that multiple road connectivity projects under the Assam Mala scheme are progressing steadily. These projects aim to link nearly every remote village with National Highways within the next three years, thereby improving transportation, trade, and economic prospects in the hill district.

Focus on Education and Tourism

On the education front, the CEM stated that four Ekalavya Model Residential Schools are currently under

construction and are expected to become operational soon, significantly expanding quality educational access for tribal and rural students.

Tourism development also featured prominently in the discussion. Gorlosa highlighted the growing tourism potential of Dima Hasao and encouraged journalists to showcase the scenic beauty of Laisong and Hangrum. Referring to the recently held Mithun Festival, he described it as a unique cultural attraction that has strengthened the district's emerging tourism profile.

Among those present were Addl. I&PR official D.N. Loying, SDI&PRO Rijit Nunisa, and journalists Surjo Thaosen, Biplob Deb, L.K. Hengna, Pankaj Kr. Deb, Nirmal Singh, Prasanta Bhattacharjee, and Swadeep Hasamsa.

The journalists expressed gratitude to Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for the goodwill gesture and to CEM Debolal Gorlosa for organizing the interactive session and addressing concerns of the media fraternity.

The meeting concluded on a positive note, reflecting strengthened coordination between the district administration and the press towards promoting responsible journalism and sustainable development in Dima

Rajasthan HC receives hoax bomb threat for second consecutive day



Jaipur, Feb 20: The Rajasthan High Court received a fresh bomb threat on Friday, hours before the scheduled arrival of the Chief Justice of India Surya Kant in the city, officials said. Nothing suspicious was found, but the court proceedings were delayed due to the security exercise, they added. The email, sent to the high court administration, threatened to bomb up the court building, following which senior police officers were alerted and conducted a thorough search of the premises, police said. A similar threat was received on Thursday as well.

The CJI is scheduled to inaugurate a seminar at the Rajasthan International Centre here on Friday evening.

CEM Debolal Gorlosa Inaugurates Key Projects in Maibang West, Highlights Unstoppable Progress in Dima Hasao



Haflong, Feb 20: Continuing the momentum of development across the hill district, DHAC Chief Executive Member Debolal Gorlosa on Thursday attended a public meeting-cum-inauguration programme at the 255-Natun Disao Polling Station under the Maibang West Constituency, where he formally launched several infrastructure projects aimed at strengthening grassroots services. Earlier in the day, the CEM had also inaugurated the Cachar Cancer Hospital & Research Centre Haflong Campus at Haflong Civil Hospital, marking a major boost to healthcare facilities in the district. He stated that the series of inaugurations reflects the administration's commitment to ensuring "unstoppa-

ble progress" in Dima Hasao. At Natun Disao, Gorlosa inaugurated multiple public utility projects, including: Ayushman Arogya Mandir (AAM), Natudisa Sub-Centre Building Choto Bathari L.P. School, Teachers' Quarter Building, Choto Bathari L.P. School Building, Dijambra L.P. School Building. Speaking on the occasion, the CEM expressed confidence that these initiatives would significantly improve healthcare access, strengthen educational infrastructure, and enhance the overall quality of life for residents of the Maibang West region. He reiterated that the DHAC is committed to balanced and inclusive development, particularly in rural and remote areas. The programme was at-

tended by Chairman DHAC Mohet Hojai; Dima Hasao District BJP President and Vice-Chairman, District Planning Board, and MAC Dhriti Thaosen; Executive Members Donpainon Thaosen, Samuel Changsan, and Smt. Probita Johori; MACs Monjoy Langthasa, Ratan Jarambusa, Rupali Langthasa, and Pronath Rajiyung; along with the Maibang Mandal President, Maibang Mandal Mahila Morcha President, Chairman of Maibang Municipal Board, Mauzadars, Gaon Burahs, and other local dignitaries. The event concluded with widespread appreciation from local residents, who expressed hope that the ongoing developmental push will accelerate socio-economic growth across Dima Hasao.

Dima Hasao Police Felicitates Taekwondo Achievers; SSP Leads Ceremony

Haflong, Feb 7: In a proud moment for the district, the Dima Hasao Police today felicitated two of its young prodigies Pollabi Handique, daughter of DLNK Santanu Handique, and Benla Kemprai, daughter of LNK (Retd) Ramendra Kemprai in recognition of their outstanding achievements in the field of Taekwondo. The felicitation programme was conducted under the Sr. Superintendent of Police (SSP), Ripunjoy Kakati, APS, accompanied by other officials. Who lauded the dedication, discipline, and sporting excellence demonstrated by the two athletes. He remarked that their achievements have brought pride not only to their families but also to the entire police fraternity and the district. Officials of Dima Hasao Police present on the occasion encouraged the young sports persons to continue striving for excellence and to aim for higher laurels at the state, na-



tional, and international levels. Pollabi Handique and Benla Kemprai were congratulated for their remarkable performance in Taekwondo, with the department expressing confidence in their bright future in the sport. Dima Hasao Police conveyed its best wishes to both achievers for their continued success and reaffirmed its commitment to encouraging young talent from the district. Among those present were Addl. I&PR official D.N. Loying, SDI&PRO Rijit Nunisa, and journalists Surjo Thaosen, Biplob Deb, L.K. Hengna, Pankaj Kr.

Deb, Nirmal Singh, Prasanta Bhattacharjee, and Swadeep Hasamsa.

The journalists expressed gratitude to Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for the goodwill gesture and to CEM Debolal Gorlosa for organizing the interactive session and addressing concerns of the media fraternity.

The meeting concluded on a positive note, reflecting strengthened coordination between the district administration and the press towards promoting responsible journalism and sustainable development in Dima.

India Seek Redemption in Hobart Pro League



New Delhi, Feb 20: The Indian men's hockey team is geared up for a fresh start as they shift focus to the Hobart leg of the FIH Men's Pro League 2025-26, scheduled from February 20 to 25 at the Tasmania Hockey Centre in Australia. Eager to bounce back and deliver improved performances, India will take on Spain and hosts Australia in what promises to be a highly competitive block of matches. The recent home leg at Rourkela was highly disappointing, with Team India losing all their matches, 1-3 against Belgium, 0-8 against Argentina.

While the recent Rourkela leg proved to be a steep learning curve, the team has regrouped with a positive mindset. They view the upcoming fixtures as a vital opportunity to test combinations, refine their structure, and build momentum ahead of the upcoming Men's FIH Hockey World Cup and Asian Games in Japan this year, a release said. The 24-member squad features a dynamic mix of seasoned campaigners and exciting young talent ready to make their mark on the international stage. India will commence their Hobart campaign against Spain on February 21, followed by a high-octane clash against Australia on February 22. They will face Spain again on February 24, before concluding the Hobart leg with a final match against the formidable Australian side on February 25. Recent history suggests a thrilling set of matches awaits. India and Spain have been incredibly evenly matched in their last 10 encounters, claiming four regulation joining us for tour.

Hardik Singh named India captain for FIH Pro League Hobart leg as Harmanpreet opts out

New Delhi, Feb 20: Midfielder Hardik Singh has been named captain of the Indian men's hockey team for the upcoming FIH Pro League matches in Hobart from February 20 to 25, after regular skipper Harmanpreet Singh opted out due to "personal reasons". The upcoming leg of the tournament will feature India alongside Spain and hosts Australia at the Tasmania Hockey Centre in Hobart. India come into the Hobart leg after a disappointing outing in the Rourkela phase, where they lost all four matches, including a 0-8 defeat against Argentina. "After a disappointing four matches in Rourkela, where the results didn't go our way, we've learned some good lessons and made some notable improvements," head coach Craig Fulton said. Hardik, a two-time Olympic bronze medallist, will lead a squad that includes several youngsters such as Amandeep Lakra and Manmeet Singh, who made their senior international debuts during the Rourkela leg. "Harmanpreet Singh will not be part of the squad due to personal reasons," Hockey India said in a statement.

A source close to the player said the seasoned campaigner will miss the matches as he is expecting his second child with wife Amandeep Kaur. Suraj Karkera and Mohith Honnenahalli Shashikumar will share the goalkeeping responsibilities, with Mohith replacing Pawan, who featured in the Rourkela leg. The defence will be anchored by experienced players

Amit Rohidas, Jarmanpreet Singh, Jugraj Singh, Sanjay and Sumit, alongside youngsters Amandeep Lakra, Yashdeep Siwach and Poovanna Chandura Boby. The midfield will feature Hardik, Sanjay, Vivek Sagar Prasad and Raj Kumar Pal, supported by Rajinder Singh, Manmeet Singh, Moirangthem Rabichandra Singh

"Going into the Hobart leg, we're aiming for improved performances and looking to finalise our squad for the World Cup and the Asian Games," Fulton said. India's squad Goalkeepers: Suraj Karkera, Mohith Honnenahalli Shashikumar. Defenders: Amit Rohidas, Jarman-



and Vishnu Kant Singh.

The forward line will be led by Mandeep Singh, Abhishek and Shilanand Lakra, with striker Maninder Singh returning to the side after last featuring in the FIH Pro League in the 2023-24 season. Angad Bir Singh, who made his senior debut last year, also returns for his first international tour, while youngsters Arajjeet Singh Hundal and Aditya Arjun Lalage complete the attacking unit.

preet Singh, Jugraj Singh, Sanjay, Sumit, Amandeep Lakra, Yashdeep Siwach, Poovanna Chandura Boby.

Midfielders: Rajinder Singh, Manmeet Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Hardik Singh, Moirangthem Rabichandra Singh, Vishnu Kant Singh, Raj Kumar Pal.

Forwards: Abhishek, Shilanand Lakra, Mandeep Singh, Arajjeet Singh Hundal, Aditya Arjun Lalage, Angad Bir Singh, Maninder Singh.

India announces squad selection for Women's AFC Asia Cup football championship 2026

Chennai, Feb 20: India's squad for March's AFC Women's Asia Cup in Australia was announced by the All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Friday. The Blue Tigresses play matches against Vietnam, Japan and Chinese Taipei in Group C. They will open their campaign against Vietnam on March 4 in Perth. Then, they will face Japan on March 7. The last group stage match will be against Chinese Taipei on March 10 in Sydney.

The top two sides from each group, along with the two best third-placed teams, will progress to the quarter-finals. The four quarter-final winners will qualify for the FIFA Women's World Cup set to take place in Brazil next year. The losing quarter-finalists will contest the play-offs for the two remaining direct spots allocated to the AFC for the World Cup. The two play-off losers



Will have Another chance of qualifying for Brazil via the Play-off tournament. After a four-week camp in Türkiye, the Blue Tigresses arrived in Perth on February 11. Among the 26 players in the squad, eight were part of the last Asian Cup that was hosted by India in 2022 — Sweetie Devi Ngangbam, Shilky Devi Hemam, Sanju, Anju Tamang, Pyari Xaxa, Grace Dangmei,

Manisha Kalyan and Sowmiya Narayanasamy. However, India had to withdraw from the tournament after just one game due to a COVID outbreak. In the squad that will battle it out in Australia, there are six potential debutants — defenders Sarita Yumnam and Sushmita Lepcha, midfielders Jasoda Munda, Sanfida Nongrum and Aveka Singh, and forward Kaviya Pakkirisamy. Grace

Dangmei is the highest-capped player and top-scorer in India's squad with 23 goals in 91 appearances. Born in 1995, Anju Tamang is the seniormost player at 30 years old. As she was in the 2022 edition, Shilky Devi Hemam is the youngest in the Indian squad, now 20 years old.

Squad: Goalkeepers: Panthoi Chanu Elangbam, Shreya Hooda, Sowmiya Narayanasamy. Defenders: Astam Oraon, Juli Kishan, Martina Thokchom, Nirmala Devi Phanjoubam, Sanju, Sarita Yumnam, Shilky Devi Hemam, Sushmita Lepcha, Sweetie Devi Ngangbam. Midfielders: Anju Tamang, Aveka Singh, Babina Devi Lisham, Jasoda Munda, SanfidaNongrum, Sangita Basfore. Forwards: Grace Dangmei, Kaviya Pakkirisamy, Lynda Kom Serto, Malavika P, Manisha Kalyan, Pyari Xaxa, Rimpa Halidar, Soumya Guguloth.

Bengaluru FC start season with win against Delhi

Bengaluru/Jamshedpur, Feb 20: Though Bengaluru FC has had to endure some tough times during the build-up to the delayed Indian Super League, they ensured there was no hiccup in their first match of the season on Sunday. At their home ground in Kanteerava Stadium, the Blues has had some interesting moments before securing a 2-0 win against Sporting Club Delhi. It couldn't have been sweeter for their fans as veteran striker Sunil Chhetri found the net in the season opener.

A goal in each half from N Sivasakthi and Chhetri secured the win. After champions Mohun Bagan Super Giant on Saturday and Jamshedpur FC earlier in the day, Bengaluru is the third team to win their opening encounter. The hosts had a lively start to the match with both Ryan Williams and Ashique

Kuruniyan coming close to score inside the first five minutes. Williams won the ball off Babovic in Delhi's half, and with a strong run towards the box, hit a low shot from outside, which went just wide of the post. In the next minute, Nikhil Poojary floated in a lovely cross from the right, which was met by Ashique at the far post. SC Delhi goalkeeper Vishal Yadav reacted quickly and flicked the ball to safety.

Delhi grew into the game and made it more difficult for Bengaluru to create chances as they defended their own box well. But Bengaluru pressed on.

