

Union MoS Bandi Sanjay Kumar Reviews Development Schemes in Dima Hasao Ahead of District Visit

Haflong, Mar 05: Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Thursday conducted a review of various government schemes and developmental projects in Dima Hasao through a video conference held from Guwahati. During the meeting, Partha Sarati Jahari, Principal Secretary, presented a detailed PowerPoint overview of the progress of schemes implemented by different departments. Heads of various departments, representatives of APEX bodies, and members of several organizations also participated in the review meeting.



The minister assessed the performance and progress of key sectors including Panchayat & Rural Development, Education, Health, Social Welfare, and Agriculture, focusing on

the implementation of welfare schemes and developmental initiatives in the district. It may be noted that MoS Bandi Sanjay Kumar is scheduled to visit Dima Hasao on

Friday to physically inspect several ongoing projects and schemes in and around Haflong. His itinerary includes visits to projects under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, Anganwadi centres, ME/LP schools, Fair Price Shops, Health Sub-Centres, Jal Jeevan Mission, and houses built under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Gramin. The minister is also inspect the Civil Hospital Haflong and PM Shri Government Girls' Higher Secondary School, besides visiting Sampardisa, where he interact with villagers and beneficiaries of various government schemes.

Community Heroism: Dima Hasao Rallies with Police to Bring Three Missing Children Home

Haflong, Mar 03: In a heartening development that brought immense relief to worried family members and residents, three children who had gone missing from Dima Hasao were successfully traced and reunited with their family following a coordinated effort by police, railway authorities, and vigilant youths. The incident was reported from Harichandrapur, which falls under the jurisdiction of Maibang Police Station. According to family members, the three children went missing on the afternoon of March 2, triggering panic and anxiety among their relatives and villagers. Soon after discovering that the children were missing, the family immediately informed the police and sought help from the media. Information about the disappearance was also widely circulated through social media platforms, prompting a rapid response and search effort from various quarters. Preliminary information shared by the family suggested that an unidentified woman allegedly approached the children, offered them food, and then took them along with her. As news of the missing children spread rapidly online, the suspected woman reportedly abandoned the children at Lumding Railway Station before

fleeing the area, apparently fearing identification. Subsequently, personnel of the Railway Protection Force ensured the safety of the children and facilitated their boarding on a train heading towards Dima Hasao. During the train journey, a group of alert youths from Haflong recognized the children based on photographs and details that had been widely shared on social media. Demonstrating commendable presence of mind, the youths immediately contacted the children's family using the phone number mentioned in the public posts. Acting swiftly on the information received, officials of Maibang Police Station traced the children and ensured their safe rescue. After completing the necessary procedures, the children were handed over safely to their relieved family members. The successful recovery of the children highlights the importance of community vigilance, responsible use of social media, and the prompt action of law enforcement agencies. Authorities have assured that efforts are underway to identify and trace the unidentified woman involved in the incident while urging parents and guardians to remain vigilant for the safety of children.

CEM Debolal Gorlosa Holds Community Meeting with Villagers and Party Workers at Sontilla Village

Haflong, Mar 06: A community interaction meeting was held at Sontilla where Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council, Debolal Gorlosa, met with local residents to discuss developmental issues and community concerns. The meeting brought together villagers, Gaon Burahs (GBs), Mouzadars, party workers of the Bharatiya Janata Party, and the BLC President of the area. The interaction served as an important platform for the local community to express their concerns, aspirations, and suggestions regarding development and welfare initiatives in the region. During the meeting, CEM



Gorlosa attentively listened to the issues raised by the villagers and assured them that their concerns would be considered while planning and implementing development works in the district. The discussion also focused on strengthening grassroots communication and ensuring that government initiatives effectively reach the people. The meeting was attended by several local leaders and party

functionaries, including Projit Hojai, MAC of the council; Ronmanon Johori; Prodesh Kemprai; senior party worker Sabinon Daulagupu; and Kolendra Langthasa, among other community members. The interaction highlighted the importance of regular dialogue between elected representatives and the grassroots community to ensure inclusive development and effective governance in Dima Hasao.

“Gaon Mein Governor” Initiative Brings Assam Governor to Grassroots in Dima Hasao; Villager Felicitated at Deswali Gaon

Haflong/Harangajo, Mar 05: In a significant step toward strengthening grassroots engagement and bringing governance closer to rural communities, the Governor of Assam, Lakshman Prasad Acharya, on Wednesday visited Deswali Gaon under the “Gaon Mein Governor” initiative. The programme aimed at fostering direct interaction between the state leadership and villagers while highlighting local achievements and community spirit. The event was held at Deswali Gaon in Harangajo, located in the hill district of Dima Hasao. The Governor was accompanied by the First Lady of Assam, Kumud Devi, along with Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council, Debolal Gorlosa. District Commissioner Munindra Nath Nagtey, several Executive Members, Members of Autonomous Council (MACs), and other dignitaries of the council were also present on the occasion. The visit formed part of the Governor's outreach

programme designed to understand the realities of rural life and encourage community participation in development. The “Gaon Mein Governor” initiative underscores the importance of bridging the gap between the administration and the grassroots, enabling local communities to feel directly connected with the state's highest constitutional office. A highlight of the programme was the felicitation of Belboti Mohapatra, whose recognition in the presence of the Governor and other dignitaries turned the event into a proud and memorable moment for the villagers. The felicitation ceremony was attended by community leaders, local representatives, and enthusiastic residents, reflecting the collective pride of the village. The presence of the Governor in a rural setting like Deswali Gaon was widely appreciated by villagers, who viewed the visit as a rare opportunity for their voices and achievements to be acknowledged at the highest level. The programme not only celebrated in-



dividual contributions but also symbolized the state government's commitment to inclusive development and community empowerment at the grassroots level. The event concluded with interactions between the dignitaries and villagers, reinforcing the spirit of the “Gaon Mein Governor” initiative, which seeks to strengthen trust, recognition, and participation in the development journey of Assam's rural communities.



**Remembering,
Lt. Pankaj Langthasa
(Pintu)**

*You left us on this day, the
6th March 2025, for your
heavenly abode.*

*Your physique, warm smile,
respect and kindness
toward us serve as constant
reminders.*

*Though you are no longer
with us, your love and
cherish memories live on
eternally in our hearts.*

May your soul rest in peace

Forever remembered by:

*Parents
Wife
Brother*

Kohima: Man Gets Life for Killing Brother

Kohima, Mar 06: A court in Kohima has sentenced a 49-year-old man to life imprisonment for the murder of his younger brother. The Court of the Principal District and Sessions Judge, presided over by Mezivolu T Therieh, delivered the verdict on Friday, convicting Lezo Seletsu under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code.

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Ravi Succeeds Resigning Ananda Bose



Kolkata, Mar 06: West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose on Thursday resigned from his post after serving for three-and-a-half years, just over a month before assembly elections in the state. Bose tendered his resignation to President Droupadi Murmu. Following the move, he told a news agency that he had spent enough time in office and did not wish to continue. "Yes, I have resigned. I have been the Governor of Bengal for three-and-a-half years; it's enough for me," Bose said.

Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi has been appointed as the new Governor of West Bengal after Bpse's resignation. Banerjee also expressed concern over Bose's resignation, alleging that he may have faced pressure from Amit Shah for "political reasons" ahead of the Bengal polls. "The reasons behind his resignation are not known to me at this moment. However, given the prevailing circumstances, I would not be surprised if the Governor has been subjected to some pressure from the Union Home Minister to serve certain political interests on the eve of the forthcoming State Assembly elections," she wrote on social media.

Hard to make firm comment on direction of West Asia crisis now: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh

Defence minister avoids reference to US sinking of Iranian warship near Sri Lanka while warning Gulf tensions could hit energy supply

Kolkata, Mar 06: In this era of changing geopolitics, oceans have once again come to the centre of the world's power balance and it is India's responsibility to provide leadership with confidence and capability, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Friday, referring to the escalating conflict in West Asia. The unfolding developments in West Asia are "highly unusual" and the situation in the region could adversely impact the global economy, he said addressing an event here. "What is happening in West Asia is highly unusual. It is difficult to make any firm comment at this stage on the direction in which conditions in West Asia might proceed going forward," he said.



The direct impact of these uncertainties falls on the economy and global trade," he said. Singh said the current situation has once again reflected the importance of oceans. "In this era of changing global geopolitics, oceans have once again come to the centre of the world's power balance. At such a time, as a major maritime nation, it is India's responsibility to

provide leadership with confidence, capability, and a clear vision," he said.

The defence minister, however, did not make any direct or indirect reference to the US sinking an Iranian warship off the coast of Sri Lanka two days back. The Iranian frigate, IRIS Dena, was returning home after participating in the Milan multilateral naval exercise hosted by India. At least 87 Iranian sailors were killed in the attack, which marked a major escalation in the conflict between the US and Iran outside of the Persian Gulf.

The US launched military strikes on Iran on February 28, killing Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Following the military offensive, Iran carried out a wave of attacks mainly targeting Israel and American military bases in several Gulf countries including the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. In the last three days, the conflict has widened significantly with attacks and counter-attacks by both the sides.

West Asia Crisis: SpiceJet Operates 14 UAE-India Relief Flights

New Delhi, Mar 06: SpiceJet will operate fourteen special flights from the United Arab Emirates on March 6 to facilitate the return of stranded Indian nationals amid the West Asia conflict. An official release said, "Of the fourteen flights, thirteen will operate from Fujairah, and one will operate from Dubai. The airline will also operate nine special flights from Fujairah to Mumbai, four special flights from Fujairah to Delhi and one special flight from Dubai to Pune, providing addition-

al capacity to help stranded passengers return home at the earliest." "In the last three days, SpiceJet has operated 25 special flights from the UAE, connecting stranded passengers to Delhi, Mumbai and Kochi," it added. IndiGo extends free cancellations As the situation in the Middle East remains volatile, IndiGo extends free waivers on cancellations till March 31. An official release said, "The full waiver on cancellations is being extended for travel to and from the Middle East, and



Istanbul, until March 31. Customers are requested to stay updated on their flight status by checking on IndiGo's website and social media channels. For additional support or clarification, customers can contact IndiGo's Customer Contact Centre at +91 124 6173838."

RSS Meets Signal Major UP BJP Overhaul Over Caste

Lucknow, Mar 06: CM Yogi Adityanath on Thursday attended a closed-door coordination meeting of the RSS in Ghaziabad, amid intensified consultations between the ruling BJP and the Sangh leadership ahead of the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections. The meeting assumes significance as the BJP seeks to address signs of discontent among sections of its core upper-caste support base while attempting to consolidate Dalit voters in the run-up to the high-stakes Assembly polls. Party insiders indicated that discussions are centred on recalibrating caste equations and strengthening grassroots coordination ahead of polls.

An organisational reshuffle in the state BJP is expected by the end of March. The rejig is likely to underscore the BJP's attempt to strike a balance between its traditional upper-caste base—which has remained central to its electoral success since the Ram Temple movement of the early 1990s—and the OBC-Dalit combine. The exercise is being viewed as a counter to the SP, which has sharpened its PDA (Pichhda, Dalit, Alpsankhyak) narrative. The BJP has also faced political heat over controversies surrounding the UGC's equity regulations and tensions involving Swami Avimuktেশwaranand Saraswati during the Magh Mela in January. The leadership is learnt to be treading cautiously amid sensitivities linked to caste and religious leadership. Sources said the RSS has been holding coordination meetings across its six regional units (prants) in the state, with caste dynamics high on the agenda. Adityanath recently participated in the RSS coordination meeting of the Gorakhpur prant.

During his visits to various prants including Gorakhpur and Lucknow, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat had made appeals to rid the society of caste discrimination. Bhagwat's call for unity among Hindus was seen in the light of the Opposition's aggressive approach to court caste groups with focus on Opposition's PDA narrative. "If all castes -- Dalits, OBCs and upper castes -- unite as Hindus, that will certainly help the BJP," said a BJP leader.



Who'll become CM? Search for Nitish successor in BJP

Patna, Mar 06: Bihar Chief Minister and JD(U) supremo Nitish Kumar on Thursday offered to step down from the CM's post and move to the Rajya Sabha, triggering a high-stakes search for his successor, with BJP leaders like Deputy CM Samrat Choudhary, Nityanand Rai and Dilip Jaiswal, and even a possible young woman leader under consideration. Sources said the BJP, in alliance with JD(U), will choose its own leader for the top post for the first time in Bihar. It will be a historic shift as BJP has never before placed its own leader as CM despite being the largest party in the assembly. Among the front-runners, Deputy CM Samrat Choudhary, who, like Nitish, belongs to the OBC category, is emerging as a leading contender. Other names include Union

MoS for Home Nityanand Rai and state industries minister Dilip Jaiswal, while JD(U)'s Nishant Kumar, Nitish's son, and water resources minister

NDA's two-thirds majority in the last assembly elections. From the JD(U) side, Nitish's son Nishant Kumar and State Water Resources Minister Vi-

two deputy CMs will go to its ally JD(U). This arrangement is already in place in the state today." The move follows an internal recalibration within JD(U) and BJP. Initially, Nishant Kumar was being considered for the Rajya Sabha seat, but when he expressed a wish to start his political career from Bihar, Nitish was asked to move to Rajya Sabha and leave a successor. BJP fields Nabin, Shivesh Kumar for RS polls

On Thursday, BJP fielded National President Nitin Nabin and Bihar unit General Secretary Shivesh Kumar for Rajya Sabha polls, while NDA ally Upendra Kushwaha and JD(U) leader Union Minister Ramnath Thakur also filed nominations. Amit Shah was present during the filing and praised Nitish for his contribution to Bihar's development.



Vijay Kumar Chaudhary are also being considered.

A top BJP source added that a young woman leader with a clean image and wide community acceptability could also be considered to signal the party's focus on women's empowerment, noting that women's support was key to

jay Kumar Chaudhary are also being discussed. BJP sources indicated that while the CM post will go to the party, JD(U) will be offered two deputy chief minister positions, mirroring the setup when Nitish was CM with two BJP deputies. A senior NDA leader said, "When BJP will have its CM, the post of

No plans to field Pabitra Margherita in Assam assembly polls: CM Sarma



Guwahati, Mar 06: With political speculation intensifying ahead of the upcoming Assam Assembly elections, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma ruled out the possibility of Union Minister Pabitra Margherita contesting from the Jorhat constituency, asserting that the BJP has no plan to bring him into state politics at present. Speaking to the press before flagging off the fifth day of the Jana Ashirwad Yatra from Naharkatia on Friday, Sarma said the party wants Margherita to continue in the Union government led by Narendra Modi, where he currently serves as Minister of State for External Affairs. "Pabitra Margherita is the Indian Union Minister of State for External Affairs.

It is a fortunate thing that a person from Assam holds this position and the State does not want to lose this opportunity," Sarma said.

"There is no need for him to come to the State Legislative Assembly. We want him to remain in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Cabinet and enhance the pride and name of Assam," he added. The Chief Minister said the party may consider Margherita's candidature in the 2029 Lok Sabha elections, but clarified that no proposal has been taken up to field him in the upcoming Assembly polls.

"When it comes to the assembly elections 2026, the BJP has taken no proposal or provision to field him as a candidate," Sarma said. On

the likely candidate from Jorhat, Sarma said the party has several strong local contenders. "We have several good candidates in Jorhat, people from humble families and backgrounds who are popular among the public. We will nominate one candidate from among the local names," he said. Addressing the situation in Sivasagar, Sarma said the party has not yet taken a final decision. "We have not taken a decision regarding Sivasagar yet. The seat is desired by the AGP, and there are also many aspirants from our party. Discussions are ongoing," he said. Commenting on the ongoing disagreement within the opposition alliance over seat sharing between the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee and Rajgor Dal, the Chief Minister said the uncertainty would continue until nominations. "Until the last moment of nomination and withdrawal, this drama will go on," Sarma remarked. He also informed that since Jogen Mohan, the MLA from Mahmora, has been fielded as a candidate for the upcoming Rajya Sabha polls, the BJP will nominate a local candidate for the Mahmora Assembly constituency in the 2026 polls.

Arunachal Cabinet Clears Education Bill and Climate Action Plan



Itanagar, Mar 03: The Arunachal Pradesh Cabinet, led by Chief Minister Pema Khandu, greenlit sweeping reforms on Monday, targeting education, finance, health administration, employee welfare, and climate action, alongside key recruitment and pay proposals. Education took center stage with five major approvals: a new bill to regulate teacher transfers via a transparent, tech-driven Teachers' Registry Portal; professorship for college teachers under UGC 2018 norms; updated recruitment rules for college principals

and physical education teachers; and revised seat reservations for diploma, PCM, PCB, and allied courses. Under the changes, 20% of seats previously reserved for non-APST candidates shift to open quota, with 80% retained for APST students.

The Arunachal Pradesh Transfer and Posting of Employees of Education Department (Regulation & Management) Bill, 2026, will be tabled in the Assembly session starting March 6, replacing the current policy with a statutory framework.

In administration, the Cab-

inet created 15 posts in the Finance and Accounts Service Cadre, upgraded grade pay for civil aviation charge-men, and granted pay parity for cooperation department inspectors, per pay anomaly committee recommendations. Health reforms included recruitment rules for deputy drugs controllers and senior food safety officers, aligned with national standards, plus a one-time relaxation for power department superintending engineers. On climate action, the Cabinet released the Pakke Declaration Implementation Report-2025, tracking the 2021 Pakke Tiger Reserve-2047 initiative. Of 410 action lines across 75 strategies by 23 departments, 246 are complete, 70 ongoing, and 94 initiated, backed by Rs 802.6 crore in investments. Educational Resources

Officials reaffirmed the government's focus on transparent governance, human resource growth, and sustainable development.

Kamalasagar Murder: Man Arrested for Killing Wife in Tripura

Agartala, Mar 06: A shocking incident has rocked the Harishnagar Munda Para area, where a man allegedly beat his wife to death in front of their two children. The accused has been identified as Lakshmindhar Munda, while the deceased is Moni Munda (Rote). According to local sources, the violence began on Thursday evening when Lakshmindhar started assaulting his wife. Neighbors reportedly tried to intervene multiple times, but the situation did not improve. Witnesses claim that the assault continued late into the night.

Family members and neighbors allege that Moni was brutally attacked with a wooden stick during the night, in full view of her children. The relentless beating left her critically injured. On Friday morning, neighbors found Lakshmindhar sitting beside his wife's lifeless body, sparking widespread outrage in the locality.

Bishalgarh police station staff rushed to the scene after receiving information. The accused husband was arrested and taken into custody, while the body was sent for post-mortem examination. Residents allege that Lakshmindhar frequently assaulted his wife, and police suspect ongoing domestic disputes may have led to this tragic incident. Bishalgarh police have launched a full investigation into the matter.

Tripura Govt Aims for 320 ICU Beds in GB Hospital, Says CM Dr. Manik Saha



Agartala, Mar 06: Chief Minister Prof. Dr. Manik Saha on Thursday announced that the state government is giving top priority to strengthening health infrastructure and ensuring quality medical care for the people of Tripura. Speaking at a press conference at GB Pant Hospital, Dr. Saha revealed that a new super speciality hospital will soon be established in Hapania, Agartala. He described the day as a "proud moment" for AGMC and GB Pant Hospital, which cater to the state's 42 lakh population.

Highlighting recent initiatives, the Chief Minister said GB Pant now has 24 NICU and 116 ICU beds, with plans to expand to 320 ICU beds following recommendations from AIIMS. A 16-bed Respiratory and Geriatric ICU, a Trauma Centre Operation Theater, and a newly renovated labour room have already been inaugurated. "We are working to provide facilities at an international level, ensuring better care for mothers, newborns, and critical pa-

tients," he added.

Dr. Saha, who also holds the Health portfolio, noted that GB Pant Hospital, one of the oldest in the state, is undergoing major upgrades. The hospital's bed capacity has increased from 727 to 1,413, with further expansion underway. Work has begun on a critical care and communicable disease centre, while five additional super speciality departments are planned.

The government is also focusing on medical education, with efforts to increase MBBS seats and expand telemedicine services in collaboration with AIIMS. Private players are joining the push, with SHIJA and GNRC Guwahati set to open hospitals in Hapania. Two new district hospitals will also be established in Sepahijala and Khowai. "Our vision is to deliver corporate-style healthcare services without burdening patients with high costs," Dr. Saha said, reaffirming the government's commitment to accessible and advanced healthcare for all.

45 Mizoram Villages Remain Without Electricity: Rodinglana

Aizawl, Mar 05: Forty-five remote villages in Mizoram remain un-electrified or de-electrified, Power and Electricity Minister F Rodinglana informed the state Assembly on Wednesday. The announcement comes amid ongoing implementation of the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS). Responding to opposition BJP MLA Prova Chakma, Rodinglana said that sanctions for electrification work are in place and three contractors including two from outside Mizoram have been finalized. "Guaranteed Technical Particulars (GTP) drawings are approved, and initial material supplies have reached some sites," he added.



The minister also highlighted ongoing transformer issues across the state, noting that 71 damaged units are awaiting repair allocation. Power supply continues via back-feeding from nearby transformers, preventing complete outages in affected

areas. Delays in repair and installation are attributed to a multi-step process involving formal surveys, Head Office approvals, and transport to a specialist workshop in Silchar, Assam. Manpower shortages and poor road conditions between Aizawl and Silchar have further contributed to delays, although periods of stable conditions have allowed accumulation of backup repaired units. On safety measures, Rodinglana assured replacement of rusted poles at risk of collapse, with Rs 2.70 crore sanctioned for 2025-26. He added that high demand for Low Tension (LT) line extensions is being addressed based on available funds.

Editorial

“Gaon Mein Governor” – Bringing Governance Closer to the People

The recent visit of the Governor of Assam, Lakshman Prasad Acharya, to Deswali Gaon under the initiative “Gaon Mein Governor” marks an important step in strengthening the spirit of grassroots democracy. At a time when governance is often perceived as distant from rural realities, such initiatives play a crucial role in bridging the gap between the administration and the people it serves. The hill district of Dima Hasao, known for its rich cultural diversity and challenging terrain, has long required sustained administrative attention and inclusive development efforts. By stepping into the heart of a village in Harangajao, the Governor symbolically reaffirmed the principle that governance must reach the last mile. When constitutional authorities personally interact with villagers, listen to their concerns, and acknowledge their achievements, it reinforces public trust in democratic institutions. The presence of the Chief Executive Member of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council, Debolal Gorlosa, along with other council members and dignitaries, highlighted the collaborative approach required to address local development issues. Local governance institutions such as autonomous councils, village bodies, and community leaders play a vital role in translating policies into meaningful action on the ground. Their participation in such outreach programmes ensures that the concerns voiced by villagers receive attention at multiple levels of administration. Equally significant was the felicitation of local resident Belboti Mohapatra, which became a moment of pride for the community. Recognizing individuals at the village level sends a powerful mes-

sage—that contributions made quietly within rural communities are valued and respected. It also encourages others to actively participate in social, educational, and developmental activities. Beyond ceremonial importance, initiatives like “Gaon Mein Governor” hold deeper democratic value. They serve as platforms where villagers can express their aspirations, concerns, and suggestions directly to policymakers. Such interactions help policymakers better understand the challenges faced by remote communities—whether related to infrastructure, education, healthcare, or livelihood opportunities. For districts like Dima Hasao, where geographical and infrastructural constraints often limit access to administrative centres, these outreach visits become especially meaningful. They represent not only recognition but also reassurance that governance is attentive to the voices of people living in the farthest corners of the state. The success of such initiatives lies in their continuity. If sustained and expanded, programmes like “Gaon Mein Governor” can significantly strengthen participatory governance, encourage community engagement, and foster a sense of shared responsibility in the development process. In essence, the visit to Deswali Gaon was more than a ceremonial engagement—it was a reminder that democracy flourishes when leaders walk among the people, listen to their stories, and acknowledge their contributions. By bringing the Governor’s office closer to the grassroots, the initiative sets a meaningful example of inclusive governance that other states may well emulate.

Open for Business: The Northeast Is Finally on India Inc.’s Map

From semiconductors to cement, biogas to cancer care — leading conglomerates are all moving into the Northeast, as policy, geography and demographics converge to make the region impossible to ignore.

Guwahati: India Inc. has arrived in the Northeast. The Rising Northeast Investors Summit in May 2025 drew Rs 4.3 lakh crore in proposals from over 80 countries, a decisive break from decades in which the region was bypassed by private capital.

Investments and forays into new airport terminals, thermal power plants, cement companies, mineral exploration, 5G, biogas, semiconductors, food processing and agri-supply chains, data centres lead the roost. The region’s oil and gas and renewables resources also attracting the interest of conglomerates who are spread across the country.

It isn’t only all about extracting resources from the region. With the increasing number of tourists visiting the states in the Northeast, providing comfortable stay for them is also a priority. To boost

scientific research and healthcare access in the region, the leading companies are also heavily investing in cancer care hospitals and genome research laboratories within the region.

Underpinning it all is a decade of public investment — Rs 6.2 lakh crore since 2014 — that doubled the road network and expanded airports from nine to 18. The Act East policy has repositioned the Northeast as India’s gateway to Southeast Asia. For corporate India, that geography is no longer an afterthought. The cumulative effect, if delivered, would mark a structural shift for a region long dependent on public spending — advancing industrial urbanisation, improving healthcare access, and bringing the Northeast closer to Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma’s vision of Assam as a self-sustaining Rs 5 lakh crore economy by 2031.

Usability Will Redefine the Future of Health Insurance in India

---By Mayank Bathwal, CEO, Aditya Birla Health Insurance

Introduction

In India, health insurance is still largely viewed through a narrow lens as something to think about only when a hospital visit feels imminent, a safety net reserved for difficult moments. This continues to be the reality for most Indians, but the country’s evolving health needs demand a broader, more forward-looking approach.

Today, the way people interact with healthcare itself is shifting from how they access information to how they manage everyday wellbeing. This shift is reshaping expectations from insurance. As digital adoption accelerates, awareness of preventive care grows, and consumers engage more actively with their health, insurance is undergoing a steady redefinition. It is evolving from a crisis-driven safety net into a partner that supports everyday health choices. In this new arc, usability will shape the future of health insurance.

The industry’s growth has been impressive, driven by rising health awareness and digital innovation. Yet, the true promise of health insurance lies ahead. The future will belong to insurers who make their products simpler and seamlessly usable so that individuals engage with their insurance not only in moments of crisis but as part of their everyday wellness journey.

From Claims to Care

The old insurance model was reactive, with policyholders engaged with their insurer primarily when they needed hospitalisation or surgery. However, India’s health challenges are increasingly being shaped by chronic and lifestyle-related conditions that require continuous management. Non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease are responsible for nearly two-thirds of all deaths in the country. The World Health Organisation’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to which India is also a signatory, recognises NCDs as a major challenge to global progress. It calls for reducing premature mortality from NCDs by one-third through prevention and treatment by 2030. This underscores the need for India’s healthcare ecosystem, including insurers, to move from reactive care to proactive health management.

A preventive approach is now central to building a healthier population and a sustainable insurance model, with insurers promoting regular check-ups, wellness assessments and fitness-linked incentives. When preventive care becomes integral to insurance, staying healthy is

not just encouraged but rewarded.

Making Everyday Healthcare Affordable

Healthcare costs in India are rising sharply — projected to consistently run at 12-15% annually, higher than the general inflation rate of 4-6%. While hospitalisation costs draw the most attention, a significant share of healthcare spending happens outside hospitals. Doctor

consultations, diagnostic tests, teleconsultations, and medicines account for much of what families pay from their own pockets. These smaller, frequent costs often create more financial strain than a rare hospitalisation.

Health insurance is beginning to evolve to reflect this shift. Comprehensive coverage should extend to outpatient (OPD) care, making doctor visits and diagnostics more affordable. The pandemic accelerated the use of telemedicine, and millions of Indians now consult doctors online, highlighting the demand for accessible healthcare beyond physical clinics. Incorporating such services into mainstream plans will make healthcare more inclusive and convenient.

Pharmacy benefits are equally important. Medicines often form the largest component of household health spending. Insurers can ease this burden by covering prescribed drugs, offering cashless pharmacy services, or partnering with digital pharmacies for discounts and doorstep delivery.

Micro-Products for the Missing Middle

A major challenge in India’s insurance landscape is the missing middle segment: millions of individuals and families who do not qualify for government schemes but find private insurance expensive or complex. This segment remains vulnerable to financial shocks from even moderate medical expenses. To bridge this gap, there’s an opportunity for insurers to design flexible, event-based micro-products such as seasonal dengue covers, maternity and childcare packages, or short-term wellness or accident covers. Such modular products can be purchased instantly, used easily and priced affordably.

Technology is making this innovation possible. Digital platforms now let people buy, manage, and claim insurance from their phones with minimal paperwork. Regulatory initiatives like IRDAI’s Insurance Vision 2047 encourage simplified, digital-first products that expand participation and spur innovation. Integration with national health missions and payment systems will further streamline access. As insur-



ance becomes more flexible and transparent, it will attract new demographics, including young professionals and gig-economy workers who prefer customised, on-demand coverage.

Personalisation Through Data and Design

A major driver of modern usability is personalisation. Tools such as data analytics, artificial intelligence and wearable technology are enabling insurers to tailor products and health programs to individual behaviours and risk patterns.

As this evolution unfolds, usability and user experience are becoming inseparable. Global research shows that insurers who invest in strong user experience design — clear interfaces, simplified journeys, and responsive digital touchpoints — see higher satisfaction and deeper engagement among policyholders. When technology feels intuitive and human, it encourages people to interact with their insurance more often and with greater confidence.

This focus on experience is visible in how insurers are using technology to make health engagement effortless and rewarding. Customers can now earn rewards including a percentage of discount on their premiums for daily step goals and receive nudges for preventive screenings, or access tailored nutrition and fitness guidance. Over time, this could potentially evolve into hyper-personalised insurance that learns from individual habits and dynamically adjusts benefits.

Conclusion

India’s push toward 0% GST on individual health insurance marks a decisive shift: access must no longer be constrained by cost. The next chapter of health insurance in India will be defined by usability and affordability working hand in hand. But affordability alone is not enough. Insurance must shift from being a ‘some-day’ purchase to an everyday health companion, woven seamlessly into how people live, track and manage their wellbeing. If insurers can unite simplicity with personalisation and everyday relevance, India can move meaningfully closer to making “insurance for all” a lived reality.

---By Mayank Bathwal, CEO, Aditya Birla Health Insurance

Ambuja Cements along with the Adani Foundation Improves Access to Safe Drinking Water in Umrangso

Umrangso: Ambuja Cements, the 9th largest building materials solutions provider globally and part of the diversified Adani Portfolio, along with the Adani Foundation, has strengthened health security for rural communities in Tharvelangso village, Umrangso, by enabling access to safe drinking water. The initiative addressed the persistent challenge of contaminated water sources, which had led to repeated cases of diarrhoea and stomach-related illnesses among families. Mrs. Ruptalin Engtipi, a resident of Tharvelangso village, had been facing frequent health concerns within her fam-



ily of six. Each instance required travelling nearly 17 km to the civil hospital in Umrangso, incurring approximately

INR 1,500 in travel expenses and around INR 3,000 on medicines, placing significant financial strain on the household. During 2025–26, Ambuja Cements along with the Adani Foundation distributed RO water filters to 215 families across three core villages as part of its community health intervention. With access to clean drinking water at home, cases of water-borne diseases have reduced considerably. The initiative has eased medical visits and related expenses, reinforcing Ambuja Cements' commitment to improving quality of life and promoting sustainable development in underserved communities.

Sudipto Sen banks on faith-themed thriller 'Charak' after The Kerala Story success

Guwahati: Filmmaker Sudipto Sen has unveiled the official trailer of his upcoming folklore thriller Charak, backing the project as producer after the commercial success of The Kerala Story.

The film is scheduled for a nationwide theatrical release on March 6, 2026. Addressing media at the launch, Sen said controversy has never been a business strategy for him. "I do not set out to make controversial films; I choose subjects that genuinely move and disturb me," he said. He recalled that an incident he witnessed in Kochi in 2014 became the foundation for The Kerala Story, which eventually released in 2023. On Charak, Sen said his long-standing fascination with faith and rural rituals, particularly the traditional Charak festival, shaped the narrative exploring belief, devotion, and the thin line between faith and fear.

Directed by Shieladitya Moulik, the film stars Anjali Patil, Sahidur Rahaman, Subrat Dutta, Shashi Bhushan, Nalnees Neel, Shankhadeep, and Shounak Shyamal. It is presented by PEN Studios and produced by Sipping Tea Cinemas in association with Sudipto Sen Productions. Rajesh Bhatt serves as associate producer. In Guwahati, trade analysts expect moderate-to-strong initial footfall driven by brand recall from The Kerala Story. Exhibitors indicate that the film's faith-centric theme and pre-release buzz could translate into steady weekend collections across multiplexes and key single-screen theatres in the city.

India, Finland explore deeper partnership in skill development and workforce mobility

Guwahati: India and Finland on Thursday discussed expanding cooperation in skill development, vocational education and workforce mobility during a bilateral meeting between Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Shri Jayant Chaudhary and Finland's Minister of Employment Matias Martinen in New Delhi.

The meeting focused on strengthening collaboration between institutions, industries and training systems in both countries to build a future-ready workforce and enhance opportunities for skilled mobility. Both sides highlighted the need to create structured frameworks that enable skilled professionals to access global opportunities while ensuring high standards of training, certification and worker welfare.

Jayant Chaudhary said that under the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is steadily moving towards becoming the "Global Skill Capital of the world." He noted that India's young and dynamic workforce, supported by an expanding skilling ecosystem, can contribute significantly to global industries. Martinen said Finland values its partnership with India and acknowledged the contribution of highly skilled Indian professionals working across sectors in Finland.

The ministers also discussed cooperation in sectors such as healthcare, construction, green technologies and advanced manufacturing.



The dialogue highlighted the need to strengthen partnerships between vocational institutions, promote knowledge exchange, enhance trainer capacity and integrate language training to support international mobility.

In Guwahati, enhanced global skill partnerships could create new opportunities for youth in Northeast India. With growing participation in government skilling programmes, training institutes in Guwahati and nearby regions may benefit from international collaborations, especially in sectors like healthcare services, construction and emerging green technologies. The Finnish delegation included senior officials from labour migration, innovation and workforce development agencies, while the Indian side was represented by officials from the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, NCVET and the Directorate General of Training. Both sides agreed to continue dialogue to identify priority sectors and practical areas of collaboration.

Chef Yogendra Negi shares traditional Khandsari Gujiya recipe for Holi celebrations



Guwahati: As the festival of Holi approaches, Chef Yogendra Negi of Organic India has shared a traditional recipe for Khandsari Gujiya, highlighting the use of organic ingredients and classic festive flavours. The recipe features a crisp pastry crust made using two cups of all-purpose flour, a pinch of salt, and one-fourth cup of melted Organic India ghee mixed to a breadcrumb consistency before kneading into a firm dough with chilled water. The dough is then rested for at least 30 minutes.

For the filling, 200 grams of crumbled mawa is roasted in one teaspoon of ghee until light golden and aromatic. Roasted semolina, finely chopped almonds, cashews and pistachios, desiccated coconut, and cardamom powder are added to enhance the flavour. After the mixture cools to room temperature, three-fourths cup of Organic India Desi Khandsari Sugar is mixed in, ensuring the fill-

ing remains dry and textured. The dough is rolled into small puri-sized circles, filled with the mixture, folded, and sealed using water or milk. The gujiyas are then shaped with a mould or fork pattern and fried in ghee or vegetable oil on low to medium heat until golden brown and crisp.

Chef Negi recommends frying on low heat to avoid bubbles and maintain crunchiness. He also suggests lightly blending Khandsari sugar for a smoother texture if desired. Once cooled completely, the gujiyas can be stored in airtight containers and remain fresh for up to 10 days.

In Guwahati, sweet shops and grocery stores are witnessing rising demand for traditional Holi ingredients such as mawa, dry fruits, ghee and Khandsari sugar. Traders say the festival season has boosted sales of festive sweets and cooking essentials as households prepare traditional dishes like gujiya ahead of Holi celebrations.

Skill Ministry makes 150-hour OJT mandatory for ITI trainees under CTS reform

Guwahati: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has introduced a major reform in Industrial Training Institute (ITI) training by making 150 hours of On-the-Job Training (OJT) or a Group Project compulsory under the Craftsmen Training Scheme (CTS). The guidelines were issued by the Directorate General of Training on March 3, 2026, and the provision has been effective since the 2022–23 academic session.

Under the revised structure aligned with the National Education Policy 2020, the annual CTS training duration has been reduced from 1,600 hours to 1,200 hours, with 150 hours reserved for structured OJT or project work. Trainees will be eligible after completing three months of ITI training. Performance will be assessed through mentor



evaluation, logbook review and viva during practical exams, with grades reflected in marksheets and in-

dustry-approved certificates issued by ITIs.

Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development, Jayant Chaudhary, said the reform would enhance practical competence and deepen industry-institution linkages to make youth "job-ready and future-ready."

In Guwahati, the move could strengthen local manufacturing, service and small-scale industrial units by ensuring ITI graduates possess hands-on skills aligned with current technology demands. The reform is expected to improve employability in Assam's growing industrial clusters and reduce the gap between training and workplace requirements.

The CTS, launched in 1950, continues to play a key role in building India's skilled workforce.

Renault India posts 31% sales growth in February, Duster buzz lifts momentum

Guwahati: Renault India reported a strong 31% year-on-year rise in wholesale sales in February 2026, selling 3,495 units compared to 2,676 units in the same month last

corresponding period of 2025. The automaker outpaced overall industry growth for the second consecutive month, driven by strong demand for the refreshed Kiger and Trib-

since Q3 CY2025 has supported its steady turnaround, with growth of 9% in Q3 CY25, 27% in Q4 CY25 and 32% in the first two months of 2026.

The recent announcement of the return of the Renault Duster to the Indian market has further boosted consumer sentiment, leading to higher dealership footfalls across the country.

In Guwahati, dealers reported steady enquiries for the Triber and Kiger, especially among first-time buyers and families seeking value-driven SUVs. Industry observers said the Duster comeback could further strengthen Renault's position in Northeast India, where compact SUVs continue to see rising demand.



year. The company said it has maintained growth momentum in the first two months of 2026, registering a 32% cumulative increase over the

er models. The new Triber led the surge with an impressive 57% year-on-year growth in February. Renault said improved brand favourability

Ambuja Cements along with the Adani Foundation Strengthens Early Education Support in Umrangso

Umrangso: Ambuja Cements, the 9th largest building materials solutions provider globally and part of the diversified Adani Portfolio, along with the Adani Foundation, has strengthened access to early education support for children in Chotolokhindong village, Umrangso. The initiative addressed barriers faced by students from economically vulnerable families who lacked basic school essentials, impacting their attendance and confidence. Mirso Ronghangpi, a nursery student and daughter of Babu Ronghang and SamilyBeypi, had been irregular in school as her family found it difficult to afford a school bag, shoes

and basic learning materials. Without these essentials, she often stayed at home, feeling discouraged and left behind in her early learning journey. Recognizing such needs, Ambuja Cements along with the Adani Foundation distributed 65 educational kits across four government schools. The kits included school bags, shoes, painting kits and pencil boxes to ensure children had the necessary tools to attend school with dignity. With access to these essentials, Mirso is now regular in her classes, participates actively and displays a positive attitude towards learning, reinforcing Ambuja Cements' commitment to promoting inclusive



and equitable education in rural communities.

Turkish Airlines partners with Google to introduce next-gen baggage tracking experience

Kolkata: Turkish Airlines has partnered with Google to introduce a next-generation baggage locating experience, becoming the launch partner for Google's new Find Hub "share item location" feature. The collaboration marks another step in the airline's digital transformation aimed at improving the overall travel experience for passengers.

Under the initiative, passengers travelling with a Find Hub-compatible tracker tag attached to their baggage can generate a secure location link through the Find Hub app and share it directly with a Turkish Airlines baggage representative. The link allows airline teams to view the real-time location of misplaced or delayed luggage, enabling faster and more efficient recovery.

Passengers can open the Find Hub app, select the missing item and tap "share item location" to create a secure URL. The link automatically expires after seven days and can be stopped at any time by

the passenger. Location data remains encrypted, ensuring privacy and security throughout the process.

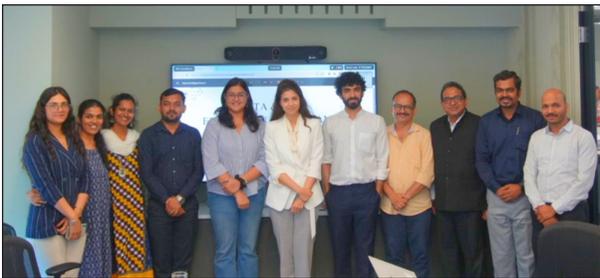
Turkish Airlines Ground Operations Vice President Mehmet Yıldırım said the airline continues to invest in data-driven digital solutions to enhance passenger experience across its network of more than 350 destinations worldwide.

Meanwhile, Erik Kay noted that Find Hub leverages a crowdsourced network of over a billion Android devices, helping users locate lost items quickly and seamlessly.

Such digital baggage-tracking innovations could also benefit passengers travelling through eastern India. With growing international travel demand from the Kolkata aviation market, advanced tracking systems introduced by global carriers like Turkish Airlines may help improve passenger confidence and streamline baggage recovery for travellers connecting through major global hubs.



Data & AI take centre stage in education governance discussions at Mumbai roundtable



Itanagar: The Sterlite EdIndia Foundation on Thursday hosted the Data & AI for Education Governance Roundtable in Mumbai, bringing together senior leaders from municipal corporations, district administrations, education departments and leading education foundations to discuss how technology can strengthen education systems in India.

Held at the Sterlite Electric Office in Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), the roundtable focused on improving student learning outcomes and strengthening administrative planning in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF). Participants highlighted the growing need for insight-driven systems to improve planning, monitoring and evaluation across classrooms and institutions.

The session was led by Sonakshi Agarwal, Managing Director of Sterlite EdIndia Foundation, and Antony Nellissery, Head of the Foundation, who emphasised building cohesive data ecosystems to support informed decision-making. "When public and private partners come together, we build scalable solutions

whose impact continues long after the project ends," Agarwal said.

Government representatives including Sujata Khare (MCGM), Mohit Patil (MBMC), Dr PokdeyYongam (Deputy Director of School Education, Namsai) and Dr Keshab Sarmah (District Planning Officer, Namsai) discussed how data and AI can enable targeted and equitable interventions across diverse education contexts.

Leaders from organisations such as Adhyayan Quality Education Foundation, Vipra Foundation, Pehlay Akshar and Dasra also shared insights on strengthening governance through data-driven planning and improved monitoring of learning outcomes, teacher deployment and attendance.

In Itanagar, education experts say the adoption of data analytics and AI-driven systems could significantly benefit education administration in Arunachal Pradesh. Officials noted that districts such as Namsai are already exploring data-based planning models that may gradually influence education governance practices across the Itanagar region, helping authorities track student performance and deploy resources more effectively.

The roundtable concluded with a call for stronger collaboration between governments, foundations and system leaders to build transparent and scalable education systems that improve learning outcomes nationwide.

Sterlite EdIndia Foundation works in teacher education, data analytics support and institutional strengthening of education systems as part of a CSR initiative incubated by Sterlite Electric, Resonance and Serentica.

Mahindra auto sales jump 18% in February; SUVs drive growth with 60,018 units

Guwahati: Mahindra & Mahindra Limited on March 1 reported total auto sales of 97,177 vehicles in February 2026, registering an 18% year-on-year growth, including exports.

The company said it sold 60,018 utility vehicles in the domestic market, up 19% from 50,420 units in February 2025. Overall utility vehicle sales, including exports, stood at 60,685 units. Domestic commercial vehicle sales reached 24,585 units, marking a 10% rise.

Nalinikanth Gollagunta, CEO, Auto-

motive Division, said, "February saw SUV sales of 60,018 units, a growth of 19% reflecting robust customer demand across the portfolio. Total vehicle sales stood at 97,177 units, an 18% year-on-year growth."

In the commercial segment, light commercial vehicles (2T-3.5T) grew 12% to 21,416 units, while three-wheelers, including electric models, surged 44% to 9,190 units. Total exports increased 11% to 3,384 units. Year-to-date exports rose 21% to 37,022 units.

In Guwahati, dealers reported steady demand for Mahindra's SUVs and small commercial vehicles, driven by infrastructure activity and rural consumption trends in Assam and the Northeast. Industry observers said strong festival bookings and preference for utility vehicles continue to support sales momentum in the region.

Founded in 1945, the Mahindra Group operates in over 100 countries and is the world's largest tractor manufacturer by volume.

The Definitive Complimentary California Road Trip: Discover The Golden State Without Incurring Any Expenses

Many of California's finest treasures are available at no cost. With a wealth of unmatched natural beauty, distinctive landmarks, and unique attractions, you need not spend much (or anything at all!) to experience the highlights of the Golden State. Explore a selection of essential free or low-cost activities throughout the state that are budget-friendly.

Adventures galore

Walk or rent bikes to cross the Sacramento River on the 700-foot architectural marvel of the Sundial Bridge, located at Turtle Bay Exploration Park in Redding. Nearby, you can also stroll through Paul Bunyan's Forest Camp or relax in the McConnell Arboretum & Botanical Gardens. A trip to the Shasta Cascade region wouldn't be complete without visiting some of the area's stunning waterfalls. With over 50 in the area, there is something for everyone ranging from easily accessible to more strenuous with spectacular payoff in Shasta, Siskiyou, Butte, Plumas, Tehama and Trinity County.

North Coast

Drive the Avenue of Giants in Humboldt County Cruise this 31-mile stretch, which runs parallel to High-



way 101 and is flanked by the enormous trees of Humboldt Redwoods State Park. But the exploration can go beyond the car: make a quick stop on the avenue to check-out the park's loop trails that have views of some of the world's tallest trees in the Rockefeller Forest.

San Francisco Bay Area Bike along the Napa Valley Vine Trail

The Napa Valley Vine Trail runs from downtown Napa to Yountville, going straight through the heart of the valley. Open to both bikes and pedestrians, the trail is the perfect way to see wine country and the vines that put it on the map. Don't forget to stop for a photo op at one of the two

famous "Welcome to Napa Valley" signs.

Gold Country

Look at Past History in California's Capitol With its noble columns and stunning cupola, California's State Capitol building in Sacramento looks like a mini replica of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. Take a free tour to learn about the 1869 building's architecture and history, or stroll through the adjacent 40-acre Capitol Park, where you can admire monuments and memorials that remind visitors of California's history and natural beauty.

High Sierra

Swim in Tenaya Lake at Yosemite National Park

Dive into clear blue waters on a hot summer day, or simply admire the beautiful mountains from the shore at Tenaya Lake. Because of its free admission, its prime spots for picnicking and calm waters for safe swimming and canoeing, this lake deserves a spot on visitors' next Yosemite trip.

Central Valley

See Endangered Species

Wind Wolves Preserve, just outside Bakersfield, offers over 30,000 acres of wild terrain and rare wildlife. Free to hike or camp, this nature conservancy site is home to the endangered San Joaquin kit fox, California condors and sweeping wildflower fields in spring. Don't miss the El Camino Viejo Trail.

Central Coast

Stroll through Solvang

Wandering this Danish-style village in the Santa Ynez Valley is an attraction in itself, immediately transporting visitors to the Old World. Solvang's flower-lined streets are packed with windmills, historic buildings and free-to-enter attractions like the Elverhøj Museum of History & Art. Don't forget to sample aebleskiver or peek into the old-style bakeries while you wander.

Visit the Santa Monica Pier

The iconic Santa Monica Pier blends beachside fun with nostalgic charm. Walk the boardwalk, watch street performers or take in ocean views — all for free. Bonus: The pier also hosts a small aquarium beneath its carousel that offers free educational events throughout the year.

Orange County Hang Ten

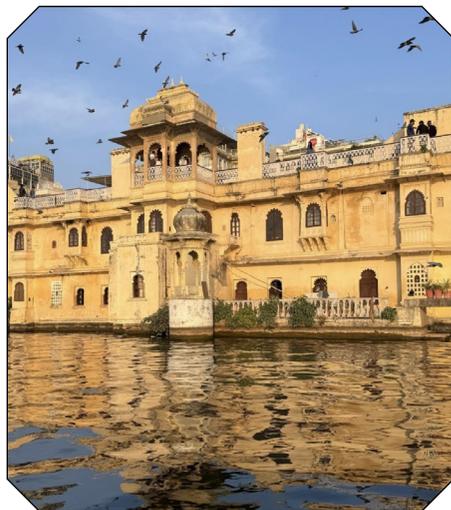
A trip to Orange County wouldn't be complete without catching a wave and hanging ten, or at least watching the pros do it! The Huntington Beach Pier is a great viewing spot to watch some of the best, but also perfect for beginners. In Dana Point, Doheny State Beach is a locals' favorite, plus visitors can stop in the original Hobie Surf Shop.

Inland Empire

Big Entertainment in Big Bear

Stop by the Big Bear Discovery Center, the largest visitor center in the Big Bear Valley, for free entertainment throughout the year. Enjoy events like outdoor concerts, theater productions and nighttime interpretive programs in the Amphitheater. Make sure to take a dip in the lake before you leave!

Udaipur: The City of Lakes and Its Finest Lakeside Accommodations



Udaipur, often referred to as the "City of Lakes," resembles a dream depicted in shades of blue and white. Enclosed by the Aravalli Hills and adorned with palaces, ghats, and gardens, the city appears to have emerged from a fairy tale. However, what genuinely renders Udaipur memorable are its glistening lakes—Pichola, Fateh Sagar, Udai Sagar, and Badi—each embodying a piece of royalty and tranquility. And what better way to enjoy Udaipur than by staying at a lakeside hotel, where every sunrise feels poetic and every sunset is dipped in gold? Here are four stunning lakeside stays you should bookmark for your next trip: Zana Lake Resort, Udaipur If peace had an address, it would be Zana Lake Resort. Sitting beside the serene and uncluttered Udai Sagar Lake, this resort blends nature with luxury. Wake up to the sound of birds, sip your favorite drink with the shimmering lake as

your backdrop, and spend evenings under a starlit sky framed by surrounding mountains. Perfect for couples, friends, and families, Zana promises a distinctive luxury experience with some of the best lake views in the city. Shree Vilas Orchid A hidden gem right on Lake Pichola, this boutique-style hotel feels like a mix of nature and luxury. Picture yourself in a tented villa facing the lake, surrounded by greenery, yet enjoying all the comforts of a hotel. Watching the City Palace glow at night across the water is an experience you won't forget. Hotel Lakend As the name suggests, this one is all about the lake! Located on the banks of Fateh Sagar Lake, Hotel Lakend is perfect for a peaceful holiday. With its infinity pool touching the lake, open-air dining, and wellness spa, it makes you feel as though time has slowed down. If you love sunsets and long walks by the water, this place is calling your name. Jagat Niwas Palace Hotel Perched on the eastern banks of Lake Pichola, Jagat Niwas Palace Hotel offers that authentic Udaipur charm, with arched windows, courtyards, and jharokhas opening directly to lake views. Its rooftop restaurant is a highlight, where you can watch the changing colors of Lake Pichola while savoring Rajasthani flavors. Intimate, warm, and full of character, this stay is truly unforgettable. Udaipur isn't just about sightseeing, it's about slowing down, breathing in the beauty, and experiencing the city's soul through its lakes. A stay by the water turns every moment into something special. These lakeside hotels don't just offer rooms; they offer experiences that linger long after your trip ends. So, when you plan your visit to the City of Lakes, choose a stay that lets you live the poetry of Udaipur, not just see it.

The Five Most Tranquil Destinations Across the Globe

Are you feeling overwhelmed in the hectic pace of life? You are not by yourself. In today's world, travel transcends merely checking off tourist attractions; it involves taking a moment to pause, discovering your inner peace, and exchanging screen time for meaningful moments of self-reflection. If you are seeking a respite from the noise, consider packing your bags for these five enchanting destinations where tranquility is guaranteed alongside stunning vistas. Bali, Indonesia – Beaches And Lush Greenery Known for its beautiful beaches and tranquil resorts, Bali is also a sanctuary for inner peace. The verdant rice terraces of Ubud and the pristine shores of Uluwatu provide a soothing backdrop. Visitors flock here year-round for yoga and meditation retreats, making it an ideal place to reconnect with yourself. With its tranquil beaches, pristine waterbanks, and rich cultural tapestry, Bali, offers the perfect blend of romance, peace and adventure. Santorini, Greece – Blue Skies And Serene Seas This volcanic island is famous for its iconic blue and white ar-



chitecture and breathtaking sea views resembling a crater. Santorini's renowned wines and the ancient ruins of Akrotiri offer a glimpse into Greek history, while the calm seas and skies invite you to truly unwind. Kyoto, Japan – The City Of Meditation And Tranquillity With over 1,600 temples and peaceful Zen gardens, Kyoto is a haven for meditation and reflection. Traditional tea ceremonies and gentle strolls along the Kamo River further enhance its calming charm, making it perfect for those seeking mental peace. Maldives – Embrace 'No Shoes, No News' Comprising more than a thousand coral islands in the Indian Ocean, the Maldives offers the ultimate escape from modern life. The gentle sounds of

the waves, sparkling waters, and soft sandy beaches create a perfect natural retreat where you can completely disconnect. Swiss Alps, Switzerland – Mountain Serenity For mountain lovers, the Swiss Alps are paradise. Snow-capped peaks, crystal-clear lakes, and lush greenery provide stunning scenery year-round. Whether trekking, skiing, or cycling, places like the Aletsch Glacier and Jungfrauoch promise a rejuvenating experience. Remember, relaxation isn't a luxury but a vital necessity in today's hectic world. These destinations offer the peace and quiet often lost in daily life, giving you the chance to discover not only new places but also yourself.

Fall Desserts To Satisfy Your Craving for a Cozy, Delicious Treat

There's just something about the change of season that makes us want to head into the kitchen and bake! Whether it's to use up our apples or pears after a trip to the orchard or simply because we're craving a perfectly spiced, seasonal treat—fall is one of our favorite times of the year for desserts. You can't go wrong with any of the ideas in this roundup but a go-to recipe after a day of apple picking is a must. That's why we love these mini treats; they're reminiscent of a cake doughnut and perfect for snacking—and flecked with bits of apple. Boosted with cider and topped with streusel, they're the perfect indulgence.

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
2. For the streusel: Combine the flour, brown sugar, cinnamon and salt in a medium bowl. Add the butter and use a fork or clean hands to incorporate until combined with pea-size pieces. Set aside.
3. For the cake: Whisk the flour, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda, ginger and salt in a medium bowl; set aside.
4. Add the granulated sugar, butter and

brown sugar to a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Beat on medium speed until light and fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the vanilla and egg and beat until smooth. Reduce the speed to low, add the flour



mixture and beat until just combined. Whisk together the sour cream and apple cider in a small bowl until smooth, then add to the mixer and beat until just combined. Fold in the apple.

5. Add 1/4 cup of the batter to each cav-

ity of an 8-cavity nonstick mini loaf pan. Firmly tap the pan on the countertop a few times to even out the batter. Cover the batter in each cavity with the streusel topping.

6. Bake until the streusel is crispy and a toothpick inserted into the center of a cake comes out clean, 25 to 30 minutes.

Let cool completely in the pan, about 1 hour.

7. For the frosting. Add the apple cider to a small saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Continue to boil until the cider is reduced to about 1/4 cup, about 10 minutes. Let cool slightly, about 10 minutes.

8. Add the butter, vanilla, salt and maple extract to a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat on medium speed until completely smooth and no pieces of butter can be seen, about 2 minutes. Reduce the speed to low, add the confectioners' sugar and beat until combined and the frosting is smooth. Transfer to a small serving bowl until ready to serve.

Transforming your tea-time into a delightful ritual of joy

There is nothing more soothing than a hot cup of chai accompanied by a crispy snack. The delight of tea-time becomes even more significant. From the invigorating morning brews to the relaxing evening gatherings, each cup of chai narrates a tale, and the ideal snack enhances the experience. Be it the soothing flavor of Britannia Good Day or the familiar crunch of pakoras and samosas, every sip discovers its ideal companion. here are some pairings that bring together the many moods of chai with the many flavours of life.



1. Cutting Chai & Samosas The bold strong tea meets the savoury crisp of a samosa for a flavour contrast that wakes

you up and soothes you at once.

2. Masala Chai & Britannia Good Day Butter The spicy warmth of masala chai complements the classic Good Day Butter biscuit, a timeless comfort combo.

3. Masala Chai & Carrot Halwa The sweet, milky richness of halwa balances the spiciness of masala chai, a dessert-tea fusion that feels indulgent.

4. Adrak (Ginger) Chai & Pakoras Nothing says monsoon comfort like hot ginger chai with a plate of pakoras, the spicy, crunchy bite perfectly complements the warmth of the tea.

Make Chicken Wings in an Air Fryer Like a Pro

There is nothing more gratifying than preparing a batch of wings without the need for deep frying. The air fryer utilizes a fan and heating element to generate a whirlwind of hot air that circulates around the wings, achieving a perfectly crisp skin with a golden hue (all while avoiding the extra calories associated with frying oil). Air fryers are not the sole option for home cooking: consider multi-cookers and ovens equipped with an air fryer function. You have the choice to purchase chicken wings that are pre-split or to prepare them yourself using whole wings – remember to keep the tips for making chicken stock. Split the wings. Buy chicken wings that are already



split into flats and drumettes or do it yourself by using a sharp knife to cut between the chicken wing tip and the flat, then between the flat and drumette. Discard the tips or save for your next batch of homemade chicken stock

Pat the chicken wings dry and sprinkle generously with salt. Place the wings in the basket of a 3.5-quart air fryer so they are not touching (if necessary to fit, line up the drumettes standing upright along the sides). Set the air fryer to 360 degrees F and cook for 12 minutes, then flip the wings with tongs and cook for 12 minutes more. Flip the wings again, increase the heat to 390 degrees F and cook until the outsides are extra-crispy, about 6 minutes more. Meanwhile, warm the butter in a microwave-safe bowl in the microwave until melted, about 1 minute. Whisk in the hot sauce. Toss the wings with the butter mixture to coat in a large bowl and serve with dressing on the side.

6 Extremely Fast Sattvic Drinks To Maintain Your Energy Levels

Fasting is not solely about abstaining from food; it is equally crucial to properly nourish and energize the body. Many individuals believe that creating drinks appropriate for fasting is a complex task, but in truth, numerous sattvic beverages can be prepared in merely a few minutes. Here's a list of easy and wholesome sattvic drinks that will keep you feeling refreshed and energised.

Coconut Water: Coconut water is one of the most natural and refreshing drinks you can have during a fast. Simply crack open a fresh coconut and enjoy. It's hydrating, cooling, and gives an instant energy boost. Ideal for quick nourishment. Blend chopped bananas, milk, a few roasted almonds, and honey.

Mint Buttermilk (Chaos): Mint chaos is a light and cooling drink, especially helpful during hot weather fasts. Blend together fresh curd, water, a pinch of rock salt, and crushed mint leaves. It aids digestion and keeps



the stomach calm and cool.

Fruit Smoothie: To make a wholesome smoothie, blend apple, papaya, pomegranate, curd, and honey. This nutritious drink is not only delicious but also provides essential vitamins and minerals. It's especially great for children and elders during the fasting period.

Dry Fruit Saffron Milk: Looking for something rich yet sattvic? Warm milk with soaked dry fruits, saffron strands, and a pinch of cardamom powder makes for a comforting, energy-packed drink. It's ideal for the evenings and helps the body stay warm and nourished.

Bael (Wood Apple) Sharbat: For something unique and naturally cooling, try bael sharbat. This shake is packed with nutrients and can keep you feeling full and fresh, especially when consumed in the morning or early afternoon.

Banana-Almond Shake: Feeling low on energy? A banana-almond shake is rich, creamy, and perfect for quick nourishment. Blend chopped bananas, milk, a few roasted almonds, and honey.

Scoop out the pulp from a ripe bael, mix with water, jaggery, and cardamom powder, then strain. This traditional drink helps with digestion and is perfect for the fasting season. Eating light and sipping sattvic drinks during your fast not only supports your health but also preserves the sanctity and spiritual focus of the fast.

Instant Pot Magic Apple Cake

You don't need fancy inserts or special pans to make a sweet and satisfying baked dessert in an instant pot. This easy recipe lets you cook up a warm, spiced apple treat right in the bowl of the machine.

1. Whisk together the brown sugar, granulated sugar, cinnamon, allspice, nutmeg and 1 1/2 cups water in a bowl and add to a 6-quart Instant Pot®. Add the apples to the pot. Follow the manufacturer's guide for locking the lid and set to pressure cook on low for 1 minute (see Cook's Note).

2. After the pressure-cook cycle is complete, follow the manufacturer's guide for quick release and wait until the quick-release cycle is complete. Being careful of any remaining steam, remove the lid.



3. Break each apple in half using a wooden spoon. Place the cake mix in a bowl and combine with the butter, eggs and 3 tablespoons of the liquid from the pot; the mixture will be thick. Pour it evenly over the apples in the pot. Sprinkle with the almonds. Lock the lid and set to pressure cook on low for 30 minutes.

4. After the pressure-cook cycle is complete, follow the manufacturer's guide for quick release and wait until the quick-release cycle is complete. Being careful of any remaining steam, unlock and remove the lid. Allow to sit for 15 minutes. Spoon the cake into bowls and top with ice cream and caramel sauce.

Assam Governor Inaugurates New School Buildings in Haflong, Emphasizes Value-Based Education and Cultural Preservation

Haflong, Mar 05: In a significant boost to the education sector in Dima Hasao, the Governor of Assam, Lakshman Prasad Acharya, on Thursday inaugurated the newly constructed school buildings of Vivekananda Vidyalaya and Saraswati Vidya Mandir Secondary School at Haflong. The occasion marked a major milestone for the advancement of educational infrastructure in the hill district. The Governor was accompanied by the First Lady of Assam, Kumud Devi. The inauguration ceremony witnessed the presence of several prominent dignitaries including Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council, Debolal Gorlosa, and Minister of Sports and Youth Welfare, Nandita Gorlosa. Executive Members, Members of Autonomous Council (MACs), the District Commissioner of Dima Hasao, and other senior administrative officials also attended the program. Addressing the gathering, Governor Acharya stressed the importance of value-based education and character-building in shaping responsible citizens and strengthening the nation's future. He appreciated the efforts of the district administration and the autonomous council in prioritizing the development of quality educational infrastructure in the remote hill district.



Highlighting the enduring relevance of the teachings of Swami Vivekananda, the Governor urged educational institutions to integrate his ideals into the learning process. He encouraged students and teachers alike to draw inspiration from Vivekananda's philosophy of strength, self-discipline, service to society, and self-reliance. During the event, CEM Debolal Gorlosa delivered an inspiring message focusing on social responsibility and cultural preservation. Reflecting on the human journey, he remarked that human beings are only guests in this world for a short period of time and therefore have a moral responsibility to contribute positively

to society and leave behind a meaningful legacy. Gorlosa also emphasized that the survival and progress of any community largely depend on the preservation of its mother tongue, traditions, and cultural heritage. He urged the younger generation to remain firmly rooted in their cultural identity while pursuing modern education. In a significant announcement aimed at strengthening linguistic heritage in the region, the CEM revealed that the Dimasa language has officially been introduced as a Modern Indian Language (MIL) subject in schools. The initiative, he said, will help protect and promote the cultural identity of the indigenous communities of the region. Following the formal inauguration, the Governor and other dignitaries inspected the newly constructed school facilities. The modern buildings are expected to provide improved learning environments and serve as important centers for both academic excellence and cultural development in the hill district. The inauguration ceremony concluded with optimism that the new educational infrastructure will significantly contribute to nurturing future generations in Dima Hasao, combining modern learning with strong cultural and moral values.

Kohima Fratricide Life-Sentence

According to the Public Prosecutor's Office, the incident occurred on August 20, 2023, when Seletsu shot his 33-year-old brother with a firearm, causing fatal injuries. After the shooting, he fled the scene but was later arrested by investigators. The firearm used in the incident was recovered during the investigation based on information provided by the accused. During the proceedings, the court noted that an altercation had taken place between the two brothers earlier. However, the judge observed that the victim had already walked away when Seletsu went to his house, retrieved the firearm, and shot him from behind.

Considering the seriousness of the offence and the absence of mitigating circumstances, the court sentenced Seletsu to rigorous life imprisonment and imposed a fine of ₹10,000.

Union MoS for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar Visits Dima Hasao, Reviews Development Projects and Interacts with Stakeholders



Haflong, Mar 06: Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar visited Dima Hasao on Thursday and reviewed the implementation of various development schemes while interacting with local bodies, organizations, and officials to assess the district's progress and challenges. The minister was accompanied by Andra Vamsi during the visit. At a meeting held with representatives of local organizations, including the All Dimasa Students' Union and the Zeme Council, the minister sought suggestions and feedback aimed at ensuring balanced and sustainable development in the hill district. A review meeting was also held at the Circuit House Conference Hall in Haflong, where officials from several departments under the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council briefed the minister about ongoing projects and administrative challenges. During the discussion, Kumar stressed the need for concrete

and effective measures to strengthen departmental functioning and enhance public service delivery across the district. During the meeting, Rukmini Difoesa highlighted key concerns related to the shortage of medical staff and congestion of hospital beds in the district. Responding to the issue, Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the council Debolal Gorlosa informed the minister that the council has been unable to advertise new posts due to the non-sanctioning of additional positions. Meanwhile, Rebecca Changsan apprised the minister that more than 100 appointments were recently made in the education sector to strengthen the teaching workforce in the district. Representatives of apex organizations also demanded the establishment of a university campus, an engineering college, and more central schools in remote areas to improve higher education opportunities for local students.

During his visit, the minister inspected the PM Shri Government Girls' Higher Secondary School, where he interacted with students and teachers. He also visited the N. L. Daulagupu Sports Stadium and Civil Hospital Haflong to review the infrastructure and available facilities. Later, Kumar travelled to Sampardisa, where he inspected the implementation of several central government schemes including Anganwadi Centres, Jal Jeevan Mission, and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Gramin. CEM Debolal Gorlosa accompanied the minister during the field inspections. Concluding the visit, the Union Minister assured that the concerns and suggestions raised during the meetings would be taken up with the relevant authorities. He reiterated the Government of India's commitment to ensuring holistic development and improved public services for the people of Dima Hasao.

Kanchanjunga and Silchar-Sealdah Express Trains Begin Halt at Mahur Station, Boosting Connectivity for Dima Hasao Residents

Haflong, Mar 06: In a significant development for the people of Mahur and surrounding areas in Dima Hasao district, the Silchar-Sealdah Express and Kanchanjunga Express trains have started halting at Mahur Railway Station on the Lumding-Badarpur hill section from Friday. The new stoppage is expected to greatly improve connectivity and travel convenience for residents of the remote hill region. Train numbers 13175/13176 Silchar-Sealdah Express and Kanchanjunga Express will now stop at Mahur Station, allowing passengers from Mahur and nearby villages easier access to long-distance rail travel without having to travel to distant stations. To mark the occasion, the Northeast Frontier Railway organized a ceremonial program at Mahur Railway Station on Friday when the Kanchanjunga Express, travelling from Silchar to Sealdah, made its scheduled halt. The event was attended by Debolal Gorlosa, Chief Executive Member of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council, and Nandita Gorlosa, Assam's Minister for Sports and Youth Welfare and other dignitaries. After the train halted for about two minutes at Mahur Station, both leaders ceremonially waved the green flag, marking the official commencement of the new stoppage. Local residents warmly welcomed the locomotive pilots by presenting them with traditional Dimasa "Risha" cloths as a gesture of respect and celebration. The new stoppage is expected to benefit thousands of people in Mahur and nearby hill areas by easing travel for students, patients, traders, and government employees. Residents will now have improved access to major cities such as Silchar and Kolkata, facilitating education, healthcare, and business opportunities. Meanwhile, the railway authorities have also approved a new stoppage for the Kanchanjunga Express (Train No. 13173/13174 Sealdah-Sabroom-Sealdah) and the Agartala-Anand Vihar Tejas Rajdhani Express



(Train No. 20501/20502) at Maibang Railway Station to strengthen transport connectivity in the Maibang subdivision. To celebrate this development, the Northeast Frontier Railway will organize a formal stoppage ceremony at Maibang Station on Saturday when Train No. 13174 Sabroom-Sealdah Kanchanjunga Express halts there. Notably, the Agartala-Anand Vihar Tejas Rajdhani Express, which already stops at New Haflong, has now also been granted a stoppage at Maibang Station by the Railway Board. The first Rajdhani Express halt at Maibang is scheduled for March 13, marking another major step toward improving railway connectivity in the hill district of Dima Hasao. The new railway stoppages are being widely welcomed by residents, who believe the move will promote regional development, tourism, and economic activity in the remote hill areas.



Morocco: Regragui Quits Months Before World Cup; Ouahbi Appointed



Rabat, Morocco, Mar 06: Morocco coach Walid Regragui has quit the team just months before it competes at the World Cup, he confirmed at a late-night press conference on Thursday.

Regragui's departure — less than 100 days before the United States, Canada and Mexico host the World Cup from June 11 to July 19 — was widely reported before Fouzi Lekjaa, the president of the country's soccer federation, accompanied Regragui for the press conference that doubled as a tribute to the departing coach. "The team needs a fresh

face, a different energy, and a new perspective with a new coach," Regragui said. "I think the team needs a new lease of life before the World Cup, a new vision to continue progressing. My decision to leave is part of this team's evolution."

The 50-year-old Regragui led Morocco to the semifinals at the 2022 World Cup — a first for Africa and the Arab world — but he was criticized after the team failed to win the Africa Cup of Nations as the host country after a dramatic 1-0 loss to Senegal in the final in January.

Prague International Chess Festival: Aravindh Chithambaram beats world champion Gukesh

Prague, Mar 06: Defending champion Aravindh Chithambaram found a text-book-style tactic to outwit compatriot D Gukesh, relegating the reigning FIDE world champion to the last spot after the end of sixth round of Masters section of Prague International Chess Festival here. The victory for Aravindh meant that Gukesh is now ranked number 20 on the live rating list that did not feature Viswanathan Anand due to his possibly inactive status. There has been a clear struggle for Gukesh to maintain his status as the world champion since he won the title in December 2024. Possibly the only exception was the Tata Steel Masters in January 2025 when he lost the tiebreaker to R Praggnanandhaa after tying for first place. A recent slump has now seen the world champion losing over fifty points in rating. For the record, Aravindh finally changed to a Sicilian defense as black after his Philidor experiment failed miserably.

Going for the complications for Gukesh was easy as he sacrificed a pawn to find some tactics in the early stages of the middle game. Aravindh would have been happy with a draw the way the position unfolded with white having a rook against two knights. But, on the 40th move, with

seconds remaining, Gukesh made the decisive error. It was all over eight moves later. Surprisingly, this was the only decisive game of the day with the remaining four ending in draws. Jorden van Foreest remained in sole lead on 4.5 points drawing with local star David Navara who remained joint second with Abdusattorov Nodirbek of Uzbekistan a half point



behind. David Anton Guijarro on 3.5 is closest to the three above him on 3.5 after settling for peace against Parham Maghsoodloo of Iran.

Aravindh with Vincent Keymer of Germany and Nodirbek Yakubboev of Uzbekistan is next in the line up while Niemann is just above Gukesh on 1.5 points.

Foreest finally had a draw after five decisive games and this time too it seemed his extra pawn would do the trick. The

Dutchman has been in the form of his life but in the sixth round Navara held his nerve to keep the opposition pieces and attack at bay. The result was a draw, letting Foreest keep the lead, but both Navara and Abdusattorov remain in hunt with three rounds still to come in the second super tournament of the year. In the masters section, world women's cup winner Divya Deshmukh played out a draw with Thomas Beerdsen of Holland while Surya Shekhar Ganguly split the point with Daniil Yuffa of Spain.

Results round 6 Masters: D Gukesh (Ind, 1.5) lost to Aravindh Chithambaram (Ind, 2.5); David Anton Guijarro (Esp, 3.5) drew with Parham Maghsoodloo (Iri, 3); Hans Moke Niemann (Usa, 2) drew with Vincent Keymer (Ger, 2.5); Nodirbek Yakubboev (Uzb, 2.5) drew with Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 4); Jorden van Foreest (Ned, 4.5) drew with David Navara (Cze, 4). Challengers: Daniil Yuffa (Esp, 3) drew with Surya Shekhar Ganguly (Ind, 1.5); Benjamin Gledura (Hun, 3) beat Nemeč Jachym (Cze, 3); Divya Deshmukh (Ind, 3) drew with Thomas Beerdsen (Ned, 3.5); Hrbek Stepan (Cze, 3.5) drew with Jonas Buhl Bjerre (Den, 3); Zhu Jiner (Chn, 2) drew with Finek Vanclav (Cze, 4.5).

India Into T20 Final After High-Scoring Survival Against England

Samson Shines Again: Quickfire 89 Drives India to Record 253/7

Mumbai, Mar 05: Jacob Bethell gave India an almighty scare with a hundred off just 45 balls as England fell just short of a mammoth target of 254 in the T20 World Cup semifinal at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium on Thursday. With England needing 30 off the last over and Bethell on strike, skipper Suryakumar Yadav decided not to risk bowling out left-arm spinner Axar Patel and instead brought on Shivam Dube for the first time. Bethell was run out off the first ball, going for a desperate second run that was never on, having made 105 in 48 balls. Jofra Archer then struck three sixes off the last three legal deliveries to reduce the margin of defeat to an agonisingly close seven runs. After Sanju Samson had smashed 89 off just 42 balls to fire India to a hefty 253/7, Hardik Pandya drew first blood in the second over of the innings, having Phil Salt caught at cover by Axar Patel for five.

Jasprit Bumrah, who was introduced in the fifth over,

then struck first ball to send back England skipper Harry Brook for seven, with Axar taking an even better catch this time, again at cover, leaving England at 38/2. Skipper Suryakumar Yadav handed Varun Chakravarthy the ball for the last over of the powerplay, only to see the spinner's first three deliveries disappear for six as Jacob Bethell went on the rampage. Bethell took a single to get off strike and Varun struck immediately to castle Jos Buttler for 25. But Tom Banton reverse swept the last ball for four as the over went for 23. After Hardik Pandya's next over cost 15, Suryakumar brought on Axar Patel instead of Varun. Axar was greeted with two sixes by Banton to give the Indians a sense of déjà vu. But with his next ball, he rattled the timber to send back Banton for 17. Bethell continued to send the Indians on a leather hunt, adding 77 with Will Jacks and then 50 with Sam Curran, but narrowly failed to take England over the line. For India, Bumrah and Pandya finished with re-



spectable figures of 1/33 and 2/38 respectively amid the carnage, while Varun was the most expensive, ending with 1/64 in his four overs.

Earlier, despite the early loss of Abhishek Sharma, India got off to a flyer after being put in to bat. Abhishek smacked Will Jacks for two fours in the second over, only to hit the off spinner down Phil Salt's throat at midwicket off the last ball of the over to depart for nine off seven balls. Samson continued where he left off in the final Super Eights game against the West Indies, making England pay for dropping him on 15 when skipper Harry Brook shelled a straightfor-

ward chance at mid-on off Jofra Archer. He raced to his fifty off just 26 balls by lofting left-arm spinner Liam Dawson over long-off for six. At the other end, Ishan Kishan was equally belligerent, hammering 39 off 18 balls before Adil Rashid made a vital breakthrough, having him caught at long-off. Samson and Kishan's partnership was worth 97 in 45 balls. At the end of 10 overs, India were 119/2. Shivam Dube was promoted to No. 4 ahead of skipper Suryakumar Yadav to negate England's spin threat. He duly hit Rashid out of the attack, smashing him for two sixes in an over. Samson was finally caught at cover by

Salt off Jacks for 89 after a 42-ball knock that featured eight fours and seven sixes. That brought the skipper to the crease and he looked to get a move on, lifting Rashid over square leg for a six. But the leggie had the last laugh, having him stumped by Jos Buttler next ball for 11 off six balls.

Dube was looking good for a fifty but was run-out in a mix-up with Hardik Pandya after making 43 in 25 balls including four towering sixes. Tilak Varma then produced an invaluable cameo of 21 off seven balls, blasting Archer for three sixes off four balls in the penultimate over before being castled by the paceman. That over went for 20 and Hardik Pandya then inflicted more damage in the final over by hitting Jacks for two sixes to set England a target of 254. Earlier, Suryakumar showed no concern after losing the toss, stating that he was looking to bat first anyway. This is the third T20 World Cup in a row in which the two teams are facing each other in the

semi final stage. In the previous two editions, the winner of this contest went on to lift the trophy. India entered the match on a high after Samson's heroic 97 guided them to victory over West Indies in their must win Super 8 clash. On the other hand, Harry Brook's England have won their last five matches, with all rounder Will Jacks in red hot form.

The winner of Thursday's clash will face New Zealand in the T20 World Cup final on Sunday. India named an unchanged playing XI for the third match in a row. India XI: Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (wk), Ishan Kishan, Suryakumar Yadav (c), Tilak Varma, Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube, Axar Patel, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah. England made one change to their side, with Jamie Overton replacing Rehan. England XI: Philip Salt, Jos Buttler (wk), Harry Brook (c), Jacob Bethell, Tom Banton, Sam Curran, Will Jacks, Jamie Overton, Liam Dawson, Jofra Archer, Adil Rashid.