

## NCHAC Executive Member Samuel Changsan Passes Away in Guwahati

**Hafong, Apr 01:** In a tragic development, Samuel Changsan, Executive Member (EM) of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC), passed away at a private hospital in Guwahati on Wednesday evening. He was about 53 years. His sudden demise has sent shockwaves across the political fraternity, particularly within the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), as well as among the people of Dima Hasao. Changsan, who held the Medical portfolio in the council, was known for his dedication and service to the community. His untimely passing is being widely mourned by leaders, colleagues, and well-wishers across the region. Expressing deep sorrow, NCHAC Chief Executive Member Debolal Gorlosa shared a condolence message, stating that it is with a heavy heart that the news of Samuel Changsan's demise is being conveyed. He noted that Changsan breathed his last in Guwahati and described his passing as a profound loss to the council and the district. Apart from his political career spanning over a decade, Changsan was actively associated with various social



and community-based organizations, where he worked tirelessly for the welfare of the people. He was widely admired for his friendly nature, approachable personality, and his ability to connect with people from all walks of life. Leaders across party lines and members of the public have extended their condolences, remembering Changsan not only as a committed public servant but also as a compassionate individual who left a lasting impact on society. He is survived by two childrens, his family members and a large number of admirers. Prayers are being offered for the eternal peace of his soul, and strength and comfort for his bereaved family during this difficult time.

## "Mission Viksit Hills: BJP Releases Power-Packed Manifesto, Signals Unstoppable Push in Dima Hasao"

**Hafong, Mar 31:** In a major political push ahead of the Assam Legislative Assembly elections scheduled for April 9, 2026, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has released its much-anticipated manifesto for Dima Hasao, projecting an "unstoppable vision" for a self-sufficient and developed hill district. Released at Atal Bihari Vajpayee Bhawan in Hafong, the manifesto titled "Your Aspirations, Our Mission – Towards Self-Sufficient & Viksit Dima Hasao" outlines an ambitious roadmap focusing on peace, infrastructure, education, healthcare, tourism, and tribal empowerment. The event witnessed the presence of BJP candidate for 113-Hafong (ST) LAC Rupali Langthasa, DHAC Chief Executive Member Debolal Gorlosa, Chairman Mohet Hojai, District BJP President Dhriti Thaosen, senior party leaders, and hundreds of enthusiastic karyakartas, reflecting strong grassroots momentum. Key Highlights of the Manifesto Stronger Political Representation The BJP pledged to push for increased representation of hill districts, including a proposal for at least two additional MLA seats for Dima Hasao in future delimitation exercises. Peace & Stability Commitment Reaffirming its dedication to lasting peace, the party promised time-bound and transparent implementation of the Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) signed with DHD factions (2012) and DNLA (2023), ensuring rehabilitation and development. Healthcare Revolution A major highlight is the proposal to establish a Government Medical College

with MBBS and PG courses in the district, reducing dependency on distant cities like Guwahati for advanced treatment. Education & Youth Empowerment The manifesto promises:

- \* A Government Engineering College affiliated with Assam Science and Technology University

- \* An Agricultural College under Assam Agricultural University

- \* An AYUSH College promoting traditional and modern healthcare systems

These institutions aim to empower local youth and curb migration for higher education. Tribal Development Boost The BJP has proposed the creation of the Assam Hills Tribes Development Corporation (AHTDC), dedicated to providing financial assistance, skill development, and entrepreneurship opportunities for hill communities. Sports & Talent Development Plans to establish a Sports Authority of India (SAI) Special Area Games Centre aim to nurture local talent in disciplines like football, boxing, athletics, and archery. Tourism Transformation With a vision to make Dima Hasao a premier tourist destination, the party has proposed:

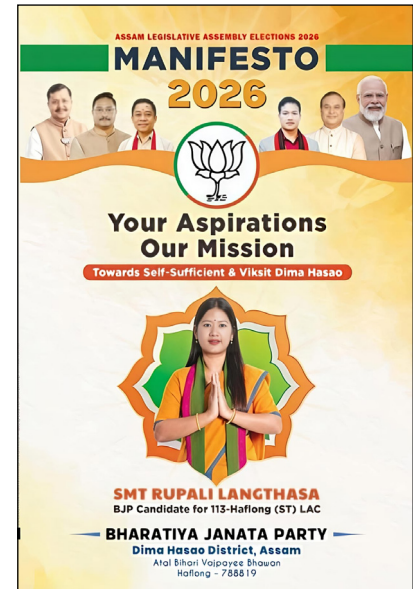
- \* Development of Hafong as a premium hill station

- \* Lakefront projects and a signature bridge over Hafong Lake

- \* Adventure tourism circuits and cycling corridors

- \* Promotion of eco-friendly and sustainable tourism

Water & Urban Infrastructure Under the Jal Jeevan Mission, the BJP assured piped drinking water to



every household, along with improved urban infrastructure across key towns like Hafong, Maibang, Umrangso, and Harangajao. Political Significance Party leaders expressed strong confidence that the manifesto reflects the true aspirations of the people and will further strengthen BJP's support base in the hill district. With a comprehensive and development-driven agenda, the BJP aims to position itself as the frontrunner in what is shaping up to be a highly competitive and multi-cornered electoral battle. As the countdown to April 9 begins, the release of this detailed and forward-looking manifesto signals BJP's aggressive campaign strategy and its intent to maintain political dominance in Dima Hasao.

## CONGRESS UNVEILS 'PEOPLE'S MANIFESTO 2026', PROMISES A 'NATUN BOR AXOM' FOR ALL

**Guwahati, Apr 01:** The Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) has released its much-anticipated People's Manifesto 2026, presenting a vision to build a "Natun Bor Axom" (New Greater Assam) rooted in inclusivity, justice, and progress. In a letter addressed to the people of Assam, the APCC President stated that the manifesto is not merely a political document but a reflection of the voices and concerns of the people gathered during extensive outreach across tea gardens, rural belts, and urban centres. Highlighting key challenges such as rising cost of living, unemployment among youth, and long-standing issues faced by indigenous communities, the party emphasized its commitment to delivering practical and people-centric solutions. The manifesto outlines a governance model focused on accountability and transparency, promising that no government contracts or welfare schemes will be allotted to immediate family members of MLAs. It also proposes the establishment of an Anti-Corruption Commission to ensure clean administration. A major thrust has been given to social



and economic welfare. The party has promised universal healthcare with cashless coverage of up to ₹25 lakh per family and 24x7 ambulance services with a response time of 30 minutes. In education, it has pledged to establish AI-enabled government schools in every block and set up a Centre of Excellence for art and culture.

For farmers, the manifesto assures guaranteed Minimum Support Price (MSP) for major crops including paddy, jute, mustard, pulses, and tea, along with expanded procurement systems. Rural development initiatives include a "Family Doctor Program" to link every household with local healthcare services. Urban issues have also been addressed, with a commitment to tackle flooding through a comprehensive Urban Flood Resilience Plan. On law and order, the party has proposed a special police task force to curb illegal syndicates and land mafia, alongside launching a "Nasha Mukh Assam" mission against substance abuse. The manifesto further emphasizes inclusive growth through targeted welfare schemes. Key promises include monthly financial assistance to women, up to 40% reservation for women in government jobs, and financial support of ₹50,000 for women entrepreneurs. Youth-focused initiatives include time-bound recruitment processes, employment opportunities, and support for young contractors and engineers.

(To be continued in page- 3)

## 298 electors casted votes from comfort of home through home voting postal ballot facility



**Hafong, Apr 01:** Home voting for absentee voters was successfully conducted on 30th and 31st March, 2026 for 113-Hafong (ST) constituency in Dima Hasao district. As per the Representation of People Act, 1951, Home Voting for absentee voter includes senior citizen from age 85 years and above and persons with disabilities (PwD), absentee voters of senior citizen category (AVSC), absentee voters belonging to PwD category (AVPD). 298 numbers of polled Postal Ballots

in Sealed Envelopes in Form 13C have been collected by polling officials engaged from various corners of the district as per the election norms and guidelines. The Election Commission has this facility where electors who fall under this category can avail home voting, where polling officials go to their homes to have a postal ballot filled by them and those belonging to this category but who have not opted for optional home voting will be provided with all necessary facilities at the polling stations.

# Allahabad HC Orders Deep Probe into Honeytrap Gangs

**Court: unchecked honeytraps threaten a decent social order**

**Lucknow, Apr 02:** The Allahabad High Court has sought a thorough investigation to trace gangs allegedly using women to honeytrap men and extort money through blackmail. A division bench of the Allahabad High Court, comprising Justice JJ Munir and Justice Tarun Saxena, on March 30 observed that if offences like these are permitted to continue, it would become difficult to live in a decent world. The bench also directed the government of Uttar Pradesh, Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department, Director General of Police, and Inspector General of Meerut Zone, to trace such gangs. The bench issued the directives while hearing a writ petition filed in one such incident in Bijnor district, involving a woman and three others, including two police constables and a local politician. The four were allegedly part of a honeytrap gang that targeted a local businessman through the woman. All four had approached the court seeking relief in the case lodged against them. The counsel for the petitioner also requested that the petition be withdrawn, and the bench allowed it.

But the division bench observed, "... This is a matter which discloses a very pernicious state of affairs in society. The first petitioner [the woman accused] reached the third respondent [the alleged victim of honeytrap] over his WhatsApp and honey-trapped



him, doing sweet talk. She called him over to a certain place in Bijnor, took him to a hotel, where she had carnal relations with him." The bench added, "During the escapade, she captured some video clips of the informant and resorted to blackmail. The other petitioners, who are said to be in connivance with the first petitioner, all men, are policemen. They are petitioners nos. 4 and 5, Lalu Yadav and Punit Tyagi. Petitioner no. 3 in this case, Shahbej alias Shanu, is a ward member (local politician), who was also involved with the first petitioner in the crime." "After the video was captured, it was passed on to the third petitioner [politician], who called the informant [the victim] to his place, where the two policemen were also there. They inquired if the informant... knew the first petitioner and showed him the video clip that had been deceitfully captured," the court observed.

Then, a demand of Rs 10 lakh was made by the petitioners, saying that the woman in the video clip with him

wanted it. However, the deal was struck at Rs 8 lakh. The man said he was under great anxiety, mixed up with emotions of fear and shame. As the blackmailing progressed, he did not handover the money but reported the case to the police, the court stated in its observation. The bench observed, "This is a very serious matter. While we accept the petitioners' (the accused) prayer to withdraw this writ petition, we are of the opinion, on our own motion, that it requires thorough investigation to be undertaken by the Inspector General of Police of Meerut Zone. He shall alert the entire district police chiefs in the zone to maintain strict vigil if a gang of this kind is operating, or other gangs are also operating, blackmailing innocent people by utilising women for springing a honey trap, or in some other way, bringing about the same results."

"The petition is dismissed as withdrawn, but not without the directions that we have made above," the judges stated in their order.

# West Asia conflict: Flights see surge in GPS spoofing

**New Delhi, Apr 03:** The over a month-long West Asia conflict is having an unintended consequence – civil aviation flights from India operated in the UAE air space are frequently flying a bit off track due to the tactics deployed by the warring countries. This is making them travel a bit longer, resulting in waste of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) and potentially endangering passenger safety, sources said. Global Positioning System (GPS) spoofing, which involves tampering with the navigation signals of a vehicle to misdirect it from its original path, has surged manifold. A senior official of the Airport Authority of India, which controls the Air Traffic Control (ATC) centres, and multiple sources from airlines in India confirmed that they are battling against this hazard in the skies. "With Iran, Israel and Iraq air space off limits for airlines presently, many airlines in India operate flights on and off to the UAE region, including to Sharjah, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Fujairah and Ras Al Khaimah airports. The flights primarily encounter GPS spoofing there," an airline official told this newspaper.

He said this was a tactic now adopted by many nations to safeguard their own skies. "They want to divert the GPS system of drones as well as missiles and hence put in place massive spoofing technologies. This ends up misguiding civilian planes flying in the airspace," he added. The official said pilots are able to take back their flights to safety after

switching over to the manual process. "When it comes to my airline, I will not call spoofing a big threat to passenger safety. However, they end up delaying the journey for everyone on board as well as adding expenses to each trip due to the extra fuel used because of the wrong route taken," he said. A senior AAI official confirmed that they were observing a surge in flights going off track a bit and getting back to the original route later. During a summit in Montreal last year, International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) General



Secretary General Juan Carlos Salazar had said, "Radio Navigation Satellite Service interference can impact aircraft operations far beyond the immediate affected area, creating potential safety risks across multiple flight regions." He said ICAO was working with its members to implement protective measures through aviation safety frameworks and standards.

Aviation enthusiast Shardul Chauhan, who witnessed multiple instances of GPS spoofing through flight tracking platforms, said, "GPS spoofing is a reality which spans land, air and now the seas. It is used by state and non-state actors to mislead aircraft, drones, ships and weapons."

# Rahul Gandhi Releases 11-Sector Assam Manifesto



**Bokajan, Apr 02:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday released the party's manifesto for the Assam Assembly elections, with a focus on 11 sectors such as governance, identity and healthcare. At an election rally here, Gandhi, Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi and other senior leaders unveiled the party manifesto. The 11 resolutions spread across areas like governance, identity, healthcare, infrastructure development, industrialisation, agriculture, rural and urban development, climate change and security in Assam. The Congress had already released "five guarantees" on March 29 during the visit of party chief Mallikarjun Kharge, with a focus on women's welfare, healthcare for all, land rights and justice in the Zubeen Garg death case.

These included a monthly cash transfer to women, along with an additional Rs 50,000 assistance to women willing to set up or expand a business, Rs 25 lakh cashless health insurance per family, a promise of justice in the case within 100 days, land pattas for 10 lakh "Khilonjia" residents, and Rs 1,250 monthly assistance for the elderly. Polling for the 126-member Assam Assembly will be held on April 9, while the results will be declared on May 4.

# Eight Arrested for Nalanda Woman's Assault

**Patna, Apr 02:** Bihar police have arrested eight individuals in Nalanda district following the brutal public molestation and attempted gang rape of a 20-year-old married woman. The incident, which occurred on March 26, came to light after a video filmed by the perpetrators went viral on social media, sparking widespread outrage.

An SIT led by SDPO Sanjay Kumar Jaiswal arrested primary suspects Ashok Yadav and Matlu Mahto, whose interrogation led to six further arrests. The group allegedly accosted the woman on her way from a grocery shop, assaulting her



and tearing her clothes under the pretext of a suspected extra-marital affair.

The accused face charges under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) Sections 74, 75, and 76, along with the IT Act. SP Bharat Soni has ordered a speedy trial and an immediate chargesheet. While eight are in judicial custody, raids continue for a ninth accomplice, Ravikant Kumar.

# Sunetra Pawar's EC Letter Signals NCP Leadership Shake-up

**Mumbai, Apr 02:** Maharashtra deputy chief minister and NCP national president Sunetra Pawar wrote to the Election Commission of India (ECI), stating that any correspondence by NCP leaders between January 28 and the date of her appointment as the party chief should not be treated as the party's official correspondence. The letter was written on February 28, two days after she was elected as the national president of the party. Her letter has made the February 16, 2026 communication to the ECI by working president Praful Patel and state president Sunil Tatkare void, as it had claimed that in Ajit Pawar's absence, Patel was entrusted with the

authority to take decisions for the party. Interestingly, her letter makes no mention of Patel or Tatkare, raising questions over whether the two senior NCP leaders still hold the positions earlier assigned by the late Ajit Pawar or if there has been a change.

A person privy to the developments said Sunetra Pawar's letter to the ECI, and the absence of any mention of the two NCP leaders, indicate that she has dissolved the party's existing body, with both leaders likely to lose their positions as she looks to build her own team. "The message is loud and clear that Sunetra Pawar has not liked the way both the Patels and Tatkare tried to take over the party after the



demise of her husband. Now, she is slowly trying to assert and reclaim her authority in the party by showing the door indirectly to these two leaders," said a senior person from the NCP. "Besides, she also terminated the contract with the political campaign and PR firm Design Box, headed by Naresh Arora, that was hired by Patel and Tatkare at high cost," they further said, adding that if Sunetra Pawar emerges as

Maharani Tarabai in this crisis, then no one should be surprised. Sunetra Pawar also held a meeting with her MLAs, who urged her to be assertive and active to put the party back in public dominance. "We know Sunetra Pawar cannot fill the shoes of Ajit Pawar, but she can definitely stop the erosion in the party and build a positive perception when the party is in a tattered state after the resignations of two ministers and the state women's commission chairperson Rulapi Chakankar and the emergence of a purported video of NCP minister Narhari Zirwal. Therefore, she needs to step out and show some leadership," an observer said.

**ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA**

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No. ECI/PN/054/2026

02.04.2026

**PRESS NOTE**

**General Elections and bye-elections 2026: Prohibition of display of Election Matter in Silence Period and Exit Poll**

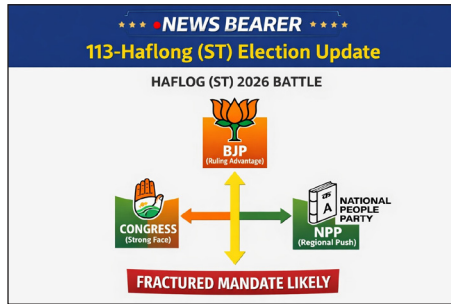
1. Election Commission of India (ECI) announced the schedule for the General Election to Legislative Assemblies of Assam, Kerala, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal and Bye-election to 8 (Eight) Assembly Constituencies of Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Nagaland and Tripura on March 15, 2026.
2. Section 126 (1)(b) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, prohibits displaying any election matter by means, inter alia, of television or similar apparatus, in any polling area during the period of **forty-eight hours (silence period)** ending with the hour fixed for the conclusion of the poll for any election in that polling area.
3. Polls in the states are to be held as per the schedule given below:

Name of State/UT going for general elections	Poll Date	Silence period
Assam	09.04.2026	5:00 PM (07.04.26) To 5:00 PM (09.04.26) 6:00 PM (07.04.26)
Kerala and Puducherry	09.04.2026	To 6:00 PM (09.04.26) 6:00 PM (21.04.2026)
Tamil Nadu	23.04.2026	To 6:00 PM (23.04.2026) 6:00 PM (21.04.2026)
West Bengal	23.04.2026 (Phase I)	To 6:00 PM (23.04.2026) 6:00 PM (27.04.2026)
	29.04.2026(Phase II)	To 6:00 PM (29.04.2026)

4. Accordingly, the Commission reiterates that the TV/Radio channels and cable networks should ensure that the contents of the programme telecast/broadcast/displayed by them during the **period mentioned above** do not contain any material, including views/appeals by panellists/participants that may be construed as promoting/prejudicing the prospect of any particular party or candidate(s) or influencing/affecting the result of the election. This **includes display of any opinion poll**.
5. The Commission under Section 126A of the R.P. Act 1951, has notified that the conduct of **Exit poll and dissemination of their results by means of print or electronic media is prohibited between 7:00 AM on April 9, 2026 (Thursday) and 6:30 PM on April 29, 2026 (Wednesday)**. Violation of Section 126A of the R.P. Act, 1951 is punishable with imprisonment upto a period of two years, or with fine or both.
6. The Commission advises all Media houses to follow instructions in this regard in keeping with its spirit.

P. Pawan  
Deputy Director

# 113-HAFLOG (ST) ELECTION SPECIAL



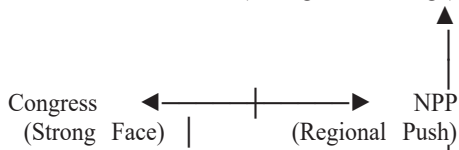
**Haflog, Mar 30:** With the Assam Legislative Assembly elections scheduled for April 9, 2026, the political atmosphere in the hill district of Dima Hasao has reached a decisive phase, as candidates from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Indian National Congress (INC), and National People's Party (NPP) intensify their campaigns across the 113-Haflog (ST) constituency. From house-to-house visits to village-level interactions, all three major contenders are actively engaging with voters, highlighting local issues, development promises, and identity-based concerns in what has now emerged as a closely fought triangular contest. Key Candidates in the Fray

\* BJP: Rupali Langthasa (new face replacing sitting MLA)

\* Congress: Nandita Gorlosa (former BJP minister, now INC candidate)

\* NPP: Daniel Langthasa (regional leader, former MAC and Congress leader) The contest became highly competitive after Nandita Gorlosa's dramatic shift from BJP to Congress, following denial of a BJP ticket—a move that has significantly altered the political equations in the constituency.

HAFLOG (ST) 2026 BATTLE  
BJP (Ruling Advantage)



**FRACTURED MANDATE LIKELY**  
Grassroots Campaign: A Direct Connect Strategy  
All candidates are focusing heavily on community-level outreach:

- \* Visiting remote hill villages
- \* Conducting small group meetings
- \* Engaging with youth, traders, and indigenous communities Directly interacting with traders and citizens, emphasizing local development and environmental concerns, relying on door-to-door mobilization and

leveraging local networks and traditional community structures to consolidate votes. ANALYSIS: Why This Election is Different  
1. Triangular Contest = Vote Split For the first time in recent years, Haflog is witnessing a serious three-cornered fight, reducing the possibility of a one-sided victory.

- \* BJP retains organizational strength and ruling advantage backed by MAC's key factor
- \* Congress banks on Gorlosa's personal influence and sympathy factor
- \* NPP aims to cut into both vote banks with regional appeal

➔ This fragmentation increases the likelihood of a fractured mandate.  
2. BJP's Advantage Still Intact Despite the setback:

- \* BJP benefits from state machinery and governance record
- \* Introduction of a new candidate (Rupali Langthasa) signals a strategic reset

➔ Strong cadre network remains active in MAC constituency and rural belts  
➔ BJP still holds a structural edge, especially in organized campaigning.

3. Impact of Nandita Gorlosa Factor  
Sitting MLA since 2021 and former minister

- \* Strong grassroots base among tribal voters
- \* Her switch has split BJP's traditional support base

➔ Her presence gives Congress an unexpected boost, making the contest highly competitive.

4. NPP's Silent Surge  
\* Candidate Daniel Langthasa has roots in regional politics

- \* Focus on tribal identity, autonomy, and local governance issues

\* Appeals to youth and disillusioned voters  
Result: Narrow margins / Split verdict possible  
What Will Decide the Outcome?

- \* Personal influence vs party structure
- \* Tribal identity politics

\* Local development issues (roads, ecology, jobs) \* Vote division among opposition and regional players  
The 113-Haflog (ST) constituency, the only MLA seat in Dima Hasao district, is heading toward one of its most unpredictable elections in recent times. While the ruling BJP enters the race with inherent advantages, the entry of a strong Congress candidate and the rise of NPP have transformed the contest into a multi-layered electoral battle. If current trends continue, a fractured mandate or narrow victory margin appears highly likely, making Haflog one of the key constituencies to watch in Assam 2026 elections.

## Dry Day to be Observed in Dima Hasao from April 7th to April 9th



**Haflog, Apr 01:** The Office of the District Commissioner, Dima Hasao, has declared Dry Day in Dima Hasao district in connection with the General Elections to the Legislative Assembly of Assam, 2026. As per the order, Dry Day will be observed for a period of 48 hours, starting from 5:00 PM of April 7th, 2026 to 5:00 PM of April 9th, 2026, i.e., till the conclusion of polling. Additionally, the day of counting on May 4, 2026 will also be observed as a Dry Day until the counting process is completed.

## Arunachal GSDP to Hit ₹50,651 Cr by FY27: Dy CM



**Itanagar, Apr 03:** Arunachal Pradesh's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) is projected to increase from Rs 41,314 crore in FY 2025-26 to Rs 50,651 crore in FY 2026-27, marking a 23% growth, Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein said on Friday.

Holding the Finance, Planning, and Investment portfolios, Mein said the projected growth reflects the state's development policies and improving economic fundamentals. He attributed the increase to higher capital expenditure, improved resource mobilization, and strengthened tax administration, citing the latest communication from the Union Ministry of Finance. "The steady rise in GSDP underscores our fiscal management and investments in key sectors," Mein said. He added that the government remains committed to inclusive growth, resilient infrastructure, and enhanced livelihoods.

## Congress Launches 2026 'People's Manifesto'

Special attention has been given to tea workers, with assurances of recognizing tea as Assam's premier industry and providing industrial minimum wages, along with free school bus services for students. The Congress has also proposed a Climate Resilience Fund to address recurring floods, erosion, and climate-related challenges in the state. Describing the manifesto as a collective vision, the APCC urged the people to join hands in building an Assam where dignity, security, and prosperity are ensured for all, marking it as a decisive step towards a more inclusive and progressive future.

## Special Observer, Rtd. IAS Manjeet Singh in Dima



**Haflog, Apr 3:** The Special Observer for the ongoing General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Assam, 2026, Manjeet Singh, Rtd IAS arrived at Dima Hasao on 2nd April last and proceeded for the next constituency today i.e 3rd April, 2026. On his arrival to the district headquarters, Haflog, the Special Observer was greeted by Dima Hasao District Commissioner cum District Election Officer (DEO), Gayatri Devidas Hyalinge, IAS. The Special Observer took stock of the strong room and cells engaged in the process of election. He also sat

on a review meeting with the District Commissioner cum District Election Officer about the preparedness for the forthcoming election. He reviewed the poll-preparedness and the conduct of the general elections in the district and gave inputs wherever necessary in order to have a free, peaceful, impartial and transparent election in Assam. Manjeet Singh, is a retired IAS Officer of the Rajasthan cadre who is appointed as the Special Observer to Assam by the Election Commission in exercise of its powers under Article 324 of the constitution of India.

## Arunachal CM joins 'Youth Will Lead' programme in Assam's Dhekiajuli

**Arunachal Pradesh, Apr 03:** Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu joined the "Youth Will Lead" programme organised by the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) in Assam's Dhekiajuli on April 3, where young voters turned up in large numbers. The event was also attended by Ashok Singhal, BJP candidate for 65 No. Dhekiajuli LAC, who engaged with first-time voters and youth from the constituency. Addressing the gathering, Khandu emphasised the importance of youth partic-



ipation in shaping the nation's future, stating that the energy and vision of young people will play a crucial role in India's growth. He encouraged the youth to take responsibility and actively contribute to the demo-

cratic process. The programme served as a platform for interaction with young minds, with leaders highlighting that the strength of "Yuva Shakti" will be instrumental in driving the country forward.

## Editorial

## SHIFT IN POLITICS — NATIONAL INTEREST, PEOPLE, AND THE NEXT-GENERATION VISION OF LEADERSHIP

As Assam approaches the crucial 2026 Legislative Assembly elections, the political landscape is undergoing a noticeable transformation. The discourse is no longer confined to traditional vote banks, identity politics, or short-term populism. Instead, a broader shift is emerging—one that attempts to balance national interest with regional aspirations, while also addressing the evolving expectations of a younger generation. At the heart of this transition lies a key question: what kind of leadership does Assam need in the coming decade? For years, electoral politics in the state has revolved around issues of identity, land, and ethnicity—concerns that remain deeply relevant. However, today's voters, especially the youth, are increasingly demanding more. Employment opportunities, quality education, healthcare access, digital infrastructure, and climate resilience have become equally decisive factors. This shift reflects a growing realization that safeguarding identity must go hand-in-hand with ensuring economic and social progress. National interest, in this context, is being interpreted in a more integrated manner. It is no longer viewed merely through the lens of central policies or national security, but also through the ability of states like Assam to contribute meaningfully to India's growth story. Connectivity projects, industrial corridors, and investment in the North-east are now central to political narratives. Yet, the challenge for leadership lies in ensuring that such development is inclusive and does not alienate local communities. Equally significant is the rising demand for accountability and transparency. Voters are becoming more aware and less tolerant of corruption, unfulfilled promises, and governance that prioritizes headlines over ground realities. The call

is for leaders who listen, engage, and deliver—not just during elections, but throughout their tenure. Another defining feature of this election cycle is the emergence of what may be termed as “next-generation leadership.” This does not merely refer to younger faces in politics, but to a change in mindset. Leadership today is expected to be forward-looking, technologically aware, environmentally conscious, and socially inclusive. The next generation seeks leaders who can bridge tradition with modernity—protecting Assam's rich cultural heritage while preparing it for future challenges. Importantly, women, youth, farmers, tea workers, and small entrepreneurs are no longer passive stakeholders. They are active participants shaping political narratives. Any party or leader that fails to recognize and meaningfully engage with these groups risks being left behind. However, amid this evolving landscape, caution is necessary. Political rhetoric often promises transformation, but the true test lies in implementation. Grand visions must be backed by clear roadmaps, financial viability, and administrative will. The electorate, more informed than ever, is likely to scrutinize not just what is promised, but how it will be achieved. The 2026 Assam elections, therefore, are more than a contest for power—they represent a defining moment in the state's political evolution. It is an opportunity to move beyond divisive politics and towards a governance model that harmonizes national priorities with local needs, present challenges with future aspirations. In the end, the verdict will rest with the people. Their choice will determine whether Assam continues along familiar political paths or embraces a new trajectory—one driven by vision, responsibility, and a genuine commitment to the next generation.

## The topography of AI onslaught

The literary world is grappling with a modern dilemma: the “moral panic” over Artificial Intelligence. Recently, Hachette cancelled Mia Ballard's horror novel *Shy Girl* following accusations of “AI slop” in her text. Historically, tools like the slide rule were accepted while calculators were banned, reflecting a bias toward manual labor. Ironically, the industry has long embraced “cheating” via human ghostwriters for celebrities. As AI faces scrutiny, the debate shifts: is the unease about the technology itself, or a lingering, outdated obsession with the “legitimate fruits of labor”?

The literary world is debating whether AI is a tool or a “cheat,” much like the transition from slide rules to calculators. Historically, legendary editors like Gordon Lish and Maxwell Perkins didn't just fix typos; they performed “drastic surgery,” reshaping the voices of Raymond Carver and F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Today, AI has replaced the passionate editor. Romance author Coral Hart recently made headlines by using AI to generate a novel in just 45 minutes, arguing

that genre readers prioritize “predictable plots” over originality. As “slop” floods the market, the question remains: is AI-assisted writing a clever hack or the end of genuine craft? The Fletcher School at Tufts University has released the American AI Jobs Risk Index, a landmark study shifting the AI debate from “apocalyptic anxiety”

a “Wired Belt” risk: innovation hubs and university towns (like Durham and Boulder) are more vulnerable than manual labor centers. Chakravorti emphasizes that the most secure future workers will be those who bridge domain expertise with AI proficiency.

For India, the message is clear:



to data-driven geography. Led by Dean Bhaskar Chakravorti, the index projects that 9.3 million U.S. jobs—primarily in high-wage, knowledge-intensive sectors like coding and writing—face significant displacement by 2030.

Crucially, the study identifies

as it aims to become a global AI powerhouse, it must treat this transition as a “military challenge.” Just as engineers once relied on the slide rule, social planners must now use these “ordnance maps” to navigate the shifting landscape of human labor.

## Instituting the right to dignified exit

On March 11, the Supreme Court addressed one of the most difficult questions of life and death: whether, when and on what legal basis medical treatment may be withdrawn or withheld. In the Harish Rana case, it framed the issue not as whether it is in the patient's best interests to die, but whether it is in his best interests to prolong life with artificial support. This reframing shifted the debate from the morality of death to the legitimacy of prolonging life in conditions where dignity has irreversibly ebbed away. The case arose from Rana, a 32-year-old man who remained in a persistent vegetative state (PVS) for over 12 years following a fall from his balcony. He was sustained on clinically-assisted nutrition and hydration (CANH) administered through a tube, with negligible prospects of recovery. It was a hard case at the intersection of law, medicine and ethics. The court situated the issue within the constitutional framework developed in *Common Cause* (2018), where it held that the right to life under Article 21 includes the right to live with dignity, and therefore the right to reject an undignified existence. It recognised passive euthanasia by withdrawal of medical treatment and permitted individuals to execute advance medical directives, or living wills, specifying when life-sustaining treatment should not be continued.

Acknowledging a legislative vacuum, the court invoked Article 142 to lay down interim procedures governing withdrawal of life support, while expressing a “pious hope” that Parliament would enact a comprehensive law on end-of-life decisions. In 2023, the court streamlined these guidelines to address implementation challenges. While Parliament is yet to act, the issue resurfaced in Harish Rana. His parents, after years of caregiving and unsuccessful attempts to secure relief from hospitals, approached the Delhi High Court, which declined permission to withdraw CANH on the ground that it did not constitute ‘medical treatment’. A special leave petition before the Supreme Court also failed. The family reframed the issue in a subsequent application, seeking the constitution of medical boards and a declaration that CANH is ‘medical treatment’. This reframing proved decisive: successive medical boards the court convened confirmed that Rana was in a vegetative state with no realistic prospect of recovery and engaged directly with doctors, family members and counsel. It held that CANH is ‘medical treatment’ and that its withdrawal is in the patient's best interests. This clarification removes the ambiguity between ‘care’ and ‘treatment’ that could otherwise render the right to a dignified exit illusory.

The court reaffirmed the governing framework for discontinuing life support and applied it to the case. It emphasised that withdrawing or withholding treatment does not extinguish the patient's right to care; it marks a transition from



curative intervention to a structured, medically-supervised palliative and end-of-life care plan. The judgement reinforces the dual pathways envisaged in *Common Cause*. First, where an individual—while in a sound and conscious state—executes a living will, specifying in advance the circumstances in which treatment should be withheld or withdrawn, and authorises a representative to act on his behalf if he loses decision-making capacity. This is an expression of autonomy, an extension of personal liberty into the realm of end-of-life decisions. Second, where no such directive exists, decisions to withdraw or withhold treatment must be made in the patient's best interests through a structured process involving medical boards, institutional oversight and procedural safeguards. This ensures that the absence of prior choice does not lead to arbitrariness.

Recognising the persistent implementation challenges, the court directed authorities to streamline the creation, preservation and retrieval of living wills, and to ensure the timely constitution of medical boards. These directions address longstanding attitudinal and logistical barriers that have limited the practical utility of living wills. However, the judgement has a limitation: a patient in a vegetative state may lack the financial means to sustain prolonged artificial life support. This risks decisions ostensibly based on the patient's best interests may, in fact, be driven by economic compulsion, blurring the line between principled choice and financial exhaustion.

Earlier, the court directed that Rana be transferred to a government hospital to ensure continued care. It is, however, doubtful whether public hospitals can sustain such long-term care at scale. This gap is likely to widen. Advances in medical science prolong biological life. Simultaneously, demographic trends indicate a rapidly ageing population with a growing incidence of chronic and degenerative conditions. It results in an increasing number of patients requiring prolonged palliative care, intensifying the ethical and policy questions around dignity, autonomy and resources. Through *Common Cause* and Harish Rana, the Supreme Court has crafted a nuanced and workable jurisprudence. It has moved from recognising a right in principle to making it operational in practice. But courts decide cases; they do not design systems. Without a law, families like that of Rana must still navigate uncertainty, often turning to courts for decisions that should be part of a structured and humane system.

## India pushes outcomes-based financing at global summit, Jayant Chaudhary highlights skilling focus

**Guwahati:** India reinforced its commitment to outcome-driven development financing at the Outcomes Finance Alliance (OFA) Summit 2026 in Cape Town, with Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and MoS Education Jayant Chaudhary underscoring the need for measurable impact in skilling and human capital investments.

Speaking at the March 25–27 summit, Chaudhary participated in a high-level plenary on unlocking public-private

funding, alongside representatives from South Africa, Switzerland, and financial institutions. He emphasised aligning public, private, and philanthropic capital to deliver tangible outcomes in education, livelihoods, and workforce development. “The real challenge is ensuring investments translate into measurable outcomes for people,” he said, highlighting India’s scalable models in skills and employment. On the sidelines, Chaudhary held discussions with African leaders, including South African Deputy

Ministers and Nigeria’s Lagos education board officials, focusing on future-ready workforce development and outcomes-based financing. India shared insights from initiatives like the Skill Impact Bond and upcoming Skills Outcomes Fund, while also drawing lessons from South Africa’s Jobs Boost programme.

He also engaged with global institutions such as the UK government, OECD, and philanthropic organisations to expand collaboration on innovative financing and so-

cial impact. The emphasis on outcomes-based skilling and employment models is expected to resonate strongly in Guwahati, where demand for job-oriented training and youth employment opportunities continues to rise. With Assam positioning itself as a growing hub for skill development in the Northeast, such global collaborations and financing models could enhance local training ecosystems, attract private investment, and improve employability outcomes for the region’s young workforce.

## Renault Duster Turbo 160 delivers 18.45 km/l mileage, sets benchmark in segment

**Guwahati:** Renault India has announced ARAI-certified fuel efficiency figures for the new Renault Duster powered by the Turbo TCe 160 engine, reinforcing its focus on performance and efficiency. The SUV delivers 18.45 km/l with the DCT automatic transmission and 17.75 km/l with the 6-speed manual variant. Dr V Vikraman, Chief of Renault Engineering, Renault Group India, said the certified figures reflect the company’s technological strength and commitment to delivering superior value. He noted that the Turbo 160 engine uses advanced features such as low-friction coatings and high-pressure fuel injection to optimise combustion and efficiency, while the latest DCT transmission ensures seamless gear shifts and responsive performance. Engineered for Indian driving conditions, the new Duster produces 163 PS of power and 280 Nm of torque, making it the most powerful offering in its segment. Renault said the model combines strong performance with best-in-class ride and handling, supported by an optimised powertrain design. In Guwahati, the new Duster is expected to attract strong interest due to rising demand for powerful yet fuel-efficient SUVs suited to varied terrain and long-distance travel in the Northeast. Dealers anticipate that the balance of performance and mileage could position the model competitively in the region. Renault India, a subsidiary of Renault S.A.S., manufactures vehicles at its Oragadam facility in Chennai and operates over 350 sales and 450 service touchpoints nationwide.

## TVS launches 2026 Apache RTR 160 4V with new features across variants, prices start at Rs 1.25 lakh

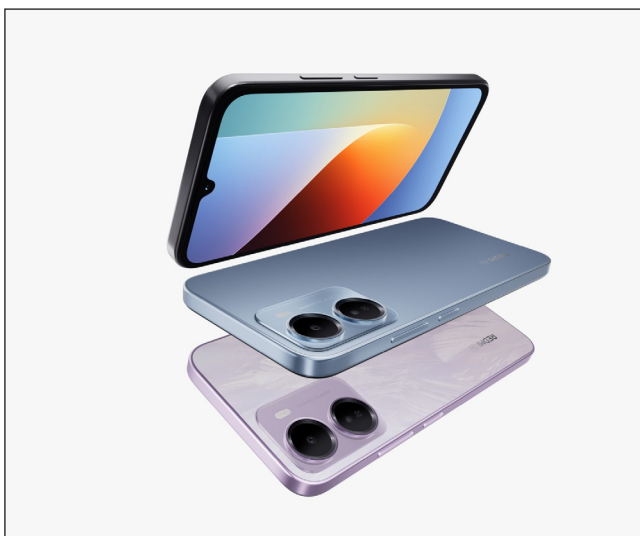
**Guwahati:** TVS Motor Company has announced the launch of the all-new 2026 TVS Apache RTR 160 4V, introducing upgraded features across variants to strengthen its position in the premium 160cc motorcycle segment. The updated range now gets a projector headlamp, all-LED lighting and Assist & Slipper Clutch technology across more variants, enhancing safety, night-time visibility and rider control. The company has introduced two new variants alongside the existing top-end trim, which already features USD suspension, TFT display and traction control. The motorcycle continues to deliver best-in-class 17.55 PS power and retains key features such as three ride modes—Sport, Urban and Rain—along with TVS SmartXconnect connectivity and ra-

dial tyres for improved stability.

Speaking on the launch, Vimal Sumbly said the upgrade reflects the brand’s commitment to performance and rider-centric innovation. “We are enhancing safety, visibility and control while keeping the product accessible,” he said, adding that TVS Apache has built a global base of over 6.5 million riders.

The new range is priced starting at ₹1,25,440 (ex-showroom, Delhi), while the Apache RTR series begins at ₹1,12,190. In Guwahati, the launch is expected to boost demand in the growing premium commuter segment, where young riders are increasingly opting for feature-rich motorcycles with racing DNA and advanced technology, strengthening TVS Motor’s foothold in Northeast India.

## REDMI 15A 5G launched in India with focus on battery, performance and affordability



**Guwahati:** Xiaomi India on Monday launched the REDMI 15A 5G, a new smartphone aimed at delivering reliable performance and long battery life for everyday users. The device is designed to support heavy daily usage such as streaming, multitasking and social media, without compromising on efficiency.

The smartphone is powered by an octa-core 5G processor

and backed by a 6300mAh battery, which the company claims can last up to two days on a single charge. It supports 15W charging and 7.5W wired reverse charging. The REDMI 15A 5G features a 6.9-inch display with up to 120Hz refresh rate, 800 nits brightness and Wet Touch Technology 2.0, along with TÜV Rheinland certifications for reduced eye strain.

For imaging and entertainment, the device offers a 32MP AI dual rear camera, an 8MP front camera and up to 200% volume boost. Running on HyperOS 3.0 based on Android 16, it promises four years of Android updates and six years of security support. Additional features include IP52 rating, fingerprint sensor, dual SIM and expandable storage up to 2TB.

The launch is expected to strengthen Xiaomi’s foothold in the Guwahati market, where demand for budget-friendly 5G smartphones continues to rise. With competitive pricing starting at Rs 12,999, the REDMI 15A 5G is likely to attract students, young professionals and first-time smartphone buyers in the region, especially as offline retail and e-commerce penetration grows steadily.

The device will go on sale from April 3 via Flipkart, mi.com and authorised Xiaomi retail stores.

## Nissan India sales jump 98% in March; new Gravite drives strong growth



**Guwahati:** Nissan Motor India Pvt. Ltd. reported a sharp surge in domestic sales in March 2026, registering a 98% month-on-month growth, driven by the launch momentum of its new SUV, the Nissan GRAVITE. The company recorded cumulative sales of 10,388 units during the month, including domestic wholesale of 4,408 units — its highest monthly domestic figure in the past five years.

Exports contributed 5,980 units, underscoring Nissan’s continued global market linkage. The strong domestic performance was supported by the commencement of customer deliveries of the GRAVITE in March, which has received a positive response nationwide. The model is the first of three upcoming products under Nissan’s

India Resurgence plan, aimed at boosting market share and product presence.

Managing Director Saurabh Vatsa said March marked a “defining month” for the company, citing strong customer response and sustained demand for the Nissan Magnite. He added that network expansion and improved sales and service experience remain key priorities.

In Guwahati, Nissan’s growth reflects rising demand for compact SUVs, especially among urban buyers seeking affordability and features. Dealers report increasing interest in the GRAVITE alongside the Magnite, with improved financing options and dealership expansion aiding market penetration in Assam and the wider Northeast region.

## TVS Motor hits record FY26 sales, registers 24% growth to 5.9 million units

**Guwahati:** TVS Motor Company reported its highest-ever annual sales in FY 2025-26, clocking a 24% growth with total volumes reaching 5.9 million units. The company also recorded its best-ever quarterly performance in Q4 FY26, with sales rising to 1.6 million units.

In March 2026, TVS posted total sales of 519,358 units, marking a 25% increase from 414,687 units in March 2025. Two-wheeler sales grew 25% to 498,134 units, driven by strong domestic demand, which rose to 372,383 units. Motorcycles recorded an 18% growth at 232,788 units, while scooters surged 31% to 217,624 units.

Electric vehicle (EV) sales saw a sharp 44% rise, reaching 38,877 units in March 2026. The company’s international business also grew by 25%, with total exports in-

creasing to 141,443 units.

Three-wheeler sales registered a robust 46% growth, climbing to 21,224 units during the month.

For the full financial year, two-wheeler sales rose 23% to 5.67 million units, while three-wheelers saw a significant 63% jump to 2.19 lakh units. Export volumes grew 33% to 1.58 million units, underlining strong global demand.

The performance reflects sustained growth across domestic, export, and EV segments, reinforcing TVS Motor’s position in the mobility market.



## Regulatory crackdown on surveillance systems puts spotlight on data security and trust

**Guwahati:** Amid tightening regulatory scrutiny on surveillance systems in India, Pushkar Gokhale, Business Head – Security Solutions Business at Godrej Enterprises Group, has said the recent actions mark a critical turning point for the country’s security industry.

In a statement, Gokhale noted that in sensitive categories like CCTV, where data protection and national security intersect, “trust and accountability cannot be optional.” He highlighted that Indian brands have gained credibility by aligning with local regulations, strengthening data security practices, and maintaining consistent product quality and service support.

The development comes at a time when concerns around data vulnerabilities and supply

chain transparency are intensifying. Gokhale emphasised that modern security solutions now go beyond basic monitoring, reflecting a broader shift in the industry.

He further pointed to the evolving framework under the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, which mandates that user consent must be free, informed, and unambiguous. In surveillance systems, this requires organisations to be transparent about how data is collected, stored, and used.

Reaffirming the company’s position, Gokhale said Godrej remains focused on delivering reliable, responsible, and India-focused security solutions, aimed at ensuring long-term safety and customer trust.

## Axis Max Life, YES BANK mark 21 years; eye digital-first insurance push

**Guwahati:** Axis Max Life Insurance Limited and YES BANK Limited on Sunday celebrated 21 years of their bancassurance partnership, reaffirming a joint focus on digital-first delivery and hyper-personalised protection solutions. Over two decades, the alliance has evolved into a strong distribution ecosystem, leveraging YES BANK’s network of over 1,300 branches to serve around 18.03 lakh policyholders with a cumulative sum assured exceeding ₹1.50 lakh crore. The partnership has integrated new-age technologies to simplify insurance ac-

cess, offering solutions across child education, retirement planning, wealth creation and term protection. Key innovations include video-based consultations and agile underwriting systems aimed at faster onboarding and enhanced customer experience.

Axis Max Life MD & CEO Sumit Madan said the collaboration reflects a shared commitment to customer-first growth, adding that over 18 lakh families have been protected through the combined strengths of both institutions. YES BANK MD & CEO Prashant Kumar highlighted

the role of digital infrastructure in seamlessly integrating insurance into banking journeys, with a focus on expanding reach in underserved markets.

In Guwahati, the partnership is expected to gain traction as demand for structured financial protection rises among urban middle-class families and small businesses. Industry observers note that increasing digital adoption and awareness around term insurance and retirement planning are driving growth in the region, with banks playing a key role in last-mile access.

## For ‘Aaj Kal’ launch, Teen Boy Band Outstation set for Guwahati takeover as 10,000+ fans RSVP

**Guwahati:** India’s leading teen pop boy band, OutStation, is set to make a highly anticipated return to Guwahati on April 4th, 2026, for the launch of their second single, ‘Aaj Kal’, at Silpagram. Part of their OutStation To Your Station Pop-Up IP, the event promises to be one of the city’s largest youth music gatherings of the year. The free-entry event has already generated overwhelming excitement, with over 10,000 RSVPs already received, marking an industry first. Organisers are expecting a massive crowd, building on the band’s previous Guwahati performance in December, which drew a similarly massive audience. The highlight of the evening will be a



first-of-its-kind live moment: a synchronised crowd sing-along of ‘Aaj Kal,’ a track that has already gained popularity through the band’s live performances across cities. The goal, as described by the organisers, is to create the biggest-ever launch event for a second single in the Indian pop space and an unforgettable shared experience where thousands of fans sing in unison as the track plays live.

Expressing their excitement on the launch event, OutStation shares, “‘Aaj Kal’ is so special to us, and we can’t wait to sing it live with thousands of our passengers in the city that’s given so much love to us.” The band’s 30-minute set will feature a mix of new and familiar material, including their debut single ‘Tum Se,’ unreleased tracks, and interactive segments designed to engage the audience. OutStation, a five-member teen pop band formed through Visva Records’ nationwide talent search and bootcamp, has steadily built momentum within the Indian pop space. Guided by Grammy-nominated global songwriter-producer Savan Kotecha, known for crafting massive

pop hits for artists like Ariana Grande, One Direction, The Weeknd, and Usher, the band has already shared stages with major artists, previously supporting Akon and Anuv Jain on their respective India tours. The band comprises Bhuvan Shetty (22, Udipi), Hemang Singh (20, Prayagraj), Mashaal Shaikh (21, Goa), Kurien Sebastian (20, Delhi), and Shayan Patterm (17, Hyderabad).

## Škoda Auto India continues surge; in Q1 2026, records highest-ever quarterly sales



**Guwahati:** Škoda Auto India has continued its strong growth trajectory into 2026, recording its highest-ever quarterly sales in Q1 (January–March) with 20,028 units sold. This is a growth of 17% over the 17,138 cars sold in the same period last year. Building on a landmark 2025, Škoda Auto India has sustained its growth surge and is continuing to break its own records, further accelerating its momentum in the Indian market. Škoda Auto India’s performance has been led by the strong and consistent demand for the Kylaq, which recently crossed the 50,000 sales milestone, the introduction of the new Kushaq, steady contribution from the Slavia, and the continued demand for the Kodiaq in the premium SUV segment. Comment-

ing on the milestone, Ashish Gupta, Brand Director, Škoda Auto India, said, “Continuing our growth surge into 2026 with our biggest-ever quarter is a strong validation of the momentum we have built over the past year. After achieving a record in 2025, it is encouraging to see that we are sustaining this trajectory while also setting new benchmarks for ourselves.”

Škoda Auto India continues to strengthen customer confidence through a sharper focus on ownership experience and aftersales support. The introduction of Škoda Super Care has set a new benchmark. This customer-first approach is complemented by continuous enhancements in service processes, transparency, and accessibility. With

a growing network of 330 Customer Touchpoints in over 180 cities, Škoda Auto India is expanding its reach. Škoda Auto India’s performance in the first quarter of 2026 is underpinned by a strong and evolving product portfolio that continues to resonate with changing customer expectations. With segment-first technologies such as an all-new eight-speed automatic transmission and features like the Rear Seat Massager, along with enhanced standard equipment across the range, the new Kushaq reinforces Škoda Auto India’s focus on delivering higher value and accessible European technology. At the same time, the Slavia continues to deliver steady volumes, while the Kodiaq upholds the brand’s presence in the luxury SUV range.

## ICICI Prudential Life unveils Smallcap 250 Index Fund to drive long-term wealth creation

**Imphal:** ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has launched the ICICI Prudential Life Smallcap 250 Index Fund under its Unit Linked Insurance Plans (ULIPs), enabling investors to participate in India’s emerging growth stories through a disciplined, index-based approach. The fund tracks the Smallcap 250 Index, comprising companies ranked 251st to 500th within the Nifty 500 universe, offering exposure to 250 emerging firms across sectors.

The fund adopts a passive, rule-based strategy, mirroring the index to ensure transpar-

ency and consistency. It provides diversified exposure across sectors such as financial services, healthcare and capital goods, allowing investors to participate in multiple growth opportunities through a single fund. However, due to regulatory constraints, the fund may not always replicate index weights fully, potentially resulting in tracking errors.

Commenting on the launch, CIO Manish Kumar said the fund offers a “simple and transparent” route for long-term investors seeking structured exposure to emerging companies, while maintaining

diversification and alignment with benchmark performance.

As of February 27, 2026, the Nifty Smallcap 250 TRI delivered 15.36% one-year returns, with a five-year annualised return of 19.04% and 15.45% since inception, reflecting strong long-term growth potential despite market-linked risks.

In Imphal, financial planners note rising interest in ULIP-linked equity products, with the new fund expected to attract young investors and salaried individuals looking for disciplined, long-term wealth creation options.



## Abandon the Chicken – This Delicious Fish Is Rich in Protein and Completely Boneless

An increasing number of individuals are opting for fish as a substitute for mutton and chicken. Consequently, there is a heightened interest in discovering various fish types. This is why we are presenting to you a fish that is rich in remarkable health advantages — a fish that is unparalleled in flavor. This popular fish, often referred to as the viral fish or snakehead murrel, thrives in lakes and farms and can even survive in swampy areas. Uniquely, it can breathe air directly, enabling it to survive on land for extended periods without access to water. This remarkable feature enables it to survive for a long time outside water without suffocating. Where is it found? This fish is predominantly found in the delta districts. However, due to rising demand, it is now being farmed and sold in various other locations. So, if you spot this fish in your local market, be sure not to miss it. Below are some compelling reasons why. This fish is an excellent source of protein and is also rich in omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins A, B12, and E, as well as essential minerals like calcium, phosphorus, iron, selenium, and potassium. Here are the 9 health Benefits of the snakehead murrel fish:

**Muscle Growth & Recovery:** Thanks to its high protein content, consumption of snakehead murrel supports muscle development and aids in recovery from muscle pain. It is especially beneficial for indi-



viduals who work out regularly or suffer from muscle injuries and inflammation. **Bone Health:** With its rich calcium content, this fish is ideal for those experiencing joint pain, brittle bones, or osteoporosis. It's also a great option for children to support strong bone development.

**Heart & Blood Pressure Support:** The

omega-3 fatty acids present in viral fish are known to promote cardiovascular health. It also helps regulate blood pressure levels, making it suitable for those with hypertension. **Aiding Weight Loss:** Snakehead murrel helps control appetite and keeps you feeling full for longer, making it a good choice for those aiming to lose weight. **Prevents Various Ailments:** Regular consumption of this fish may help prevent conditions such as dia-

betes, respiratory issues, infections, and strokes. It can also help manage the severity of these illnesses in those already affected. **Boosts Memory and Digestion:** Snakehead murrel can enhance memory in children and also stimulates digestive functions, promoting overall gut health. **Natural Antibacterial Properties:** It contains unsaturated fats like DHA and EPA, which have strong antibacterial effects, helping prevent various infections and diseases. **Suitable for Skin Conditions:** According to public health expert Dr Prakash Murthy, viral fish is safe for individuals with skin allergies. It doesn't trigger allergic reactions and the omega fatty acids help improve skin glow. Those with acne may also benefit from including this fish in their diet. **Beneficial for Pregnant and Postnatal Women:** Snakehead murrel can help address nutritional deficiencies during pregnancy and may contribute to a healthy delivery. Postnatal women can consume it to aid recovery from internal injuries, surgical wounds, and to rebuild muscle strength. However, breastfeeding mothers are advised to consult a doctor before including it in their diet. Whether you're aiming to improve your health, support recovery, manage a condition, or simply enjoy a delicious meal, snakehead murrel or viral fish is a smart choice. So next time you're at the market and see this fish, don't hesitate to buy it.

## 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, unlock and 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.

## Jalebis have found a place in nearly every household and glass-fronted mithai shop across the country

A vast array of sweets can be found throughout India. From the soft indulgence of rasgulla to the grainy luxury of besan laddoo, the golden and unapologetically sweet flavor of jalebi is an experience you cannot overlook. Stroll through any market street in India, and amidst the scent of fried snacks and street cuisine, this deep-fried spiral delicacy will draw you in with its captivating spiral and distinctive fragrance. Dripping with syrup, Jalebis have found a place in nearly every household and glass-fronted mithai shop across the country. It's a tradition, celebration, and comfort, all rolled into one. But there's a delicious dilemma that echoes through the minds of many: Is Jalebi a breakfast delicacy, an evening snack, or a post-meal dessert? Join us as we delve deep into this sweet's history to find out whether it is a snack or a dessert. **Jalebi's Origin Story: Where Did This Come From?** For ages, Indians have been going gaga over this delicious sweet. But you will be shocked to know that Jalebi is said to have originated in the Middle East. Yes, you read that right. Most food historians say its roots go way back to the Middle East, where it showed up as 'Zalabiya'. It was introduced to India between the 13th and 15th centuries, thanks to Persian traders and travellers. An ancient Persian cookbook, 'Kitab al-Tabeeh' by Muhammad bin Hasan al-Baghdadi, mentions the recipe of the dish. He described it as the sweet traditionally



distributed among the masses during Ramadan and other festivities. The dish also finds mention in a 10th-century Arabic cookbook by Ibn Sayyar al-Warraq. Over time, it has become India's most cherished dessert and is now symbolising joy, festivity, and nostalgia. How is it consumed worldwide? For North Indian states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh, jalebi is not just a sweet treat; it has become a breakfast essential. Often

served hot alongside curd or milk to balance the sweetness, it is a weekend indulgence for some and a daily staple for others. Move towards the west, and you will see the people of Maharashtra and Gujarat enjoy it during festivals. Especially during occasions like Dussehra and Diwali, jalebi makes its way to the morning plate, but without its companion, fafda. Head to South India, and you'll find Jalebi mostly served in

the evenings, either with tea or as a casual indulgence. In other places, it is more likely to show up as a dessert in a restaurant, plated elegantly with rabri or served warm post-meal. Whether you're dipping it in milk at dawn or crunching on it with tea at dusk, Jalebi doesn't



ask for a time slot. So next time this question comes to your mind, "Is Jalebi a breakfast or a dessert?" remember that it is India's anytime treat enjoyed by people of all ages.

# These 5 Temples in India Are a Must-Visit, Where Devotees Engage in Distinctive Rituals

India is recognized for its varied culture and abundant traditions. It hosts numerous temples, each narrating its story of devotion and spirituality. Although the majority of temples adhere to conventional practices, a select few have forged their own identity by adopting the unconventional. Within the extensive spiritual realm of India, Gireesh Vasudev Kulkarni, the founder of Temple Connect, presents five temples that are distinguished as emblems of faith, while simultaneously igniting curiosity and awe. The spiritual significance of these temples is rooted not only in their architectural beauty but also in the remarkable narratives they convey, the distinctive rituals they practice, and the steadfast devotion that attracts devotees from distant places.

## Kukke Subrahmanya Temple

Nestled on the banks of Kumaradhara in the Dakshina Kannada district in Karnataka, Bhagawan Kartikeya is worshipped in this temple in the form of Subrahmanya, who is revered as the God of Serpents. The uniqueness of this temple is the Ashlesha Bali Puja, performed on the Ashlesha Nakshatra, which is believed to remove any obstacles in one's kundli related to sarpa dosha. Another distinctive puja performed here is Sarpa Samskara. This is a more elaborate ceremony where a bhakt offers a serpent idol as a form of gratitude to remove any curse or hurdles in marriage, health, or prosperity. Not only that, it absorbs sins against serpents and also grants relief to the devotee.

## Srikalahasti Temple

Located in the state of Andhra Pradesh, Bhagawan Shiva is worshipped as Sri Kalahasteswara, representing the combined forms of spider, snake, and elephant. This temple houses the famous Vayu Lingam (embodiment of air). According to legend, Kannappa, a hunter devotee, was ready to offer both his eyes to stop the Vayu Lingam from bleeding. Deeply moved by his devotion, Bhagawan Shiva appeared, stopped him, restored his eyesight, and granted him salvation. This religious site is also considered a Rahu Ketu Kshetra, which is why a unique Rahu-Ketu puja is performed here daily for the sarpa dosha nivarana. However, Sundays and Tuesdays are gen-



erally considered auspicious. Ayyavadi Maha

## Prathyangiradevi Temple

Tucked away in the Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu, the Ayyavadi Maha Prathyangiradevi temple is dedicated to Devi Prathyangiradevi, a powerful incarnation of Devi Adishakti. In this temple, idols of Devi Lakshmi and Devi Saraswathi are placed near Devi Prathyangiradevi. The temple is more than 1000 years old and holds relevance to the Mahabharata era as well. A special ritual carried out called Nikumbala Homam with red chillies to invoke the blessings of Devi Varahi. People believe that the Homam removes evil eyes and black magic and averts any untimely death while bestowing good health, wealth, success, and confidence. In the Yagya, done on Amavasya, more than 10,000 to 15,000 devotees attend the Havan. More than 1.5 to 2 tonnes of red chillies are offered in the Havan Kund, but not a single cough or tear is shed by the devotees, despite the pungent smoke. It is believed that the negative around you is consumed, and you are free from any black magic.

## Attukal Bhagavathy Temple

This Hindu temple is located in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, and enshrines Devi Bhadrakali (Kannaki) as its presiding deity. The temple is known as the "Sabarimala for women" due to its annual festival – Attukal Pongala. It attracts millions of women from around the world. The exceptional ritual at this holy shrine is the annual Attukal Pongala festival, which has entered the Guinness Book of World Records, as it is the largest religious gathering of women. During this ceremony, women prepare Pongala and offer it to the Goddess to appease her. Bhakts believe that Attukal Amma brings prosperity and blessings to their households. As this ritual is exclusive to women, men are not permitted to enter the temple grounds during the festival.

## Kalbhairav Temple –

Ujjain Situated in the heart of Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, Kalbhairav (the fierce aspect of Bhagawan Shiva) is worshipped as the 'Guardian of the City' and is also considered a senapati. He is venerated mainly by the Kāpālīka and Aghora sects. The most interesting ritual here involves offering alcohol to the deity, which is one of the five practices in the Tantric Sadhna known as Panchamakara. The devotees are asked to hand over the liquor bottles, and the Pandits pour it into a dish near the deity's lips. Miraculously, it disappears, signifying Bhairav ji consuming it. Around one-third of the bottle is returned to the devotee as a form of prasadam. Since Bhairav ji's vahan is a dog, most devotees feed dogs around the temple. Praying to Kalbhairav brings protection from negative forces, untimely death, and life's fears. Despite Madhya Pradesh recently banning alcohol sales, the temple still practises the oblation of liquor.



## 10 Activities to Experience in South Korea: An All-Inclusive Travel Guide for First-Time Visitors

The phenomenon of K-pop, K-dramas, labubus, rameyon, and a general admiration for South Korean culture has captivated the Indian populace. This fascination has motivated numerous individuals to visit the country, immerse themselves in its rich culture, attend its grand music concerts, and savor its traditional dishes. As the peak travel season draws to a close this month, it presents an ideal opportunity to prepare for a journey, secure travel tickets, and venture to a nation rich in cultural heritage. Nevertheless, it is essential for Indian travelers to obtain a visa prior to their trip to the country. South Korea is also well-known for its minimal yet effective skincare, beauty routines and clothes, making it a great destination for the younger lot of travellers. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met South Korea's President Lee Jae-myung at the G20 Summit to reaffirm the country's commitment to deepen the India-South Korea Special Strategic Partnership and expand cooperation across trade, investment and advanced technologies. Travel creator Simran Balar Jain shares 10 things you should add to your list of experiences to have when travelling to South Korea. Ride the Seouldal Hot-Air Balloon for the Best City Views Located at Yeouido near the Han River, Seouldal is a moon-themed tethered hot-air-balloon that rises 130 metres above the



ground. It offers stunning aerial views of Seoul's skyline and is perfect for dreamy photos and romantic moments. Since flights depend on weather, book your slot in advance. Explore Seoul's Trendiest Neighbourhoods Go beyond basic sightseeing and spend time in Hongdae, Ikseon-dong and Seongsu-dong, packed with aesthetic cafés, indie fashion stores, thrift clothing, street music, Korean stationery and experimental lifestyle brands. These districts capture Korea's youthful and artistic vibe. Dive Into Korea's Beauty, Hair and Wellness Culture Korea is the world capital of beauty and it's

not just about shopping, it's an entire experience. Start at Olive Young, where every shopper gets skin analysis to understand their skin type and concerns before buying products. Then try viral Korean facials, scalp-targeted hair spa, body scrubs, aromatherapy and traditional bathhouses (Jjimjilbang). These treatments genuinely show visible results and are surprisingly affordable. Try Perfume-Making and Craft Workshops Korea is full of DIY studios that offer experiences like perfume making, ceramic art, resin art, candle moulding and clay sculpture They're fun, aesthetic and you get to take

home a customised souvenir created by you. Take a Day Trip to Nami Island Famous for its dreamy tree-lined paths, Nami Island is perfect for couples, families and photographers. Spend a slow day cycling, strolling along the riverside and hopping around pretty cafés. Visit the DMZ for an Eye-Opening Experience The Demilitarized Zone tour gives powerful insight into North-South Korea relations, featuring observatory points, tunnels and real stories from the divided peninsula — a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Watch the Sunset from N-Seoul Tower Take the cable car up to N-Seoul Tower for panoramic skyline views. The love-lock area is especially beautiful during sunset and makes for romantic photos. Enjoy Vegetarian-Friendly Korean Street Food Try dishes like Tteokbokki, Bibimbap without meat, Jumeokbak, Korean sweet potatoes and strawberry milk. Learn phrases like "chaesik juseyo" (vegetarian) and "gogi mulhayo" (no meat) to make ordering easy. Experience Korea's Nightlife the Local Way End the day in Itaewon or Gangnam, known for rooftop bars, karaoke rooms (Noraebang) and safe late-night energy. Move Around Easily with Public Transport Buy a T-Money card and use the subway — fast, clean, safe and English-friendly. Taxis via the Kakao T app are also reliable.

## Neiphu Rio Meets Nirmala Sitharaman



**Nagaland, Apr 03:** Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphu Rio on Friday met Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and discussed issues related to financial support for the state and other hill regions.

During the meeting, Rio acknowledged the Centre's support under "Part-X, Pride of Hills" of the Special Assistance Scheme for Capital Investment (SASCI), noting that the initiative addresses the needs of hill states and contributes to inclusive development. The Chief Minister also raised concerns regarding Nagaland's fiscal situation and stressed the need for sustained assistance to meet developmental priorities.

The Union Finance Minister assured continued support and understanding of the state's financial requirements, according to the Chief Minister.

## AJP Slams Smear Campaign Against Kunki Chowdhury

Guwahati, Apr 03: The Asom Jatiya Parishad (AJP) has expressed deep concern over what it described as a sustained smear campaign against its party candidate for the 36 Guwahati Central Assembly constituency, Kunki Chowdhury. In a press statement, Samsheer Singh, Vice President of AJP and Chief Convenor of the Election Management Committee, and Ziaur Rahman, Secretary of AJP and Convenor of the Election Management Committee, said that Chowdhury, a young and highly educated candidate representing the new generation, has received widespread public support since the announcement of her candidature. The party highlighted her commitment, integrity, and strong connection with the people as reflective of a vision for a progressive and self-reliant Assam. However, the party alleged that certain vested interests, unsettled by her growing popularity, have resorted to unethical tactics. These include circulating misleading images and false narratives on both mainstream and social media, with the apparent intent of maligning her personal reputation and that of her family.



Calling the campaign "deeply condemnable," the AJP leaders stated that such actions are not merely attacks on an individual candidate but also undermine democratic values. "Political competition must be based on principles, policies, and public service—not on personal attacks, slander, or intimidation," they said. They further emphasised that targeting a candidate's family or personal life runs contrary to the cultural ethos of Assamese society, which upholds dignity, respect, and fairness. Expressing confidence in the people of Assam, Singh and Rahman said voters are aware and discerning, and will reject divisive and negative politics. The party reiterated its commitment to standing firmly with Kunki Chowdhury and her family during this period. The AJP leaders also urged all political parties and stakeholders to maintain decorum and uphold the sanctity of the democratic process.

## Emotional Farewell Paid to NCHAC EM Samuel Changsan at DHAC Premises



**Haflong, Apr 04:** A heartfelt last tribute was paid today to late Samuel Changsan, Executive Member (EM) of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC), at the DHAC premises. The condolence gathering was led by Chief Executive Member Debolal Gorlosa, accompanied by DHAC Chairman Mohet Hojai, Principal Secretary Partha Sarati Jahari, Principal Secretary, Executive Members (EMs), Members of Autonomous Council (MACs), BJP Dima Hasao President Dhriti Thaosen, along with officials and well-wishers. The atmosphere turned deeply emotional as colleagues, leaders, and supporters bid a final farewell to the departed leader. Remembering his life and service, speakers highlighted Changsan's dedication, humility, and unwavering commitment to the welfare of the people, noting that his contributions will always be cherished. In a tragic development, Samuel Changsan passed away at a private hospital in Guwahati on Wednesday evening at the age of 53. His sudden demise has sent shockwaves across the political fraternity, especially within the Bharatiya Janata Party

(BJP), and among the people of Dima Hasao. Changsan, who held the Medical portfolio in the council, was widely respected for his sincere service to the community. Expressing deep sorrow, CEM Debolal Gorlosa stated that Changsan's passing is a profound loss to the council and the district, recalling his dedication and commitment to public service. Beyond his political career spanning over a decade, Changsan was actively associated with various social and community organizations, working tirelessly for the upliftment of society. He was admired for his friendly nature, approachable personality, and his ability to connect with people from all walks of life. Leaders across party lines and members of the public have extended their condolences, remembering him as a committed public servant and a compassionate individual who left a lasting impact on society. He is survived by his two children, family members, and a large number of admirers. Prayers are being offered for the eternal peace of his soul and strength to the bereaved family in this hour of grief.

## Mizoram MP Pushes for Faster Progress on Bangladesh Bridge Link



**Agartala, Apr 03:** Aizawl: Mizoram's lone Rajya Sabha member, K. Vanlalvena, has urged the Centre to expedite construction of a key cross-border bridge at Kawrpuichhuah in southern Mizoram's Lunglei district, aimed at strengthening connectivity with Bangladesh. Raising the issue during the ongoing Parliament Budget Session on Thursday, Vanlalvena noted that despite a bilateral trade agreement with Bangladesh signed nearly a decade ago, tangible progress on infrastructure has remained limited. Kawrpuichhuah has been identified as a proposed

Integrated Check Post (ICP) and land port, envisioned as a crucial node for border trade between India and Bangladesh. The site lies about 11.58 km from Tlabung, the nearest notified town in Lunglei district.

The MP, however, welcomed the recent commencement of construction on a bridge over the Khawthlang Tuipui river near the Bangladesh border. The project, overseen by the Union Home Ministry, is estimated to cost Rs 54 crore. Highlighting the humanitarian challenges in the region, Vanlalvena recalled his 2021 visit to

Border Security Force (BSF) outposts along the Indo-Bangladesh border. He pointed out that several remote camps remain inaccessible by road, severely affecting both security operations and civilian life. "Local leaders and BSF officials have reported tragic instances where patients lost their lives due to the complete lack of connectivity in these remote areas," he said.

Vanlalvena added that he had earlier submitted a formal proposal to the Union Home Ministry seeking construction of the Khawthlang Tuipui bridge to address these issues. He also expressed gratitude to Union Home Minister Amit Shah for prioritising the project following his representation. Emphasising its strategic and social importance, the MP said the bridge would significantly improve military logistics while enhancing access to essential services for residents in border areas. He added that the initiative reflects the Centre's commitment to addressing the needs of remote and underdeveloped regions.

## Tripura CM Probes Tipra Motha's Poll Funding



**Agartala, Apr 03:** Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha has launched a sharp offensive against the Tipra Motha Party, questioning its election fund management ahead of the TTAADC polls on April 12.

Targeting Tipra Motha supremo Pradyot Kishore Debarman, Saha noted that despite advice from party leaders to align with the BJP for financial stability, Debarman chose to contest independently. "The question arises: from where have the election funds been arranged?" Saha asked, promising a thorough probe

into suspicious finances once the BJP takes the council.

The CM accused the ruling council party of "defalcation and embezzlement" of development funds and dismissed claims of TTAADC land encroachment as "misinformation." He likened Tipra Motha's "threats and intimidation" to West Bengal's TMC politics. Urging voters to reject "cowardly tactics," Saha assured that the state would protect the council's geographical integrity and encouraged citizens to vote fearlessly for the BJP to ensure transparent governance.

## TARUBRATA MUKHERJEE PASSES AWAY AT 48, FAMILY AND FRIENDS IN SHOCK

**Haflong/Tezpur, Mar 30:** Tarubrata Mukherjee, son of Tusha Kanti Mukherjee, passed away on March 30 at a hospital in Tezpur following a prolonged illness. He was around 48 years old at the time of his demise. He had been staying at his father-in-law's residence in Tezpur. Tarubrata completed his schooling at Haflong Convent and Don Bosco School, and later graduated with a First Class degree in B.Sc. Geology from G.C. College, Silchar. Remembered as a sports enthusiast, he was widely known among his peers for his friendly and calm nature. His untimely demise has come as a shock to his friends, well-wishers, and family members, who mourn the loss of a warm and gentle individual. He leaves behind grieving family members and a large circle of friends who remember him for his simplicity and kind-hearted personality.

## Fakhar Zaman's 2-Match Ban Confirmed by PSL



**Lahore, Apr 03:** A three-member technical committee of the Pakistan Super League has rejected opener Fakhar Zaman's appeal against the two-match ban imposed on him for ball-tampering during a match. The committee held a hearing and after going through all available evidence, upheld the ban imposed by match referee Roshan Mahanama. He had charged the Lahore Qalandars' skipper with a level three offence for changing the condition of the ball.

Zaman will miss his team Lahore Qalandars' match against Multan Sultan on Friday and on April 9 against Islamabad United. Zaman had based his appeal on the plea that there is no conclusive evidence available to confirm he changed the condition of the ball and the ban should be retracted. The match referee held two hearings with him after the Lahore Qalandars and Karachi Kings match here. Just before the final over in the Karachi Kings innings, umpire Faisal Afridi had asked for the ball from Zaman, Shaheen Shah Afridi and pacer Haris Rauf, while they were huddled together before the start of the final over.

The umpire, after inspecting the ball with his fellow umpire Shujauddaula imposed a five-run penalty on the Qalandars team and also changed the ball. The five runs penalty, which was protested by Shaheen, left Karachi Kings requiring nine runs in the final over and they got them off the first three balls to secure an exciting win.

## Napoli vs. Milan: Italy's World Cup Antidote

Fit Napoli Trail Milan by One After Four Straight Wins

**Milan, Apr 03:** Napoli and AC Milan will face off on Monday with Serie A leaders Inter Milan in their sights, but the return of domestic football over Easter has been completely overshadowed by the fallout from Italy failing to reach yet another World Cup. Leading Milan by six points with eight matches remaining in the season, Inter would ordinarily be confident of claiming a 21st league crown ahead of the visit of Champions League chasers Roma on Sunday. But Napoli and Milan have re-ignited what had looked to be a dead title race, helped by Inter picking up just two points in their last three matches before a traumatic international break for Italian football fans. Napoli are a point behind Milan after having won their last four matches following the end of a near season-long injury crisis, but will be without Romelu Lukaku after the Belgium striker incurred the wrath of the reigning champions for staying in his home country for treatment on a hip problem. But that row, Saturday's showdown and the title battle all fade into the background when faced with the national team's latest humiliation, failing to reach a third straight World Cup.

The reaction to Tuesday's play-off defeat on penalties to Bosnia and Herzegovina has been the same to the previous two that cost Italy a place at the world's biggest football tournament: rip it up and start again. Football federation chief Gabriele Gravina was the first to fall on



his sword, his resignation coming on Thursday afternoon, two days after saying he would wait a week before making a decision. He was followed by the national team's general manager Gianluigi Buffon, with coach Gennaro Gattuso also expected to step down over the coming days. Now the talk is of how to bring Italian football back to the top table after years of flops from the national team and the slow decline of the country's top clubs on the European stage. Inter were the one club that had stayed with the best on the continent but even they have helped contribute to the doom, gloom and despondency after being dumped out of the Champions League by Norwegian minnows Bodo/Glimt. Cristian Chivu's

team has also become a sort of symbol of Italy's failure, with defender Alessandro Bastoni being sent off in the first half against Bosnia and academy product Pio Esposito smashing over the first penalty in the shoot-out. And on Saturday Roma will be hoping to lift a depression of their own by staying in the hunt for a top-four finish.

Knocked out of the Europa League by Bologna and wobbling in Serie A, Roma have an awful record against the division's top teams and trail fourth-placed Como by just three points. But with Como at Udinese on a run of five straight wins Gian Piero Gasperini's Roma, sixth and level on 54 points with Juventus, risk falling further off the pace.

## Abhishek Sharma Fined For Umpire Dissent



**Kolkata, Apr 03:** Sunrisers Hyderabad vice-captain Abhishek Sharma has been fined 25% of his match fee and handed one demerit point during SRH's commanding 65-run victory over Kolkata Knight Riders. The opener provided a blistering start, smashing 48 off just 21 balls, but his exit sparked controversy in the ninth over. After Varun Chakaravarthy claimed a diving catch, TV umpire Nitin Menon ruled the dismissal legal despite replays appearing inconclusive. An agitated Abhishek openly expressed his dissent while leaving the field. He admitted to a Level 1 offense under Article 2.3 of the IPL Code of Conduct. While SRH secured their first win of 2026, the match referee's disciplinary ruling remains final and binding.

## Messi Shines as Argentina Wins 5-0 in Home Farewell

**Buenos Aires, Apr 01:** In what was likely his final home appearance for Argentina's national squad, Lionel Messi scored a goal and provided an assist in a 5-0 rout of Zambia on Tuesday night in a farewell friendly ahead of the World Cup. The 38-year-old Messi set up Julián Álvarez in the fourth minute and then scored in the 43rd at La Bombonera stadium in Buenos Aires, his 116th international goal in 198 appearances for Argentina. The crowd gave him a standing ovation and pleaded with him to help Argentina win another World Cup. The global tournament kicks off June 11 in the United States, Mexico, and Canada. Nicolás Otamendi and Valentín Barco also scored for Argentina. The defending world champions raised some concern after their lackluster performance last Friday in a 2-1 victory over Mauritania. In the lead-up to the Zambia friendly, coach Lionel Scaloni had warned that if the team didn't improve its performance he would take drastic measures regarding the 26-man World Cup squad, which must be submitted by May 30.

For the last home game before the World Cup, Scaloni started with a lineup similar to that which defeated France in the 2022 final, with the notable exclusion of midfielder Rodrigo De Paul, who is recovering from a muscle injury and performed poorly against Mauritania. Argentina, which also won the World Cup in 1978 and 1986, will open against Algeria on June 16 in Group J, followed by games against Austria on June 22 and Jordan on June 27.



## Sindarov in spotlight, hands Caruana a lesson

**Chennai, Apr 02:** THE first three days of the Candidates was a teaser, a sign of things to come. On Day Four, an important one preceding the first rest day, Javokhir Sindarov put up a performance full of verve, a man at the top of his game. In the process, he beat the pre-tournament favourite, Fabiano Caruana, in breathtaking fashion. Actually, he didn't just beat the US GM. He blitzed his way past Caruana in a middle-game of the actual qualifying tournament to pick the challenger for the next World Championship game. And on the evidence of the first four days in Cyprus, it's hard to envisage a world where Sindarov won't be in that title match against D Gukesh. The game lasted all of 36 moves but Caruana, playing with the black pieces and the joint leader with Sindarov coming into the round, was gasping for air for a very long time. He seldom

got up from his office chair as Sindarov had put him in a bind very early on.

The US GM couldn't find any interplay and had to be content with defending his pieces. That the Uzbek GM, the reigning world champion, played back-to-back brilliancies just out of the opening tells its own story. Sindarov,



who has stormed inside the world's top-10 recently, had all of his attacking pieces in sync and there was a multi-pronged attack outside the World No. 3's door. Caruana, short on time and ideas, threw on the towel. He had fewer than four minutes when he resigned (his opponent's clock showed 51:21).