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Haflong, Apr 14: The vibrant town of Haflong in the scenic district of Dima Hasao witnessed a spirited celebration of Baisakhi, as the Sikh community came together with great enthusiasm and devotion to mark the auspicious occasion. Celebrated as both a harvest festival and a significant religious event, Baisakhi commemorates the founding of the Khalsa Panth by Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1699—an event of immense importance in Sikh history. The celebrations, held at the local Gurdwara, were filled with devotion and unity. The program featured prayer services, soulful Kirtan, and the traditional Langar Seva, reflecting the core Sikh values of equality and community service. Devotees gathered in large numbers, and people from different communities also joined in the festivities, showcasing communal harmony. Secretary Nirmal Singh, along with other members of the Sikh community in Haflong, extended heartfelt greetings to the residents of the dis-



trict, conveying messages of peace, brotherhood, and collective progress. Remembering the legacy of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, speakers highlighted his unwavering dedication to righteousness, courage, and spiritual discipline. The formation of the Khalsa Panth under his leadership stood as a symbol of resistance against injustice and oppression, particularly

during the Mughal era. His remarkable literary contributions were also acknowledged as an enduring part of Sikh heritage. As the celebrations concluded, the atmosphere remained filled with the echoes of hymns and the warmth of shared meals, leaving behind a powerful reminder of the enduring values of unity, compassion, and courage that define the spirit of Baisakhi

Swastika Paul Secures Top Spot in HSLC 2026 in Dima Hasao with 90.33%

Haflong, Apr 15: Swastika Paul, daughter of Vivekananda Paul and Sima Paul of Haflong, has emerged as the HSLC 2026 topper of Dima Hasao district by securing an outstanding 90.33% in the examination. A student of St. Agnes Higher Secondary School, Haflong, her remarkable achievement reflects her dedication, perseverance, and academic excellence. Swastika's hard work and commitment have truly paid off, earning her the top position in the district and bringing immense pride to her family, school, and the entire Haflong community. This milestone stands as a shining example of her determination and focus, inspiring fellow students to aim higher in their academic pursuits. Different organization extended their best wishes on her success and her continued achievements in the future.



Mob Vandalizes Assam Forest Office Over Detentions; Several People Injured

Guwahati, Apr 17: A mob went on a rampage at the Assam forest department's Runikhata range office in Chirang district on Friday, protesting the detention of some locals who had allegedly encroached upon forest land. The mob vandalized the range office as well as residential quarters, torched seven to eight government vehicles on its premises, and took away some weapons. A senior police official said the weapons had been recovered. The police used force to control the situation, but the violence continued. Over 30 people, mostly police personnel, were injured. The police detained at least four protestors. Tensions had been simmering in the area since Thursday night, following the detention of the locals who are from an Adivasi community. They had encroached upon land at the Ripu-Chirang Reserve Forest near the Bhutan border. Locals, including women, had gheraoed the forest office on Thursday night, demanding the release of the persons, but were dispersed by forest personnel. However, a mob, armed with sticks, went to the site again on Friday morning and launched the attack. As violence erupted, police personnel rushed to the area. They resorted to lathi charge and the protestors retaliated by pelting stones.

The protestors alleged that forest personnel had assaulted some locals, including women, the previous night. They demanded action against the personnel involved. A protestor told media persons at the site that they would not rest till those guilty were arrested. "They (administration) have assured us that the guilty forest personnel will be arrested. We will get peace only if that happens, or else this unrest will continue," the protestor said. "Our people had lost their land following the ethnic violence of 2014 and occupied land in the jungle. Yesterday, 25 of our people were picked up by the administration for occupying land. The violence broke out today in protest against their detention," he further said. The situation remained tense when reports last came in.



Major Drug Bust in Dima Hasao: Heroin Worth ₹1.45 Crore Seized, One Peddler Arrested

Haflong, Apr 09: In a significant crackdown on drug trafficking, Dima Hasao Police arrested a suspected drug peddler on Wednesday during a special operation carried out in the district.

According to official sources, the police seized 727.41 grams of heroin, with an estimated market value of approximately ₹1.45 crore. The contraband was reportedly being transported in a vehicle, which has also been confiscated as part of the operation.

The arrest marks a major success for the district police in their ongoing efforts to



curb the menace of illegal drug trade in the region. Further investigation is underway

to trace the network involved and identify other individuals connected to the case.

Devastating Fire Breaks Out in Maibang Bazaar; Houses and Shops Damaged, Relief Provided



Maibang, Apr 15: A devastating fire incident was reported early Wednesday morning at Maibang Bazaar under Maibang Police Station. The fire broke out at around 5:00 AM, caus-

ing significant damage to residential and commercial properties in the area. As per field verification conducted by the Executive Magistrate, Maibang, along with members of the CQRT (Cir-

cle Quick Response Team) and DDMA field officers, a total of two houses were completely gutted, while eight nearby shops sustained damage in the incident. Emergency response teams promptly reached the site and assessed the situation. Immediate relief measures were undertaken, with essential items such as tarpaulin sheets and utensil sets distributed to the affected households. The relief materials were provided by the Indian Red Cross Society. The cause of the fire remains unknown at the time of reporting, and further investigation is underway to determine the origin of the blaze. Authorities have assured continued assistance and necessary support to the affected families as recovery efforts continue.

Allahabad HC orders FIR against Rahul Gandhi

Lucknow, Apr 17: The Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court has directed the registration of a First Information Report (FIR) against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over an alleged dual citizenship controversy. On Friday, Justice Subhash Vidyarthi overturned a January 28, 2026, ruling by a special MP/MLA court that had previously dismissed the case, citing a lack of jurisdiction over citizenship matters.

The petitioner, S. Vignesh Shishir, a BJP worker from Karnataka, alleges that Gandhi holds British citizenship, which would render him ineligible to hold office in India. The High Court observed that the claims warrant a formal investigation under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the Official Secrets Act, and the Passport Act.

Furthermore, the Court stated that once the FIR is lodged, the Uttar Pradesh government may seek assistance from a central agency, such as the CBI, to conduct a detailed probe. The case, which began in Rae Bareilly before being transferred to Lucknow in late 2025, represents a significant legal challenge for the Leader of the Opposition.



Six injured in Saranda encounter as Maoist IED blast hits forces in Jharkhand

Bounty Leader Misir Besra Trapped in Forest

Ranchi, Apr 17: WEST SINGHBHUM — A major anti-Naxal operation in the Saranda forests of Jharkhand intensified on Thursday, April 16, 2026, after a Maoist-triggered IED blast injured a sixth security personnel. The injured jawan, Abhinay Kumar of the CoBRA Battalion, was airlifted to Ranchi for urgent treatment following the explosion.

The encounter began at 8:00 AM on Wednesday when a joint team of the CRPF's CoBRA Battalion, Jharkhand Jaguar, and district police



intercepted a Maoist squad shifting camps. Security forces have since cordoned off a 10-kilometer radius, trapping top Maoist leader Misir Besra—a Politburo member carrying a ₹1 crore bounty. Other high-ranking operatives, including Mochu and Sagen Angaria, are also believed to

be within the perimeter.

Chaibasa SP Amit Renu confirmed that intermittent firing continues as forces navigate a hazardous terrain booby-trapped with IEDs and spike holes. While several Maoists are suspected to have sustained gunshot wounds, official casualty counts await the operation's conclusion. As exit routes remain sealed, this confrontation marks a critical escalation in the effort to dismantle the long-standing Maoist stronghold in the Jharkhand-Odisha border region.

Indian National Arrested for Mid-Flight Assault



Chandigarh, Apr 17: PERTH — A 52-year-old Indian national, Sudhir Kumar Chauhan, was arrested at Perth Airport on Monday, April 13, 2026, following allegations of a sexual assault during an international flight. According to the Australian Federal Police (AFP), the incident occurred aboard Scoot Airlines flight TR16, traveling from Singapore to Perth. Chauhan is accused of committing “non-consensual sexual acts” and three counts of indecency against a female passenger seated next to him. The victim immediately alerted cabin crew, who moved her to a different seat and monitored Chauhan until the aircraft landed.

Upon arrival at approximately 8:00 AM, AFP officers boarded the plane and took Chauhan into custody. He appeared in Perth Magistrates Court the following day, where he was denied bail. Under the Crimes (Aviation) Act, Chauhan faces a maximum of 12 years for sexual intercourse without consent and 7 years for each count of indecency. AFP Acting Superintendent Peter Brindal reaffirmed a zero-tolerance policy for criminal behavior in aviation, stating all passengers have the right to feel safe. Chauhan remains in custody pending a bail hearing scheduled for today, Friday, April 17.

SC Upholds Ranya Rao's Smuggling Detention

New Delhi, Apr 17: The Supreme Court of India on Thursday upheld the preventive detention order passed by the Central Economic Intelligence Bureau and affirmed the Karnataka High Court order against Kannada actress Ranya Rao for allegedly smuggling gold into the country. A bench of Justices M M Sundresh and N Kotiswar Singh dismissed the appeals filed by Rao's mother and another accused against the December 19, 2025 order of the Karnataka High Court, which had upheld the preventive detention order. “Detention order is not in contravention of Article 22(3)(b) of the Constitution. Substantial procedural compliance had been made by the authorities while issuing the detention orders. The detenus had been furnished with the relied-upon documents within the prescribed time and that the contents of electronic evidence, including CCTV footage, had been displayed to them in prison,” the apex court said while dismissing the special leave petitions filed by Rao and others.

The Bench also observed that a detenu

has no right to be represented by a legal practitioner before the Advisory Board as a matter of course. Such a right would arise only if the detaining authority itself participates through a legal practitioner, which was not the case here. “The detention order contained adequate reasons, including prior instances of disposal of foreign-marked gold bars, and that a live and proximate link existed between the alleged activities and the need for preventive detention,” the court said.

It added that there was no illegality or violation of constitutional safeguards under Article 22 and upheld the preventive detention order passed by the Central Economic Intelligence Bureau and affirmed by the Karnataka High Court. The petitioners had argued before both the High Court and the Supreme Court that the detenus and their relatives challenged the detention orders on multiple grounds. “The relied-upon documents were not properly supplied, that there was no imminent possibility of future smuggling activities, and that the detention orders



lacked proper subjective satisfaction by the detaining authority,” they argued. The petitioners further submitted that the refusal to permit legal representation before the Advisory Board vitiated the detention proceedings. “The authorities had failed to establish a proximate link between the alleged past activities and the necessity for preventive detention order,” they contended. Rao has been in jail for more than a year after her arrest in March 2025 in the case. She was detained by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence at the Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru.

Huge women's rally held in support of Women's Reservation Bill in Sikkim

Gangtok, Apr 17: Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on Friday lauded a large rally organised by women across Sikkim in support of the Nari Shakti Vandhan Adhiniyam (Women's Reservation Bill), calling it a powerful reflection of unity, awareness and collective resolve. In a social media post, the Chief Minister said it was a matter of “immense pride, unity, and encouragement” to witness women from all sections of society, mothers, sisters and daughters representing every constituency come together in solidarity for the cause of women's empowerment.

He noted that the rally symbolised the strength and determination of women in the

state, underlining their growing participation in shaping public discourse. “This collective expression of solidarity reflects the strength, awareness and determination of the women of our state,” Tamang said. Extending his best wishes on behalf of the state government and its people, he praised the participants for their active involvement and commitment. The Chief Minister said such initiatives would play a crucial role in building a more inclusive and empowered society. “The active participation of women in such movements is truly inspiring and will undoubtedly contribute towards a stronger and more equitable future,” he added.

Describing the Nari Shak-



ti Vandhan Adhiniyam as a landmark reform, Tamang said its passage marked a historic milestone in advancing women's empowerment in India. He credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi for conceptualising the initiative, terming it one of the most significant achievements of the 21st cen-

tury in strengthening gender equality. The Chief Minister expressed hope that the momentum generated by such public participation would continue to inspire progress and unity in the years ahead. He emphasised that sustained efforts and collective will are essential to ensuring mean-

ingful representation and opportunities for women across sectors. CM Tamang also conveyed his greetings to the people of the state on the occasion of Mata Tirtha Aunsi, wishing peace, prosperity and continued success. Reaffirming his support for women-led initiatives, the Chief Minister said the government remains committed to policies that promote inclusivity, empowerment and equal participation in the state's development journey. The Women's Reservation Bill, officially known as the Nari Shakti Vandhan Adhiniyam, introduced by the Centre under the leadership of PM Modi, aims to reserve 33 per cent of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state leg-

islative assemblies. The legislation is being seen as a landmark reform to address the long-standing underrepresentation of women in India's political landscape. By ensuring greater participation of women in lawmaking, the Bill seeks to make governance more inclusive and representative. Its implementation is linked to the delimitation exercise, which will redraw constituency boundaries based on population changes, after which the reservation will come into effect. Supporters argue that the move will empower women politically and strengthen democratic institutions, while also encouraging more women to take up leadership roles across sectors.

Himanta Slams Women's Quota Bill Defeat As 'Black Day'



Guwahati, Apr 17: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday lashed out at the Congress-led opposition after the defeat of the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, which sought to implement 33% reservation for women in legislatures be-

ginning 2029. The bill, which also proposed increasing Lok Sabha seats from 543 to 816 following a delimitation exercise based on the 2011 Census, was defeated in the Lower House with 298 members voting in favour and 230 against. Out of 528 MPs who voted, the

bill required 352 votes for passage. Reacting to the outcome, Sarma described April 17 as a "Black Day" and accused the opposition of betraying women. "The Opposition led by Congress has proven that they are ANTI WOMEN. Shame," he wrote in a post on X.

The amendment also envisaged increasing seats in state and Union Territory assemblies to accommodate the 33% quota for women. Its defeat has drawn sharp reactions from ruling party leaders, who accused the opposition of blocking a historic measure, while opposition parties maintained that linking reservation with delimitation was politically motivated.

Tipra Motha Sweeps TTAADC Polls As BJP Presence Declines

Agartala, Apr 17: What was expected to be a closely contested election has instead turned one-sided, with the Tipra Motha Party sweeping the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) polls with a larger majority and wider margins. As per the latest updates, Tipra Motha candidates have been declared victorious in 20 seats, while in four more seats the party is leading by a comfortable margin. The BJP has won three seats and is leading in one more. The saffron party's presence in the 28-member TTAADC has seen a drastic 50 percent dip, as it had secured 10 seats in the last elections, although one of its MDCs later defected to Tipra Motha.

Tipra Motha, on the other hand, has gained additional seats, and if the party wins the seats it is currently leading in, it is set for a strong comeback. The CPI(M), Congress, and IPFT drew a blank as the elections to the politically crucial constitutional body turned into a bipolar contest between the BJP and Tipra Motha, who are otherwise allies in the coalition gov-



ernment ruling the state. Senior Tipra Motha leaders such as sitting CEM Pruna Chandra Jamatia, Kamal Kaloi, retired IAS officer C.K. Jamatia who served in the TTAADC, and Rabindra Debbarma retained their seats with larger margins.

Senior BJP leaders such as party secretary Devid Debbarma, party general secretary Bipin Debbarma, and Tribal Welfare Minister Bikash Debbarma's close relative Billow Jamatia lost their seats. The BJP performed comparatively better in non-tribal seats.

10kg Meth Seized; Four Arrested In Aizawl



Aizawl, Apr 17: In a significant crackdown on narcotics trafficking, the Mizoram Excise and Narcotics Department seized over 10 kg of methamphetamine (approximately 1 lakh tablets) during a specialized operation in Aizawl on Wednesday. Acting on a tip-off, officials conducted a raid near Folkland Park, initially arresting two residents of Assam's Karimganj—Jakaria Hussain (28) and Taj Uddin (25). Follow-up investigations led to the arrest of the alleged supplier, Lalnunziri (38), a Myanmar national, and Vanlalrintluanga (27), a local resident accused of facilitating transport. Key Seizures Contraband: 10.021 kg of methamphetamine. Assets: A Maruti WagonR and five mobile phones used for coordination. Destination: The consignment was reportedly bound for distribution in Assam. Department spokesperson Peter Zohmingthanga stated the accused are booked under the NDPS Act, 1985. This operation is part of an intensified "Special Drive" ahead of the Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) elections on April 21. Since January, the department has demonstrated a high level of vigilance, seizing 7.238 kg of heroin and over 49 kg of methamphetamine to curb the flow of illegal drugs across the border.

Nagaland: NFHRCC defers agitation over Foothills road upgradation after meeting with tribal bodies

Dimapur, Apr 17: The Nagaland Foothills Road Co-ordination Committee (NFHRCC) on April 15 announced the temporary suspension of its proposed agitation over the upgradation of the Foothills Road, following a high-level consultative meeting with tribal bodies in Dimapur.

The decision was taken at an extended meeting held at Hotel Saramati, where representatives of apex tribal hohos and other stakeholders unanimously urged the committee to keep the phase-wise agitation—earlier scheduled to begin from April 15, in abeyance for the time being. While agreeing to defer the protest, the committee said it would continue to function as a "watchdog" over the proposed upgradation of the

Foothills Road into a two-lane national highway, particularly in the context of the No Objection Certificate (NOC) issued by apex tribal organisations.

The NFHRCC also raised concerns over financial transparency and called on the state government to publicly clarify the revised administrative approval of Rs 430.77 crore earmarked for the project. Even as it paused its agitation, the committee cautioned that protests could be revived if the government fails to adequately address the concerns and expectations of the Naga public. The development comes amid increasing scrutiny over the long-delayed Foothills Road project, widely regarded as a key infrastructure initiative in Nagaland.



Meghalaya to release white paper on Taj Umiam project: CM Conrad K. Sangma

Guwahati, Apr 17: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Thursday, April 16, said the government is ready to release a white paper on the proposed Taj Umiam Luxury Resort & Spa to address public concerns. He did not comment on whether the Lumpodeng Island issue has been politicised, leaving it to the public to decide. Addressing reporters, the Chief Minister said the government is prepared to make full project details public through the white paper. He stated that the main concern raised by protesters regarding construction on Lumpodeng Island has already been addressed.

He clarified that no construction will take place on the island and that the proposed five-star hotel will instead be developed at the existing Orchid Hotel site near Umiam. He added that



this position has remained unchanged and has been communicated repeatedly. Referring to the ongoing agitation, including a hunger strike by members of the Green-Tech Foundation, he said

the administration is monitoring the protesters' health and has arranged medical support at the site after some refused hospital admission.

He said that with the issue of con-

struction on the island addressed, there is no reason for the protest to continue. He further noted that the focus of the demands now appears to be shifting towards cancelling the memorandum of understanding (MoU), adding that the basis for such a demand has not been clearly explained.

He said the project is part of a broader tourism development plan involving investment in hotels, homestays, transport, and local businesses, aimed at generating employment and boosting the state economy. He urged that tourism projects be viewed as a cohesive plan rather than in isolation. Admitting that earlier communication gaps caused confusion, the Chief Minister noted that the government is now actively engaging with stakeholders to provide necessary clarifications.

Editorial

Dima Hasao: Assam's Lone Hill District Emerges as a Rising Paradise for Nature Lovers

In recent years, Dima Hasao—often referred to as Assam's only hill district—has steadily transformed from a quiet, lesser-known region into a promising tourism hotspot. Blessed with breathtaking landscapes, rolling hills, dense forests, and a rich diversity of flora and fauna, the district is now capturing the attention of travelers seeking serenity away from crowded destinations. The charm of Dima Hasao lies in its unspoiled natural beauty. From mist-covered valleys and cascading waterfalls to vibrant biodiversity, the district offers an immersive experience for nature lovers, trekkers, and eco-tourists alike. As word spreads, footfall has begun to rise, marking a positive shift in the district's tourism narrative. What makes this transformation particularly encouraging is the parallel development of infrastructure. Gradually but steadily, the district is gearing up to meet the ex-

pectations of modern travelers. Improved accommodation facilities, availability of diverse and hygienic food options, better connectivity, and basic amenities are enhancing the overall visitor experience. Small hotels, homestays, and local eateries are beginning to flourish, contributing both to tourism growth and local livelihoods. Cleanliness and environmental awareness are also becoming central to this growth story. Efforts to maintain the pristine beauty of the hills, coupled with community participation, are helping position Dima Hasao as a responsible and sustainable tourism destination. The emphasis on keeping tourist spots clean and preserving natural resources will play a decisive role in shaping its long-term appeal. However, this growth must be guided carefully. Unplanned expansion or over-commercialization could risk damaging the very beauty that draws vis-

itors here. Authorities and stakeholders must ensure that development remains eco-friendly, inclusive, and sustainable. Investment in eco-tourism, proper waste management, improved road connectivity, and promotion of local culture will be key to sustaining this momentum. Dima Hasao stands at a crucial juncture. With its natural assets and growing infrastructure, it has all the potential to emerge as one of Northeast India's most sought-after destinations. If nurtured thoughtfully, this lone hill district of Assam can truly become a haven for nature lovers—offering not just scenic beauty, but a model of balanced and sustainable tourism. The rise in tourist inflow is not just a trend—it is a testament to the district's untapped potential. As Dima Hasao continues to flourish, it carries with it the hopes of becoming a jewel in Assam's tourism crown, inviting the world to experience its untouched splendor.

More hard yards to cross before peace

The Predicament: President Donald Trump is grappling with an increasingly unpopular war in Iran that threatens his political legacy. While he maintains a desire to end the conflict, the situation has devolved into a potential war of attrition. With the November midterm elections approaching, Democrats have identified the conflict as Trump's "Achilles' heel," while former President Bill Clinton leads a public charge against the administration's strategy. The Diplomatic Stalemate: Negotiations in Islamabad recently came "inches away" from a breakthrough, according to Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. However, the talks collapsed, leading to a U.S. naval blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. Iran's Demands: Lifting of all sanctions, war compensation, and the right to enrich uranium. Trump's Stance: Insists on a "significantly better deal" than the 2015 JCPOA, which he previously withdrew from.

The Conflict: Operation Epic Fury (launched Feb 28,

2026) has decimated Iran's navy and air force, but a ground quagmire looms.

Geopolitical Complications: The war has created a logistical nightmare for the Pentagon. With U.S. bases in the Persian Gulf largely dysfunctional due to Iranian retaliation, the U.S. may

late despite significant military defections and a crippled economy.

Strategic Analysis: The India Factor Trump's recent frequent calls to Prime Minister Narendra Modi underscore the critical need for Indian basing facilities in the Arabian Sea. While Trump



seek to invoke the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) with India to access naval facilities for refueling and repairs. Key Development: The conflict reached a tipping point following the assassination of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in March 2026. Tehran now views the struggle as a matter of national honor, refusing to capitulate.

has publicly criticized allies like UK PM Keir Starmer for hesitating on support, his outreach to India highlights the strategic necessity of the Indian Ocean hinterland for any potential U.S. ground operations. How do you think India's historical policy of "strategic autonomy" will hold up against the logistical requirements of the LEMOA pact in this conflict?

Evening the odds over 64 squares

The world of competitive chess is getting younger. Javokhir Sindarov, the 20-year-old Uzbek prodigy, won the Men's Candidates tournament, making him the challenger of reigning world champion Gukesh Dommaraju, 19. When 24-year-old R Vaishali won the women's tournament, she credited 19-year-old Grandmaster M Pranesh for keeping her in good spirits in Cyprus. Indians—and Indian-origin people overseas—who have become increasingly invested in chess since the triumphs of Viswanathan Anand, had hoped for even more. They had expected the Candidates to be dominated by more Indian names—Vaishali's brother Praggnanandhaa, Anish Giri of the Netherlands and Divya Deshmukh. Wouldn't it be grand if an Indian rose above other Indians to challenge yet another Indian for the world title? The proto-nationalist dream has a reasonable basis. The Candidates offered a chance for older stars like the Americans Hikaru Nakamura and Fabiano Caruana to assert themselves, but soon it was clear that the young Turks would prevail. The signs were out there

even last year, points out Jordan Himelfarb in his book *Interregnum: Inside the Gruelling and Glamorous Battle to Become the Next King of Chess*, which will be released in a few days. The book, which includes vivid accounts of the top Indian players, focuses on the period after Magnus Carlsen of Norway declined to defend his title in 2022. Bored after a decade as world champion, he was seeking distractions like re-branding Bobby Fischer's random chess, in which the valuable pieces in the back row are jumbled up, to freestyle chess. Himelfarb writes that when Carlsen stepped aside, there was only one top player—the French-Iranian Alireza Firouzja born in the 2000s. Only Ding Liren, whom Gukesh defeated in 2024 to become world champion, represented a country outside Europe and North America. But when Carlsen returned to classical chess in Norway last summer, "five of the top 10 players were children of the 2000s. Three were from India and one from China". The age trend had been visible even earlier. Like mathematicians, chess players shine brightest in their teens

and early twenties. Gukesh was the youngest world champion ever at 18. Garry Kasparov was 22 when he bested Anatoly Karpov in 1985.

Indians saw opportunities in chess in the 1980s and 90s, when cricket was the only sport in which India excelled. Organisations like the Alekhine Chess Club in Kolkata, a soft diplomacy initiative of the USSR, mentored promising players like Dibyendu Barua, India's second grandmaster. But as Viswanathan Anand has pointed out, Indian families regarded chess as a hobby, to be left behind by their children in high school as they prepared for careers. From one grandmaster in 1988, India now has over 90. This would not have been possible without changes in parental attitudes. Chess is a cerebral sport, making it more acceptable than, say, hockey. The game opens up the world—apart from Cyprus, this year's venues include locations in Poland, the UK and Spain. It offers quick returns, too. Gukesh has already earned ₹21 crore—enough for a lifetime of leisure in India. Aspirants who don't make the big league can sustain careers coaching

the stars and running chess academies, to which tiger moms and dads are herding their kids. Or, there are roles like those of chess evangelist and YouTuber Sagar Shah and columnist Devangshu Datta, who have perhaps given as much impetus to the sport in India as the grandmasters who lead by example.

Alternative careers like chess will become even more attractive as AI bites deep into the traditional job market. Parents might not mind if their children cut schooling for a dignified calling. In the perception of the middle-class Indian, the game of kings has more dignity than YouTube pakodanomics.

Could India's growing presence in chess become a nationalist thing? Was the excitement over the 2026 Candidates an early warning? Nationalism has made cricket, the gentlemen's game, hostage to some of the worst instincts. It could happen in other sports, too. India has a genuine historical claim to chess, not like the absurd claims about plastic surgery and powered flight in ancient times. Central Asian sources explicitly attribute it to India, where the strategic

game of chaturanga—meaning four arms, reflecting the four wings of an Indian imperial army—probably developed in the Gupta period. Then it travelled the trade routes to Iran, where chaturanga was sound-shifted to shatranj, spread through the rapidly growing Muslim world and reached Europe via the Arab conquest of Spain.

Historian Krisztina Ilko is working on a book, *The Pawns of History: A New Approach Towards the Global Middle Ages*, which sees chess as a form of cross-cultural communication in the Old World. In a related article in the University of Chicago journal *Speculum*, Ilko had focused on art in the Iranian epic *Shahname* depicting a dark-skinned Indian playing chess with an Iranian minister, and argued that despite the Old World associations of colour which are the basis of modern racism, this image and other paintings depicting Africans show that in medieval chess, cultures met as intellectual equals. As Indians begin to reclaim the game with remarkable energy and success, it's an important observation to keep in mind.

HPCL delivers 187 lakh LPG cylinders in 15 days amid demand surge, activates 'Peak Demand Playbook'

Guwahati: Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) has ramped up operations under its "Peak Demand Playbook" to manage rising LPG demand, delivering over 187 lakh cylinders across India between April 1 and 15, 2026. The company said the strategy focuses on scaling bottling plant capacity through additional shifts, optimised manpower, and faster turnaround times, ensuring quicker filling and dispatch without compromising safety. This was supported by strengthened logistics, with 1,14,755 tankers deployed to maintain uninterrupted fuel movement nationwide.

HPCL's response is driven by real-time data, with 99.3% of LPG bookings now digital, enabling dynamic route optimisation and prioritisation of high-demand areas for faster doorstep delivery. The company also reported increased adoption of smaller cylinders, supplying over 4.01 lakh 5 kg and 21,800 2 kg units during the period, catering to migrant and low-consump-

tion households.

To ensure system integrity, HPCL conducted 5,187 inspections between March 14 and April 15, taking action against 121 distributors, including 30 suspensions, and seizing 3,674 cylinders through enforcement drives.

In Guwahati, the surge in LPG demand has been visible amid rising household consumption and urban expansion. HPCL's enhanced distribution and route optimisation have helped maintain supply stability in the region, despite logistical challenges typical of the Northeast. Market observers note that smaller cylinder formats are gaining traction among migrant workers and low-income households, supporting last-mile accessibility and demand balancing.

HPCL said supplies remain adequate nationwide and urged consumers to avoid unnecessary stocking, assuring continued replenishment and smooth delivery during peak demand.

Renault bets big on India with 'FutuREady' plan, targets top 3 market by 2030

Guwahati: Renault Group has unveiled its 'FutuREady India' strategy, marking a major push to position India at the core of its global growth roadmap. Announced by CEO François Provost, the plan aims to make India one of Renault's top three global markets by 2030 while strengthening its engineering, manufacturing, and export capabilities.

As part of its largest product-led expansion in India, Renault will roll out a seven-model portfolio by 2030, spanning compact cars to SUVs with multi-energy powertrains, including strong hybrids and electric vehicles. The lineup includes the recently unveiled Renault Duster and the Bridger Concept, previewing a new compact SUV. Built on RGE and RGMP platforms, these vehicles will integrate advanced onboard technologies and next-generation electronic architecture. Renault will also offer a 7-year warranty under its 'Renault Forever' customer initiative.

Renault is simultaneously positioning India as a global technology and export hub, targeting €2 billion in annual exports by 2030.



Its Chennai facility, now fully owned, and a 6,000-strong engineering workforce will drive global R&D, platform development, and supply chain integration.

In Guwahati and the wider Northeast, rising demand for SUVs and fuel-efficient vehicles is expected to benefit Renault's expanded lineup. With increasing preference for feature-rich, value-driven models and growing interest in hybrid mobility, the FutuREady strategy could help Renault deepen its market penetration in the region.

HPCL maintains uninterrupted fuel, LPG supply amid demand surge; tightens vigilance across network

Guwahati: Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) has reaffirmed supply stability across its fuel and LPG network, backed by high-volume distribution and strict enforcement measures during a period of elevated demand. Between April 1 and 12, the company supplied over 12 lakh KL of fuel, including 4,60,508 KL of petrol and 8,34,126 KL of diesel, reflecting strong mobility demand nationwide. To support this, HPCL mobilised 80,529 tankers, ensuring uninterrupted

ed supply across retail outlets. In the LPG segment, 154.2 lakh cylinders were delivered, alongside targeted distribution of smaller cylinders to support migrant and underserved populations.

HPCL also reported near-complete digital adoption, with 99.5% of LPG bookings made through platforms such as IVRS, SMS, WhatsApp and HP PAY, improving efficiency and transparency.

Strengthening its zero-tolerance stance, the company

conducted 4,897 inspections and 660 raids between March 14 and April 12, leading to action against 110 distributors, suspension of 30 agencies, and seizure of 3,674 cylinders. In Guwahati and surrounding regions, HPCL's steady supply has helped stabilise fuel availability despite intermittent demand spikes. Market observers noted that precautionary buying briefly increased pressure at select outlets, but supply chains remained intact, preventing any prolonged shortages.

Bajaj Auto unveils 'WEGO' EV 3-wheeler range with up to 296 km mileage

Guwahati: Bajaj Auto Ltd. has launched its new electric three-wheeler portfolio under the brand Bajaj WEGO, marking what it calls India's widest range of EV 3-wheelers across passenger and cargo segments. The new lineup offers a class-leading range of up to 296 km and starts at Rs. 3,11,908 (ex-showroom Delhi).

The WEGO portfolio includes passenger variants—P50, P70 and P90 series—and cargo models under the C90 range. The vehicles are powered by an electric drivetrain with 2-speed auto transmission, regenerative braking and an advanced battery management system aimed at reducing range anxiety and improving long-term ownership value.

Features include Bluetooth connectivity, digital LCD display, hill hold, climb mode and enhanced gradability. The vehicles also offer improved passenger space, ergonomic



design, a 5-year warranty and access to over 1,500 service touchpoints.

In the passenger segment, the P50 series delivers up to 272 km range, while the P70 series targets urban and semi-urban shared mobility. The top-end P90 offers a range of 296 km. Cargo variants C9009 and C9012 offer up to 207 km for last-mile delivery needs.

Samardeep Subandh, President – Intra-City Business, said the range is "purpose-built to meet diverse

customer needs" across segments.

The launch is expected to strengthen Bajaj Auto's footprint in the Northeast, particularly in Guwahati, where demand for electric three-wheelers is rising amid fuel cost concerns and policy push for cleaner mobility. With growing last-mile delivery demand and shared transport usage, the WEGO range could see strong adoption among fleet operators and small businesses in the region.

India advances nuclear power push as Godrej supplies key components for fast breeder reactor

Guwahati: India has moved a step ahead in its civil nuclear programme as the Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Kalpakkam achieved criticality, marking progress in the country's three-stage nuclear energy roadmap. The milestone is seen as important for long-term energy security and better fuel use.

The Precision Engineering business of Godrej Enterprises Group played a key role by supplying critical components such as the Large Rotating Plug, Small Rotating Plug, and Sodium Pump Shaft to Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Limited, a government-owned company. With this, India has become only the second country to develop commercial fast breeder reactor capability.

The components involve complex engineering. The rotating plugs measure up to 8 metres in diameter and weigh nearly 120 tonnes, while the sodium pump shaft operates in extreme conditions at high speed. All parts were designed and manufactured within India without prior domestic reference, marking a first-time achievement.

Officials said the project overcame major technical challenges, including specialised bearings and systems built to handle strict safety and seismic conditions. The PFBR, developed over 22 years, will help create more fuel than it consumes and support thorium use, where India has large reserves.

Organic India promotes traditional sweets for regional New Year celebrations

Guwahati: As regional New Year festivals are being celebrated across India, Organic India has introduced a range of traditional sweet recipes made with natural ingredients, encouraging healthier festive choices rooted in Indian traditions.

The initiative, backed by Tata Consumer Products, highlights the use of jaggery and khandsari sugar as alternatives to refined sugar, aiming to combine nutrition with cultural authenticity during celebrations.

Among the featured recipes is Vermicelli Payasam prepared with Organic India jaggery, where roasted vermicelli is cooked in milk and blended with jaggery, cardamom, and



ghee-fried cashews and raisins. The company also suggests Sakkarai Pongal made using khandsari sugar, rice, and chana dal, enriched with saffron, cardamom, and dry fruits for a traditional festive flavour. Another offering includes Sooji Halwa Pockets, where semolina-based halwa sweetened with jaggery is filled into samosa wrappers and deep-fried to create a crispy festive snack.

The company said these recipes reflect mindful living and promote the use of natural sweeteners while preserving the essence of Indian culinary traditions during New Year festivities celebrated in different regions.

Renault begins nationwide deliveries of new Duster, CEO hands over first key in Chennai

Guwahati: Renault India has commenced nationwide deliveries of the new Renault Duster, marking a key milestone for the automaker in India. The first delivery was made in Chennai, where François Provost and Stéphane Deblaise handed over the keys to Dr. Arthanari-Manickavasagam.

The event also coincided with the inauguration of Renault's second 'new'R' experiential retail store on Mount Road in Chennai. Spread across 4,500 sq. ft., the 1S facility includes a 3,000 sq. ft. display and interaction area, showcasing up to five vehicles along with a dedicated delivery bay. Chennai, which hosts the first such outlet, also became the first city to deliver the new Duster.



Renault India said the new'R' format is part of its aggressive retail expansion strategy, with plans to scale up to 70 such outlets this year. Currently, the company operates 11 new'R' stores alongside a network of over 350 sales touchpoints nationwide.

A pioneer in the mid-size

SUV segment, the Duster continues to attract strong customer interest. The company is also offering its Renault Forever program, providing coverage of up to seven years or 150,000 km. The rollout comes amid strong momentum, with Renault India reporting a 77% sales growth in

March 2026, driven by models like Kiger and Tribler.

In Guwahati, rising demand for compact and mid-size SUVs in Guwahati is expected to benefit the new Duster. Industry observers say improved road connectivity and consumer preference for rugged vehicles in Northeast India could drive steady bookings, positioning Renault to expand its footprint further in the region.

In Guwahati, such developments could boost demand for high-end engineering services and skilled manpower in the Northeast over time. Local suppliers and fabrication units may benefit indirectly as India expands its nuclear and energy infrastructure, opening new opportunities for regional industrial growth.

Tata Tea Gold celebrates Poila Boishakh with warmth and togetherness message

Guwahati: As Poila Boishakh marks the beginning of the Bengali New Year, homes across Bengal are filled with hope, warmth, and renewed optimism. The festival, also known as Bengali New Year, is a time for families to reconnect, reflect, and embrace fresh beginnings.

Highlighting the cultural significance of everyday rituals, Tata Tea Gold extended festive greetings, positioning tea as a unifying element in Bengali households. Known for its rich taste and aroma, the brand continues to resonate with Bengal's discerning tea preferences and remains a popular choice during celebrations.

Over the years, Tata Tea Gold has remained closely associated with Bengal's cultural identity, celebrating occasions ranging from Durga Puja to daily traditions that define the region's lifestyle.

In its Poila Boishakh message, the company wished consumers a year filled with warmth, togetherness, and "golden moments", encouraging people to begin each day of the new year on a positive note. In Guwahati, festive-driven demand for premium tea blends like Tata Tea Gold is expected to see a seasonal uptick. Retailers in the city note that cultural cross-overs and gifting trends during regional festivals are boosting sales, reflecting growing consumer preference for branded, high-quality tea products in the Northeast market.

HPCL delivers 178 lakh LPG cylinders amid surge, ensures last-mile supply

Guwahati: As LPG demand rises sharply across markets, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) has stepped up last-mile delivery operations to ensure uninterrupted supply to households nationwide. Between April 1 and 14, the company delivered over 178 lakh LPG cylinders, highlighting the scale of demand and the strength of its distribution network.

The surge has been managed through coordinated efforts by distributors, delivery personnel and logistics teams. Thousands of delivery workers have been operating extended hours, navigating urban and rural areas to maintain timely deliveries. Increased booking volumes have pushed a sharper focus on efficient routing, faster turnaround and continuous dispatch cycles.

HPCL also supplied over 3.73 lakh 5-kg Free Trade LPG cylinders and more than 21,400 2-kg cylinders, catering to migrant workers and economically diverse consum-

ers. Digital adoption has further streamlined operations, with 99.3% of bookings now made online and deliveries authenticated through DAC/OTP systems.

To ensure supply integrity, HPCL conducted 5,072 inspections between March 14 and April 14, taking action against 115 distributors and seizing 3,674 cylinders. The company said LPG stocks remain stable, with temporary delays linked to short-term demand spikes. In Guwahati and other parts of the Northeast, rising LPG consumption has mirrored national trends, driven by urban expansion and increased reliance on clean cooking fuel. HPCL's distribution network in the region has remained largely stable, though occasional delays have been reported due to demand spikes. Officials indicate that improved digital bookings and coordinated replenishment are helping streamline deliveries, ensuring consistent supply across both urban centres and nearby rural areas.

Xiaomi launches REDMI A7 Pro 5G with 6.9-inch display, 6300mAh battery at Rs 11,499

Guwahati: Xiaomi India on Tuesday launched the REDMI A7 Pro 5G, marking the first Pro model in its A Series, aimed at offering feature-rich performance at an affordable price point. The smartphone features a segment-leading 6.9-inch display with a 120Hz refresh rate and peak brightness of 800 nits, designed for smoother viewing across daily use.

The device packs a segment-largest 6300mAh battery, supporting 15W charging and 7.5W reverse charging, while maintaining

durability over extended usage cycles. It is powered by an octa-core 5G processor with up to 8GB virtual RAM for improved multitasking.

Running on Xiaomi HyperOS 3.0, the smartphone introduces features such as Google Gemini, Circle to Search, and enhanced interconnectivity across Xiaomi devices. On the camera front, it houses a 32MP AI dual rear camera and an 8MP front camera, along with AI Sky and Document Mode.

With a slim 8.15mm design, IP52 rating, and expandable storage up to 2TB,

the device balances style and functionality. It will be available from April 15 across Amazon India, Mi.com, and retail stores, starting at an introductory price of ₹11,499.

In Guwahati, retailers expect strong demand in the budget 5G segment, where consumers are increasingly seeking large displays and long battery life. Local sellers indicate that competitive pricing and feature-heavy offerings like the REDMI A7 Pro 5G could further intensify competition among entry-level 5G smartphones in the region.

Ai+ Nova 2 now available on Flipkart, starting at Rs 8,999



Guwahati: Ai+ Smartphone has announced that its latest device, Nova 2, under the newly launched Nova Series, will be available starting April 14 at 12 noon. The smartphone will be available exclusively on Flipkart and select retail outlets.

The Ai+ Nova 2 is priced at ₹8,999 for the 4GB+64GB variant and ₹10,999 for the 6GB+128GB model, targeting users looking for an affordable yet feature-rich upgrade.

Announcing the launch, Madhav Sheth, CEO of Ai+ Smartphone and Founder of NxtQuantum Shift Technologies, said, "The Nova Series is our strongest expression yet of what Ai+ stands for—technology that is accessible, reliable, and built for real ev-

eryday use. With Nova 2, we wanted to ensure users upgrading for the first time find everything they need without compromise."

The Nova 2 comes with a 6000mAh battery aimed at supporting a full day of usage, including streaming, browsing, gaming, and multitasking. It runs on Android 16 with NxtQuantum OS for a smooth user experience.

The device features a 6.745-inch HD+ display with a 120Hz adaptive refresh rate and HBM support. It also offers a 50MP rear camera and an 8MP front camera. Additional features include IP64 resistance, a side-mounted fingerprint sensor, and five colour options — Purple, Green, Pink, Blue, and Black.

Nissan expands India footprint with 54 new touchpoints in Q1 2026

Guwahati: Nissan Motor India Pvt. Ltd. (NMIPL) has announced the launch of 54 new customer touchpoints across the country in the first quarter of calendar year 2026, marking one of its largest network expansion drives in India. The move significantly strengthens Nissan's sales and service footprint and aligns with its broader product-led growth strategy.

The newly added facilities include a mix of 3S (Sales, Service and Spare Parts), 2S and 1S outlets, strategically spread across key cities such as New Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Patna, Jaipur, Pune and others. The expansion is aimed at enhancing accessibility, improving customer reach and delivering a more seamless brand experience.

Managing Director Saurabh Vatsa said the expansion reflects Nissan's commitment to growth as it strengthens its portfolio with models like the All-New Nissan GRAVITE



and upcoming launches including the Nissan TEKTON and a C-segment 7-seater SUV. He added that the company is targeting 400 touchpoints by FY27.

The expansion comes amid strong market momentum, with Nissan reporting cumulative sales of 10,388 units in March 2026, including its highest domestic wholesale in five years at 4,408 units, marking a 98 per cent growth.

In Guwahati, the expansion is expected to enhance Nissan's presence in the Northeast, where demand for compact and mid-size SUVs like the Nissan MAGNITE is steadily rising. Improved service reach and customer engagement are likely to strengthen brand penetration in Assam and neighbouring states.

Pulsar 180 returns with modern upgrades, marks 25 years of iconic Bajaj brand



Guwahati: Bajaj Auto Ltd has announced the return of its iconic motorcycle, the Pulsar 180, featuring new graphics, an LED headlamp, LED blinkers, and a Bluetooth-enabled digital console. The bike has been priced at Rs 1,22,490 (ex-showroom Delhi) and reintroduced in response to strong rider demand.

The relaunch coincides with 25 years of the Pulsar brand, which debuted with the Pulsar 150 and Pulsar 180, reshaping India's performance biking segment. The company said the Pulsar 180 had originally set benchmarks by combining higher engine performance with everyday usability, helping usher in the era of sports

motorcycling in the country.

The updated model retains its aggressive styling while adding modern features and improved refinement. Positioned as an upgrade for 150–160cc riders, it aims to deliver enhanced performance, design, and value. Sarang Kanade, President, MCBU, Bajaj Auto Ltd., said the reintroduction reflects strong consumer demand and the brand's enduring appeal. "Reimagined for a new generation, it continues to embody our 'Definitely Daring' philosophy," he said.

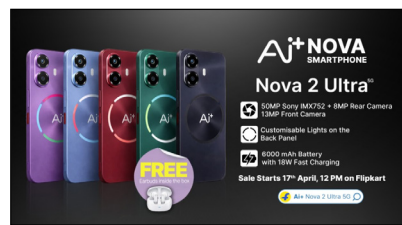
The return of the Pulsar 180 is expected to resonate strongly in Guwahati, where demand for performance-oriented commuter motorcycles remains high. With a growing base of young riders upgrading from 150cc segments, dealers anticipate healthy traction for the model, particularly due to its pricing, brand recall, and added connectivity features.

Bajaj Auto, which has sold over 21 million motorcycles across 100 countries, continues to strengthen its portfolio with products focused on performance, design, and technology.

Nova 2 Ultra sale kicks off April 17 as Ai+ bets big on mid-range premium push

Guwahati: Ai+ Smartphone has announced that the Day 1 sale of its latest device, Nova 2 Ultra, will begin on April 17 at 12 noon, marking the rollout of the flagship model in its newly launched Nova Series. The smartphone will be available exclusively on Flipkart and select retail outlets, with a second sale scheduled for April 24.

The launch builds on the strong market response to the Nova 2, which sold out within 15 minutes on its first day, highlighting rising consumer interest in the series. The Nova 2 Ultra is priced at ₹14,999 for the 6GB+128GB variant and ₹16,999 for the 8GB+128GB model, with an additional ₹2,000 exchange offer on any phone.



Speaking on the launch, Madhav Sheth said the device aims to deliver a "complete smartphone experience" with a Sony camera system, advanced display, and responsive design.

Powered by the MediaTek Dimensity 7400 chipset, the device features a 6.78-inch 1.5K AMOLED display with 120Hz refresh rate and a 6000mAh battery with 40W fast charging. It runs on Android 16

with NxtQuantum OS, offering enhanced privacy features. The phone also sports a 50MP Sony IMX752 camera, IP68 rating, and customizable design elements.

In Guwahati, there is a strong demand for the Nova 2 Ultra, driven by the earlier success of the Nova 2 and growing appetite for feature-rich smartphones in the mid-range segment. With competitive pricing and bundled offers like free earbuds, the device is likely to attract young buyers and upgraders in the Northeast market.

Ai+ Smartphone, backed by NxtQuantum Shift Technologies, continues to position itself as a key player in India's evolving smartphone and AIoT ecosystem.

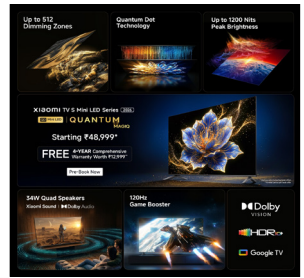
Xiaomi launches first Mini LED TV Series in India with advanced display tech

Guwahati: Xiaomi India has announced the launch of its first Mini LED television lineup in the country, the Xiaomi TV S Mini LED Series, marking its entry into advanced display technology in India.

The new series is built on QD Mini-LED technology, combining Quantum Dot colour with precise Mini LED backlighting to deliver improved contrast, brightness, and colour accuracy. The televisions offer peak brightness of up to 1200 nits, along with Dolby Vision, HDR10+, and Filmmaker Mode to ensure cinematic viewing aligned with creators' intent.

The lineup supports 4K Ultra HD resolution and features DLG 120Hz, MEMC, and Auto Low Latency Mode, targeting smooth performance for gaming and sports content. It is equipped with a 34W quad-speaker system supported by Dolby Audio and DTS technologies for an immersive sound experience.

Commenting on the launch, Anuj Sharma, Chief Marketing Officer, Xiaomi India, said the focus is on improving display



performance with better brightness control and consistent picture quality, especially for larger screens.

Available in 55-inch, 65-inch, and 75-inch variants, the series will go on sale from April 22 across online and retail platforms, with prices starting at ₹51,999. Pre-bookings are open with bank offers and extended warranty benefits.

In Guwahati, the launch is expected to tap into rising demand for larger smart TVs driven by increased OTT consumption and live sports viewership. Retailers in the region are witnessing a shift toward premium display technologies, and Xiaomi's competitive pricing and financing options could further accelerate adoption in the Northeast market.

OutStation bets big on Guwahati with 'Aaj Kal' launch as 10,000+ fans register



Guwahati: India's teen pop boy band OutStation is set to launch its second single 'Aaj Kal' in Guwahati on April 4, 2026, signalling a strategic push into high-growth youth markets. The free-entry event at Silpagram, part of the band's "OutStationTo Your Station" pop-up IP, has already crossed 10,000 RSVPs, highlighting strong pre-release traction and fan engagement.

Organisers expect a turnout comparable to the band's December performance in the city. A key highlight will be a synchronised crowd sing-

along of 'Aaj Kal', positioned as a first-of-its-kind live launch aimed at creating a large-scale shared fan experience. "We knew our second song had to be launched here... we want this to be larger than life," the band said. The 30-minute set will include their debut single 'Tum Se', unreleased tracks, and interactive segments. Formed through Visva Records' nationwide talent search, the five-member band is mentored by Grammy-nominated songwriter Savan Kotecha, known for global pop collaborations, and has previously supported Akon and Anuv Jain on India tours.

In Guwahati, the scale of early registrations underscores the city's emergence as a strong consumption hub for live youth entertainment. Rising Gen Z engagement, coupled with proven audience turnout, is positioning Guwahati as a key market for music IPs, brand activations, and touring artists targeting India's expanding pop segment.

LPG shortage pushes kitchen shift, Godrej Jersey promotes smart cooking alternatives



Guwahati: Amid ongoing LPG cylinder shortages across several parts of India, marked by supply delays, refill

constraints and longer waiting periods, daily cooking routines have been disrupted for many households. In response, Godrej Jersey, a subsidiary of Godrej Agrovet Limited, has put forward a practical approach to help consumers adapt during the crisis.

Through a recent content initiative, the brand is encouraging households to adopt alternative cooking methods using appliances such as microwaves, air fryers and electric kettles. It highlights that meals like pulao, paneer dishes, sandwiches and chaat-style snacks can still be prepared without LPG, promoting flexibility and creativity in Indian kitchens. The campaign also emphasises family participation in

cooking, reducing reliance on food delivery while fostering stronger connections at home.

Addressing the situation, Shantanu Raj, Head of Marketing at Godrej Jersey, said the initiative aims to inspire confidence and innovation among consumers, adding that Indian kitchens have always been resilient and adaptable in times of uncertainty.

In Guwahati, the LPG shortage has begun influencing consumer behaviour, with a noticeable rise in demand for electrical kitchen appliances and ready-to-cook options. Retailers report increased inquiries for alternatives that reduce dependency on cylinders, indicating a gradual shift in urban cooking patterns.

5 Initial Indicators of Arthritis That Individuals Frequently Overlook



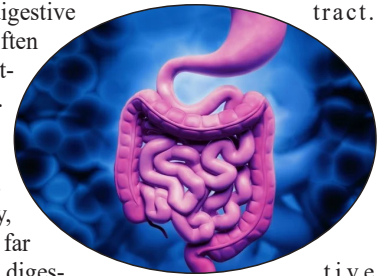
Arthritis is often viewed as a condition affecting the elderly or as an unavoidable aspect of aging. However, it is actually a degenerative disorder that progresses quietly and gradually. There is seldom a singular event that initiates it. Rather, the body starts to provide subtle signals indicating that there is an issue with the joints. Many of these initial symptoms are overlooked or regarded as trivial discomforts, yet being attentive to them can facilitate prompt diagnosis and improved management. Dr. Dhananjay Gupta, Senior Orthopaedic & Joint Replacement Surgeon, outlines five early signs that should not be disregarded. One of the earliest signs of arthritis is stiffness in the joints after periods of

rest, such as waking up in the morning or sitting for a long time. Initially, this stiffness lasts only a few minutes but can make a person feel sluggish or “slow off the blocks.” Simple movements like taking a few steps or stretching usually bring relief. However, when this pattern repeats frequently, it should not be dismissed. 2. Pain on Climbing Stairs Climbing stairs puts extra load on the knees, and pain during this activity is often a red flag for early knee arthritis. The cartilage that cushions the joint starts wearing out, making it harder for the knees to bear the additional pressure. Many people attribute this to fatigue or overexertion, but persistent stair-related pain deserves attention. 3. Discomfort After Prolonged Activity

Standing or walking for long durations can stress arthritic joints beyond their tolerance. This makes individuals look for a seat or rest break after covering a certain distance or standing for some time. Unlike simple tiredness, this discomfort is localized to the affected joints and recurs predictably, an indication of underlying joint degeneration. 4. Recurrent Mild Swelling and Stiffness Arthritis often causes the joint membranes to swell intermittently. These repeated episodes make joints stiff and gradually reduce flexibility. The loss of full range of motion becomes noticeable in everyday activities. For example, during yoga, one may suddenly find it difficult to sit comfortably in certain asanas that previously felt effortless. Such limitations are an early warning that the joints are not functioning as they should. 5. Crepitus or Crackling Sounds Another overlooked sign is crepitus, the crackling or grating sounds from joints during movement. This occurs due to loss of lubrication fluid and reduced tissue elasticity. While crepitus may be painless at first, it can progress to painful grinding sensations if ignored. Takeaway Recognizing these subtle signs early can make a big difference in managing arthritis. Consulting a doctor at the first hint of trouble allows for timely lifestyle changes, targeted exercises, and treatment that can slow progression and preserve mobility.

Apple is digested in one hour, while a samosa takes six

It is a widely shared experience that consuming an apple often results in a feeling of lightness and refreshment, whereas a serving of samosas may lead to a sensation of sluggishness and heaviness. According to health experts, the distinction lies in the body's processing of these two types of food. An apple typically requires only about an hour for digestion, while a samosa may take six hours or longer to fully digest. Apples are among the easiest fruits for the stomach to process. Rich in water and dietary fibre, the fruit promotes smooth digestion and aids bowel movement. Nutritionists note that an apple typically takes about 30 minutes to 1 hour to digest. Its natural sugars are easily broken down into energy, and its fibre content helps cleanse the digestive tract. That is why people often feel hungry again shortly after eating an apple. In sharp contrast, a samosa, deep-fried and stuffed with potatoes and spices, is a heavy, oily food that demands far more effort from the digestive system. Laden with fats and carbohydrates, a single samosa can take 4-6 hours, or even longer, to break down completely. The stomach enzymes must work harder to dissolve the layers of fat, which linger longer in the gut, slowing down the overall digestive process. This is why many experience gas, acidity, or a feeling of fullness after consuming fried snacks. Experts explain that age, metabolism, and lifestyle further influence digestion speed. Younger individuals with active metabolism tend to digest food faster, while those with poor gut health or weakened immunity may experience slower digestion even with lighter meals. For maintaining a healthy digestive system, doctors advise consuming a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and fibre while limiting the intake of fried and oily foods.



7 Digestive Symptoms You Should Always Take Seriously, Even If They Appear Trivial

Many individuals tend to dismiss symptoms such as acidity, bloating, or sporadic stomach discomfort as mere trivialities associated with a busy lifestyle. However, the digestive system serves as one of the body's most dependable indicators. It frequently alerts us to potential issues well in advance of a serious illness. Overlooking these subtle cues may result in overlooking early indications of ailments such as inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), liver dysfunction, or even pancreatic disorders. Why Minor Discomforts Deserve Major Attention “Digestive complaints are among the most common reasons for medical consultations in India. People tend to self-medicate for bloating or acidity, but some of these ‘routine’ symptoms may actually be indicators of deeper issues,” says Dr. Varun Teja, Consultant Medical Gastroenterologist at Apollo Hospitals, Visakhapatnam. According to the Indian Council of Medical Research, digestive diseases account for nearly 12 per cent of hospital admissions. Dr. Teja stresses that timely evaluation makes all the difference – “Recognising symptoms early allows us to intervene at a reversible stage before they progress into chronic illness.”

1. Persistent Bloating and Fullness



Feeling bloated after a festive meal is normal, but persistent bloating that occurs irrespective of food intake could signal something more. “Chronic bloating may reflect slow gut motility or conditions such as IBD or early pancreatic insufficiency,” explains Dr. Teja. In women, recurring bloating has also been linked to ovarian issues, which often overlap with digestive discomfort.

2. Frequent or Unexplained Heartburn

If you're popping antacids regularly, it's time to rethink. “Frequent reflux can damage

the oesophagus and may be a sign of GERD,” says Dr. Teja. Left untreated, it could progress to Barrett's oesophagus – a condition that needs long-term monitoring.

3. Ongoing Constipation

Chronic constipation shouldn't be dismissed as a lifestyle problem. “If constipation alternates with diarrhoea, or if it's accompanied by blood or pain, it may indicate thyroid dysfunction, motility disorders, or even colorectal issues,” warns Dr. Teja.

4. Diarrhoea That Lingers

While short bouts of diarrhoea are common, Dr. Teja cautions that diarrhoea lasting beyond two weeks, or recurring frequently, may point to chronic inflammatory diseases like ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease. Over-the-counter remedies only mask symptoms without addressing the cause.

5. Yellowing of Eyes or Skin

Even mild yellowing isn't something to ignore. “Jaundice reflects elevated bilirubin levels and indicates liver or biliary tract dysfunction,” explains Dr. Teja. Early evaluation can prevent reversible liver conditions from becoming chronic.

6. Unexplained Abdominal Pain

Not all abdominal pain is gastritis. Pain radiating to the back can signal pancreatic problems, while pain in the right upper abdomen often points to gallbladder or liver issues. Persistent pain, especially with weight loss, should always prompt medical review.

7. Blood in Stool or Black Stools

“Visible blood in stool, or stools that appear black and tarry, must never be ignored,” warns Dr. Teja. While haemorrhoids are a common cause, ulcers or malignancies can present similarly. Early endoscopy or colonoscopy can detect treatable causes before complications arise.

Three Dead In Ukhrul Ambush; CM Condemns



Imphal, Apr 17: Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh has strongly condemned the killing of three persons, including a retired Army personnel, in a suspected militant ambush at TM Khasom in Ukhrul district on Saturday. Media consulting services Describing the incident as “deeply disturbing” and a “heinous act,” the Chief Minister denounced the attack as a crime against humanity and asserted that such violence has no place in society.

He expressed heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and said the government stands in solidarity with them during this time of grief. Reaffirming the state’s commitment to peace and security, the Chief Minister assured that all necessary measures will be taken to ensure justice and prevent such incidents in the future.

Assam: Indian Army Leads ‘Jal Rahat’ Flood Relief Drill At IIT Guwahati

Guwahati, Apr 17: The Red Horns Division of Gajraj Corps, representing the Indian Army, organized a comprehensive joint flood relief exercise named ‘Jal Rahat’ at IIT Guwahati on Saturday. This initiative brought together the Army, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) to highlight seamless interagency coordination and operational readiness amid natural disasters. The drill demonstrated key aspects of flood relief operations, including the distinct roles of each agency, advanced technologies, and creative rescue techniques. Participants simulated real-world scenarios, such as deploying drones for surveillance and delivering supplies to isolated villagers, along with evacuating individuals from floodwaters. Specialist teams from

the Army, NDRF, and SDRF further exhibited expertise in deep-water rescues.

Designed to sharpen responses to severe flooding, the exercise featured an Indian Army-led specialist unit, bolstered by partner agencies, enacting high-stakes missions. Attendees included Gajraj Corps General Officer Commanding (GOC) Lt Gen Neeraj Shukla, senior representatives from the Army, state administration, SSB, Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), and disaster relief groups. NCC and NSS cadets, as well as students from Guwahati’s schools and colleges, observed the proceedings. Addressing the gathering, Lt Gen Shukla called on all personnel from the Army, SSB, NDRF, SDRF, and NCC to embrace a “whole-of-society approach for nation building,” guided by the four ‘Ps’: Predict, Prepare, Protect, and Provide.

Tipra Motha Sweeps Tripura Tribal Polls; BJP Trails

Agartala, Apr 17: The Tipra Motha Party is in a commanding position in the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council elections, with a lead in 22 out of 28 seats after the third round. The BJP is leading in six seats, while the CPI(M), Congress, and Indigenous People’s Front of Tripura (IPFT) are trailing in all seats. Although the Tipra Motha Party (TMP) is an important partner in the BJP-led coalition government in the state, both parties contested the elections to the tribal council separately. “The counting began at 8 am on a peaceful note at all 17 centres amid tight security. The TMP is leading in 22

seats out of the total 28, while the BJP is leading in six seats after the third round of counting,” said Bipul Barman, the officer on special duty in the state election commission. In the 2021 elections, the TMP won 18 seats while the BJP bagged nine. Around 83 per cent polling was recorded for the TTAAD elections on April 12, which witnessed a few stray incidents of violence. The TTAADC comprises two-thirds of the state’s geographical area and is home to a population of 13 lakh.

In the outgoing TTAADC, the TMP has 17 Members of the District Council, while the BJP has nine, and two seats were vacant. More than



83.52 per cent of the 9,62,697 eligible voters exercised their franchise on April 12 in the TTAADC elections, which will determine the fate of 173 candidates. A State Election Commission (SEC) of-

ficial said that prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, have been imposed in and around counting centres to ensure the maintenance of law and order.

Meghalaya Cabinet declares Khasi, Garo as state languages, repeals 2005 Act

Shillong, Apr 17: The Meghalaya Cabinet on Thursday approved an ordinance declaring Khasi and Garo languages as the official languages of the State. Announcing the decision, Chief Minister Conrad Sangma said that the Cabinet passed the Meghalaya Official Languages Ordinance 2026 by repealing the State Language Act, 2005. “This is a historic decision that will open opportunities for our youth and also promote the two languages,” Sangma said, adding that the two languages would now be official languages, apart from English.

He said the two languages would now be officially used in all government communication and also in the State legislature. The Chief Minister said that the Government would also come up with necessary amendments to the present Acts to facilitate the change. On top of the list is the amendment to the Meghalaya State Legislature (Continuance of the English Language) Act, 1980. He said once this Act is amended, it would enable legislators to speak and debate in Khasi and Garo during Assembly sessions.



Currently, the MLAs can speak and debate only in English under the Act and this has sometimes led to heated arguments. On some occasions, legislators resorted to speaking in Khasi and Garo as a mark of protest. Sangma further said with the approval of the ordinance, important examinations will be held in the Khasi and Garo languages apart from English. “All this will not happen immediately and will take some time as these are matters of logistics and manpower rules are to be considered,” Sangma said. One of the driving forces

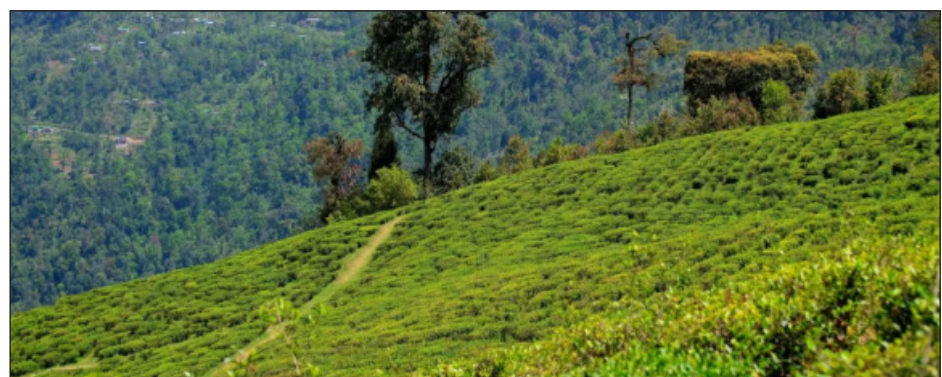
behind declaration of Khasi and Garos as the official languages is also to put pressure on the Central Government to recognise these two languages under the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. In July 2018, the State Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution, seeking the inclusion of these two languages under the Eighth Schedule. Sangma said that recognition of Khasi and Garo as the State’s official languages would send a “strong message” to the Parliament. He expected that the languages would now be included in the Eighth Schedule.

Sikkim’s Temi Tea Estate Hits Record ₹27,000/kg For Organic First Flush

Sikkim, Apr 17: Sikkim’s state-owned Temi Tea Estate has set a new benchmark by selling its first flush organic tea at a record Rs 27,000 per kilogram this season, according to an official statement released on Saturday. Renowned for its delicate flavor and exceptional quality, this premium first flush continues to draw robust interest from buyers in domestic and international markets. Initial auction lots sparked overwhelming bids, and follow-up batches have sustained that enthusiasm. As harvesting of fresh leaves progresses, the estate focuses on crafting high-end orthodox black tea and

oolong varieties. Estate officials credit the milestone prices to precise plucking limited to a bud and two leaves and refined processing methods. By switching from traditional coal firing to LPG-based systems, Temi has achieved cleaner, more efficient operations that elevate tea quality.

These advancements position Temi Tea strongly for global premium pricing and reinforce its status as a leading organic brand. Management aims to produce 1 lakh kg of made tea this season, prioritizing quality and strategic marketing to drive revenue growth.



God, destiny, Griezmann: Atletico target rare Copa del Rey success

Simeone eyes perfect Atletico send-off for MLS-bound Antoine Griezmann

Seville, Apr 17: No sooner had Atletico Madrid eliminated Barcelona from the Champions League than their fans turned their attention to Saturday's Copa del Rey final against Real Sociedad. "We'll give everything to win the cup -- spirit of '96," read a banner

"(The joy) was short-lived because Cholo (Simeone) cut us off a bit," explained the Frenchman, who is desperate to leave the club with a farewell trophy -- or ideally two. Griezmann, 35, Atletico's all-time top goalscorer, is leaving for MLS side Orlando

a football genius." Griezmann flirted with an early exit from Atletico in March but with the Copa del Rey and Champions League trophies still on the line, he could not bring himself to depart. "(Playing in the Copa final) is my dream, my objective, and I hope we can do something big," said Griezmann a few weeks ago when announcing that he would stay until the end of the season.

The forward has been one of Simeone's most reliable soldiers during his long reign in the Spanish capital. "I've been here 14 years at the club and I never stop getting emotional," said Simeone after reaching the Champions League semis. "I told the players when the game ended -- thank you, thank you. I'm completely grateful as a coach for the way they play, for their drive, for their heart, for the belief we have, for what we do. "And now rest, rest, because on Saturday we have a very important match."



they unfurled, harking back to Atletico's historic La Liga and Copa double 30 years ago under Radomir Antic. Atletico coach Diego Simeone had a similar idea to the fans. There was no time to celebrate downing the Catalans, even if Antoine Griezmann said he was craving "a cold beer".

City at the end of the season, and Simeone said he would love for the forward to depart with his ambitions fulfilled. "I hope that God and destiny give him what he's looking for in the time he has left in the game," said the Argentine coach. "We'll only realise over time that we had and still have

Farukh strike ends home drought as Chennaiyin sink Sporting Delhi



Chennai, Apr 17: Chennaiyin FC secured their first home victory of the 2025-26 ISL season, defeating Sporting Club Delhi 1-0 on Friday. Farukh Choudhary scored the decisive goal in the 11th minute, capitalizing on a clinical pass from Alberto Noguera

Despite the absence of injured defender Elsinho, the "Marina Machans" backline held firm against a dangerous Delhi attack. While the visitors threatened late through Sourav K, Chennaiyin's superior efficiency in the final third—making 82 successful attacking-zone passes—proved the difference. The victory lifts Clifford Miranda's side to 10th in the standings with 8 points. They now prepare to host Mohammedan SC next week, aiming to build on this crucial momentum.



Kaur: SA series vital for youth to shine

Bengaluru, Apr 17: With only eight matches remaining before the T20 World Cup in June, the Indian women's team begins a crucial five-match T20I series against South Africa this Friday. For captain Harmanpreet Kaur, the series is less about experimenting with a settled batting order and more about finalizing the bowling depth and all-round combinations. The Youth Movement The selectors have signaled a youth-centric approach by including Bharti Fulmali, Kashvee Gautam, and uncapped Anushka Sharma. This follows a period of high turnover among youngsters, including recent debutants Vaishnavi Sharma and G Kamalini. While Vaishnavi missed out due to team combinations, Kamalini was replaced by Uma Chetry.

Managing Injury Woes India faces a significant setback with the resurfacing of Amanjot Kaur's back injury. The all-rounder, a "vital cog" for team balance, is currently recovering at the BCCI Centre of Excellence. To counter South African conditions, Harmanpreet emphasized the need for a seam-heavy attack: "When you come to South Africa, you have to go with at least four medium-pace options... That's why we have brought Kashvee in the team." — Harmanpreet Kaur The All-Rounder Audition With Amanjot sidelined, the spotlight shifts to Kashvee Gautam and Arundhati Reddy. Gautam, known for her three-dimensional skills, must manage her workload carefully following past injuries. For Reddy, this series offers a definitive chance to cement her status as the squad's leading seam-bowling all-rounder before the global showcase in June.

Blitz, table tennis and padel: What Vaishali did off the board



Bengaluru, Apr 17: In the idyllic resort town of Paphos, Cyprus, Grandmaster Vaishali Rameshbabu found an unconventional path to victory at the 2026 Women's Candidates Tournament. Facing immense pressure after a rocky start—comprised of four draws and a defeat—the 24-year-old turned to table tennis, padel, and blitz games to preserve her mental clarity.

Vaishali, who humorously described herself as a "terrible" table tennis player, utilized these sports as a form of eustress to escape the suffocating world of chess theory. A key architect of this mental reset was 19-year-old GM M. Pranesh. While officially her "second," Pranesh functioned as a confidante and "vibe manager." Coach RB Ramesh specifically chose Pranesh for his ability to lighten the mood. Even when Vaishali attempted to cram opening lines an hour before her matches, Pranesh would intervene, offering sibling-like reassurance: "Akka (elder sister), it's okay, you have got this." Their rest days were dedicated to padel and casual blitz, allowing Vaishali to disconnect from the board. This balance of physical activity and emotional support proved winning; she finished with 8.5/14, becoming the first Indian woman to secure a World Championship challenge.

SRH's young pace duo Hinge and Husain add fresh edge ahead of clash with CSK

SRH pacers test struggling Gaikwad as CSK seek redemption

Hyderabad, Apr 17: Sunrisers Hyderabad will head into their IPL clash against Chennai Super Kings on Saturday with renewed confidence after the emergence of young pace duo Praful Hinge and Sakib Husain, who produced match-winning performances in their previous outing. The uncapped pair, drafted in to replace seasoned bowlers Harshal Patel and Jaydev Unadkat, made an immediate impact by ripping through Rajasthan Royals' top order. The Royals were reduced to 9 for 5 inside the first three overs while chasing 216, eventually collapsing to 159 all out. Vidarbha pacer Hinge was the standout performer, claiming 4/34 as he dismantled the top order, including Dhruv Jurel, Lhuan-dre Pretorius and skipper Riyan Parag in a fiery opening spell. Bowling from a back-of-a-length and extracting sharp bounce, he set the tone early.

Bihar's 21-year-old Sakib Husain, who went unsold at the Kolkata Knight Riders auction before making his SRH debut,

complemented him well. Using variations in the middle overs, Husain also picked up four wickets to seal a dominant win. Their performances have strengthened SRH's pace attack, which had been a concern earlier in the season, and added balance to a side otherwise reliant on batting firepower featuring Abhishek



Sharma, Travis Head, Ishan Kishan and Heinrich Klaasen. CSK, meanwhile, will enter the match after recovering from a poor start to the season. The five-time champions, who began with three consecutive defeats, have registered back-to-back wins to regain momentum. How-

ever, they will be without left-arm pacer Khaleel Ahmed, who has been ruled out of the season due to a quadriceps injury sustained in the win over Kolkata Knight Riders. CSK are also missing MS Dhoni and Nathan Ellis, further testing their squad depth.

Captain Rituraj Gaikwad has struggled for form, managing a highest score of 28 in five innings, though Sanju Samson has shown strong form with an unbeaten century against Delhi Capitals followed by a 48 against KKR. CSK could consider reshuffling their batting order, with young Ayush Mhatre, who has hit two fifties in his last four innings, being promoted. Mukesh Choudhary is expected to take up new-ball duties in Khaleel's absence, with Ramakrishna Ghosh also an option. Both teams come into the contest with contrasting momentum, SRH boosted by their breakthrough pace attack and CSK riding a two-match winning streak as they look to secure their first away win of the season.