

**What to WATCH**

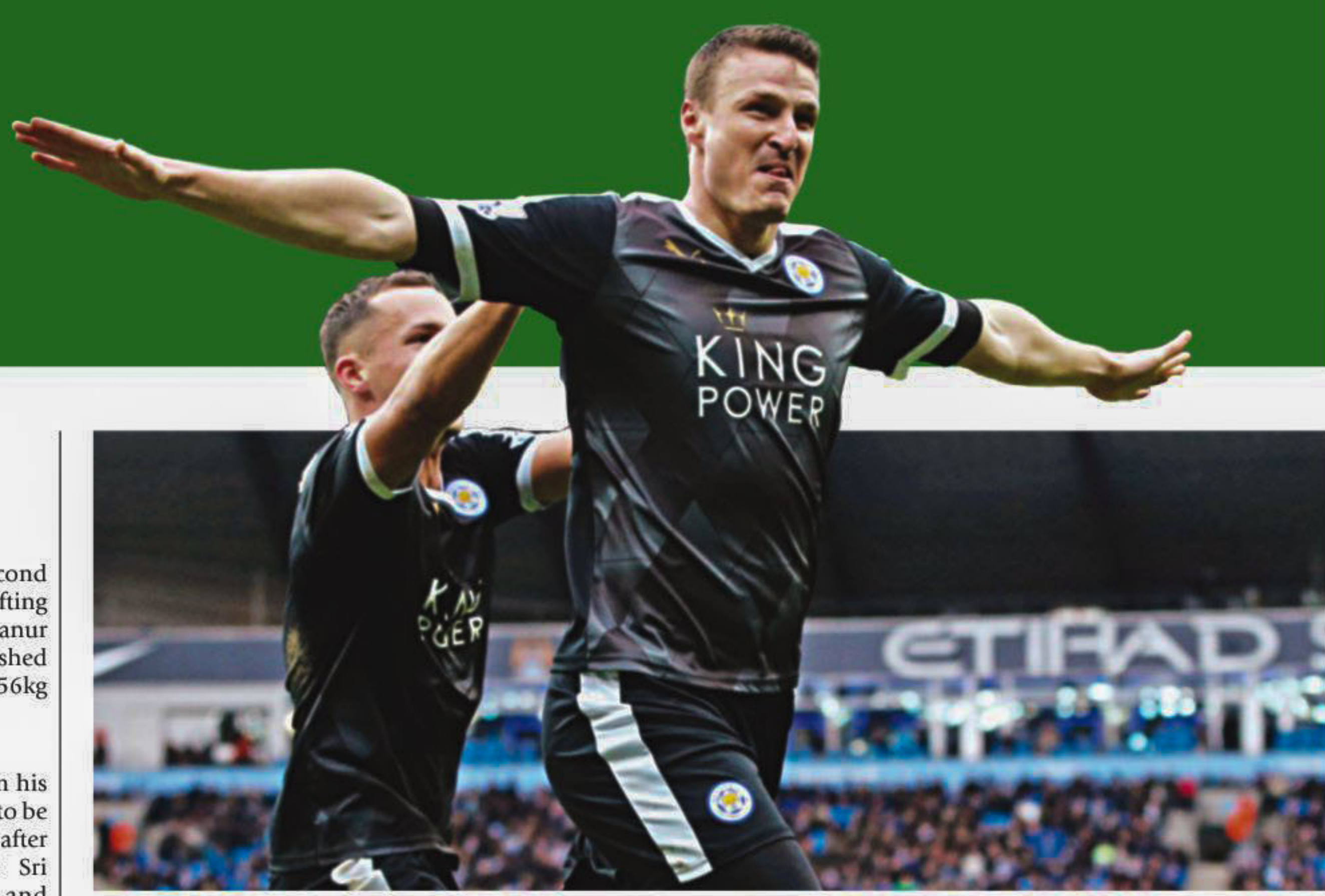
**STAR SPORTS 1**  
ICC U-19 World Cup  
Quarterfinal  
England v Sri Lanka  
Live from 9:00 am

**Bundesliga**  
Hamburger SV v FC Köln  
Live from 8:30 pm

**STAR SPORTS 4**  
English Premier League  
Bournemouth v Arsenal  
Live from 7:30 pm

Chelsea v Manchester United  
Live from 9:30 pm

**DAY'S EVENT**  
ICC U-19 World Cup  
Quarterfinal  
Venue: SBNS  
Sri Lanka vs England



Leicester City defender Robert Huth made the difference in their top-of-the-table English Premier League clash against Manchester City at the Etihad yesterday, scoring twice and consolidating the Foxes' lead at the top. PHOTO: AFP

# Sabira sets the tone

SPORTS REPORTER from Guwahati



Winning the silver medal in women's wrestling event was the lone highlight for the Bangladeshi athletes on the opening day of the 12th South Asian Games in Guwahati, Assam yesterday.

The athletes of hosts India however had been the dominating force with 14 gold medals, with cyclist Bidyaluxmi Tourangbam winning the first gold in 30km individual time trial.

Sri Lanka and Pakistan followed leaders India while Bangladesh were in fourth position with one silver and eight bronze medals. However, Indian Olympic football team were stunned 1-0 by Sri Lanka in the opening game.

Veteran weightlifter Mollah Sabira brought the first medal for Bangladesh after finishing third in women's 48kg category behind gold-winner Mirabai of India and silver-winner Bomiriyog Gomas of Sri Lanka at Bhogeshwari Phukanani Indoor Stadium in the morning. Sabira virtually set the tone for the rest of the day for Bangladesh, who won one silver from wrestling and eight bronze medals-- four from the pool while two each from wrestling and weightlifting.

losing to Manish of India in the gold-deciding match after the girl from Khulna beat her Nepal and Sri Lankan counterparts to reach the final.

"I had a dream to win the gold medal but the Indian player was too strong. I am satisfied with the achievement because I came here with a realistic hope of winning the first silver medal in my maiden international appearance," said Rina, who switched to wrestling from Judo in 2006.

"As per the advice from the coach, I just tried to put up my natural performance that helped me beat the Sri Lankan and Nepalese counterparts to reach the final," said Rina, who joined Bangladesh Army in 2014 after winning a gold medal in the 2013 Bangladesh Games.

Rina's teammate Nadi Chakma and Soma Chowdhury beat their respective rivals in 48kg and 65kg categories to win bronze medals.

**WEIGHTLIFTING**  
Sabira lifted a total of 143kg -- 63kg in snatch and 80kg in clean & jerk.

"I could have finished second had I lifted the weight that I did in national championship," said Sabira, who failed to lift her third attempt of 66kg in snatch after lifting 63kg in her second attempt.

Indian Mirabai went far from other competitors after lifting 79kg in snatch and then lifted 90kg in her first attempt to ensure the gold medal.

Mostain Billah won the second bronze from weightlifting by lifting 225kg in 62kg category while Mizanur Rahman and Jahura Akter finished fourth and fifth in their respective 56kg and 53kg categories.

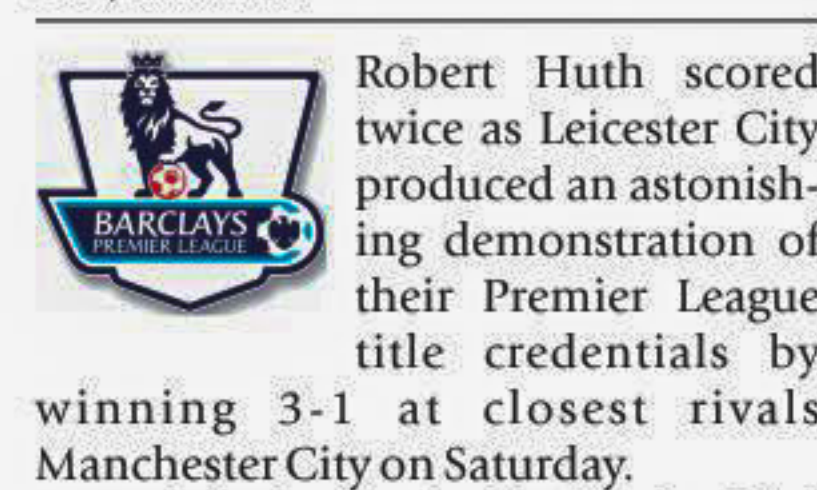
**SWIMMING**  
Mahfuzur Rahman became first in his heat of 200m freestyle but he had to be content with a bronze medal after timing 1:56.19 seconds while Sri Lankan Mathew Abeysinghe and Indian Saurabh Sangvekar grabbed gold and silver medals timing 1:52.28 and 1:53.05 seconds respectively.

There had been hope on Kamal Hossain in the 200m breaststroke but the 34-year-old swimmer frustrated all to finish fourth while Shariful Islam won the bronze in the same event with a time of 2:26.99 seconds. In women's group, Romana Akter won a bronze medal in 200m breaststroke clocking 2:49.60 seconds.

**OTHER DISCIPLINES**  
Bangladesh men's kho-kho team beat Sri Lanka 19-6; men's badminton team beat Afghanistan in 3-0 sets in team event while table tennis team lost to India in straight 3-0 sets. Cyclists Subarna Barma and Chingby Marma became fifth and ninth out of 10 competitors in 30km individual time trial while Repon Kumar and Manwar Hossain finished seventh and eighth among 10 cyclists in the 40km individual time trial.

# City overrun by Foxes

AFP, Manchester



Robert Huth scored twice as Leicester City produced an astonishing demonstration of their Premier League title credentials by winning 3-1 at closest rivals Manchester City on Saturday.

Huth broke the deadlock in the third minute from a Riyad Mahrez free-kick and after Mahrez had netted a brilliant solo goal early in the first half, the German centre-back headed in his second goal from a corner on the hour.

Sergio Aguero replied for City with

RESULTS		
Aston Villa	2 - 0	Norwich
Lescott 45, Agbonlahor 51		
Liverpool	2 - 2	Sunderland
Firmino 59, Lallana 70		Johnson 82, Defoe 89
Man City	1 - 3	Leicester
Aguero 87		Huth 3, 60, Mahrez 48
Newcastle	1 - 0	West Brom
Mitrovic 32		
Stoke	0 - 3	Everton
		Lukaku 11-pen, Coleman 28, Lennon 42
Swansea	1 - 1	Crystal Palace
Sigurdsson 13		Dann 47
Tottenham	1 - 0	Watford

a glancing header but the day at the Etihad Stadium belonged to Leicester.

It was the most sensational win to date of their fairytale 12-month rise from the bottom to the top of the table and left Claudio Ranieri's side six points clear of second-place City.

At the post-match press conference, Ranieri could no longer deny his side's title aspirations admitting that they are very much in contention.

"There are a lot of super teams now. We will try. Why not?" he said. "The effort is a lot. Now it is important the players recover because we spent a lot of energy. Sometimes we run more than a bull. match."



# Beckenbauer latest to face lawsuit

AFP, Cologne

German football chiefs Friday launched a lawsuit involving Franz Beckenbauer, world governing body FIFA, two former German federation (DFB) presidents as well as the former head of Adidas as part of the 2006 World Cup scandal.

"The DFB has taken the measure to avoid a statute of limitations" that could prevent a future claim, they said in a statement released to sports news agency SID.

As a result, the DFB reserved the right to reclaim the mysterious 6.7 million euro payment made to FIFA which is at the heart of corruption allegations dogging the bidding process for the 2006 World Cup.

However, Beckenbauer has insisted that the sum had to be paid in order to obtain a bigger grant from world football's governing body.

# Chelsea test for Man Utd

AFP, London



Manchester United's tentative resurgence will be tested this Sunday when Louis van Gaal pits his side against a Chelsea team slowly finding their feet under his countryman Guus Hiddink.

It is only two weeks since United were booed off at Old Trafford after a 1-0 home defeat by Southampton, but consecutive wins -- 3-1 at Derby County in the FA Cup and 3-0 at home to Stoke City in the league -- have convinced Van Gaal that his side can still win the title.

United go into the weekend 10 points below leaders Leicester City in fifth place and five points below the Champions League berths.

"We don't have to exaggerate, but I have the feeling if we shall beat Chelsea -- although that is very difficult, because under Guus Hiddink they don't lose -- then I think our league is starting again," Van Gaal said.

"Michael Carrick said to me and I have the same feeling, the competition is not yet finished, not for Manchester United or the other teams.

"We have the feeling, and that's because we are winning twice in a row and with sparkling football."

United played with scarcely seen enterprise against Stoke, rejuvenated captain Wayne Rooney scoring his seventh goal in seven games and Anthony Martial capping a flowing move by curling in a goal that left the pundits purring.

But United remain a puzzling team and Van Gaal continues to be dogged by speculation on his future, with reports emerging that the club have made an approach to Jose Mourinho.

The excitement sparked by the announcement of Pep Guardiola's impending arrival as Manchester City manager has only served to underline the sense of uncertainty hovering over the dug-outs at both United and Chelsea.

"This is a big match," Hiddink told his pre-game media conference. Big clubs through the years, both Manchester United and us like to compete for the title. They have underperformed and we are getting back on track a little bit.

"Of course I would like some more victories instead of the unbeaten draws, but the team is step by step more stable and now we hope to go to in a beautiful spring time."

# United begin Jose talks

BBC ONLINE

Manchester United have held talks with representatives of ex-Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho.

The Portuguese, who was sacked by the Blues in December, is increasingly hopeful of succeeding Louis van Gaal at Old Trafford.

No agreement has been reached, and the club have made no comment, but negotiations have begun.

Dutchman Van Gaal, 64, is expected to leave United at the end of the season - one year earlier than scheduled.

That would leave the way clear for Mourinho, who is known to be excited by the prospect of taking over at Old Trafford.

The United hierarchy are thought to be keen to respond after Manchester City secured the services of coveted coach Pep Guardiola earlier this week.

Mourinho's arrival would mean a resumption of a rivalry that began in Spain when he was coach of Real Madrid between 2010 and 2013.

Twice in recent weeks, Van Gaal's tenure has seemed perilous.

However, defeats by Stoke and Southampton have been followed by an improvement in both form and performance.

# Serenity at breakneck speed

ANISUR RAHMAN from Guwahati



After a strenuous six-hour journey from Dawki, the starting point of the northeast Indian state of Meghalaya from Bangladesh, to Guwahati, co-hosts of the 12th South Asian (SA) Games, the first impression of the capital, Assam, was as if we were still in Bangladesh and had entered Mirpur. The locality had an uncanny resemblance to the northern part of Bangladesh's capital, with mostly five and four-storied buildings erected alongside trees on both sides of the road.

The city looked familiar, adorned with billboards, shop signs and a few political slogans written in the Assamese language, which is strikingly similar to Bengali with a few changes to the characters of the Bangla alphabet. The parked vehicles by the roadside and the familiar scene of jaywalkers/pedestrians crossing the road over fences on the road's divider also replicated the culture of Dhaka residents.

It was also surprising that most people could understand Bengali, while some spoke as fluently as if they also hailed from Bangladesh. The journalists who had travelled from Bangladesh felt no hesitation in communicating either with auto-rickshaw drivers or shop-keepers to seek directions to the venues for the SA Games.

The busiest part of Guwahati is the Paltan Bazar, which is much like the older part of Dhaka except for the wide roads. And that area is seemingly the business

hub of the capital, with thousands of hotels, lodges and commercial organisations. The footpaths were also reminiscent of Dhaka, with thousands of hawkers trading their wares. The whole time it never felt any different from home.

The more interesting part of the journey was the trip from Dawki to Guwahati. Starting from Dhaka at night, the bus reached Sylhet in the morning. From there, we hired a microbus which took us to Tamabil, a calm and greenish environment.

It took a few minutes to cross the immigration and custom checks on either side of the border and then the nerve wracking journey started on a Sumo (not a Japanese sumo wrestler). We entered the eight-seater jeep after the driver agreed to take us to Shillong, some 100km away from Dawki.

Five minutes into our journey, we crossed the renowned Dawki suspension bridge and it was an exciting view seeing the Umngot river's crystal clear water -- with the pebbles underneath clearly visible -- from the bridge. There was a feeling of disappointment when contrasting that side to the Bangladeshi side of the river, where stone collectors had destroyed the beauty of nature. However, the Indian side was a wonder to behold.

The single-lane road took us through a picturesque route, with mountains on the right-hand side and a stunning collection of flora on the left. Even after a 20-minute drive from the border, the cellphones still had a signal and some colleagues had a chat with their families.

Then there were some more nerves as the jeep, at an average of 40kph, went zigzagging upward through the hillside

for one-and-a-half hours. It felt like it could be the last journey of our lives, with one false move causing the jeep to slip from the hills. The view down wasn't any consolation, as all that was visible was a thick canopy of trees as far as we could see.

It surely wasn't a feel-good moment for 'the weak of heart' and someone among us advised not to look down in a bid to stay calm. Someone even started vomiting through the window of the jeep after taking a peek down.

However, the jeep reached Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya, after two-and-a-half hours of unrelenting driving, before another jeep was hired to take us from Shillong to Guwahati after a half-hour's rest.

Although the four-hour travel including a 30-minute stopover at a roadside dhaba, the journey to Guwahati was quite the sight, with charming hills on both sides of the road.

The zigzag road was akin to a Formula 1 racing track, and the 60kph speed along those turns made the feeling more eventful.

Before the 'racing experience', the lovely Umiam lake awaited us. The Shillong-Guwahati road was finely made around the banks of the lake, keeping its overwhelming beauty intact and we took a breather at the lake before entering the roller-coaster path.

Interestingly, a lot of wine bars were seen by the road which divided Meghalaya and Assam, but the bars were situated on Meghalaya's side, as the state had less tax.

The roadside pickle shops were another unforgettable experience. The taste of the delights lingered until we

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