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Dima Hasao Ethnic Fest 2026 Showcases Cultural Heritage, Boosts Tourism and Celebrates Unity in Diversity



Haflong, July 10: In a vibrant celebration of Dima Hasao's rich ethnic heritage and tourism potential, the Dima Hasao Ethnic Fest 2026 commenced with grandeur at the scenic Haflong Lake near the iconic Hanging Bridge on Friday. The two-day festival was inaugurated by the Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC), Debolal Gorlosa, who was accompanied by his wife, Kanika Hojai, along with NCHAC Executive Members (EMs), Members of the Autonomous Council (MACs), and other dignitaries. Organised by the Dima Hasao Autonomous Council in collaboration with Dima Hasao Tourism, this year's festival is being held under the theme "Celebrating Culture through Food and Dance." The event serves as a colourful showcase of the district's remarkable ethnic diversity, featuring traditional dances, indigenous music, authentic tribal cuisines, handcrafted products, and vibrant cultural performances representing the many communities that call Dima Hasao home. Addressing the gathering, CEM Debolal Gorlosa said that the

Dima Hasao Ethnic Fest is much more than a cultural event. It is an important platform for preserving and promoting the district's unique traditions and indigenous heritage while creating new opportunities for tourism, local artisans, performers, entrepreneurs, and self-help groups. He noted that such initiatives help position Dima Hasao as one of Assam's most attractive cultural and eco-tourism destinations. The CEM invited tourists, visitors, and culture enthusiasts from across Assam and beyond to experience the festival, explore the beautifully decorated stalls, witness captivating folk performances,

and savour the authentic traditional cuisines prepared by the district's various indigenous communities. He emphasized that the festival reflects the spirit of "Unity in Diversity", which has long been the hallmark of Dima Hasao's multicultural society. The Ethnic Fest will continue to travel across different parts of the district, bringing the celebration closer to local communities and visitors. The upcoming schedule includes Sibarai Hading (I Love Dima Hasao point), Haflong on July 17-18, Songkho, Umrangso on July 24-25, and Hayam at the Jatinga Festival Site on July 31 and August 1. With its unique blend of culture, cuisine, music, dance, and breathtaking natural surroundings, the Dima Hasao Ethnic Fest 2026 is expected to significantly strengthen the district's tourism profile while reinforcing efforts to preserve its rich ethnic identity for future generations. The festival stands as a celebration of the traditions, hospitality, and cultural harmony that make Dima Hasao one of Northeast India's most distinctive destinations.

Six Student Organisations Submit Joint Memorandum to Assam CM on Indigenous Rights and Border Security

Guwahati, July 11: In a significant show of unity, six prominent student organisations representing various indigenous communities of Dima Hasao and Karbi Anglong jointly met the Chief Minister of Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma, at the Assam Legislative Assembly in Guwahati on Friday and submitted a joint memorandum highlighting several issues concerning the protection of indigenous rights, constitutional safeguards, and regional security. The delegation comprised representatives of the Dimas Students' Union (DSU), Karbi Students' Association (Karbi Anglong), Zeme Students' Union, Assam, Hrangkhoh Students' Association, Thadou Students' Union, and Khelma Students' Union. The student bodies collectively urged the State Government to address what they described as pressing concerns affecting the people of Dima Hasao and Karbi Anglong. In their memorandum, the organisations placed four key demands before the Chief Minister: Scrapping of Clause 5.1(a) and Clause 5.1(b) Dis-solution of Clause 2.1. Immediate establishment of Border

Outposts (BoPs) to curb illegal infiltration from neighbouring conflict-affected states. Proper implementation of the Permanent Resident Certificate (PRC) verification process and revision of the electoral roll based on authentic land records and other valid supporting documents. The student organisations stated that while they fully support the development and welfare

and constitutional rights of the indigenous communities while maintaining peace, justice, and inclusive development across the region. The delegation expressed confidence that the Government of Assam would give due consideration to their genuine concerns and take appropriate measures to ensure the protection of indigenous rights, strengthen border security,



of all communities, any policy or provision that weakens constitutional safeguards and the rights of indigenous people should be reviewed. They expressed concern that such measures could adversely impact the long-standing communal harmony and social fabric of the hill districts. The memorandum also emphasised the need to safeguard the interests, identity,

and uphold the constitutional safeguards meant for the people of Dima Hasao and Karbi Anglong. The meeting is being viewed as a significant collective initiative by the student organisations to raise issues of common concern and seek constructive engagement with the State Government on matters affecting the future of the hill districts.

BJP Concludes Two-Day Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Training Camp in Haflong

Haflong, July 12: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Dima Hasao District Unit, concluded its two-day Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Prashikshan Maha Abhiyan (District Training Programme) at the DSA Ground, Haflong, on Sunday. The programme, held from July 11 to 12, brought together party office-bearers, elected representatives and grassroots workers for organisational training aimed at leadership development and strengthening the party's grassroots network. The final session was addressed by North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC) Chief Executive Member Debolal Gorlosa, who spoke about various welfare schemes implemented by the Central Government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Government of Assam led by Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma. He also highlighted developmental projects undertaken in Dima Hasao during the BJP's tenure and called upon party workers to strengthen

coordination at the grassroots level to ensure that government welfare schemes reach eligible beneficiaries. During his address, Gorlosa said that the BJP-led governments had accelerated development across different sectors in the district. He also alleged that previous governments had neglected the developmental aspirations of the people for several decades. Earlier on concluding day's activities began with a Yoga session, followed by classes on Karyakarta Development, Nurturing Leadership, Sense of Responsibility, and Vichar Parivar, conducted by BJP Dima Hasao District President Dhriti Thaosen and senior party leader Sujay Langthasa. The sessions focused on organisational values, leadership qualities and the responsibilities of party workers. The training programme commenced on Saturday with the ceremonial hoisting of the BJP flag by District President Dhriti Thaosen in the presence of CEM Debolal Gorlosa, NCHAC Executive Members, Members of the Autonomous Coun-

cil (MACs), district office-bearers, Mandal Presidents and Secretaries, Morcha leaders, Cell Conveners and party workers from different parts of Dima Hasao. BJP Dima Hasao Saha Prabhari Anup Kumar Deb and Convener Manjoy Langthasa also attended the inaugural session. Floral tributes were paid to Bharat Mata following the flag-hoisting ceremony. Welcoming the participants, Dhriti Thaosen described the Prashikshan Maha Abhiyan as an important initiative to prepare disciplined and committed party workers. He said karyakartas should not only strengthen the organisation but also help create awareness about welfare programmes of the Central Government, the Assam Government and the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council among eligible beneficiaries. The inaugural technical session, chaired by Bhadra Mani Langthasa, featured addresses by NCHAC Executive Member Probota Johori, BJP Saha Prabhari Anup Kumar Deb, BJP Vice-President Liton Chakraborty,



former District President Kulendra Daulagupu, and General Secretary Kehungsamying Riame. Riame also delivered a presentation on the responsible use of social media and the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital platforms in organisational communication and public outreach. A key session was delivered by Kamakhya Prasad Tasa, Member of Parliament from the Kaziranga Lok Sabha Constituency, who spoke on the history and ideological foundations of the Bharatiya Janata Party. He urged party workers to follow the principles of Integral Humanism

and Antyodaya, as propounded by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay, and to remain committed to public service. The Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Prashikshan Maha Abhiyan is a nationwide organisational initiative of the BJP designed to train party workers in leadership, organisational management, booth-level coordination, digital communication and public outreach. Senior party leaders expressed hope that the programme would further strengthen the organisation in Dima Hasao and enhance the capacity of its grassroots workers.

NIA Arrests Two in Manipur Killing of Six Naga Civilians

Imphal, July 10: A National Investigation Agency (NIA)-led joint team on Friday arrested two persons from Manipur's Kangpokpi district in connection with the killing of six Naga civilians, nearly two months after their bodies were recovered, police said. The arrests were made during an early morning operation at Leilon Vaiphei village by a joint team of the NIA, Manipur Police and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), acting on specific intelligence inputs. According to police, the two accused, identified as Ayingbi, a woman, and Pradip, were apprehended from the Kuki-Zo village of Leilon Vaiphei. They are alleged to have been involved in the killing of six Naga civilians on May 13.

The bodies of the six victims were recovered from the outskirts of Leilon Vaiphei on June 10, triggering widespread protests by Naga and Meitei groups, which demanded the immediate arrest of those responsible. The killings also led Naga organ-



isations to blockade roads leading to Kangpokpi district, causing severe shortages of essential commodities and a sharp rise in prices in the Kuki-Zo-majority district.

Days after the bodies were recovered, Kuki Zo Council (KZC) chairman Henlienthang Thanglet apologised for the killings and called for an impartial investigation into all acts of violence linked to the ongoing ethnic conflict in the state. "I admit the Kuki-Zo people made a grave mistake in killing the six Naga civilians. It was done out of emotion. I strongly condemn it. I am very sorry and apologise

on behalf of my people," he had told a press conference. A day later, however, the KZC issued a clarification, saying portions of Thanglet's remarks had been "misconstrued as an admission of responsibility by the Kuki-Zo community". The council said the chairperson's expression of regret was made purely in the spirit of humanity, compassion and moral responsibility and "was not intended to assign collective guilt". The clarification came after an influential Naga students' organisation expressed anger over the KZC chief's remarks on the killing of the six Naga hostages.

NIA Arrests Two in Manipur Killing of Six Naga Civilians

New Delhi, July 10: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday chaired a conference of superintendents of police (SPs) from 119 districts sharing international borders, stressing the need to strengthen border security, curb illegal infiltration and narcotics trafficking, and address what he described as abnormal demographic changes. Addressing the conference, Shah said the Centre was building a robust border security framework to make the country infiltration-free through coordinated efforts involving border guarding forces, state governments, district administrations and local communities.

He said the government had launched a "demographic mission" to identify population growth arising from what he termed abnormal reasons and recommend measures to prevent such changes in the future. According to Shah, the initiative aims to check demographic changes caused by illegal activities. The Home Minister said the conference would review existing border security measures, discuss emerging challenges and formulate policy responses. He added that the government was also working towards strengthening coastal security through a comprehensive approach under its Smart Border vision.

Shah said secure borders, prosperous border villages and public participation were key to national security. He also claimed that the government had significantly weakened Left-wing extremism, terrorism in Jammu

and Kashmir, and insurgency in the North-east, adding that the Centre was committed to eliminating the narcotics menace within the next three years. Comparing the present government's approach with previous administrations, Shah said earlier solutions had been temporary, whereas the current government was addressing problems at their roots. He claimed border infrastructure had increased by 400 per cent under the Narendra Modi government. Referring to the Vibrant Villages



Programme, Shah said it seeks to prevent migration from border areas, create employment and ensure full implementation of welfare schemes. He added that the government was fencing the 1,610-km India-Myanmar border at an estimated cost of ₹31,000 crore. According to Shah, the government's objectives include preventing illegal infiltration, proxy war, radicalisation, narcotics trafficking, smuggling, drone-related threats, cybercrime and organised crime, while making border regions more secure and economically vibrant.

BJP Slams Cong Over Australia Uranium Deal

BJP Questions Congress' Uranium Claim



New Delhi, July 10: The BJP on Friday rejected the Congress' claim that Australia's decision to supply uranium to India originated during the UPA government, asserting that international agreements are signed and implemented by governments, not political parties. The Congress had earlier said Australia's uranium exports to India were not a diplomatic breakthrough achieved by the Narendra Modi government. Citing developments in 2011, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said then Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard had secured her party's approval to allow uranium sales to India following the Indo-US civil nuclear agreement. Responding, BJP na-

tional spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari said the Congress was attempting to claim credit for decisions that were never implemented during its tenure. "Governments sign and implement international agreements, not political parties," he said in a post on X.

Bhandari questioned why there was "virtually no Australian uranium supply to India between 2011 and 2014" if the Congress considered the 2011 approval a major achievement. He also claimed Australia had indicated in 2012 that uranium exports to India would not begin immediately. The BJP leader said the India-Australia Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement was signed by the Modi government in September 2014 and asserted that the present government operationalised long-term Australian uranium supply commitments in 2026.

Ramesh, however, maintained that the groundwork for uranium exports had been laid during the UPA era and accused BJP leaders of ignoring the sequence of events leading to Australia's policy change.

SC to Hear Ram Temple Donation Scam Pleas on July 13

New Delhi, July 10: The Supreme Court will hear on July 13 a batch of petitions seeking a court-monitored probe into the alleged embezzlement of donations at the Ram temple in Ayodhya. According to the Supreme Court website, a Bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana will take up three petitions when the apex court reopens on Monday. The pleas seek a fair and time-bound investigation into the alleged financial irregularities involving the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, which manages the affairs of the Ram temple. One of the petitions, filed by Narendra Kumar Goswami, seeks a CBI probe into the alleged embezzlement and a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) audit of the Trust's finances.

A second petition, filed by advocates Ajay Kumar Rai and Dinesh Kumar Yadav, seeks the constitution of a CBI-led multi-disciplinary Special Investigation Team (SIT) to investigate the alleged financial irregularities and other purported illegalities concerning the Trust's affairs and administration. The third plea, filed by RJD MP Sudhakar Singh, seeks a Supreme Court-monitored CBI investigation and a forensic audit of the Trust's entire finances. Earlier, a partial working day Bench headed by Justice B.V. Nagarathna had asked one of the petitioners to mention the matter later for an urgent



hearing. Rai's petition also seeks directions to the Centre, the Uttar Pradesh government and the Trust to establish appropriate regulatory, supervisory and audit mechanisms to safeguard public interest and maintain the confidence of devotees and donors. "Whether or not the reports regarding missing funds and other alleged irregularities concerning the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust are ultimately found to be true, such reports have caused deep concern among the generations that struggled for the restoration of the glory of Ayodhya," the plea said.

The petition also questioned the Uttar Pradesh government's SIT inquiry, saying it was initiated without the registration of an FIR or any regular criminal case. It said the veracity of reports concerning alleged missing funds and other purported irregularities involving

the Trust ought to be independently verified through a professional investigation conducted by a unified agency possessing the requisite expertise, resources and institutional mechanisms for handling complex financial and criminal investigations. "Such an inquiry would inspire greater public confidence than a preliminary probe conducted by a special investigation team comprising administrative officers who may not possess specialised credentials in criminal investigation," the plea said. It said the issues involved not only concern the possible commission of cognisable offences but also directly affect the faith, sentiments and confidence of countless devotees and the public.

The Uttar Pradesh government had constituted a three-member SIT on June 13 at the request of the temple trust following allegations of misappropriation of donations received at the Ram temple. The panel comprises Lucknow Divisional Commissioner Vijay Vishwas Pant, Inspector General of Police Kiran S. and Special Secretary (Finance) Neel Ratan. Meanwhile, the criminal investigation into the alleged donations theft is also progressing. On July 7, an Ayodhya court granted one-day police remand of three of the eight accused, Anukalp Mishra, Lavkush Mishra and Karunesh Pandey. The eight accused had earlier been remanded to 14-day judicial custody by a local court on June 29.

DC Reviews Land Acquisition and Compensation Issues for NHAI, NHIDCL Projects in Dima Hasao

Haflong, July 9: In a bid to accelerate the implementation of key national highway infrastructure projects in Dima Hasao, District Commissioner Gayatri Devidas Hyalinge, IAS, chaired a review meeting on compensation, land acquisition, and other project-related issues concerning ongoing works being executed by the National Highways Authority of India (NHA) and the National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL).

The meeting was held on July 8 at the Conference Hall of the Deputy Commissioner's Office, Haflong.

Among those present were Senior Superintendent of Police Ripunjoy Kakoti, APS, the Additional District Com-



missioner, Additional Secretary of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC), the District Agriculture Officer, officials from NHA, NHIDCL, the Forest Department, and representatives of other concerned departments.

During the meeting, officials reviewed the status of ongoing highway projects, with particular emphasis on

issues relating to land acquisition, compensation to affected landowners, forest clearances, and inter-departmental coordination. Discussions also focused on identifying and resolving bottlenecks that have been affecting the timely execution of the projects.

The District Commissioner stressed the importance of close coordination among

all stakeholder departments to ensure that pending issues are addressed promptly and that infrastructure works progress without unnecessary delays. She also directed the concerned departments and implementing agencies to work in a coordinated manner to expedite project implementation while ensuring compliance with statutory procedures and safeguarding the interests of affected stakeholders.

The review meeting forms part of the district administration's ongoing efforts to facilitate the timely completion of major road infrastructure projects, which are expected to enhance regional connectivity, improve transportation, and support the socio-economic development of Dima Hasao.

CEM Debolal Gorlosa Inaugurates Community Infrastructure Projects at Hatikhali and Langting

Hatikhali/Langting, July 8: In a significant step towards community development and public welfare, the Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC), Debolal Gorlosa, inaugurated a series of public infrastructure and community welfare projects at Hatikhali and Langting on Tuesday.

The programme commenced with the inauguration of the Community Centre and Entrance Gate at Hatikhali Satsang Vihar. The newly established facilities are expected to serve as a hub for social, cultural, and spiritual activities, benefiting the local community for years to come.

During the visit, CEM Gorlosa was accompanied by NCHAC Executive Mem-

bers Dhriti Thaosen Manjoy Langthasa, Niranjana Hojai and Member of Autonomous Council (MAC) Ajay Chakraborty, along with other dignitaries and public representatives.

Later, the CEM inaugurated the Hanuman Mandir at Langting Bazar, dedicating the place of worship to the people. The temple is expected to become an important centre of faith and spiritual devotion for the residents of the area.

The programme concluded with the inauguration of a Waiting Shed and Roadside Amenities Centre, facilities designed to provide improved comfort and convenience for commuters, travellers, and local residents. The amenities are expected to enhance public services while supporting safer and more accessible roadside



infrastructure.

Addressing the gathering, CEM Debolal Gorlosa reaffirmed the Council's commitment to strengthening public infrastructure and promoting inclusive development across Dima Hasao through projects that cater to the social, cultural, religious, and civic needs of the people.

DC Reviews Progress of Eklavya Model Residential Schools, Stresses Timely Completion

Haflong, July 9: District Commissioner of Dima Hasao, Gayatri Devidas Hyalinge, IAS, chaired a review meeting with the Project Director of Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL) on Wednesday to assess the progress of the construction of Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) being developed in the district.

Held at the Deputy Commissioner's Office, the meeting focused on ensuring the timely completion of the ongoing projects and facilitating their smooth handover upon completion. The District Commissioner reviewed the status of construction works and emphasised the need for close coordination between the executing agency and the concerned departments to avoid delays.

A key area of discussion was the provision of essential infrastructure required

for the functioning of the schools, including water supply connections and approach roads. Officials deliberated on the need for effective inter-departmental coordination to ensure that these supporting facilities are completed alongside the school infrastructure.

The review covered the progress of EMRS projects currently under construction at Harangajao, Umrangso (Thaisling Hawar) and Diyungbra (Larbo Village). Officials also noted that the Eklavya Model Residential School at Ardaopur is already operational and serving students.

The District Commissioner directed all stakeholders to maintain close coordination and expedite pending works so that the residential schools can be completed and made fully functional within the stipulated timeframe.



The Eklavya Model Residential Schools are a flagship initiative aimed at providing quality residential education to Scheduled Tribe students in remote and tribal areas. Once completed, the new campuses in Dima Hasao are expected to significantly strengthen educational infrastructure and expand access to quality education for tribal students across the district.

DC Chairs Preparatory Meeting for Smooth Conduct of Census 2027 in Dima Hasao



Haflong, July 8: In preparation for the upcoming Census 2027, the District Administration of Dima Hasao convened a preparatory meeting at the Conference Hall of the Deputy Commissioner's Office, Haflong, on Tuesday to review the district's readiness and strengthen coordination for the nationwide population enumeration exercise.

The meeting was chaired by District Commissioner Gayatri Devidas Hyalinge, IAS, in the presence of all Charge Officers responsible for the implementation of the Census across the district. Among those present were the Additional District Commissioner, Joint Secretary of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC), Assistant Commissioner, and other concerned officials.

During the meeting, the District Commissioner reviewed the preparedness of the departments involved and discussed key aspects of planning, coordination and administrative arrangements required for the smooth and efficient conduct of the Census. Emphasis was laid on inter-departmental cooperation, timely execution of assigned responsibilities and ensuring that all preparatory activities are completed well in advance.

Officials also deliberated on strategies to facilitate effective field-level implementation, with the objective of conducting the Census in a systematic, accurate and transparent manner throughout the district.

The meeting concluded with a call for close coordination among all departments and Charge Officers to ensure the successful implementation of Census 2027, one of the country's most significant statistical and administrative exercises.

Preparations Begin for Summer Vacation Workshop 2026-27 in Dima Hasao

Haflong, July 10: A meeting of the Management Committee for the Summer Vacation Workshop 2026-27 was held on Friday at the Conference Hall of the Deputy Commissioner's Office, Haflong, to review preparations and finalise plans for the successful conduct of the annual student-oriented programme.

The meeting was chaired by Shaurya Sharma, ACS, Additional District Commissioner, Dima Hasao, and focused on the planning, coordination and effective implementation of the upcoming workshop.

During the meeting, members discussed various aspects of organising the workshop, including programme scheduling, coordination among departments, resource mobilisation and the overall management of activities to ensure the smooth conduct of the event. Emphasis was laid on creating an enriching and engaging learning environ-



ment for students during the vacation period.

The Additional District Commissioner stressed the importance of close coordination among all stakeholders and directed the concerned members to make necessary preparations well in advance to ensure the workshop is conducted efficiently and benefits the maximum number of students. The Summer Vacation Workshop is expected to provide students with opportunities to participate in a range of educational, creative and skill-development activities, contributing to their holistic learning and personality development during the school vacation.

Editorial

Dima Hasao Ethnic Fest 2026 – Preserving Heritage, Promoting Tourism, Building Unity

The Dima Hasao Ethnic Fest 2026 is more than a colourful cultural celebration; it is a meaningful expression of identity, heritage, and the aspirations of a district renowned for its rich ethnic diversity. Organised by the Dima Hasao Autonomous Council in collaboration with Dima Hasao Tourism, the festival has emerged as an important platform for preserving indigenous traditions while simultaneously promoting tourism and sustainable economic development.

Nestled amidst the picturesque hills of Assam, Dima Hasao is home to several indigenous communities, each possessing its own distinct language, customs, folklore, music, dance forms, traditional attire, and culinary heritage. In an era of rapid urbanisation and globalisation, such traditions often face the risk of fading away. Cultural festivals like the Dima Hasao Ethnic Fest therefore play a vital role in documenting, preserving, and passing these traditions on to younger generations.

This year's theme, "Celebrating Culture through Food and Dance," aptly recognises that culture is best experienced rather than merely observed. Traditional cuisines reflect centuries of local knowledge, agricultural practices, and community life, while folk dances and music narrate stories of history, festivals, and collective identity. By bringing together the district's diverse communities on one platform, the festival reinforces the message that cultural diversity is not a source of division but one of society's greatest strengths.

Equally important is the festival's contribution to tourism. Dima Hasao possesses immense natural beauty—from the tranquil Haflong Lake and rolling green hills to Jatinga, Umrangso, and numerous unexplored landscapes. Yet the district's tourism potential extends far beyond its scenic attractions. Around

the world, travellers increasingly seek authentic cultural experiences, local cuisines, traditional crafts, and interactions with indigenous communities. The Ethnic Fest offers precisely such an experience, making Dima Hasao an attractive destination for cultural and eco-tourism.

Tourism, however, should not be viewed merely through the lens of visitor numbers. Well-managed tourism has the potential to create livelihoods for local youth, artisans, weavers, musicians, dancers, transport operators, and small entrepreneurs. Every traditional handicraft sold, every local food stall patronised, and every cultural performance appreciated contributes directly to the local economy. In this way, cultural preservation and economic development complement one another.

The decision to organise the festival across multiple locations—including Sibarai Hading (I Love Dima Hasao Point), Haflong, Songkho in Umrangso, and Hayam at the Jatinga Festival Site—is particularly commendable. Decentralising the celebrations allows more communities to participate, encourages visitors to explore different parts of the district, and distributes economic benefits more widely. Such an approach also highlights the unique identity and attractions of each locality.

Beyond its cultural and economic significance, the festival carries an equally powerful social message. Dima Hasao is a district where people from different ethnic backgrounds have lived together for generations. Festivals that celebrate every community with equal respect strengthen social harmony and mutual understanding. They remind us that while languages, customs, and traditions may differ, the shared commitment to peace, coexistence, and development unites the people of the district.

To maximise the festival's long-term

impact, cultural events should be supported by sustained initiatives throughout the year. Improved road connectivity, visitor amenities, digital promotion, trained tourist guides, clean public spaces, better signage, and environmentally responsible tourism practices will help transform Dima Hasao into a year-round destination rather than a seasonal attraction. Local schools, educational institutions, and community organisations can also play an active role in documenting oral traditions, promoting indigenous languages, and encouraging youth participation in cultural activities.

Environmental sustainability must remain central to such initiatives. As tourism grows, protecting forests, lakes, wildlife, and the fragile hill ecosystem becomes increasingly important. Responsible tourism that respects local communities and preserves natural resources will ensure that future generations inherit both a thriving culture and a healthy environment.

The Dima Hasao Ethnic Fest 2026 demonstrates how culture can become a powerful driver of development. It showcases the district not only as a land of breathtaking landscapes but also as a vibrant mosaic of traditions, hospitality, and creativity. If nurtured with vision, consistency, and community participation, the festival can become one of Northeast India's premier cultural tourism events, strengthening the local economy while safeguarding the priceless heritage of Dima Hasao.

Ultimately, the true success of the Ethnic Fest will not be measured only by the number of visitors or performances, but by its ability to inspire pride among local communities, preserve indigenous traditions, create sustainable livelihoods, and project Dima Hasao as a destination where culture, nature, and unity flourish together.

A Republic of Regional Egos



India has once again discovered its oldest political hobby: drawing lines across itself. The argument is familiar. The North fears loss of political dominance. The South fears punishment for having governed itself better. Reading *The Paradox of India's North-South Divide* by Samuel Paul and Kala Seetharam Sridhar, I was reminded that nations rarely collapse because of their differences. They decline because they become prisoners of the stories they tell about those differences. Having spent four decades teaching and working across India—from Lucknow in the North, to Kolkata in the East, Pune in the West, and Kozhikode in the South—I have learnt that places shape our perspectives, but people shape their own destinies. Geography changes. Human vanity does not. Every region quietly believes it represents the best of India. Travel abroad only sharpens the absurdity of this habit. Japan worships punctuality with almost religious devotion. Italy has elevated leisure into civilisation. America glorifies the restless individual; Scandinavia quietly perfects collective trust and reduces the need for surveillance. The wise traveller returns home with fewer opinions and more questions.

I notice a similar tendency in organisations. Departments compete, functions defend their territories, and meetings become miniature border disputes. Yet the best institutions succeed when marketing learns from finance, finance listens to operations, and everyone eventually discovers that customers do not care about internal rivalries. Nations are not very different. Mature societies do not waste their energy asking who is superior. They borrow good ideas from one another without embarrassment. India, however, prefers emotional accounting when it comes to the North-South divide. The real question before India is not whether the North resembles the South, or whether the South should apologise for succeeding. The question is

whether each possesses the humility to borrow from the other. Civilisations decay not because they stop producing wealth. They decay because they no longer spark curiosity. Certainty is often the first symptom of decline. The South did not become more prosperous because history smiled upon it. It invested for decades in schools before stadiums, in public health before political spectacle, in local institutions before personality cults. Literacy was not a cultural ornament. It became economic infrastructure. Human capital created financial capital. This is not ideology. It is arithmetic. The North possesses strengths that statistical tables rarely capture. Its entrepreneurial instinct, demographic confidence, commercial resilience, and astonishing capacity to survive chaos, remain among India's greatest national assets. The East continues to produce intellectual restlessness disproportionate to its economic weight. The West has shown how commerce can create institutional confidence.

Triumphalism is as dangerous as neglect. Every region possesses a fragment of India's future. The tragedy is that each insists on marketing its fragment as the whole. As India approaches the centenary of Independence in 2047, we speak confidently of becoming a five-trillion or ten-trillion-dollar economy. Economic ambition is necessary. Civilisational ambition is harder. It demands that we become a country where ideas travel more freely than prejudices; where excellence is copied instead of resented; where success in one state becomes a national template rather than a regional grievance.

India has never been a finished argument. It has always been an unfinished conversation. The day the North learns without insecurity, the South teaches without superiority, the East questions without nostalgia, and the West prospers without arrogance, the compass will finally stop dividing us.

Modiplomacy: A billion people, one brand

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public event at Melbourne's Marvel Stadium drew nearly 30,000 people on Thursday, highlighting the growing role of the Indian diaspora in India's diplomatic outreach. Sharing the stage with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Modi received a rousing welcome as chants of "Modi" echoed across the packed arena. Albanese remarked that even legendary musician Bruce Springsteen had not witnessed such an enthusiastic reception at the venue.

The Melbourne event formed part of Modi's three-nation tour of Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand. Since assuming office in 2014, Modi has undertaken more than 100 foreign visits, covering around 100 countries, making him India's most widely travelled Prime Minister. His diplomatic outreach has extended beyond traditional global powers

to countries such as Israel, Mongolia, Rwanda, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Mauritius and Trinidad and Tobago, many of which have significant Indian diaspora communities. Addressing the gathering, Modi praised overseas Indians for preserving their cultural identity while contributing to their adopted countries. He also used cricket analogies and described India-Australia ties as "1+1=11", suggesting the partnership creates greater value through cooperation. Beyond the public spectacle, the visit focused on strengthening bilateral ties. India and Australia discussed expanding defence cooperation, implementing a long-pending uranium agreement and deepening collaboration in strategic sectors. Earlier in Indonesia, the two countries signed 16 agreements covering areas including defence and space cooperation, while Modi's New Zealand visit centred on en-



hancing economic engagement following the recently concluded trade agreement.

Modi's foreign engagements have also earned him more than three dozen civilian honours from different countries, including Indonesia's Bintang Adipurna. While Opposition parties have criticised the expenditure on overseas visits over the past decade, the government maintains that India's economic growth, strategic importance and global diaspora have enhanced the country's international standing, enabling deeper partnerships and broader diplomatic influence across regions.

Renault refreshes Kwid with simpler lineup, Climber now effectively priced at ₹4.99 lakh

Guwahati: Renault India has launched the refreshed Renault Kwid with a redesigned look, a simplified variant lineup and revised pricing aimed at making first-car ownership more accessible for Indian buyers. The updated hatchback now carries Renault's new brand identity and is available in just two variants—Evolution and Climber—offering customers a simpler purchase decision.

The New Kwid is priced between ₹4.52 lakh and ₹5.60 lakh (ex-showroom) under Renault's new "All India One Price" strategy. The company has also introduced a digital sales initiative, offering a ₹15,000 cash benefit on online purchases of the fully loaded Climber variant, bringing its effective transactional price



down to ₹4.99 lakh. Buyers can choose between a 5-speed manual and Easy-R AMT transmission.

Renault India Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Francisco Hidalgo said first-car ownership continues to be a major aspiration for millions of Indians, particularly among the growing middle class and two-wheeler owners looking to upgrade. He noted that more than 4.5 lakh customers have purchased the Kwid

since its debut in 2015, adding that the latest update focuses on making the product simpler, clearer and more relevant for today's buyers.

The refreshed Kwid retains its SUV-inspired styling while offering features such as 184 mm ground clearance, a 279-litre boot, a 1.0-litre petrol engine, an 8-inch touchscreen infotainment system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, a digital LED instrument cluster, rear-

view camera, dual front airbags, ABS with EBD, and 17 standard safety features. The Climber variant also receives exclusive styling elements, dual-tone interiors and rugged exterior accents.

In Guwahati, the updated Kwid is expected to strengthen Renault's position in Assam's growing entry-level passenger vehicle segment, where affordability, fuel efficiency and compact dimensions remain key buying factors. The effective ₹4.99 lakh pricing for the Climber variant, coupled with online purchase benefits and SUV-inspired styling, could attract young professionals and first-time buyers in Guwahati, where demand for budget-friendly hatchbacks continues to remain steady amid rising urban mobility needs.

Axis Max Life crosses ₹2 lakh crore AUM milestone with steady growth

Guwahati: Axis Max Life Insurance Company Ltd. has crossed ₹2 lakh crore in Assets Under Management (AUM) as of June 30, 2026, marking a major milestone for the life insurer. The company said its AUM grew by over 8 per cent year-on-year, driven by a disciplined investment strategy, customer-focused offerings and sustained business growth.

According to the company, the milestone reflects its emphasis on prudent risk management, diversified distribution channels, product innovation and a technology-driven operating model. Axis Max Life's investment portfolio spans government securities, corporate bonds, equities, commercial real estate, Alternate Investment Funds (AIFs), Infra-

structure Investment Trusts (InvITs) and Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs). More than 95 per cent of its debt investments remain allocated to sovereign and AAA-rated securities, while ESG principles continue to form part of its investment framework.

Sachin Bajaj, Chief Investments Officer, Axis Max Life, said crossing the ₹2 lakh crore AUM mark reflects the trust reposed by millions of customers and reaffirmed the company's commitment to disciplined investing, strong governance and long-term financial security for policyholders. The company also reported strong business performance for FY26, with Individual Adjusted First Year Premium (APE) rising 19 per cent to ₹9,885

crore, increasing its private market share to 10.4 per cent. It also achieved its highest-ever Individual Death Claims Paid Ratio of 99.8 per cent during the financial year, settling 20,529 claims worth ₹1,641 crore.

In Guwahati, the milestone is expected to strengthen confidence among customers in Assam and the Northeast, where demand for long-term financial protection and investment-linked insurance products has been steadily rising. Industry observers believe Axis Max Life's strong claims settlement record and disciplined investment strategy could further enhance its appeal among individuals seeking reliable life insurance and wealth creation solutions in the region.

TVS Motor, IndianOil partner to strengthen green LPG delivery network

Guwahati: TVS Motor Company and Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IndianOil) have entered into a strategic partnership to promote sustainable last-mile LPG cylinder distribution across India by deploying TVS King Kargo HD commercial vehicles through IndianOil's extensive distributor network. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in Coimbatore, marking the beginning of a long-term collaboration focused on cleaner and more efficient commercial mobility.

Under the partnership, TVS Motor will work with IndianOil's network of more than 13,000 LPG distributors to facilitate the adoption of TVS King Kargo HD vehicles for doorstep cylinder deliveries. The initiative aims to reduce carbon emissions, improve operational efficiency, lower the total cost of ownership for

distributors, and support the Government of India's clean mobility objectives. The first phase of vehicle deliveries to IndianOil distributors is expected to begin shortly.

TVS Motor Business Head for Commercial Mobility Rajat Gupta said the collaboration would help businesses improve productivity while making sustainable mobility more practical and accessible. IndianOil Executive Director V. C. Asokan said the induction of electric cargo vehicles would modernise the LPG distribution ecosystem, improve fleet productivity, reduce operating costs and contribute to greener logistics across the country.

In Guwahati, the partnership is expected to generate interest among LPG distributors and commercial fleet operators



in Assam, where demand for efficient last-mile delivery solutions continues to grow. Industry observers believe the availability of cleaner cargo vehicles could encourage faster adoption of sustainable transport in the region while supporting distribution efficiency and reducing operating expenses for local businesses.

NSTI (Women) Noida opens admissions for NCVET-approved CTS skill courses

Guwahati: The National Skill Training Institute for Women (NSTI-W), Noida, operating under the Directorate General of Training (DGT), Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), has invited applications for admission to its NCVET-approved, NSQF-aligned skill development programmes under the Craftsmen Training Scheme (CTS) for the 2026–27 academic session. The institute announced that interested candidates can apply online through its official admission portal by selecting the CTS Online Registration link. The last date for submitting applications is July 12, 2026, by 6 pm.

NSTI(W) Noida offers industry-oriented vocational training across a broad spectrum of conventional and emerging sectors, including Artificial Intelligence, Drone Technology, Semiconductor Technology, 5G Networks, Fashion Design, Computer Applications, Computer Aided Embroidery and Designing, Interior Design, Cosmetology, and Front Office Operations. The programmes are aligned with the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF), enabling trainees to pursue higher education while improving their employability across industries.

The institute said the initiative supports the Government of India's Skill India Mission by equipping women with industry-relevant skills, fostering future-ready talent, and contributing to the country's goal of becoming a global skill capital.

In Guwahati, the announcement is expected to generate interest among students and aspiring women professionals in Assam and the Northeast seeking specialised technical training. With rising demand for skilled manpower in technology-driven sectors such as AI, semiconductors and 5G, such nationally recognised programmes could enhance employment prospects for candidates from Guwahati while also encouraging greater participation in advanced vocational education.

MSDE extends Navachar Mantra registration deadline to July 15

Guwahati: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has extended the registration deadline for Navachar Mantra, its flagship national innovation platform, to July 15, 2026, following an overwhelming response from aspiring entrepreneurs and innovators across the country. The decision is aimed at enabling greater participation and providing more innovators with the opportunity to transform promising ideas into successful business ventures.

According to the Ministry, thousands of registrations have already been received through the official Navachar Mantra portal. The extended registration window is expected to attract more participants and bring forward a wider range of innovative ideas from across India.

Implemented by the National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD) under the aegis of MSDE, the initiative is supported by the Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer (FITT), IIT Delhi, as its Knowledge Partner. The programme offers structured mentorship, incubation support, industry partnerships, investor connect and institutional handholding to help in-



novators refine, validate and scale their ideas into sustainable enterprises.

Navachar Mantra seeks to strengthen India's startup ecosystem by encouraging participation from students, startups, professionals and grassroots innovators, including those from Tier-II, Tier-III and rural areas, in line with the government's vision of fostering innovation-driven growth and job creation. In Guwahati, the extended deadline is expected to generate increased interest among startups, educational institutions and young entrepreneurs in Assam and the Northeast. With the region witnessing a growing innovation ecosystem and government-backed entrepreneurship initiatives, Navachar Mantra could provide aspiring innovators from Guwahati and neighbouring states with valuable mentorship, industry exposure and access to funding opportunities, helping local ideas reach national markets.

Keeway positions Hypevolt-R to tap India's growing premium EV economy

Hyderabad: Keeway India has entered India's premium performance electric scooter segment with the launch of the all-new Hypevolt-R, signalling the company's focus on capturing a larger share of the country's fast-expanding electric mobility market. Introduced at an introductory ex-showroom price of Rs 1.99 lakh, the scooter is available for online booking at Rs 5,000, with deliveries expected to commence shortly through Keeway India's network of more than 40 authorised dealerships across the country.

The Hypevolt-R is powered by a 5.04 kWh dual removable NMC battery architecture and a 12 kW peak mid-mounted Permanent Magnet Synchronous Motor that delivers an IDC-certified riding range of 180 km, a top speed of 115 kmph and acceleration from 0-40 kmph in just 2.3 seconds. The scooter supports in-vehicle charging with 0-80 per cent charging in approximately three hours and offers

Eco, Normal and Sport riding modes. It is equipped with premium technologies including Dual-Channel ABS, Traction Control System, Hill Hold Control, Hill Descent Control, Intelligent Cruise Control, Blind Spot Detection, Rear Reverse Camera, a Bluetooth-enabled 5-inch TFT display, projector LED headlamps, reverse mode, USB Type-A and Type-C charging ports, 27-litre under-seat storage, front tele-

scopic suspension, five-step adjustable rear suspension, 14-inch alloy wheels with semi-slick tyres, 130 mm ground clearance and a 770 mm seat height. The scooter is available in Crystal White and Platinum Grey.

Managing Director Vikas Jhabakh said the Hypevolt-R has been developed to address changing consumer expectations by combining performance, intelligent technology and everyday practicality. The launch also strengthens parent company Adishwar Auto Ride India (AARI)'s premium mobility portfolio as it continues to expand its dealer network across India.



From an economic perspective, the launch reflects the ongoing shift in India's electric vehicle market from entry-level offerings towards premium, technology-driven products with higher value addition. Consumers are increasingly prioritising range, performance, advanced safety systems and connected features, encouraging manufacturers to invest in innovation and premium product development.

Sony raises the bar with Alpha 7R VI, brings 66.8MP flagship camera to India

Guwahati: Sony India has expanded its premium Alpha camera portfolio with the launch of the Alpha 7R VI, a flagship full-frame mirrorless interchangeable-lens camera featuring a 66.8-megapixel back-illuminated Exmor RS CMOS sensor and the latest BIONZ XR2 image processing engine. Designed for professional photographers and filmmakers, the new camera combines ultra-high resolution, AI-powered subject recognition, blackout-free continuous shooting at up to 30 frames per second, and advanced 8K video recording capabilities. Sony also introduced the XLR-A4 XLR adaptor, enabling professional-grade 32-bit float audio recording for enhanced video production.

The Alpha 7R VI offers up to 16 stops of dynamic range, 5-axis optical image stabilization, Real-time Recognition AF+ with skeletal-based subject tracking, dual USB Type-C ports, a high-capacity NP-SA100 battery, and support for Sony's Camera Authenticity Solution based on the C2PA standard. For video creators, it supports



8K 30p and full-frame 4K recording at up to 120p, alongside improved stabilization and professional audio integration. Sony India Head of Imaging & Professional Solution Business Mukesh Srivastava said the new model reflects the company's commitment to delivering cutting-edge imaging technology for creators seeking uncompromising performance.

The Alpha 7R VI will be available

across Sony Center stores, ShopatSC.com and Amazon from July 3 at an MRP of ₹4,70,990. As a limited-period launch offer, customers purchasing the camera will receive a complimentary NP-SA100 battery worth ₹10,490. Sony has also introduced compatible accessories, including the VG-C6 vertical grip, BC-SAD1 battery charger, DC-C2 power coupler and the XLR-A4 audio adaptor, to enhance professional workflows.

In Guwahati, the launch is expected to strengthen Sony's position in the premium imaging segment as demand grows among professional photographers, wedding filmmakers, wildlife enthusiasts and digital content creators across Assam and the Northeast. With Guwahati emerging as a regional hub for creative professionals and media production, the Alpha 7R VI's high-resolution imaging, AI-driven autofocus and advanced video capabilities are likely to appeal to users seeking flagship-grade equipment for commercial and cinematic projects.

Rasna eyes Rs 1,000 crore RTD market with nationwide launch of Jumpin family pack

Guwahati: Rasna has strengthened its presence in India's fast-growing ready-to-drink (RTD) beverage segment with the nationwide launch of its Jumpin 1-litre Tetra Pak carton, targeting an estimated Rs 1,000 crore premium fruit nectar market. The family-size pack, priced at Rs 110, is fortified with 10 vitamins and minerals and will be available through modern retail, e-commerce, quick-commerce platforms and other retail channels across the country.

The new range, available in Litchi, Mixed Fruit and Orange variants, complements Rasna's existing 125 ml and 200 ml packs. Manufactured in India under the 'Make in India' initiative using Tetra Pak packaging, the beverages are made from fruits sourced

and processed within the country. Rasna Group Chairman Piruz Khambatta said the launch reflects the company's commitment to offering international-quality fruit beverages at affordable prices while supporting Indian farmers and domestic manufacturing. Cassio Simões, Managing Director of Tetra Pak South Asia, said the partnership addresses rising consumer demand for safe, convenient and high-quality beverage solutions.

Backed by a nationwide marketing push, Rasna is reviving Jumpin's iconic rapper-led campaign alongside television, outdoor, digital, OTT and social media promotions. The company is also undertaking trade activations,



product sampling and promotional initiatives to boost consumer engagement.

In Northeast, particularly Guwahati, presents a promising growth market for premium RTD beverages as organised retail, quick-commerce services and online grocery platforms continue to expand in the region. Rising disposable incomes, increasing

demand for convenient packaged beverages and a young consumer base are expected to support sales of value-added fruit drinks. Rasna's nationwide distribution strategy could help the brand strengthen its footprint in Assam and neighbouring states, where demand for family-sized packaged beverages has been steadily increasing.

TRAI drive test flags mobile network performance across Dibrugarh and Tinsukia

Guwahati: The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has released the findings of its Independent Drive Test (IDT) conducted across Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts in Assam, offering consumers a detailed assessment of mobile network quality delivered by telecom service providers. The tests were carried out from April 13 to 17, 2026, under the supervision of TRAI's Regional Office, Kolkata, covering 374.5 km of city routes, 13 hotspot locations and 2.2 km of walk-test areas.

The exercise evaluated key Quality of Service (QoS) parameters, includ-

ing network coverage, Call Setup Success Rate (CSSR), dropped call rate, call silence instances, speech quality, and data download and upload speeds across 2G, 3G, 4G and 5G networks using live voice and data sessions. According to the report, Reliance Jio recorded the highest average download speed at 225.08 Mbps, followed by Airtel at 116.52 Mbps, Vodafone Idea at 27.27 Mbps and BSNL at 9.81 Mbps. Airtel reported one dropped call out of 447 established calls, Reliance Jio recorded two out of 446, Vodafone Idea 11 out of 445, while BSNL registered 144

dropped calls out of 501 established calls. Coverage gaps and call silence instances also varied among operators, with TRAI mapping affected locations for further action.

The drive covered areas including Dibrugarh Airport, Naharkatia, Duliajan, Digboi, Makum and Tinsukia, along with key public locations such as Dibrugarh Railway Station, Dibrugarh University, IOCL Digboi Refinery, Tinsukia Medical College and Hospital, and Assam Medical College and Hospital.

From a Guwahati market perspective, the findings are significant as the

city remains Assam's largest telecom and digital services hub, where network reliability is critical for businesses, startups, educational institutions and consumers. The publication of independent performance data is expected to encourage operators to strengthen infrastructure and improve service quality across the state, while helping users make informed choices based on objective network performance indicators. TRAI said the findings have been shared with the respective telecom operators for necessary corrective measures, with the detailed report available on its official



website.

IIMA Ventures and SAP open applications for third North East Growth Lab cohort



Mumbai: IIMA Ventures, in partnership with SAP has launched the third cohort of the North East Growth Lab (NEGL), inviting applications from 25 high-potential startups and social enterprises across Northeast India to accelerate innovation and enterprise growth.

The programme is open to entrepreneurs from Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura working in sectors such as agriculture, food processing, climate, livelihoods, biotechnology, financial inclusion and deep technology. Selected ventures will receive mentorship, strategic guidance, investor access, market linkages and capacity-building support to help scale their businesses.

The latest cohort builds on the success of previous editions, which have supported more

than 40 ventures across the region. In the first cohort alone, 41 social enterprises were backed, with 31 ventures receiving grants and investments worth Rs 2.38 crore. These enterprises later secured an additional Rs 2.29 crore through grants, debt and equity financing, while generating over 44 business opportunities and 27 active commercial engagements.

Ahead of the launch, IIMA Ventures conducted roadshows in Guwahati, Dimapur, Imphal and Agartala during June in collaboration with startup incubators and innovation hubs. Around 175 founders participated in the outreach programme, which also featured workshops on value proposition development and customer segmentation.

Announcing the launch, Chintan Bakshi, Partner – Incubation at IIMA Ventures, said the Northeast continues to emerge as a vibrant entrepreneurial hub, with founders developing scalable solutions rooted in local needs. He said the initiative aims to connect startups with funding, networks and market opportunities while strengthening the region's innovation ecosystem. Applications for the third cohort are now open, with ventures to be evaluated on innovation, scalability, impact potential and their ability to generate sustainable livelihoods.

Shree Cement expands vision care outreach to 1,500 people in Meghalaya

Shillong: Shree Cement Ltd, in partnership with Vision Spring Foundation, has completed a large-scale vision care initiative benefiting 1,500 people across Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district under the "See to Earn" programme, aimed at improving access to eye care services in underserved communities.

Implemented between May and June 2026, the initiative covered 742 men and 758 women through eye screening camps organised across villages including Moolansgi, Loomthari, Tongseng, Bomk-hosngi, Loomshyrngan, Dais-tong, Khaidong, Lumbangala, ShnongThymme and Khlieh-riat. Screening identified 953 people with refractive errors or presbyopia, accounting for nearly 64 per cent of those examined. Of them, 936 individuals received corrective eyeglasses, including 87 pairs distributed immediately at camp sites. Notably, all recip-



ients were first-time eyeglass users. The programme also referred 49 beneficiaries to hospitals for specialised treatment, including 16 suspected cataract cases.

A spokesperson for Shree Cement said the company remains committed to improving healthcare access and supporting healthier, safer and more productive communities through sustained social initiatives.

The programme followed a structured approach involv-

ing community awareness, registration, vision screening, referral support and eyeglass distribution. Vision Spring's quality supervision recorded an overall implementation score of 84 per cent during monitoring in Khaidong village. Beneficiaries Susan Langshing of Lumbangala and Magdalena Ladong of Loomthari said the intervention significantly improved their ability to read, use mobile phones and perform daily household tasks.

In Shillong, the initiative highlights the growing role of corporate social responsibility in strengthening healthcare delivery across Meghalaya. Improved vision care can enhance workforce productivity, support educational outcomes and reduce healthcare access gaps in rural areas, complementing the state's broader efforts to improve community well-being and inclusive development.

PM-SETU expands nationwide as Centre clears ₹1,237.58 crore ITI transformation plans

Guwahati: The Centre has approved the nationwide rollout of the Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs (PM-SETU), marking a major expansion of the flagship skill development programme with Strategic Investment Plans (SIPs) worth ₹1,237.58 crore across Odisha, Gujarat and Telangana. The decision was taken at the 4th National Steering Committee meeting chaired by Debashree Mukherjee, Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, in New Delhi on Monday.

The committee approved the transition of PM-SETU from its pilot phase to implementation across all 200 identified Industrial Training Institute (ITI) clusters in the country. It also cleared measures to simplify implementation, increase industry participation, encourage greater involvement of public sector undertakings and strengthen the institutional framework supporting the programme.



Among the approved projects, Jindal Naveen Avsar Limited will anchor the Barbil ITI cluster in Odisha with a proposed investment of ₹240.21 crore, while ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India will lead the Surat ITI cluster in Gujarat with ₹240.18 crore. In Telangana, Apollo MedSkills, Sri Siddharth Infotech & Services (I) Pvt. Ltd. and Neuland Foundation will anchor three ITI clusters with combined investments exceeding ₹757 crore.

PM-SETU aims to modernise the country's ITI ecosystem through industry-led infrastructure upgrades, future-ready curricula and

stronger employability outcomes by fostering closer collaboration between industry and training institutions.

The nationwide expansion of PM-SETU is expected to boost interest in skill development initiatives across Guwahati and Assam, where manufacturing, healthcare, logistics and infrastructure sectors continue to seek a skilled workforce. Industry experts believe the programme could encourage more companies in the Northeast to partner with ITIs, enhancing job-ready training, improving employability and supporting the region's growing industrial and economic development.

Manipur graduate's 250% salary jump highlights rising demand for data science skills

Imphal: The growing demand for technology professionals is creating new career opportunities for graduates from non-technical backgrounds, with Manipur's Ulenkhomba Konthoujam emerging as an example of how upskilling can accelerate career growth. The 25-year-old Mathematics graduate from Delhi University has increased his salary by over 250 per cent within two years after transitioning into the data analytics sector through Scaler's Data Science and Machine Learning programme. A resident of Imphal East, Ulen initially prepared for government examinations after graduation. However, following the death of his father in 2021, he became the sole earning member of his family, supporting his mother and two younger sisters. Seek-

ing financial stability and long-term career growth, he explored Data Science after being introduced to the field by his cousin and enrolled in Scaler's programme despite having no prior technical background.

The programme equipped him with programming, machine learning and data analytics skills through structured learning, practical projects, mentorship and interview preparation. In 2024, he secured his first role as a Data Analyst at Reveal HealthTech before moving to global commerce media and advertising technology company Criteo in the same role, recording a salary growth of more than 250 per cent in just two years.

Reflecting on his journey, Ulen said consistency, project-building and continuous

learning played a key role in his career transformation. He encouraged aspiring professionals to remain committed for at least a year, saying sustained effort eventually opens up better career opportunities.

In Imphal, Ulen's success highlights the growing relevance of digital skills and professional upskilling among the city's youth. As companies across India continue to recruit talent in data analytics, artificial intelligence and machine learning, such success stories are expected to encourage more graduates from Manipur to pursue technology careers, strengthening the state's participation in the country's expanding digital economy while reducing dependence on conventional employment avenues.

Flipkart reports 50% growth in food and nutrition category as Gen Z and Bharat fuel demand

Bengaluru: Flipkart has reported a 50 per cent year-on-year growth in its food and nutrition category, driven by Gen Z consumers and shoppers from Tier 2 and Tier 3 markets, signalling a significant shift in India's food consumption patterns. The homegrown e-commerce marketplace said Flipkart Minutes accounted for 25 per cent of overall

category demand, while non-metro markets contributed 65 per cent of total demand, reflecting rising adoption of healthier and premium food products beyond major cities.

The company said Gen Z recorded 60 per cent annual growth, with products such as protein oats, protein peanut butter, gourmet chocolates and protein muesli witnessing strong

demand. Searches for healthier alternatives, including cold-pressed oils, olive oils, authentic ghee, premium dry fruits and dates, rose by 80 per cent over the past year. Flipkart attributed the trend to increasing consumer focus on wellness, digital discovery and creator-led recommendations.

Speaking on the development,

Nishant Dalal, Vice President, Consumables (FMCG and General Merchandise), Flipkart, said consumers across metros and Bharat are making more conscious food choices, while digital commerce is enabling wider access to healthier products and supporting brands of all sizes.

The announcement coincided with Flipkart Food Fest 3.0, which

brought together more than 50 food and beverage brands, over 1,000 creators, celebrity chefs and entertainers. The festival featured over 10 product launches, immersive brand experiences and curated food zones, while an in-app sale running from July 7 to 15 offers shoppers across Bharat exclusive deals and new product launches.

Soft, juicy & delicious: Traditional Bengali Rasgulla making process

To make rasgulla, full-fat milk is curdled to extract fresh chenna (milk solids), kneaded into a smooth dough, and then rolled into tiny balls. After that, these balls are fried in a boiling sugar syrup until they are spongy, light, and airy.

The method for making it at home is as follows:

Curdle the Milk: Boil one to two liters of full-cream milk to curdle it. After turning off the heat, add a solution of water and vinegar or lemon juice until the milk separates into soft white curds and greenish whey.

Drain and Wash: Transfer the curds to a muslin cloth, wring out any extra moisture, and thoroughly rinse with cold water to eliminate the sourness. To drain the remaining water, hang it for 30 to 60 minutes.

Knead the Chenna: After the chenna has been drained, place it on a level surface and knead it

for 8 to 10 minutes with the heel of your palm until it is soft, smooth, and somewhat oily.

Form Balls: Roll the dough into smooth, crack-free balls after dividing it into small, equal-sized pieces.

Prepare the Syrup: To make the syrup, put one cup of sugar and four to five cups of water in a broad pan and bring it to a rolling boil. For flavor, you can add rose water or cardamom pods.

Simmer: Place the chenna balls gently in the boiling syrup, cover the saucepan, and simmer for 10 to 12 minutes over medium-high heat. The size of the balls will double.

Cool: To keep the cooked rasgullas from shrinking, place them in ice-cold water for a few minutes. Then, return them to the sugar syrup and let them soak for a few hours before serving.



Quick & Crispy Corn Pakodas for Every Occasion

Crispy golden corn pakodas are the perfect accompaniment to a warm cup of chai.

Ingredients: 1.5 cups fresh sweet corn kernels, ¾ cup besan, ¼ cup rice flour, 1 tablespoon finely chopped ginger, 2 green chillies, ½ cup finely chopped coriander leaves, ½ teaspoon carom seeds (ajwain), ¼ salt to taste, oil for frying.

Method : First, pulse half of the corn kernels in a blender until they are coarsely crushed, then mix them with the remaining intact kernels in a bowl. Add the besan, rice flour, coriander, carom seeds, ginger, chillies, and salt after that. To bind everything into a thick paste, thoroughly mix with just



a tablespoon of water. Now, carefully drop a spoonful of the corn mixture into the oil that has been heated in a deep pan until it shimmers. Fry until the pakodas are incredibly crispy and have a deep, consistent golden brown colour. Serve hot after draining on paper towels.

Quick Hack for Soft Idlis & Crispy Dosas

Have a craving for crispy dosas or soft idlis but neglected to ferment the batter? Baking soda and Eno are not necessary to expedite the procedure. When you're short on time, a straightforward pressure cooker method produces a heated atmosphere that speeds up the batter's fermentation.

After the batter is ready, transfer it to a bowl and season with salt. Place the batter container inside a pressure cooker that has been lightly

heated, close the lid while the whistle is on, and cook over low heat for approximately five minutes. Turn off the heat and let the batter sit in the cooker for about an hour. Faster fermentation is encouraged by the retained heat. Your choice of container can have an impact. Because they assist maintain a more suitable environment for fermentation, containers made of clay or stainless steel

are preferable to those made of plastic. It is especially advised to store idli and dosa batter in stainless steel. Add a small amount of rock salt, half a teaspoon yoghurt, a quarter teaspoon sugar, and a quarter teaspoon lemon juice if you need the batter ready sooner. To promote quicker



fermentation, cover the container, give it a good stir, and put it somewhere warm, like next to a gas stove.

It's advisable to save these rapid fermentation techniques for situations where time is of the essence. After resting for four to seven hours, naturally fermented batter still has superior flavour, texture, and digestion. For the best outcomes, plan ahead wherever you can.

How to Make Soft and Crispy Lotus Stem Shammi Kebabs

One of the most underappreciated ingredients in Indian cooking is lotus stem. It can be mashed, thinly sliced, stewed, or fried. It is the ideal vehicle to transport all the desi deliciousness because it has no flavour of its own.

Ingredients : Lotus stem / nadru, cleaned and sliced, Chana dal, Ginger-garlic paste, Green chillies, Fresh coriander, Mint leaves, Fried onions, Whole spices such as cardamom, cloves, cinnamon and bay leaf, Garam masala, Red chilli powder, Salt, Ghee or oil for cooking, Chilli-mint chutney, to serve, Laccha onion, to serve

Method : After thoroughly cleaning the lotus stem, also called nadru, it is cooked with chana dal, whole spices, ginger-garlic, green chillies, and seasoning until the lotus stem and dal are both mushy. The lotus stem adds a subtle bite and earthiness to the dish, while the dal gives the kebab body and that traditional shammi-style softness. After cooking, the mixture is thoroughly filtered to remove any remaining liquid. After that, it is ground with fried onions, fresh coriander, mint, and a faint hint of cardamom to create a smooth but slightly textured mixture. Just



enough cardamom is used to enhance the flavour of the kebab without making it overly sweet. The mixture is formed into little shammi-style kebabs and fried on a flat pan with a little oil or ghee until the inside remains mushy and the outside develops a light crust. The goal is to keep the comfort and mouthwatering texture of a traditional shammi kebab while adding lotus stem to give it a distinct vegetarian flavour. After that, it is ground with

fried onions, fresh coriander, mint, and a faint hint of cardamom to create a smooth but slightly textured mixture.

The Lotus Stem Shammi Kebab is intriguing because it adds an unexpected vegetarian base to the traditional comfort of a shammi. When combined with dal, lotus stem, or nadru, retains the delicate, nearly melt-in-your-mouth feel that people associate with shammi kebabs. It also has a lovely taste and earthiness.

From milk to magic: Easy homemade custard recipe

A mixture of milk or cream, egg yolks (or entire eggs), and sugar is slowly heated to make custard. The thick, velvety texture is produced when the eggs boil and coagulate. In order to keep pastry cream from curdling and to make it more stable, starches like cornstarch are frequently added.

Here's how to prepare a traditional handmade vanilla custard:

Two cups whole milk, half a cup white sugar, one teaspoon vanilla extract, three egg yolks, and three

teaspoons cornstarch are the ingredients.

Guidelines: Heat the Milk: Put the milk, sugar, and vanilla essence in a saucepan. Don't let the mixture boil; instead, heat it over medium until it's hot and the sugar melts. Whisk Eggs and Starch: In a different medium dish, whisk the cornstarch and egg yolks until they are smooth.

Temper the Eggs: While whisking constantly, gradually add a small bit of the heated milk mixture to the egg yolks. This keeps the eggs from

scrambling and is known as tempering.

Thicken: Pour the entire mixture back into the saucepan with the remaining milk after incorporating about half of the hot milk into the eggs. Stirring continuously, cook over medium heat until the mixture thickens and bubbles, about 5 to 8 minutes.

Cool: Once the custard is cool, pour it into bowls. If you want it cold, let it cool for ten minutes, then cover and refrigerate.



Mizoram CM Calls for Integrity in Public Service



Aizawl, July 9: Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma has called on trainee police officers to uphold integrity, discipline, and professionalism, stressing that policing is among the most vital forms of public service. Addressing eight officer trainees of the 26th batch of the Mizoram Police Service (MPS), he reminded them that police personnel are often the first to encounter citizens in distress and must carry out their duties with compassion and dedication. The Chief Minister noted that police officers frequently witness the hardships and suffering of people more than their moments of joy, making their role unique-

ly significant in society. He emphasized that the essence of policing lies not only in enforcing the law but also in serving the public with empathy and responsibility. Lalduhoma urged the trainees to embrace their responsibilities with sincerity, emphasizing that their conduct would directly shape the trust and confidence of the people in the police force.

By encouraging the young officers to prioritize public service above all else, the Chief Minister reinforced his government's commitment to strengthening the values of integrity and discipline within Mizoram's policing system.

Assam land rights body seeks activist's release

Guwahati, July 10: The Bhumi Adhikar Joutha Sangram Samiti (Joint Action Committee for Land Rights) has strongly condemned the arrest of land rights activist Aditya Chandra Rabha, alleging that the case against him is politically motivated and part of a broader attempt to suppress Assam's land rights movement. In a press release issued on Friday, the committee claimed that Rabha, who serves as an adviser to the Barduar Bagan Bhumi Pattan Dabi Samiti and spokesperson of the Nikhil Rabha Jatiya Parishad, was arrested on "baseless" charges to weaken the democratic movement for land rights and discredit its leadership.

The statement, jointly signed by convenors Gobinda Rabha, Krishna Gogoi, Bidisha Barman, and Subrata Talukdar, alleged that the state government is attempting to create divisions among indigenous communities by targeting grassroots leaders. "The tribal and indigenous people of Assam have been demanding their rightful land and have launched democratic protests across different parts of the state. Threatened by this movement, the government has jailed a grassroots



leader like Aditya Chandra Rabha on false pretexts," the committee said. The organisation condemned what it described as "oppressive actions" by the state administration and demanded Rabha's immediate release. It also urged the Assam government to halt what it termed as the suppression and harassment of democratic movements advocating public rights. According to the committee, Rabha was arrested on Thursday evening in connection with a case alleging financial irregularities in a cooperative small savings bank.

The committee further alleged that the two individuals who lodged the complaint have no association with the cooperative institution. It claimed that the police registered the case because the complainants were "local BJP supporters," describing the case as "vindicative," "politically motivated," and part of a larger conspiracy against the land rights movement.

Nagaland Reviews Census 2027 House Listing

Kohima, July 10: The House Listing phase of Census 2027 is progressing across Nagaland, with review and awareness meetings being conducted in several districts to ensure accurate and timely enumeration.

Director of Census Operations, Nagaland, Dr. Kenei Miachio, during a review meeting in Meluri, said the quality of data collected during the House Listing exercise would form the foundation for the subsequent phases of the Census. He urged officials to ensure complete and accurate enumeration of every household

while strictly following Census guidelines.

In East Dimapur, officials appealed to councillors and Gaon Buras to extend full co-operation to enumerators and create public awareness about the importance of providing accurate information. Similar awareness programmes were also held in Chumoukedima, where Urban Local Bodies were encouraged to actively support the House Listing exercise.

Meanwhile, a consultative meeting in Niuland clarified that the Census is intended solely for population enumeration and is not linked to



electoral rolls, delimitation, Aadhaar or PAN. In Chiephobozou, supervisors were instructed to maintain data quality through regular field

verification and strict adherence to Census procedures to ensure the successful completion of the nationwide exercise.

Mizoram Police bust smuggling network, arrest six suspects

Aizawl, July 10: Mizoram Police have seized heroin, methamphetamine, suspected wildlife contraband, and illegally imported areca nuts worth over Rs 4 crore and arrested six persons, including two Myanmar nationals, in a series of coordinated operations across the state over the past four days, police said in a statement on Thursday.

The largest seizure was made by the Champhai Police Special Task Force, which intercepted a Bolero Maxx on the night of July 7 and recovered about 210 kg of dehydrated manta ray (Mobula) gill plates concealed inside nine bags, the statement said.

The consignment, valued at around Rs 2.30 crore in the international black market, is believed to be one of the biggest wildlife-related seizures ever made in Mizoram, it said. The occupants of the vehicle, Rajiv Hussein Laskar (26) and Jinuk Uddin Laskar (30), both residents of Silchar in Assam, were arrested, it added. As the recovered items were suspected to have come from species

protected under wildlife laws, the seized contraband, the vehicle, and the two accused have been handed over to the Divisional Forest Officer, Champhai Forest Division, for scientific examination and further legal action under the relevant provisions of law, the statement said.

In another major operation, a joint team of the Aizawl District Special Branch (DSB) and the Assam Rifles seized 1.955 kg of methamphetamine worth around Rs 1.60 crore from the possession of Marcus Lalvenpuia (19) of Luimawi village in Mamit district at Aizawl's Lawipu area on Monday. A special team of Saitual Police, on Wednesday, intercepted a Tata truck during routine checking at the Kualmawi check gate after its driver attempted to flee. Police arrested Fulchand Ali Mondal (35), a resident of Dhubri district in Assam, and recovered 102 grams of heroin worth Rs 20.4 lakh concealed inside nine soap cases in the vehicle. Police also registered two separate heroin cases involving passengers travelling from the India-Myanmar bor-

der. On July 7, officers intercepted a Tata Sumo travelling from Zokhawthar in Champhai district to Aizawl and recovered 26 grams of heroin concealed inside a pot kept beneath the rear seat. Lalrinchhana (20), a resident of Khawmawi in Myanmar's Chin State, was arrested for possessing the contraband, the statement said.

A day earlier, Zokhawthar Police intercepted a maxicab and seized 48 grams of heroin hidden inside a sling bag carried by a Myanmar national identified as Thuanmawia (42) from Tshambhari village in Falam district. In a separate anti-smuggling operation on July 5, personnel at the Champhai Khankawn police check gate intercepted a tank lorry and seized 2,960 kg of dry areca nuts worth Rs 10.36 lakh, suspected to have been illegally imported from Myanmar, police said. As the driver failed to produce valid transport documents, the consignment and the vehicle were handed over to the Customs Preventive Force, Champhai, for further investigation, they added.

Arunachal: Khonsa-Lazu Road closed after 110-metre stretch caves in

Dibrugarh, July 08: A 110-metre stretch of the Khonsa-Lazu Road near the Post Office in Khonsa has been closed to vehicular traffic after the road caved in following heavy rainfall, disrupting connectivity to several villages and government establishments in Arunachal Pradesh's Tirap district. The affected road connects 16 villages under the Lazu Administrative Circle, including Tutnu Block villages, Lapnan, Kheti and Thinsa. It also provides access to key locations such as the APSTS Bus Station, Assam Rifles Headquarters, CRPF Headquarters and Government Higher Secondary School, Khonsa.

Officials said the damaged section has become narrow

and unstable due to erosion and subgrade failure, creating risks for commuters. The district administration has prohibited vehicle movement along the affected stretch. APSTS bus services on the route are also expected to remain suspended until the road is restored and declared safe.

During an inspection, Executive Engineer of the Public Works Department (PWD), Er. Taro Jeram, said the damaged portion falls within a slow-sinking zone and has suffered major subgrade failure. He recommended declaring the area a "black spot" due to its recurring instability. Jeram said that although annual maintenance works, including pavement repairs and parapet wall construction,



have been carried out, repeated land subsidence has prevented a permanent solution.

He said long-term measures under consideration include pile foundation work or construction of an alternative road alignment. He also advised residents living near the affected area to move to safer locations due to the risk of further land movement. To

reduce inconvenience, traffic has been diverted through Bank Colony and the Deputy Commissioner's Office Complex in Khonsa.

The district administration has asked the public to avoid the damaged stretch near the Post Office and use the designated diversion routes until restoration work is completed and the road is declared safe.

Ukraine's Kostyuk extends Wimbledon run as attacks hit Kyiv. She slams IOC decision on Russia

Kostyuk pursues tennis while Ukraine's war shapes every single day



London, July 09: As Marta Kostyuk played on Centre Court at Wimbledon on Wednesday, her compatriots in Ukraine were dealing with another deadly attack by Russia on Kyiv. It's been the same for much of Kostyuk's run to the semifinals. On Monday, after Russian missiles struck residential buildings close to where Kostyuk's parents live, she had to block that out to play her fourth-round match at

the Grand Slam tournament. Last week, Russia hammered the Ukrainian capital with an 11-hour drone and missile attack that killed at least 21 civilians. For Kostyuk, every day is about finding a way to focus on tennis while not shutting her eyes to what is going on at home. "It's not easy to disconnect entirely," Kostyuk said after beating Jasmine Paolini 6-3, 6-2 to reach the last four at Wimbledon for the first time. "It was really tough for me last week when the first big attack happened," the 24-year-old Kostyuk continued. "Then on Monday they ruined like four streets of residential buildings. It was like five kilometers away from where my parents live. Again, another difficult night and a lot of dead people, innocent people, kids. It's not easy. I try to be aware of everything that's going on. Of course, I try for these things not to influence me too much."

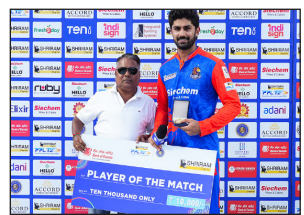
The 12th-seeded Kostyuk is in her second straight Grand Slam semifinal after losing to Russian teenager Mirra Andreeva in the last four at the French Open. The two did not shake hands before that match, which has become the standard procedure for meetings between Russian and Ukrainian players since the war broke out in 2022. Like in most sports, Russian players have competed as neutrals on the

men's and women's tennis tours since then. But the International Olympic Committee on Tuesday provisionally lifted its ban on Russia and recommended that individual sports drop the neutral status for athletes. The Kremlin on Wednesday welcomed that decision as an "important step" toward reinstating the rights of Russian athletes.

Kostyuk had a different take. "My thoughts are that it's terrible," Kostyuk said. "I think it's very, very far from fair play for all the countries involved here, not just for Ukraine. I 100 percent don't agree with this decision. ... I just want to go out there and hopefully beat every single Russian I play in the Olympics." There are no Russian singles players left in the Wimbledon tournament. Kostyuk will face Linda Noskova of the Czech Republic on Thursday. In the other semifinal, American Coco Gauff takes on another Czech player, Karolina Muchova. Kostyuk is the second woman from Ukraine to reach the semifinals at Wimbledon after Elina Svitolina did it in 2019 and 2023.

Svitolina lost on both occasions. So what would it mean for Ukraine if Kostyuk becomes the country's first finalist? "I'm hoping," she said, "it would mean a lot."

Pondicherry Premier League: Villianur record second win



Puducherry, July 09: Defending champions Villianur Mohit Kings rode on skipper Aman H Khan's 60 (32b, 3x4, 5x6) to beat Ruby White Town Legends by 23 runs at the CAP-Siechem Stadium on Thursday to register their second win in as many outings in the Shriram Capital-Pondicherry Premier League 2026. Put in to bat, Villianur posted 198/6 on the back of a 74-run fourth-wicket stand between Aman and Prithvi Rajan Khanna (38), and then put the brakes on RWTL with spinners Alim Shaikhilal Shaikh and Jishan Adil sharing five wickets. It was RWTL's second loss in two matches.

Surekha's WC finals medal to be upgraded to silver



Chennai, July 09: India's ace women's compound archer Jyothi Surekha Vennam's bronze medal from the Archery World Cup finals in Nanjing last year has been upgraded to silver, after finals winner Mariana Bernal tested positive for an anabolic steroid according to International Testing Agency (ITA). Reportedly, the Mexican tested positive for nandrolone in an out-of-competition test in September last year, three weeks after winning women's team compound gold in the 2025 World Archery Championships in Gwangju, South Korea. Nandrolone is prohibited under the World Anti Doping Agency's (WADA) as Anabolic Androgenic Steroids. "The athlete did not challenge her Anti-Doping Rules Violation (ADRV) and agreed with the consequences for her ADRV under the WA anti-doping rules as proposed

by the ITA," the agency, in a statement released on July 2, said. Due to her early admission of the violation, her ban period is cut down to three years. However, she will not take part in the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles.

This ruling will make Bernal's compatriot and World No 1 Andrea Becerra the new finals gold medallist. While Surekha had captured her long-awaited individual medal in the World Cup finals by beating Ella Gibson for bronze, the upgrade to silver will be a delight for her. She confirmed this development to this daily from Madrid, the host city for the Archery World Cup stage-4. "We have been told that it is updated in the ranking points," she said. It remains to be seen whether World Archery, the global governing body for the sport, would hand her the silver medal.

Nobdi Langting HS School Crowned Champions at Dima Hasao Inter-School Football Tournament 2026

Haflong, July 9: The District Level Inter-School Tournament, Dima Hasao 2026, concluded on Wednesday with great enthusiasm and sporting spirit at Sengya Tularam Mlaoyam Playground and Diham Raji Playground. The two-day tournament, held from July 8 to 9, featured competitions in the Under-17 Boys, Under-17 Girls, and Under-15 Boys categories.

The closing ceremony was graced by the Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC), Debolal Gorlosa, accompanied by Executive Members Donphainon Thaosen, Manjoy Langthasa, Porbita Johori, and L. Darnei. Also present were Haflong Municipal Board Chairman Pronath Rajiyung, Maibang Municipal Board Chairman Hirojit Jidung, along with officials, coaches,



teachers, students, and sports enthusiasts.

The championship final witnessed an exciting contest between Nobdi Langting Higher Secondary School and Nomjang High School, Mahur. Displaying exceptional teamwork and determination, Nobdi Langting Higher Secondary School emerged victorious to lift the championship trophy.

A total of 22 zonal champion teams, including five Under-17 girls' teams

from the district's nine zones, participated in the central meet. Following the tournament, the top three teams in each category—Under-17 Girls, Under-17 Boys, and Under-15 Boys—qualified to represent Dima Hasao at the State-Level Inter-School Tournament.

Speaking on the occasion, CEM Debolal Gorlosa congratulated the champions, runners-up, and all participating teams for their dedication, discipline, and outstanding sportsmanship. He encouraged the young athletes to continue striving for excellence and wished the state-level qualifiers success in the upcoming competition.

The tournament concluded on a high note, reaffirming the district's commitment to promoting sports, nurturing young talent, and encouraging healthy competition among students.

Gambhir, India face series defeat pressure

Chennai, July 9: India head coach Gautam Gambhir defended the team's aggressive T20 batting philosophy despite the defeat to England in the third T20I, saying a high-risk, high-reward approach will occasionally result in batting collapses. He admitted India failed to assess the conditions properly at Trent Bridge and stressed that experienced middle-order batters must adapt better to match situations instead of relying solely on attacking cricket.

Gambhir maintained that the approach has delivered success in recent years and insisted India would continue to back positive cricket. However, he acknowl-

edged that overseas conditions demand better game awareness, including reading the pitch, breeze, boundary dimensions and match situation before taking risks. He said adapting to conditions is crucial for sustained success, especially in countries where pace and bounce play a bigger role. The head coach also defended the team's selection policy, insisting every player must earn a place in the playing XI and combinations are picked with results in mind. With senior players Hardik Pandya and Jasprit Bumrah unavailable, Gambhir urged patience as India rebuild their T20 side. Trailing the series, India will look to avoid a second successive



T20 series defeat when they face England in the fourth match in Bristol on Thursday.