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Governor Reconstitutes Executive Committee of 13th NCHAC; Six New Executive Members Appointed



Haflong, May 19: In a significant development in the administration of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council, the Governor of Assam has issued an official notification appointing six members as Executive Members (EMs) of the 13th North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council with immediate effect. According to the notification

issued from Dispur on May 18, 2026, under the provisions of Rule 28(1) of the Assam Autonomous Districts (Constitution of District Councils) Rules, 1951, as amended and applicable to the Council, the following members have been appointed as Executive Members namely Lalremsiama Dammel, Projith Hojai, Noah Daime, Ngulminlal

Lienthang, Manjoy Langthasa and Ratan Jarambusa. The order was issued by the Governor exercising powers conferred under the relevant provisions of the Assam Autonomous Districts Rules read with Rule 19(1). Further, under Rule 21(3) of the same Rules, the Governor has also ordered that the following Executive Members shall cease to hold office as Executive Members of the 13th North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council with immediate effect namely, Devojit Bathari, EM and Biswajit Daolagupu, EM. The notification marks a fresh reconstitution of the Executive Committee of the Council and is expected to bring administrative changes within the autonomous bod.

24-Hour Pharmacy Bandh Concludes Peacefully Across Dima Hasao

Haflong, May 20: The 24-hour nationwide Pharmacy Bandh observed from 5:00 AM on May 20 to 5:00 AM on May 21 concluded peacefully across Dima Hasao district. The strike was organized in response to the nationwide call given by the All India Organisation of Chemists & Druggists under the direction of the Chemists & Druggists Association of Assam.

The bandh was called in support of various demands aimed at safeguarding the rights, interests, and survival of the pharmacist and chemist fraternity across the country. The key objectives of the protest included stopping the online sale of medicines, preventing deep discount practices by large corporate companies, curbing the circulation and sale of spurious medicines, and demanding the withdrawal of GSR 220 dated March 26, 2020.

Medicine shops and pharmacies remained closed in several parts of the district, including Haflong town, Umrangso, Mahur, Maibang, Harangajao, and Langting, among other areas. The shutdown witnessed significant participation from members of the pharmacy and medicine dealer community.

The association stated that these demands were raised to protect small and medium chemists, ensure fair trade practices in the pharmaceutical sector, and safeguard public health from the growing threat of counterfeit and unregulated medicines.

Despite the bandh, emergency healthcare services continued without disruption, with



special arrangements made to ensure the availability of essential medicines and healthcare support during the strike period. The association had earlier issued necessary notifications to its members to prioritize public welfare and patient care during the bandh.

The Dima Hasao Medicine Dealers Association expressed gratitude to all its members and the public for their cooperation and support in making the bandh successful.

Orientation Programme on "Jan Bhagidari – Sabse Door, Sabse Pehle" Held in Haflong

Haflong, May 18: An orientation meeting regarding the special outreach programme titled "Jan Bhagidari – Sabse Door, Sabse Pehle" was held on Monday at the DC Conference Hall, Haflong, under the chairmanship of Gayatri Hyalinge, District Commissioner of Dima Hasao. The special outreach initiative is scheduled to be conducted from May 18 to May 25 across tribal habitations in the state. In Dima Hasao district, the programme will be implemented in all five development blocks covering villages across the district with the objective of strengthening grassroots participation and ensuring the delivery of government services to remote areas. As discussed during the meeting, Gram Sabhas and plantation drives will be organized in villages beginning from May 19 onwards. The programme will also include entitlement drives, saturation camps, and village-level health screening camps to be conducted on a daily basis throughout the campaign period. Officials informed that transect walks and announcements regarding Jan Sunwai grievance hearings will also be conducted on May 20. Applications and grievances under



the Jan Sunwai programme will be received during the campaign, followed by fast-track mobilization, daily monitoring, and consolidation of issues for prompt action. The concluding session of the week-long campaign will be held on May 25 in the presence of district, mandal, and village-level officials, during which future action plans and follow-up measures will also be discussed. Among those present during the meeting were A. K. Ilias Noshim Ahmed, ADC; Mithinga Daimary, Assistant Commissioner; Sukanya Nunisa, Deputy Secretary of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC), along with the DIPRO and officials from various departments including Panchayat & Rural Development, Block Development Offices, Veterinary, Medical, Industries, and Food & Civil Supplies departments.

Media Sensitization Meeting on HPV Vaccination Campaign Held in Dima Hasao

Haflong, May 18: A media sensitization and interaction meeting on the ongoing HPV Vaccination Campaign was organized by the Health Department in Dima Hasao to spread awareness on cervical cancer prevention and emphasize the importance of timely vaccination among adolescent girls. During the meeting, officials informed that the HPV vaccination campaign commenced on March 17 and will continue for a period of three months across the district. Addressing the media, Dr. Sarsing Rongpi, Joint Director of Health Services, stated that Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is a very common viral infection that can later lead to cervical cancer in women. He explained that cervical cancer develops in the cervix, the lower part of the uterus, and is mainly caused by persistent infection with certain types of HPV transmitted through close contact. Dr. Marina Changsan, District Immunisation Officer, appealed to media personnel and the public to actively support the campaign by spreading correct information, reducing myths and misinformation, and encouraging eligible girls to receive the HPV vaccine. She informed that vaccines are being supplied through designated Cold Chain Points to ensure safe storage and proper distribution. The HPV vaccine is being provided free of cost at all Gov-



ernment Hospitals in the district. Meanwhile, Dr. Nenei Hranghol briefed the media on the mode of transmission of the HPV virus and explained that the infection is commonly spread through close skin-to-skin contact. She stated that HPV infections often do not show symptoms during the early stages, making awareness, screening, and vaccination crucial for prevention and early protection. It was informed that the vaccine is currently being administered to girls aged between 14 and 15 years under the ongoing campaign. Health officials described the vaccine as safe, effective, and approved by health authorities, adding that it provides protection

against the HPV strains responsible for most cervical cancer cases. During the interaction, officials shared that the vaccination drive is progressing steadily, with 332 beneficiaries already covered out of the remaining target of 1,432 beneficiaries in the district. The campaign is being implemented through schools and health facilities with support from the Education Department, ASHA workers, ANMs, and media personnel. The Health Department urged parents, schools, community leaders, and media partners to extend full support towards the HPV vaccination initiative to ensure a healthier and safer future for girls and women in the district.

Uttarakhand bans street Namaz to maintain law and order

Law above all: Order prioritized for Char Dham

Dehradun, May 22: Taking a firm stand on the issue of religious gatherings on public thoroughfares, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has unequivocally declared that offering namaz on roads will not be permitted in the state. Emphasising that “No one is above the law,” the Chief Minister asserted that maintaining smooth traffic and public order is the state government’s top priority, particularly during the peak Char Dham Yatra season. CM Dhami’s remarks came on Friday while addressing newly inducted personnel from the Irrigation and Agriculture departments in Dehradun. The statement follows similar hardline policies implemented in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh and discussions surrounding public conduct in other states. Addressing the gathering, CM Dhami drew a clear line between religious observance and public disruption. “Devbhoomi is a land of spiritual tourism. We cannot allow anyone to disturb the peace or disrupt the daily lives of citizens under the guise of religious activity,” he said.

The Chief Minister explicitly stated that religious prayers

should be confined to designated places of worship, such as Mosques and ‘Eidgahs’, or areas sanctioned by the administration. “Roads are meant for public transit; they cannot be turned into venues for religious events or demonstrations. We will not allow the blocking of thoroughfares, which causes inconvenience to the general public,” he



added. The issue has sparked a fresh political debate in the state. Countering statements made by certain Congress leaders who reportedly suggested leniency regarding the practice, CM Dhami accused the opposition of “politics of appeasement.” “There is an established system for everything. No one has the right to disrupt this order. While some political parties may support the obstruction of roads for their own agendas, our government’s policy is clear and uncompromising,” the Chief

Minister stated.

Conversely, former Chief Minister and senior Congress leader Harish Rawat offered a nuanced take, suggesting that while offering namaz on roads should not become a “common practice,” officials should exercise discretion if overcrowding necessitates temporary adjustments in unavoidable circumstances. The Chief Minister concluded with a stern warning to those attempting to disrupt public order. He assured that the administration would take strict legal action against anyone violating traffic regulations or compromising the state’s cultural harmony. “We will not allow roads to be blocked.

Anyone attempting to create obstacles in movement or law and order will face the full force of the law,” CM Dhami warned. With lakhs of pilgrims flocking to the state for the Char Dham Yatra, the government is keen to ensure that the infrastructure remains accessible and free from congestion. Following the footsteps of states like Uttar Pradesh, the Uttarakhand administration has signalled that maintaining the rule of law on public streets remains non-negotiable.

Delhi court defers hearing in Lalu Yadav money laundering case



New Delhi, May 22: A Delhi court on Friday deferred till June 9 the pronouncement of its decision on framing of charges against Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad Yadav, his family members and others accused in the alleged money laundering case linked to the IRCTC hotel scam being probed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). The Rouse Avenue Court, which was expected to deliver the order on Thursday, deferred the pronouncement till June 9. The ED case relates to the alleged laundering of proceeds of crime arising out of the IRCTC hotel scam registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The agency has alleged that irregularities were committed in the awarding of contracts for the operation of IRCTC hotels during Lalu Prasad Yadav’s tenure as the Union Railway Minister between 2004 and 2009. According to the prosecution, the hotel maintenance contracts were allegedly awarded without following prescribed norms to a private company linked to close

associates of the RJD supremo. It has further been alleged that, in return, three acres of prime land were acquired through a benami company allegedly linked to the family members and associates of Lalu Prasad Yadav. The accused in the case include Lalu Prasad Yadav, his wife Rabri Devi, sons Tejashwi Yadav and Tej Pratap Yadav, daughters Misa Bharti and Hema Yadav, besides others. Earlier, the Special Judge had reserved the order on framing of charges after hearing detailed arguments advanced by counsel appearing for the accused persons and the ED. The Delhi High Court is also seized of criminal revision petitions filed by Lalu Prasad Yadav, Rabri Devi and Tejashwi Yadav challenging the trial court order directing framing of charges against them in the corruption case linked to the same alleged scam. In October last year, the Rouse Avenue Court framed charges against the accused persons for offences related to cheating, criminal conspiracy and corruption under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Prevention of Corruption Act after they pleaded not guilty. Lalu Prasad Yadav has consistently denied the allegations and maintained that the tenders for the IRCTC hotels were awarded in a fair and transparent manner.

Ghaziabad police probe deaths of two men in flat



New Delhi, May 15: Two separate tragedies were reported on Friday. In Ghaziabad, the decomposing bodies of Rakesh Sharma (~75) and his caretaker Nem Singh (~60) were found in a flat after neighbors noticed a foul smell. Police found no external injuries, stating the deaths appear natural and occurred two to three days prior. The men lived alone and rented out autorickshaws. Meanwhile, a horrifying double murder shook south-east Delhi’s Govindpuri, where a mother and her minor son were stabbed to death inside their home. The unidentified suspect fled after looting ₹10–12 lakh in cash alongside gold and silver valuables.

Bomma slams Rahul Gandhi over ‘traitor’ remarks

New Delhi, May 15: Former Karnataka Chief Minister and BJP MP Basavaraj S. Bommai strongly criticized Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Friday, alleging that his recent remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah insulted the entire nation. Bommai condemned Gandhi for reportedly calling the leaders “traitors,” emphasizing that PM Modi was constitutionally elected three times and enjoys global respect. He stated that the Modi government’s bold steps—such as revoking Article 370 to curb terrorism and launching ‘Operation Sindoor’ against cross-border threats—have significantly fortified national security and eliminated Naxalism. Arguing that Gandhi holds a responsible constitutional post and must avoid “low-level remarks,” Bommai warned that such statements would further diminish the Congress party, which has already lost ground in recent state elections. He demanded that Gandhi issue a public apology to the nation, warning that otherwise, the public would teach him a lesson.

Centre to launch ‘smart border project’ along Bangladesh, Pakistan border in 2027

Shah: Northeast states, West Bengal back strict anti-infiltration

New Delhi, May 22: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said the Centre will soon hold a meeting with the chief ministers of Assam, Tripura and West Bengal on border security, asserting that the BJP-led governments in these states believe there should be “no infiltration” from across India’s borders. “The governments in Tripura, West Bengal and Assam believe that there should be no infiltration from across Indian borders. The Home Ministry will soon hold a meeting with the chief ministers of these states regarding border security,” he said. Shah made the remarks while delivering the annual Rustamji Memorial Lecture hosted by the Border Security Force in New Delhi, where he also announced centre’s plan to launch a “smart border” project.

The Union Home Minister said the Modi government has decided to es-



establish a “strong security grid” along the nearly 6,000-km Pakistan and Bangladesh fronts within the next year using advanced surveillance and border-monitoring technology. “I want to assure BSF troops that we will launch this smart border project in the

60th year of the force’s raising and we will make the Pakistan and Bangladesh borders impenetrable,” Shah said. According to him, the proposed smart border system will be supported by technology-driven mechanisms to strengthen border management and

curb infiltration. “The smart border will be aided by technology, drones, radars and smart cameras which will help create an impenetrable border,” he said. Shah further urged BSF personnel to ensure that what he termed a “conspiracy” to artificially alter the demography of India is defeated. “We will find each and every infiltrator in the country and send them outside India,” the minister asserted. The lecture was organised in memory of K F Rustamji, who served as the first Director General of the BSF after the force was raised in 1965. The Home Minister also said the Union government would soon announce a high-powered demography mission that had been declared earlier. The remarks are expected to hold significance particularly for Assam and Tripura, where illegal infiltration and demographic concerns have remained politically sensitive issues for decades.

Nationwide Chemists' Strike Observed Against Unregulated Online Medicine Sales

Guwahati, May 20: Chemists and druggists across the country on Wednesday successfully observed the one-day nationwide token strike called by the All India Organisation of Chemists & Druggists in protest against the continued illegal and unregulated online sale of medicines and other issues affecting public health and the livelihood of lakhs of small chemists.

Responding to the call given by the AIOCD and the Chemists & Druggists Association of Assam, chemists and druggists across all 30 districts of Assam kept their establishments closed and extended unanimous support to the agitation.

As part of the protest, a memorandum addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi was submitted through the respective District Commissioners and Sub-Divisional Officers. The memorandum highlighted three major concerns — the illegal and unregulated online sale of medicines, home delivery of



medicines without valid and verified prescriptions, and predatory deep discounting practices adopted by online medicine platforms, which the association claims are severely affecting licensed chemists and small pharmacy owners.

The memorandum further demanded the immediate withdrawal of GSR 817(E) and GSR 220(E), alleging that these provisions are being misused by various online platforms and quick commerce operators for uncontrolled medicine delivery

services.

Chemists and druggists expressed serious concern that medicines are not ordinary commodities and that their uncontrolled online sale without proper prescription verification poses a significant threat to public health, patient safety, and the regulatory framework established under the Drugs & Cosmetics Act.

The pharmaceutical trade fraternity also recalled its contribution during the COVID-19 pandemic, stating that chemists across the coun-

try had worked tirelessly as frontline healthcare support providers and ensured uninterrupted supply of medicines and essential healthcare services to the public during the crisis.

The associations alleged that despite repeated representations and submission of evidence regarding illegal online medicine operations, no effective action has yet been taken by the concerned authorities. They appealed to the Central Government to take immediate corrective measures in the larger interest of patient safety, public health, and the protection of lakhs of small licensed chemists and their employees.

The strike remained peaceful across Assam and received overwhelming support from chemists and druggists throughout the state. Despite the bandh, the association ensured that essential and emergency medicines were made available to needy patients as part of its humanitarian responsibility.

Mukesh Singh Likely Next Manipur DGP After Centre Approves Deputation

Manipur, May 22: The Centre has approved the inter-cadre deputation of Mukesh Singh, the police chief of Ladakh, to Manipur, paving the way for his likely appointment as the state's Director General of Police (DGP), according to an official order. Mukesh Singh, a 1996-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the AGMUT (Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram and Union Territories) cadre, has been granted inter-cadre deputation to Manipur for a period of three years.

The approval was granted by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet as a special case in public interest, according to a Personnel Ministry order dated May 21. Officials said Singh is expected to take charge as Manipur Police chief following the transfer of incumbent DGP Rajiv Singh, who has been appointed Secretary (Security) in the Cabinet Secretariat.

The Secretary (Security) heads the administrative framework of the Special Protection Group (SPG), the elite force re-



sponsible for the security of the Prime Minister and immediate family members residing at the official residence. The appointment comes at a critical time for Manipur, which has been grappling with ethnic violence since May 3, 2023. The unrest began after a "Tribal Solidarity March" was organised in hill districts to protest the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe status.

The prolonged conflict has claimed at least 260 lives and displaced thousands of people, making restoration of law and order one of the most pressing challenges before the state police leadership.

DDMA Dima Hasao Organises Workshop on Earthquake Risk Mitigation to Strengthen Disaster Resilience

Haflong, May 18: The District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), in collaboration with the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), organized a one-day workshop on "Earthquake Risk Mitigation" at the Training Hall of

tors to enhance preparedness and strengthen resilience against earthquake-related disasters in the region. The training sessions were conducted by a panel of distinguished experts including Rajesh Dutta, Engineering Consultant (Earthquake Risk

eral important topics related to earthquake safety and disaster mitigation, including the earthquake scenario in the North-East region, causes and hazards of earthquakes and their impact, the importance of BIS codes in construction safety, introduction to pile foundation and retrofitting technologies, and prevailing building bye-laws in Assam along with their implementation at the local level. During the sessions, experts emphasized the urgent need for adopting safe construction practices, strict enforcement of building bye-laws, and the integration of modern technologies to reduce earthquake risks in vulnerable areas like Dima Hasao. Officials present during the workshop stated that the programme would significantly contribute towards enhancing disaster resilience in the district by equipping engineers and contractors with practical knowledge, technical expertise, and effective strategies for earthquake risk reduction and safer infrastructure development.

Mitigation), ASDMA; A. K. Dey from the Department of Civil Engineering, National Institute of Technology Silchar; Rajib Gupta, DRR Specialist (Projects); Chiranjib Prasad Sarma from the Department of Civil Engineering, Assam Skill University; and Satyabrata Choudhury. The workshop covered sev-



the District Commissioner's Office, Haflong, on Sunday. The workshop was inaugurated by Shhaurya Sharma, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) and Chief Executive Officer of DDMA, Dima Hasao. The programme brought together engineers from various line departments along with contrac-

Congress led opposition paid price for 'politicising' Zubeen Garg's death in Assembly polls: Himanta

Guwahati, May 20: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sharma on Wednesday claimed that 'politicising' musician Zubeen Garg's death backfired on Congress-led opposition in Assam polls as they were rejected by the people. He visited Garg's cremation ground, 'Zubeen Khetra' at Kamarakuchi in Sonapur on the outskirts of Guwahati to pay tribute to the musician who died in Singapore on September 19 last year while swimming in the sea.

The 52-year-old singer had gone to the Southeast Asian nation to perform in the 4th edition of the festival. Sarma stressed that there should be no politics in the name of Zubeen Garg. "As promised, after the dust of the elections settled, I visited the site today purely as a tribute to someone who, for us, is evergreen. He was never a matter of politics, but an emotion that lives in every heart," the chief minister said. He also claimed that politicising the unfortunate death of Garg backfired on the Congress-led opposition during the recently concluded



Assembly elections. "Some of them have stopped invoking his name as soon as polls got over, and those who came to his shrine had no knowledge of Zubeen when he was alive," the CM said. "Zubeen was, is and will always remain my favourite! Today, at Zubeen Khetra, I paid my tributes to Assam's eternal heartthrob and reviewed the progress of the development work underway, an effort that will stand as a fitting tribute to his enduring legacy," Sarma told reporters.

The Congress and its allies had criticised the Assam government during election campaigns over the alleged delay in setting up the fast-track court in the Zubeen Garg

death case. Giving justice to Zubeen Garg within 100 days of government formation was a "guarantee" by the Congress, which criticised the BJP as no national party leader visited Zubeen Khetra.

During his visit on Wednesday, Sarma reviewed the ongoing development works at the Zubeen Khetra. He said the initial phase of construction has begun, while steps have also been taken to safeguard the site from possible landslides. Once the construction of the boundary wall is completed, the main development work of the Samadhi Khetra is expected to progress in a structured manner, the chief minister added.

Editorial

Balancing Digital Growth and the Survival of India's Chemists

The nationwide strike call given by the All India Organisation of Chemists & Drug-gists on May 20 has once again brought into focus a growing conflict between rapid digital expansion and the survival of traditional healthcare service providers. Representing over 12.40 lakh chemists and drug distributors, the organisation has raised concerns that deserve serious attention from both the Government and the public.

At the heart of the agitation lies the unchecked growth of online pharmacies and the aggressive discounting practices adopted by large corporate players. While digital platforms have undoubtedly improved convenience for consumers, especially in urban areas, questions surrounding regulation, patient safety, and fair competition cannot be ignored. Medicines are not ordinary consumer products; they are sensitive healthcare commodities that directly impact human lives. Their sale and distribution demand strict monitoring and accountability.

The allegations raised by the AIOCD regarding the misuse of regulatory relaxations under G.S.R. 817(E) are alarming. The possibility of medicines being sold without proper physical verification, repeated use of

prescriptions, and the circulation of AI-generated fake prescriptions pose serious risks to public health. Unregulated access to antibiotics and habit-forming medicines can accelerate antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which is already emerging as one of the world's greatest healthcare threats.

Equally important is the issue of economic survival for small and independent chemists. Across India, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, local pharmacies serve as the backbone of the healthcare delivery system. These establishments not only supply medicines but also provide emergency support, healthcare guidance, and immediate availability of life-saving drugs at odd hours. If deep discounting by large corporations continues unchecked, thousands of small pharmacies may eventually be forced to shut down, weakening the country's medicine distribution network and reducing accessibility in remote regions.

At the same time, the debate should not become a battle between technology and tradition. Digital healthcare services and e-pharmacies can play an important role in modern India, especially in improving accessibility and efficiency. However, innovation must operate within a strong regulatory

framework that ensures accountability, ethical practices, and fair competition. No business model should be allowed to grow at the cost of public safety or by destroying smaller players through predatory pricing.

The Government must therefore act as a balanced mediator. It should initiate meaningful dialogue with stakeholders, strengthen regulatory mechanisms for online medicine sales, and ensure strict compliance with prescription verification norms. Simultaneously, policies must protect small chemists from unfair market practices while encouraging responsible digital innovation.

The concerns raised by the AIOCD are not merely about trade interests; they reflect larger questions about healthcare ethics, patient safety, and economic sustainability. India's healthcare system depends heavily on its vast network of neighbourhood pharmacies. Preserving that network while embracing technological advancement is the challenge before policymakers today.

A balanced and transparent policy approach is urgently needed — one that protects both innovation and the millions of livelihoods connected to the pharmaceutical trade, while placing public health above all else.

Why agriculture must align with health needs

In a historic bid to align the nation's farms with its public health needs, the Indian government has launched a national mission-mode initiative: SEHAT (Science Excellence for Health through Agricultural Transformation). The landmark program formally merges the operations of two premier scientific bodies—the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). Unveiled by Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda and Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, the partnership aims to transform India's food systems to achieve the aspirational goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047. Bridging the Farm-to-Plate Divide

For the first six decades post-Independence, India's public policies focused strictly on calorie volume, undernutrition, and anemia. However, changing food environments have triggered a "slow-motion public health emergency." The country now battles a dual burden: persistent micronutrient deficiencies alongside a rapid surge in lifestyle-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular illnesses fueled by visceral adiposity (belly fat). Instead of isolating obesity as an individual's failure of "over-nutrition," SEHAT approaches it as a systemic quality deficit. Modern food processing often strips natural grains of essential dietary fiber, starving the gut microbiome—the trillions of gut bacteria that communicate via the vagus nerve to boost human immunity and regulate metabolism. The Five Pillars of Transformation To build a resilient nutritional chain, SEHAT is deploying a five-pronged framework focused on evidence-based, culturally adaptive outcomes: Bio-fortified Crops: Breeding plants like iron-rich pearl millet, zinc-enriched wheat, and vitamin A-packed carrots to naturally store vital nutrients, bypassing the market vagaries and uneven pricing of factory food fortification. Integrated Farming Systems: Combining tradi-

tional crop cultivation with livestock, fisheries, and horticulture to foster rural dietary diversity and augment farmer incomes. Agri-Nutrition for NCDs: Cultivating functional food alternatives, such as traditional millets (Kodo, Kutki, Ragi, Bajra), which act as preventive dietary "medicine" against chronic diseases. Farmer Health & Safety: Implementing scientific protocols to protect agricultural workers from the occupational hazards of pesticide exposure and chemical imbalance. One Health Approach: Spearheading integrated human-animal-environmental disease surveillance. A Paradigm



Shift to Preventive Care At the launch event, Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda highlighted that SEHAT signals a critical paradigm shift for Indian healthcare—moving from a reactive, treatment-heavy model to proactive prevention and early intervention. Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan reinforced the shift by invoking the ancient Ayurvedic canon of healthy nutrition: "Hith bhojan, mith bhojan, rithu bhojan" (eating food that is beneficial, moderate, and seasonally appropriate). Chouhan emphasized that India must look beyond pure production volumes. "The country's next major target should be nutrition-rich agricultural production. We must focus on growing what people should eat for better health," he stated. By synthesizing cutting-edge crop engineering with medical validation, SEHAT positions nutrition security as the core engine powering a healthier, more productive India over the next two decades.

Personal liberty as a constitutional imperative

In a significant constitutional course correction, a Supreme Court Bench of Justices B.V. Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan granted bail to Syed Iftikhar Andrabi, a Jammu and Kashmir resident incarcerated since 2020 under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). Reaffirming that "bail is the rule, jail is the exception," the apex court criticized previous coordinate benches for denying bail to activists like Umar Khalid by ignoring the binding three-judge precedent established in K.A. Najeeb (2021). Highlighting Andrabi's six-year detention based largely on self-incriminatory confessions and noting dismal national UAPA convic-

tion rates, the Bench ruled that statutory restrictions cannot indefinitely override constitutional guarantees of personal liberty and speedy trial under Article 21. Following the Supreme Court's critical ruling in Andrabi (2026), the Delhi High Court has granted a brief three-day interim bail to activist Umar Khalid, reversing a lower trial court's rejection. Legal scholars have criticized the trial court's initial refusal as a sign of "judicial anarchy," where individual judges' opinions disrupt adjudicative discipline by ignoring binding precedents.

While landmark rulings like K.A. Najeeb (2021) dictate that statutory restrictions under Section 43D(5) of the



UAPA must yield to Article 21's guarantee of a speedy trial, lower benches frequently deviate, signaling a deepening conflict between anti-ter-

ror law stringency and constitutional liberty. SC Reference Request Escalates Tension Over Draconian UAPA Bail Divergence NEW DELHI:

Legal experts are warning of a dangerous institutional shift following the Delhi Police's request—accepted by a two-judge Supreme Court Bench—to refer the issue of UAPA bail to a larger Bench. The state cites conflicting judgements, but critics dismiss the move as an attempt to legitimize "judicial indiscipline," noting that a smaller bench deviating from established precedent does not constitute a valid legal conflict under Article 145(3). High courts across India have historically navigated these waters by prioritizing liberty. In Kalidas (2025), the Kerala High Court ruled that stringent orders like Gurwinder Singh (2024) can-

not dilute the landmark K.A. Najeeb (2021) precedent, which establishes that statutory embargoes must yield to Article 21's guarantee of a speedy trial. By challenging the recent Andrabi (2026) verdict—which heavily criticized lower courts for subverting Najeeb—the state's push for reference risks reviving a dark "ADM Jabalpur moment" where fundamental rights were suspended in favor of state overreach. Legal scholars argue that while the apex court often champions the presumption of innocence in rhetoric, true personal freedom will remain elusive until human rights are centered within India's broader political and judicial discourse.

BharathCloud launches first AI-ready sovereign cloud centre at CtrlS Hyderabad facility

Guwahati: BharathCloud, an Indian AI-ready cloud services provider, has launched its first Cloud Centre at CtrlS Datacenters' Hyderabad DC1 facility, marking a significant step towards strengthening India's sovereign and AI-ready digital infrastructure ecosystem. The datacentre ecosystem transaction was exclusively advised by global property consulting firm JLL.

The Cloud Centre was inaugurated by Sridhar Pinnareddy, Founder and CEO of CtrlS Datacenters. The launch comes amid rising demand for secure, scalable and sovereign digital infrastructure driven by increasing AI workloads, data localisation requirements and rapid digital transformation across industries.



The initiative marks the beginning of BharathCloud's infrastructure expansion journey in India. The facility is hosted within CtrlS' AI-ready Rated-4 datacenter ecosystem and is supported by JLL's infrastructure advisory capabilities. Congratulating BharathCloud, Sridhar

Pinnareddy said India's AI and digital growth would require resilient and secure digital infrastructure at scale. BharathCloud Co-Founders Rahul Takkallapally and Padma Reddy Sama said the collaboration with CtrlS and JLL would help the company expand its sovereign cloud

ecosystem nationally and globally.

JLL's Rachit Mohan said the partnership reflects growing demand for AI-ready cloud infrastructure worldwide.

In Guwahati, the rapid expansion of AI-ready cloud infrastructure across India could also benefit Northeast India's growing digital economy, startups, fintech firms and government digital services, creating future opportunities for regional connectivity and data infrastructure development.

BharathCloud plans to invest \$100 million (around ₹950 crore) over the next five years to build sovereign AI-ready cloud infrastructure across metro cities and Tier-II and Tier-III locations in India.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds opens first Assam showroom in Guwahati

Guwahati: Jewellery retailer Malabar Gold & Diamonds today launched its first showroom in Assam at Guwahati, marking a major step in the company's expansion across East India. With the opening, the brand's presence in the eastern region has increased to 21 showrooms.

Spread across 8,000 square feet, the new outlet has been designed to offer a premium jewellery shopping experience with spacious displays, modern interiors and personalised customer service. The showroom was inaugurated by Sonu Sood along with O. Asher, Managing Director, India Operations, in the presence of senior company officials, customers and members of the local community.

The showroom features a wide range of gold, diamond, platinum, gemstone and silver jewellery for bridal, festive, gifting and daily wear categories. Customers can explore collections including Mine diamond jewellery, Era uncut diamonds, Precia gemstone jewellery, Ethnix handcrafted jewellery and Virazpolki jew-



ellery.

A major attraction is the Chitrangi collection, inspired by the artistic heritage of Bengal and Odisha, featuring temple motifs, alpina-inspired patterns and traditional Eastern craftsmanship.

Speaking on the launch, Malabar Group Chairman M. P. Ahammad said Guwahati's cultural and commercial importance made it a strategic market for the company's expansion in the North East.

In Guwahati, the launch is expected to strengthen organised jewellery retail in Assam as consumer demand for branded and certified jewellery continues to rise. The entry of a large national brand like Malabar Gold & Diamonds could further boost competition, improve customer choices and support growth in the premium jewellery segment across the city and the wider Northeast market.

TVS Racing concludes nationwide selection program for India OMC 2026

Guwahati: TVS Motor Company on Monday announced the successful completion of the TVS India One Make Championship (OMC) 2026 Training & Selection Program, reinforcing its focus on developing grassroots motorsport talent across the country. The nationwide initiative was conducted across four cities and concluded with the final selection round held from May 15 to May 17 at the Madras International Circuit in Chennai. More than 120 racers participated in the selection process across Women, Media, Rookie, Electric and TVS Apache RR310 Expert categories.

The company said participants underwent structured

training and evaluation sessions under TVS Racing experts, focusing on riding technique, track awareness, consistency, rider safety and race discipline. The 2026 season also marks 20 years of the TVS Apache brand, which the company said continues to benefit from TVS Racing's "Track to Road" philosophy. Vimal Sumbly, Head Business – Premium, TVS Motor Company, said the championship has played a major role in creating a professional and accessible racing ecosystem in India while helping riders progress from beginner stages to national and international competition. Since its launch in 1994, TVS India OMC has trained



more than 4,000 racers and emerged as one of the country's largest rider development platforms. TVS Racing, founded in 1982, has also recorded multiple successes in road racing, rallying and supercross formats.

The growing popularity of performance motorcycles and motorsport culture is also

influencing Guwahati, where demand for premium bikes and racing-inspired models has seen a steady rise among young enthusiasts. Dealers in the region believe initiatives such as the TVS India OMC are helping strengthen brand engagement and awareness around professional riding culture in Northeast India.

Vi launches flexible international roaming plans for summer travellers

Mumbai: Vi has launched a new range of flexible International Roaming (IR) plans for postpaid customers, introducing fresh 7-day, 14-day and 21-day validity packs aimed at offering greater convenience and flexibility for overseas travellers during the summer season.

The telecom operator said the new offerings have been designed to cater to the growing and diverse travel needs of customers travelling abroad for business, education, medical tourism and leisure purposes. With the latest additions, Vi's international roaming portfolio now includes 17 different IR packs with validity options ranging from one day to 30 days.

According to the company, the plans

cover more than 120 countries and include a mix of limited and truly unlimited data, voice and SMS benefits. Vi stated that it remains the only telecom operator offering unlimited voice and data benefits across 41 key international destinations. Customers can also purchase and manage the packs digitally through the Vi App.

Commenting on the launch, Avneesh Khosla, Chief Marketing Officer at Vodafone Idea, said international travel requirements are becoming increasingly dynamic and the new roaming plans are aimed at giving customers greater flexibility and peace of mind while staying con-

are you paying for a roaming plan that doesn't fit your travel plan?

New roaming plans that match your travel needs, **only with Vi.**

Get now

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nected abroad.

Tata AIA declares record Rs 2,173 crore bonus payout for policyholders in FY26

Mumbai: Tata AIA Life Insurance has announced its highest-ever bonus payout of ₹2,173 crore for participating policyholders for the financial year ended March 31, 2026, marking an 18 per cent rise from ₹1,842 crore declared in the previous fiscal. The insurer said more than 8.74 lakh participating or "Par" policies will benefit from the record bonus declaration, which has been announced across several eligible participating insurance plans including Smart Value Income Plan, Shubh Flexi Income Plan, Shubh Maha Life, Diamond Savings Plan and Value Income Plan.

The company said the bonus declaration reflects strong financial performance and disciplined fund management, with assets under management growing 18 per cent year-on-year to ₹1,45,617 crore as of March 31, 2026. Commenting on the development, Kshitij Sharma, Appointed Actuary at Tata AIA Life Insurance, said, "We are proud to announce

yet another milestone year of record bonus payouts for our participating policyholders. This record bonus declaration reflects Tata AIA's disciplined investment strategy, prudent fund management, and continued commitment to delivering long-term value to our



policyholders."

He added that the company remains focused on helping customers secure their financial future through solutions offering protection, stability and long-term wealth creation. The company noted that participating plans continue to attract consumers seeking stable returns, life cover and disciplined long-term savings amid market volatility.

Skoda Auto India upgrades Kodiaq range with new luxury and tech features

Guwahati: Škoda Auto India has refreshed its flagship Kodiaq luxury 4x4 SUV range for 2026 with new technology, enhanced premium features and a wider variant lineup aimed at different customer segments. Prices for the updated Kodiaq start at Rs 36.99 lakh (ex-show-room).

The updated Kodiaq lineup now includes Lounge, Sportline and Selection L&K variants, each offering a distinct focus on accessibility, sportiness and premium luxury. The company has also introduced Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) in the Sportline and Selection L&K variants. These include adaptive cruise control, lane assist, blind spot detection, rear traffic alert and front assist with automatic braking functions.

The Kodiaq Lounge has been positioned as a value-luxury offering with a five-seater configuration and 786-litre boot space. The Sportline variant highlights Skoda's motorsport-inspired styling with glossy black elements, while the Selection



L&K continues as the top-end luxury trim with massage seats, Cognac leather upholstery and premium comfort features.

All variants continue with the 2.0-litre TSI petrol engine producing 150kW power and 320Nm torque, paired with a seven-speed DSG automatic transmission and 4x4 capability. Speaking on the update, Ashish Gupta, Brand Director of Skoda Auto India, said the company aims to cater to every luxury 4x4 aspiration Kodiaq range following

strong sales growth in 2025 and early 2026.

In Guwahati, luxury SUV demand has been witnessing steady growth, particularly among premium buyers looking for performance-oriented vehicles suited for both urban roads and Northeast terrain conditions. Dealers in Guwahati expect the updated Kodiaq range, especially the Sportline and Selection L&K variants, to attract affluent customers seeking advanced safety features, all-wheel-drive capability and premium interiors.

Jayant Chaudhary represents India at Uganda President Museveni's swearing-in ceremony

Guwahati: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education Jayant Chaudhary represented India at the swearing-in ceremony of Yoweri Kaguta Museveni in Uganda, marking the beginning of Museveni's seventh term as President of the Republic of Uganda. During the visit, Chaudhary conveyed greetings and a message of solidarity from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the people of India. He highlighted the importance of political continuity and stability for national development and reaffirmed India's commitment to strengthening its longstanding partnership with Uganda and the African continent. As part of the visit, Chaudhary toured the Uganda campus of National Forensic Sciences University in Jinja, India's first overseas public academic campus, which admitted its inaugural batch of students in October 2025. He said the institution would emerge as a centre of excellence in foren-



sic sciences, research, development and capacity building, reflecting growing India-Africa cooperation.

In Kampala, the minister also interacted with members of the Indian diaspora, underlining strong people-to-people ties between the two countries. The strengthening of India-Africa ties could also open new

opportunities for businesses in Guwahati, particularly in the education, skill development and training sectors. Experts believe institutions and entrepreneurs in Assam could benefit from future academic collaborations and international partnerships linked to India's expanding engagement with African nations.

Tata AIA launches dividend leaders pension fund for retirement wealth creation

Mumbai: Tata AIA Life Insurance has announced the launch of its new "Tata AIA Dividend Leaders Index Pension Fund", aimed at helping consumers build long-term retirement wealth through investments in India's leading dividend-paying companies. The newly launched fund will invest in 50 consistent dividend-paying firms and track the BSE 500 Dividend Leaders 50 Index through a passive investment strategy in line with IRDAI regulations. According to the company, the fund is designed to combine market-linked growth opportunities with life insurance protection while focusing on financially strong and established businesses.

Tata AIA said dividends generated by companies in the portfolio will be reinvested into the fund, allowing investors to benefit from long-term compounding and capital appreciation. The fund will maintain an equity allocation between 70 and 100 per cent, while up to 30 per cent may be invested in cash and money market instruments for flexibility.

The New Fund Offer (NFO) opened on May 20 and will remain available till May 27, with policies issued during the period priced at an NAV of ₹10. The fund is available through Tata AIA Smart Pension Secure and Tata AIA Premier Pension Secure plans.



Tata Coffee Gold launches summer-ready café-style coffee experience at home

Guwahati: As summer temperatures rise across the country, Tata Coffee Gold has introduced its premium freeze-dried coffee range aimed at bringing café-style coffee experiences into homes. The company highlighted that the range is designed for both hot and cold coffee preparations, offering consumers a variety of flavours for everyday indulgence during the summer season.

The range includes five variants — Original, Vanilla, Hazelnut, Brownie and Tiramisu — each positioned to cater to different consumer preferences. The Original variant offers a rich and full-bodied coffee taste with a strong aroma, while Vanilla focuses on

smooth and mellow flavours suitable for creamy lattes and iced coffees. Hazelnut delivers a nutty café-style flavour profile, while the Brownie variant is aimed at consumers looking for dessert-style coffee experiences. The Tiramisu flavour, inspired by the classic Italian dessert, combines creamy and cocoa-like notes for a more

indulgent blend.

The company said its freeze-dried technology helps preserve aroma and flavour, allowing consumers to recreate café-style beverages at home with convenience.

In Guwahati, premium instant coffee consumption has been witnessing grad-



ual growth, particularly among young consumers and working professionals seeking convenient beverage options. Retailers in Guwahati said flavoured coffee variants and café-inspired products are increasingly gaining traction as demand rises for affordable at-home indulgence products during the summer months.

Star Health launches affordable 'Value Plus' insurance plan in Guwahati

Guwahati: Marking 20 years since its foundation, Star Health and Allied Insurance Company Limited on Thursday launched 'Value Plus', an affordable health insurance product aimed at expanding healthcare coverage in Tier 2, 3 and 4 cities, including Guwahati.

The company said the new plan offers sum insured options ranging from ₹7.5 lakh to ₹25 lakh for both individual and family floater covers at nearly 20 per cent lower premiums through a curated hospital network. The offering is available for adults aged 18 years and above and dependent children from 91 days to 25 years.

According to the company,

customers will receive a full refund of the first-year base premium after five consecutive claim-free years. The plan also includes cumulative bonus benefits, wellness-led support, tele-consultations, AYUSH treatment, home care, ambulance cover and long-term policy discounts.

In Guwahati, Star Health currently has 39 network hospitals, including 29 curated Value Network hospitals under the Value Plus plan. Across Assam, the insurer operates through 18 branches and over 13,000 agents. The company said it has covered 1.97 lakh lives in the state and settled 11,330 claims worth ₹58.7 crore during FY26.

Managing Director and

CEO Anand Roy said the launch was part of the company's mission to make health insurance more accessible and affordable for families in smaller cities. Business Head for North-East and Odisha Aditya Biyani said the product was designed to address rising medical costs while offering premium efficiency and wider healthcare access.

In Guwahati, the launch reflects rising demand for affordable health insurance products in the city and across Assam amid increasing healthcare expenses. Lower-premium products with higher coverage and curated hospital access could attract more first-time policy buyers in the region.

TVS Venu to acquire up to 9.9% stake in Jana Small Finance Bank

Guwahati: TVS VENU has agreed to acquire a minority stake in Jana Small Finance Bank through a mix of primary issuance of warrants and secondary purchase, taking its equity ownership to up to 9.9% on a fully diluted basis. The deal includes a 4.9% stake to be held by TVS Motor Company, subject to regulatory approvals and customary closing conditions.

The investment marks TVS VENU's latest move to strengthen its presence in India's financial services sector. The group already operates through TVS Credit Services and has also signed agreements to acquire 100% stake in PGIM India Asset Management.



Jana Small Finance Bank currently serves more than 12 million customers through 822 outlets spread across 23 states and two Union Territories. As of March 31, 2026, the bank reported advances and deposits exceeding Rs 35,000 crore

each, with a growing focus on mass retail and MSME banking. Sudarshan Venu, Chairman of TVS Motor Company, said the investment aligns with the group's long-term strategy of supporting institutions serving India's expanding digital financial ecosystem and growing credit demand.

In Guwahati, banking and financial services experts said the investment could further boost confidence in retail lending and MSME financing across the Northeast. Market observers noted that expanding banking networks and digital finance penetration are creating new opportunities for businesses and consumers in Guwahati and other emerging urban centres in the region.

Timely treatment and proper footwear can prevent chronic heel pain, say Medanta doctors

Guwahati: Doctors at Medanta – The Medicity have raised concern over the increasing number of plantar fasciitis cases, warning that ignoring recurring heel pain can lead to long-term mobility issues and chronic discomfort.

The advisory comes after cases like that of Sukrita, a 42-year-old corporate professional, who suffered persistent heel pain for nearly six months before being diagnosed with plantar fasciitis. Doctors said the condition, which affects an estimated 4-7% of India's population, is often overlooked in its early stages despite causing sharp heel pain, reduced mobility, and complications in the

knees or hips if left untreated.

Dr. Attique Vasdev, Vice Chairman, Orthopaedics at Medanta Gurugram, said plantar fasciitis occurs when the plantar fascia — the tissue connecting the heel bone to the toes — becomes inflamed due to repeated stress, obesity, prolonged standing, or poor footwear choices. He said people above 40 years of age, runners, dancers, athletes, and those frequently wearing high heels are particularly vulnerable.

Doctors said symptoms often worsen after waking up or following long periods of standing. They added that diagnostic tests such as X-rays, ultrasound, or MRI scans may

be needed in severe cases.

In Guwahati, awareness around foot health and orthopaedic care has been steadily increasing in the city, particularly among working professionals and fitness-conscious residents. Demand for supportive footwear, physiotherapy services, and specialist consultations has also grown in Guwahati's healthcare market in recent years.

Dr. Vasdev will consult patients on May 23 at Sun Valley Hospital in Guwahati. Medanta has also launched a dedicated North East helpline with multilingual support to assist patients with appointments and doctor consultations.

Bajaj General Insurance launches MHCP EDGE+ with health cover up to Rs 5 crore



Guwahati: Bajaj General Insurance has launched 'My Health Care Plan Edge+' (MHCP EDGE+), a new health indemnity insurance plan offering flexible and customised coverage options with sum insured ranging from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 5 crore.

The company said the plan has been designed to address rising healthcare costs and reduce out-of-pocket expenses through a modular structure that allows customers to choose add-ons and riders based on their healthcare requirements and affordability.

MHCP EDGE+ offers unlimited reinstatement of the sum insured within a policy year, ensuring continued protection in case of multiple claims. The base plan covers hospitalisation expenses including room rent, ICU charges, surgeries, modern treatment methods, AYUSH therapies, pre and post hospitalisation costs, day care procedures, domiciliary hospitalisation, organ donor expenses, and emergency am-

balance services.

The insurer said the product also includes optional riders such as Consumables Plus, Super Cumulative Bonus, Major Illness and Accident Multiplier, and global coverage options for emergency and planned treatment abroad.

Among the key features are the Age Shield rider, which locks the premium at the entry age until a claim is made, and Smart Tenure, allowing customers to pool their total sum insured across the policy tenure and use it flexibly from the first year itself.

Speaking on the launch, Dr. Tapan Singhel said the product aims to make health insurance more flexible, transparent, and aligned with evolving customer healthcare needs.

Available in both individual and family floater options, the plan offers lifetime renewability, policy tenures of up to five years, and coverage for individuals from three months of age.

Campus Activewear unveils new brand identity focused on youth culture and individuality

Guwahati: Sports and athleisure footwear brand Campus Activewear has unveiled a new brand identity as part of its larger evolution into a culture-led and youth-focused brand. The announcement was made during the company's Annual Distributors' Meet, Shoecase 2026, held from May 16 to 18.

The refreshed identity reflects the company's "Move Your Way" philosophy and is centred around themes of individuality, movement and self-expression. The new visual design features three outward arrows and lines symbolising multiple paths, choices and possibilities for the younger generation.

More than 300 distributors from across India attended the three-day event, which included leadership interactions, product showcases, fashion presentations and in-

fluencer-led engagements. Former Indian cricketer and current India men's cricket team coach Gautam Gambhir attended the event as chief guest and spoke about



the importance of individuality and resilience in achieving success.

Nikhil Aggarwal, Whole Time Director and CEO of Campus Activewear, said the new identity represents a generation that

values authenticity and freedom while strengthening the brand's connection with consumers and everyday movement.

The company said it currently operates through over 23,000 retail touchpoints and more than 300 exclusive outlets across India, while also maintaining a strong omni-channel presence through e-commerce platforms and its official website.

In Guwahati, retailers and footwear traders say the growing popularity of athleisure products among urban youth and college students has boosted demand for affordable fashion-forward sports footwear in the city. Campus' renewed youth-centric branding could further strengthen its presence in Guwahati and the wider Northeast market, where lifestyle and sports-inspired fashion continue to gain traction among young consumers.

90% of heart-related deaths preventable through lifestyle changes: Medanta doctors

Dimapur: Specialists from Gurugram-based Medanta – The Medicity have stressed that nearly 90 per cent of heart-related deaths can be prevented through healthier lifestyle choices, amid rising concerns over increasing cardiovascular diseases among younger people in India.

Padma Shri awardee Dr. Praveen Chandra said sedentary lifestyles, long working hours, stress, irregular sleep and unhealthy eating habits were contributing significantly to heart diseases among young adults. He noted that conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity were now being detected at earlier ages.

"Small but consistent lifestyle changes such as regular exercise, balanced eating,

stress management and avoiding smoking can significantly reduce the chances of serious heart conditions," Dr. Chandra said.

Dr. C ManpaPhom said even moderate activities like walking for 45 minutes four to five times a week, along with proper sleep and stress reduction, could help maintain heart health.

The doctors also highlighted India's advancement in cardiac care, stating that treatment facilities in the country now match global standards. They stressed that prevention and awareness remain the most effective tools in reducing cardiovascular disease.

Medanta has signed an MoU with the Government of Nagaland for accreditation under the Chief Minister's Health

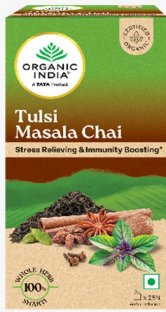
Insurance Scheme and has also partnered with IDAN to promote health awareness in the state.

In Dimapur, healthcare awareness and preventive cardiac consultations are seeing growing demand as urban lifestyles and work-related stress increase among residents. Private hospitals and diagnostic centres in the city have also witnessed rising interest in specialised heart care services and wellness consultations. Nagaland residents can consult Dr. C ManpaPhom from Dr. Praveen Chandra's team at Faith Hospital, Dimapur, on May 23, 2026, from 9 am to 1 pm. Medanta has also launched a dedicated North East helpline to assist patients with appointments and healthcare support in multiple regional languages.

Tea brands showcase regional flavours and wellness blends on International Tea Day

Guwahati: Marking International Tea Day, leading tea brands have introduced a range of products focused on regional preferences, wellness and energy-driven consumption trends in India's growing tea market.

Tata Tea Premium continued to strengthen its "Desh Ki Chai" proposition by offering customised blends tailored to regional tastes across India. The company said the initiative includes state-specific packaging and localised communication campaigns inspired by regional pride, aiming to deliver a tea experience rooted in local preferences while maintaining its national identity. The products are available through retail stores, Amazon and Tata NutriKorner.



Meanwhile, Tata Tea Agni launched "Extra Josh", described as India's first tea with added natural caffeine. Positioned around the brand's "Josh JagayeHar Roz" campaign, the product targets consumers seeking an energising beverage for busy mornings and demanding schedules. The product is also available through major retail and e-commerce platforms.

In the wellness tea segment, Organic India highlighted its Masala Black Tea and Tulsi Masala Chai blends. The company said the products combine Assam black tea with spices and herbs such as ginger, cardamom, cinnamon and Tulsi, offering antioxidant-rich and immunity-supporting benefits through certified organic ingredients.

In Guwahati, the growing popularity of premium regional and wellness teas is influencing consumer buying patterns in the city. Retailers noted rising demand for flavoured and immunity-focused tea products, particularly among younger consumers and health-conscious families, with online platforms further expanding access to specialised blends across the Guwahati market.

NCVET holds first Research Advisory Committee meeting to boost evidence-based skilling policies

Guwahati: The National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET), under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), on Tuesday convened the first meeting of its Research Advisory Committee (RAC) to strengthen research-driven policymaking in India's vocational education and training ecosystem.

The meeting was chaired by Smt. Debashree Mukherjee, Secretary, MSDE and Chairperson of NCVET. Senior representatives from government bodies, industry, academia, think tanks and research organisations participated in the discussions, including NITI Aayog, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Directorate General of Training (DGT), Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), IIM Calcutta, NCAER, TISS, Ashoka University and NIEPA. The committee discussed short, medium and long-term priorities for strengthening institutional collaboration, consolidating research efforts and improving regulatory effectiveness in the skilling sector. Members also stressed the need for greater participation of states, adoption of emerging technologies, skill gap analysis and inclusion of youth perspectives in the national skilling agenda.

Mukherjee said research and data-driven insights would play a key role in shaping fu-



ture-ready skilling policies as India moves towards becoming a global skill capital. Prof. (Dr.) Ashok Kumar Gaba, Executive Member of NCVET, said the initiative would help build globally benchmarked vocational education systems.

The proposed Research Division within NCVET aims to function as a national knowledge and research hub for vocational education, labour market analysis and policy reforms. In Guwahati, the initiative could help strengthen Assam's growing skill development ecosystem by improving industry-linked training, employability and workforce planning, especially in sectors such as hospitality, logistics, tea, tourism and emerging digital services.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor steps up biodiversity conservation efforts

Dimapur: Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) on Thursday reinforced its commitment to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development on the occasion of International Day for Biological Diversity 2026 through a series of environment-focused initiatives aligned with the Toyota Environmental Challenge 2050 (TEC 2050).

The company said it continues to integrate biodiversity conservation into its manufacturing ecosystem, environmental action plans and community engagement programmes under its "Respect for the Planet" philosophy. TKM highlighted initiatives such as the Toyota Greenwave Project, Miyawaki afforestation, green-belt development, lake rejuvenation and habitat restoration around its Bidadi manufacturing facility.

TKM's 25-acre Ecozone currently supports more than 650 native plant species, including 25 IUCN red-listed species, and around 400 faunal species. The company said over 62,000 students and stakeholders have been engaged through its Education for Sustainable Development programme promoting eco-conscious practices.

During the reporting period, the company planted 747 saplings within its campus and



1,492 saplings externally. It also developed over 6.6 acres of land at the Channapatna Police Training School with nearly 4,090 saplings across 33 native species. TKM further stated that nearly 89% of its water needs are met through rainwater harvesting and recycled water, while 100% renewable grid electricity helped avoid 509,000 tCO₂e emissions.

In Dimapur, sustainability-led initiatives by major automobile manufacturers are increasingly influencing customer sentiment in the Northeast. Industry observers noted that environmentally responsible manufacturing and green branding are helping companies strengthen consumer trust, particularly among younger and environmentally conscious buyers in Nagaland.

Tata Soufull launches millet muesli range to tap growing wellness market

Guwahati: Tata Soufull has expanded its breakfast portfolio with the launch of its new Ultimate Millet Muesli range, aimed at consumers looking for targeted nutrition solutions linked to weight management, protein intake and gut health.

The company on Tuesday announced that the new range includes three variants — Tata Soufull Ultimate Millet Muesli Slimcare for weight management goals, Ultimate Millet Muesli Hi-Protein for protein goals, and Ultimate Millet Muesli Probiotic for gut health support. The products are built around millets as the core ingredient as the company looks to strengthen its position in India's growing millet-based foods segment.

Alongside the launch, the brand unveiled its new campaign, "Nourish Your Goals with Millets", highlighting the importance of consistent daily nourishment in achieving long-term wellness goals. The campaign will roll out through a digital-first media strategy across YouTube, Meta platforms, influencer collaborations and social media channels.

Deepika Khattar Bhan, President-Packaged Foods, Capital Foods and Soufull, said con-

sumers are increasingly shifting from generic healthy eating habits to food choices aligned with specific lifestyle goals. The launch further reinforces Tata Soufull's strategy of combining traditional millet nutrition with modern food formats to attract urban consumers seeking healthier breakfast options.



In Guwahati, the growing demand for healthy packaged foods and millet-based products among urban households is expected to create fresh opportunities for brands like Tata Soufull. Retailers in Guwahati said consumer awareness around protein-rich and gut-friendly foods has increased steadily, particularly among young professionals and fitness-conscious buyers.

Škoda Auto India launches 'G.O.A.T' campaign with national track record

Guwahati: Škoda Auto India has launched its new brand campaign titled 'G.O.A.T – Greatest On A Track', highlighting the company's motorsport legacy and performance-oriented engineering across its product range. The campaign began with the company setting an India and Asia Book of Records title for the "Fastest Multi-Car Relay of a Single Manufacturer on a Circuit" at the Coimbatore Automotive Sports and Technical Training (CoASTT) track.

The record-setting fleet, comprising the Kylaq 1.0 AT, Kushaq 1.5 DSG, Slavia 1.5 DSG, Octavia RS and Kodiaq Selection L&K, completed the relay in 12:30.97, including pit-lane changeovers. The Octavia RS emerged as the fastest vehicle in the lineup with a lap timing of 2:10.85 on the 3.8-km circuit.

Ashish Gupta, Brand Director of Škoda Auto India, said the

campaign reinforces the company's focus on precision, safety, control and dynamic driving performance. He added that the initiative reflects Škoda's strategy of "democratising performance" across all vehicle segments.

The company said the campaign also celebrates more than 50 years of the RS badge and strengthens its differentiation strategy in India. Škoda highlighted that features such as turbocharged engines, automatic transmissions and handling dynamics remain central to its portfolio, which includes the Kylaq, Slavia, Kushaq and Kodiaq.

In Guwahati, premium and performance-focused SUVs and sedans are witnessing growing demand in Northeast India, particularly among younger buyers and urban professionals. The expansion of premium automobile showrooms and customer



touchpoints in Guwahati is also helping brands like Škoda Auto India strengthen their presence in the region.

PM Modi Gifts Assam's Muga Silk And Manipur's Shirui Lily To Italian PM

Manipur, May 21: Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended a gesture of cultural diplomacy by presenting Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni with two distinctive silk stoles from Northeast India: a Muga silk stole from Assam and a Shirui Lily silk stole from Manipur. The exchange highlighted India's rich textile traditions while reflecting symbolic ties with Italy's own heritage of artistry and design. The Muga silk stole, often described as Assam's "Golden Silk," is celebrated for its natural golden hue and enduring strength. Produced in the Brahmaputra Valley without artificial dyes, it represents a sustainable craft that has been preserved for generations. Its luster deepens with age, and its durability makes it one of the most prized natural fibers in the world. The gift resonated



with Italy's longstanding reputation for luxury textiles, creating a bridge between two traditions of elegance and craftsmanship.

Equally meaningful was the Shirui Lily silk stole, inspired by the rare flower that blooms only on Shirui Kashong Peak in Manipur. For the Tangkhul Naga community, the lily embodies purity, identity, and cultural pride. The stole

carried not only the artistry of Himalayan weaving but also the spirit of indigenous folklore. The lily's symbolism of purity and grace also holds deep resonance in Italy, where it has been a recurring motif in Renaissance art. This shared cultural imagery underscored the connection between India and Italy, weaving together traditions of refinement and heritage.

Tripura Implements Major Drop in Infant Mortality Rate

Agartala, May 21: Tripura has emerged as one of the better-performing states in maternal and child healthcare, with its Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) falling to 12, far below the national average, according to the latest Sample Registration System (SRS) Bulletin 2024. Chief Minister Manik Saha shared the achievement on Thursday, calling it a significant milestone for the state's healthcare system and a reflection of sustained efforts to improve medical services for mothers and newborns. The SRS Bulletin, released by the Registrar General of India in May 2026, showed a steady decline in infant deaths in Tripura, highlighting progress in public healthcare delivery.

Dr. Saha attributed the achievement to a series of focused initiatives undertaken by the state government over the years. These include better institutional delivery services, strengthening of Special Newborn Care Units (SNCUs) and Newborn Stabilisation Units (NBSUs), expansion of immunisation programmes, and improved community-level healthcare outreach. He said the declining IMR demonstrates the effectiveness of the government's healthcare policies and underlined the administration's resolve to further enhance medical infrastructure and services



across the state.

The Chief Minister also acknowledged the role of the Central government in supporting Tripura's healthcare sector. He thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda for extending continuous support toward healthcare development in the state.

Medical experts consider Infant Mortality Rate a key indicator of the quality of healthcare and public health services. The latest data is being viewed as a positive sign of improved neonatal care, wider healthcare access, and better health outcomes for both mothers and infants in Tripura.

Tynsong Raises Shillong-Dawki Landslide Concerns With NHIDCL



Shillong, May 21: Deputy Chief Minister in charge of PWD (Roads), Prestone Tynsong, announced that he will convene a review meeting next week to assess the progress of construction on the Shillong-Dawki Road. He acknowledged that frequent landslides have hampered work along the stretch and emphasized the need for comprehensive solutions. Tynsong stated that the government will examine measures to address the recurring problem and ensure safer travel along the vital route.

The Deputy Chief Minister also informed that he recently met the Managing Director of the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited in New Delhi. During the meeting, he stressed that landslide protection measures must be implemented on a massive scale across the corridor to safeguard commuters and maintain connectivity.

Assam Rifles Seize Border Methamphetamine

Aizawl, May 21: In a major anti-narcotics operation near the Indo-Myanmar border, the paramilitary force Assam Rifles, in a joint operation with the Excise and Narcotics Department, seized 570 methamphetamine tablets worth Rs 17.1 lakh from the Vapar area in eastern Mizoram's Champhai district, Assam Rifles said in a statement. The operation was carried out on May 19 following specific intelligence inputs regarding the movement of banned contraband in the area. Acting on the tip-off, security personnel launched a night surveillance operation in the suspected



zone. During the operation, the joint team intercepted two individuals moving through a forested area close to the international border.

However, when the suspects were stopped for

checking, they panicked, leading to a scuffle with the security personnel. The suspects reportedly managed to flee across the border, but the team succeeded in seizing a bag they were carrying.

Upon inspection, security forces recovered three packets containing 570 methamphetamine tablets worth Rs 17.1 lakh. The statement said the operation was conducted with utmost caution, considering the sensitive nature of the border area and local sentiments.

The seized narcotics were later handed over to the Excise and Narcotics Department in Champhai for further legal action. Assam Rifles stated that the successful seizure underscores the continued efforts of Assam Rifles and civil agencies to curb drug trafficking and maintain security in the border region.

Assam: ACS officer arrested in bribery case over land NOC



Guwahati, May 21: An Assam Civil Service (ACS) officer was arrested on Thursday, May 21, by the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (V&AC) in Guwahati for allegedly accepting a bribe.

Lachit Kumar Das, the Additional Director of Land Records, was caught red-handed inside his Rupnagar office while accepting ₹45,000. According to authorities, Das had demanded a total bribe of ₹1 lakh from an applicant in exchange for issuing a No Objection Certificate (NOC) required for a land transaction.

Unwilling to pay, the applicant filed a complaint with the V&AC, prompting officials to lay a trap. The partial bribe amount was recovered from Das's possession in front of independent witnesses. Following the seizure of incriminating evidence, the anti-corruption branch registered a case under the Prevention of Corruption Act and placed the senior official under arrest.

Arunachal CM Khandu Meets Amit Shah in Delhi, Reviews Key Projects in Arunachal

Itanagar, May 20: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi on Wednesday to review the status of multiple projects of national importance underway in Arunachal Pradesh. The meeting focused on infrastructure and strategic initiatives being executed in the frontier state, which shares international borders with China, Bhutan, and Myanmar.

During the interaction, Khandu conveyed his gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, and the Union Government for their "unwavering support and continued commitment" to Arunachal Pradesh's development and progress.

Arunachal Pradesh is currently seeing work on several flagship schemes deemed nationally significant. These include the 1,748 km Frontier Highway along the Line of Actual Control, the Trans Arunachal Highway, and multiple hydropower projects aimed at boosting India's renewable energy capacity. The state government has been coordinating closely with the Ministry of Home Affairs on security related infrastructure, road networks in remote districts, and telecommunications expansion in border areas.

Khandu has previously credited the Centre for increased budgetary allocations and faster clearances for projects in the state, noting that improved connectiv-



ity is key to both economic growth and national security.

BCCI's domestic outlook: Focus on T20s



Chennai, May 20: The much-awaited 2026-27 domestic calendar was announced by the Indian cricket board (BCCI) on Wednesday with the U23 white ball competition and the inter-zonal university tournament for Vizzy Trophy being changed to T20 from 50-over per side format. The move by the richest cricket board could be a sign for big changes expected in future and former players, who now are coaches of successful domestic sides, see it as a positive step going forward. "I think change is an essence of life and this is absolutely fine if it's going this way," former India batter Amay Khurasiya told this daily. With cricket officially returning to Olympics for the 2028 Los Angeles Games since its first appearance in 1900, the ex-flamboyant left-hand batter from Madhya Pradesh believed the move could have been taken keeping the new order in mind. "With time, I see the world playing more T20s and maybe T20s will take over as they are cricket's gateway to the Olympics also. This is

my feeling and it's absolutely fine. If things are changing and everything is going into this mode, we just have to accept the way it is going to be," he opined.

Usman Gani, Vidarbha head coach, who led the side to Ranji Trophy and historic Vijay Hazare title, echoed Khurasiya's sentiments. "The cricket world is changing with time being a big factor. It's a logical decision as talented U23 cricketers can feature both in Vijay Hazare and Ranji Trophy to get the feel of both formats apart from playing T20 format. More importantly, it will help the players financially as the IPL scouts now have one more tournament to look out for talented youngsters," said Gani.

As per the calendar, the Men's U23 State A Trophy (Elite and Plate) will begin on December 1. The knock-outs of the Elite category will be held from December 17 to 23. The timing will be apt for U23 cricketers to showcase their skills ahead of the IPL auction, which is usually held during that time of the year.

Keymer extends lead as Firouzja withdraws, Praggnanandhaa held in Super Chess Classic

Bucharest, May 21: Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa was held to a draw by Romania's Deac Bogdan-Daniel in the sixth round of the Super Chess Classic, part of the Grand Chess Tour, while France's Alireza Firouzja withdrew from the tournament due to injury concerns. Firouzja, who had played two games despite an ankle injury, decided he could not continue and withdrew on the rest day of the 10-player, nine-round tournament. Germany's Vincent Keymer benefited from Firouzja's withdrawal as he extended his lead to a full point after receiving a walkover in the round. While all the other games ended in draws, Keymer remained the sole leader on 4.5 points, a full point clear of Netherlands' Jorden Van Foreest, Anish Giri, top seed American Fabiano Caruana, and Praggnanandhaa, who are all on 3.5 points each.

France's Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and Wesley So share sixth place with three



points each, while World Championship challenger Javokhir Sindarov of Uzbekistan is close behind on 2.5 points. Romania's Deac Bogdan-Daniel is in ninth place with two points, while Firouzja ended his campaign on one point from five games. Deac Bogdan-Daniel, though the lowest ranked in the field, has repeatedly underlined why he was chosen as the local wildcard entry. Praggnanandhaa opted for complications from the opening with

the Stonewall Dutch, but Deac remained solid and matched the Indian move for move. Pieces were exchanged regularly, and although Praggnanandhaa picked up a temporary pawn advantage, the draw became inevitable. The game ended after 68 moves.

Sindarov, who had been in top form just over a month ago when he won the Candidates to earn the right to challenge Gukesh for the next World Championship match, is still searching for his first win after six rounds, having played his fifth draw against Caruana. It was an Italian opening in which Caruana briefly held a slight advantage, but the American avoided complications, and the position levelled out in the middlegame before the players agreed to a repetition. In another game, Van Foreest drew with compatriot Giri. Three rounds remain in the event, which has a total prize pool of USD 375,000, with USD 100,000 reserved for the winner.

Tilak stars as Mumbai dent Punjab's playoff hopes with six wicket win



Dharamsala, May 20: Tilak Varma delivered a masterful, unbeaten 75 to anchor a tense six-wicket chase as Mumbai Indians dealt a devastating blow to Punjab Kings' playoff

ambitions on Thursday. Chasing a formidable target, Varma's 33-ball blitz shattered the hosts' hopes, sentencing them to a fifth consecutive defeat. Stand-in Mumbai skipper Jasprit Bumrah elected to bowl on a tricky, low-bounce surface at the high-altitude venue. Punjab initially stuttered but exploded late through a devastating cameo from Azmatullah Omarzai (38 off 17) and impact sub Vishnu Vinod. Their late-innings onslaught propelled Punjab to 200/8, despite

a brilliant four-wicket haul from Shardul Thakur. In reply, Mumbai managed the changing tempos beautifully. Varma paced his innings before unleashing an array of powerful strikes, hitting six boundaries and six maximums. He was expertly supported by Will Jacks, who chipped in with a vital 25 not out off 10 balls. The pair forged a blistering 56-run partnership off just 20 deliveries to see Mumbai cross the line with one ball to spare. Key Match Reactions "Absolutely a tough pill to swallow... [Tilak] played amazing, he was selecting

his shots pretty well, and he maneuvered the field nicely." — Shreyas Iyer, Punjab Kings Captain "Having played the World Cup and some international games, I've come to know how to finish the games... I just told [Will] to hold shape and wait for the slower one." — Tilak Varma, Player of the Match Bumrah, enjoying his captaincy stint, praised both Varma and Thakur for keeping their composure before jokingly quipping: "I have captained a Test match, I have captained T20s, and now the only game left is ODI cricket, but I don't see that happening."

Emery Leads Villa to Historic Europa League Triumph

Emery wins record fifth Europa League title as Villa sweep past Freiburg

Istanbul, May 21: Unai Emery cemented his legacy as the ultimate UEFA Europa League master on Wednesday night, guiding Aston Villa to an emphatic 3-0 victory over SC Freiburg at Beşiktaş Park. The triumph ended Villa's 30-year domestic trophy drought and secured Emery a record-extending fifth career title in the competition.

Watching proudly from the stands was lifelong Villa supporter Prince William. The future king was spotted celebrating wildly and taking photos on his phone as captain John McGinn lifted the silverware amid an explosion of confetti. "He was in the dressing room before the game," McGinn told TNT Sports. "Tonight

was everything we have built coming together." While Villa entered the match as heavy favorites, their historic continental conquest marks an unbelievable turnaround under the Spanish coach. When Emery took charge in October 2022, the club was languishing just three points above the Premier League relegation zone. Less than four years later, he has delivered their first European trophy since the 1982 European Cup and secured back-to-back Champions League qualifications.

Villa's technical dominance completely overwhelmed their first-time German finalists: 41st Minute: Youri Tielemans opened the scoring

with a thunderous volley from a clever short-corner routine initiated by Morgan Rogers. 45+3rd Minute: Emiliano Buendía doubled the lead just before the interval, curling a majestic left-footed strike into the far top corner. 58th Minute: Morgan Rogers capped off a flawless team move, sliding at the near post to convert a Buendía cross. For Emery, who previously lifted the trophy three times with Sevilla and once with Villarreal, the win provides final personal redemption after losing the 2019 final with Arsenal. "I am always very grateful for the Europa League," Emery reflected. "We played in a very serious way this year."

