

CPI leader shot dead in Hyderabad

Hyderabad: Senior Communist Party of India (CPI) leader Chandu Rathod, 47, was shot dead by unidentified assailants during his morning walk at Shalivahana Nagar Park in Hyderabad's Malakpet area. The incident occurred around 7:30 AM, sending shockwaves through the local community and triggering a high-level police investigation. According to eyewitness accounts and preliminary police findings, a group of three to four attackers arrived in a white Swift car, threw chilli powder into Rathod's eyes to disorient him, and then opened fire. Rathod attempted to flee but was shot multiple times and died on the spot. His wife and daughter, who had accompanied him to the park, had left moments before the attack. Police recovered three fired rounds and two unfired rounds from the scene, indicating the use of a single weapon. Forensic teams and sniffer dogs were deployed, and ten special teams have been formed.

Congress calls July 17 Odisha bandh over student death

Bhubneswar: A coalition of eight opposition parties, led by the Congress, has announced a statewide Odisha Bandh on July 17 to protest the death of Soumyashree Bisi, a 20-year-old B.Ed student from Fakir Mohan Autonomous College, Balasore, who succumbed to burn injuries after allegedly setting herself on fire in response to prolonged sexual harassment and administrative inaction. On July 12, Bisi



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reportedly self-immolated on campus after her repeated complaints against Head of Department Sameer Ranjan Sahoo went unaddressed. She sustained 95% burns and died on July 14 at AIIMS Bhubaneswar, despite intensive treatment efforts. The college's Principal Dillip Ghosh and the accused HOD have since been arrested. Odisha Pradesh Congress Com-

mittee (OPCC) President Bhakta Charan Das declared the bandh during a joint press conference with leaders from CPI, CPI(M), NCP, and other parties. Das described the incident as a systemic failure and called for a complete shutdown of schools, colleges, markets, and transport services across the state. "This is not just a political protest—it's a moral obligation.

Assam CM accuses TMC of distortion

Guwahati: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has accused the Trinamool Congress (TMC) of deliberately misrepresenting his comments on Bengali-speaking citizens to protect illegal Muslim immigrants from Bangladesh. The statement has ignited a fresh political controversy between the BJP-led Assam government and the opposition party. Sarma's remarks stemmed from a recent media interaction where he stated that writing Bengali as the mother tongue in census documents could help quan-

tify the number of foreigners residing in Assam. The comment was in response to threats by All BTC Minority Students' Union leader Mainuddin Ali, who suggested that Bengali-speaking Muslims would stop listing Assamese as their mother tongue, potentially impacting the linguistic demographics of the state. In a post on X, Sarma clarified, "Assam has been waging a relentless war against illegal infiltration of Bangladeshi Muslims for several decades. The recent attempt by the @AITCofficial to distort my media.

Tejashwi slams Bihar NDA over insult to Tushar Gandhi

Patna: Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav has strongly criticized the ruling NDA government in Bihar over the alleged mistreatment of Tushar Gandhi, great-grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, during his visit to East Champaran. The incident, which occurred at Turkauliya village on July 13, has triggered widespread outrage and political condemnation. Tushar Gandhi, who is touring Bihar in support of the opposition Mahagathbandhan ahead of the assembly elections, was



reportedly asked to leave a public event at the Gram Panchayat office by village head Vinay Kumar Sah and his supporters. The confrontation began after Gandhi's associates criticized the Nitish Kumar-led government, prompting the Mukhiya to object and allegedly insult Gandhi, questioning his lineage and political stance. Gandhi had

earlier garlanded a historic Neem tree, a site associated with Mahatma Gandhi's indigo movement, before attending the Panchayat event. Following the altercation, he addressed villagers outside the venue, stating, "Bapu may have been slain long back, but the ideology of Godse lives on. It is this ideology that wants to muzzle any voice of dissent". Tejashwi Yadav shared a video of the incident on social media, apologizing to Tushar Gandhi "on behalf of all the people of Bihar".

Shubhanshu Shukla's Axiom-4 mission to splash down off San Diego at 3:01 pm

Indian astronaut returns after 18-day ISS mission

San Diego: Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, India's second astronaut to travel to space, is scheduled to return to Earth today as part of the Axiom-4 mission. The SpaceX Dragon spacecraft 'Grace', carrying Shukla and three international crewmates, will splash down in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of San Diego, California, concluding an 18-day stay aboard the International Space Station (ISS).



During their time aboard the ISS, the crew conducted over 60 experiments, including studies on myogenesis, microalgae, cyanobacteria, and crop seed germination. Shukla's work is expected to contribute valuable data to ISRO's upcoming human spaceflight program, Gaganyaan, slated

for 2027. The spacecraft undocked from the ISS on July 14 at 4:45 PM IST. Final descent preparations include a de-orbit burn at 2:07 PM IST, trunk detachment at 2:26 PM IST, and heat shield orientation for atmospheric re-entry. The capsule will deploy drogue parachutes at 2:57 PM IST

and main parachutes at approximately 2 km altitude before splashdown. A brief sonic boom is expected to precede the landing. Recovery teams will retrieve the capsule, conduct medical evaluations, and transport the astronauts to shore via helicopter. The crew will undergo a seven-day rehabilitation program to readjust to Earth's gravity. Shukla's mission has reignited national pride, echoing the legacy of Rakesh Sharma's 1984 spaceflight. In a farewell message aboard the ISS, Shukla reflected on India's transformation. "Aaj ka Bharat mahatvakanshi, nidar, confident aur garv se purn dikhta hai. Saare jah-an se accha."

Assam woman buries drunk husband's body

Guwahati: In a shocking case of domestic violence, a 38-year-old woman from Joymati Nagar in Guwahati's Pandu area has been arrested for allegedly murdering her husband and burying his body in the compound of their residence. The incident occurred on the night of June 26, following a heated altercation between the couple. The accused, Rahima Khatun, reportedly killed her husband, Sabyal Rahman, a 40-year-old scrap dealer, after he returned home intoxicated. According to police, the couple—married for 15 years with two children—engaged in a violent argument that escalated fatally. In a panic, Khatun allegedly dug a five-foot pit in their yard

and buried Rahman's body. To conceal the crime, she initially misled family and neighbors by claiming Rahman had traveled to Kerala for work, later changing her story to say he was unwell. Suspicion grew when Rahman remained missing for weeks, prompting his brother to file a missing person complaint on July 12. Khatun surrendered at Jalukbari Police Station the following day and confessed to the crime. A police team, accompanied by forensic experts and a magistrate, exhumed the body from the premises and sent it to Gauhati Medical College and Hospital for autopsy. Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Padmanav Baruah confirmed the arrest.





Passport Seva Mobile Van launched in Guwahati to aid rural applicants in Northeast

FM Sitharaman ends Meghalaya visit, promotes women's weaving initiative

Palasbari: A severe drinking water crisis has gripped Dakhala Colony in Palasbari Legislative Assembly Constituency (LAC), Kamrup district, affecting nearly 400 families across four localities—Naradpara, Kukuriya, Kalitapara, and Bholapara. Despite being surrounded by semi-urban development, residents have endured decades of neglect,

with limited access to basic amenities and exclusion from key government welfare schemes.

The colony's rocky terrain has rendered conventional water supply methods ineffective. Water tankers cannot reach the area, and attempts to dig deep tube wells or borewells have largely failed. Most families lack the financial means to

construct pucca wells or install private borewells. While a few public wells exist, their water is deemed unsafe for consumption. Residents are forced to collect water from the Brahmaputra River for bathing and washing, but must purchase drinking water to avoid illness. Many families, unable to afford this, resort to consuming untreated river water.

Militants convert looted guns into sniper rifles

Imphal: Ethnic insurgent groups in Manipur, comprising factions from both the Meitei and Kuki communities, have reportedly modified a portion of over 6,000 firearms looted from police armouries in 2023 into makeshift long-range sniper rifles, according to security officials.

The weapons—originally standard-issue .303 rifles, AK-series assault rifles, and INSAS carbines—have undergone extensive modifications to enhance their range and lethality. Officials stated that by altering the buttstock, adding telescopic sights, and reinforcing structural components, insurgents have transformed these firearms into precision weapons capable of targeting rival groups from

considerable distances. A standard .303 rifle, typically effective up to 500 metres, now poses a greater threat with its extended reach and accuracy.

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Raijor Dal names Rahul Chhetry for 2026 Margherita Assembly election battle

Margherita: In a strategic move ahead of the 2026 Assam Assembly elections, Raijor Dal has officially announced student leader Rahul Chhetry as its candidate for the No. 89 Margherita constituency. The declaration was made by party chief Akhil Gogoi during a joining ceremony held at Rang Manch in Margherita on Sunday. Chhetry, formerly the general secretary of Raijor Dal's student wing, Chhatra Mukti Sangram Samiti, was introduced as an "educated youth" poised to bring change to the region. Gogoi, addressing a packed gathering, stated, "If the people of Margherita make him victorious, we both will shake the Assam Assembly." He also took a swipe



at Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, suggesting that Chhetry's entry into the Assembly would amplify the opposition's voice. The announcement marks Raijor Dal's early entry into the electoral fray in Upper Assam, signaling its intent to challenge the BJP's dominance in the region. Gogoi outlined a series of promis-

es the party aims to fulfill if elected, including measures to curb inflation, establish micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and waive farm loans. He criticized the BJP-led central government for failing to control rising prices, noting that even basic commodities like salt and cooking oil have become unaffordable.

Interestingly, Gogoi's proposals echoed some of the commitments made by the current administration, particularly around MSME development. He emphasized that such initiatives would reduce youth migration from Assam, especially those forced to take up low-paying jobs abroad. With the Margherita candidacy now confirmed, Raijor Dal appears to be setting the tone for a high-stakes contest in the upcoming elections. The party's grassroots messaging and youth-centric approach suggest a campaign focused on local empowerment and economic reform. Interestingly, Gogoi's proposals echoed some of the commitments made by the current administration.

PM Modi to launch Rs 8,000 Cr infra projects in Assam on September 8

Assam gears up for major infrastructure transformation

Mangaldai: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit Assam on September 8 to inaugurate and lay the foundation stones for a series of major infrastructure projects collectively valued at ₹8,000 crore. The announcement was made by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma during a site inspection in Darrang district, where several of the projects will be initiated.

Among the key developments, the Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone for a 430-bed medical college and hospital in Darrang, estimated to cost ₹572 crore. The site for the institution has already been finalized at the Government



Sericulture Farm in Kamarpara near Mangaldoi. Additionally, Modi is expected to inaugurate the Narengi-Kuruwa bridge over the Brahmaputra River and launch the Guwahati Ring Road project, both of which are aimed at improving regional connectivity and easing traffic congestion.

The visit coincides with the birth centenary celebrations of Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, which the Prime Minister will also attend in Guwahati later that day. Prior to arriving in Mangaldoi for the public meeting, Modi will participate in a separate event in Numaligarh.

Tripura Congress plans protests against BJP government policies

Agartala: The Tripura Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) has launched statewide demonstrations across all district headquarters today, protesting what it describes as the BJP-led state government's "anti-people policies." The move comes amid growing public discontent over rising utility costs and alleged deterioration of law and order. TPCC President Asish Kumar Saha, addressing the media in Belonia, South Tripura, criticized the government's decision to implement smart electricity meters through the Tripura State Electricity Corporation Ltd (TSECL). He claimed the rollout has led to increased power tariffs, placing an additional financial burden on consumers



already grappling with inflation. Saha also condemned the hike in piped gas prices, arguing that essential services are becoming unaffordable for many residents. In addition to economic grievances, the Congress leader raised concerns over the state's law and order situation. He alleged that opposition leaders are be-

ing systematically targeted, citing recent incidents involving threats to MLA Sudip Roy Barman in Udaipur and an attack on senior legislator Gopal Roy in Banamalipur. Saha questioned Chief Minister Manik Saha's assertion that law and order in Tripura remains "normal," calling it a misrepresentation of the ground reality.



Mahindra unveils XUV 3XO REVX series from Rs 8.94 lakh, strengthens compact SUV portfolio

Guwahati: Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd., India's leading SUV manufacturer, has announced the launch of its new XUV 3XO REVX series, starting at ₹8.94 lakh (ex-showroom). With this launch, Mahindra expands its presence in the highly competitive compact SUV segment, offering a blend of premium features, performance, and design at an accessible price point. The REVX series includes three variants—REVX M, REVX M(O), and REVX A—powered by the 1.2L mStallion TCMPFi and TGD i engines,



delivering up to 96 kW power and 230 Nm torque. Key highlights include black alloy wheels, dual-tone roof, leatherette seats, panoramic sunroof, twin 26.03

cm HD screens, Adrenox Connect with Alexa, and a comprehensive safety suite featuring six airbags and ESC.

In Guwahati, the launch

has resonated with urban buyers seeking value and aesthetics. Local dealerships report heightened interest in the REVX M(O) variant, as consumers in the city increasingly prefer tech-rich and stylish SUVs under ₹10 lakh, aligning with growing aspirations in Assam's automotive market. With five bold color options and class-leading features, the XUV 3XO REVX series reinforces Mahindra's commitment to delivering innovation-driven mobility solutions tailored to evolving customer needs.

ITC Aashirvaad unveils 'Boga Atta' in Assam

Guwahati: ITC Aashirvaad, India's leading packaged atta brand, has entered Assam's premium white atta segment with the launch of Aashirvaad Boga Atta, targeting consumers seeking quality, hygiene, and regional taste. The product is made from superior quality wheat and processed through advanced automated milling technology to ensure consistent texture and high hygiene standards. The move comes in response to the dominance of loose atta in the Assam market, which often lacks quality control and consumer confidence. Boga Atta is tailored specifically to Assamese culinary needs, offering the perfect base for soft luchis, rotis, and traditional dishes like pithas. The product



is priced at ₹60 for a 1kg pack and is now available at general stores across Assam. According to Anuj Rustagi, COO – Staples and Adjacencies, ITC Ltd., "Boga Atta embodies our commitment to regional relevance while delivering uncompromising quality to every kitchen."

Illegal mosquito incense sticks spark health concerns in East India, market pegged at Rs 600 crore: Good Knight Survey

Guwahati: A new nationwide study commissioned by Good Knight, the flagship mosquito repellent brand from Godrej Consumer Products Ltd. (GCPL), reveals that 73% of consumers in East India feel uneasy using illegal mosquito repellent incense sticks. Conducted by market research firm YouGov, the survey titled "One Mosquito, Countless Threats"

highlights growing health concerns in states like Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, and Jharkhand over unregulated mosquito control products laced with Chinese chemicals. The East India market shows the highest concern nationwide, with 71% of respondents preferring government-approved solutions and 56% being particular about the repellents they

buy. Despite this, the illegal incense stick market in the region has ballooned to over ₹600 crore, out of the ₹1,675 crore national market, growing at an alarming 20% annually. In Guwahati, consumer awareness is visibly rising. Shoppers are increasingly verifying Central Insecticides Board & Registration Committee (CIBRC) approvals before purchase.

Retailers also report higher inquiries about safe alternatives, reflecting a shift toward regulated solutions. GCPL is countering the trend by introducing Renofluthrin; a patented, indigenously developed molecule in its new Good Knight Flash liquid vaporiser, claiming it to be 2X more effective than any other registered liquid repellent in India.

ICICI Pru Life Q1 net jumps 34 per cent

Mumbai: ICICI Prudential Life Insurance reported a 34% year-on-year increase in net profit for the first quarter of FY26, reaching ₹302 crore, up from ₹225 crore in the same period last year. The growth was driven by higher premium income, improved cost ratios, and a strong solvency position. Despite a 5% decline in Annualised Premium Equivalent (APE) to ₹1,864 crore, the Value of New Business (VNB) stood at ₹457 crore, with margins improving to 24.5% from 24%. The company saw strong growth in retail protection, with protection APE rising 15.2% to ₹409 crore. Operating expenses dropped 10.1%, aided by reduced advertising and sales costs. The cost-to-total premium ratio improved to 21.2%, and within the savings segment, it fell to 14.1% from 16.8%.

HP launches Laser M300 series in India to power high-volume business printing

Mumbai: India's life insurance industry is intensifying efforts to bridge the growing protection gap, which has surged from 83% in 2019 to 87% in 2023—reaching over 90% among the 18–35 age group. In response, the Insurance Awareness Committee (IAC), comprising all 24 life insurers, has rolled out the next phase of its Sabse Pehle Life Insurance campaign, positioning life insurance as the foundational step in financial planning. The campaign focuses on behavioral economics—challenging the prevailing consumer trend of prioritising savings and investments



while neglecting risk protection. It combines emotional storytelling with a revamped digital knowledge hub to drive awareness and policy uptake. This aligns with IRDAI's mandate requiring insurers to cover 10% of lives in 25,000

Gram Panchayats and builds on a strong 96.82% claim settlement rate recorded in FY 2023–24. With the sector growing at a CAGR of 9.5% and projected to hit 10.5%, this campaign marks a strategic push toward inclusive financial security.

slice Small Finance Bank boosts Assam with deposits, new jobs

Guwahati: Assam headquartered slice small finance bank (slice SFB) has reported robust growth in the past year, recording a 20.7% rise in deposits across the state and creating over 400 new jobs in the Northeast. This milestone un-



derscores the bank's commitment to boosting local economies and deepening financial inclusion in un-

Aizawl: slice small finance bank (slice SFB), headquartered in Assam, is accelerating its regional expansion with the opening of a new branch in Serchhip and the upcoming launch in Bawngkawn, Mizoram. The bank has created over 400 new jobs across the Northeast in the last 12 months, reinforcing its commitment to local employment and inclusive economic development. Designed as digital-first branches, the new outlets aim to serve rural households, women-led enterprises, and first-time digital users. "Our mission to deliver banking to the traditionally underbanked revolves around the Northeast—a region with immense potential," said

Satish Kumar Kalra, MD & CEO of slice SFB. The bank is offering savings and current accounts, digital services, and affordable credit products to underserved segments. In Aizawl, entrepreneurs see the bank's entry as a catalyst for improved credit access and increased competition. The emphasis on local decision-making and digital enablement is expected to resonate well with Aizawl's growing base of MSMEs and semi-urban consumers.

With 20.7% deposit growth in Assam and innovations like voice box tech for small merchants, slice SFB is positioning itself as a key driver of financial inclusion in the Northeast.

es are tailored for rural communities, women-led businesses, and first-time digital users, blending technology with personalized service. MD & CEO Satish Kumar Kalra emphasized the bank's vision of inclusive innovation from India's heartland,

with continued support from the Assam government. Looking ahead, the bank plans to focus on empowering women, building a future-ready workforce, and advancing digital literacy to fuel long-term growth across the region.



MoS Margherita's Cambodia visit opens new avenues for trade, culture and investment

Guwahati: Union Minister of State for External Affairs and Textiles, Pabitra Margherita, commenced his official visit to Cambodia and Malaysia on July 6 to deepen economic, cultural, and strategic partnerships. During his engagements in Phnom Penh, Margherita interacted with ITEC and ICCR alumni, highlighting India's commitment to capacity-building and people-to-people ties.

In high-level meetings with Cambodian leaders—including Senate President H.E. Hun Sen, Prime Minister H.E. Hun Manet, and His Majesty King Norodom Sihamoni—the Minister discussed enhancing bilateral cooperation across trade, textiles, heritage conservation, and education. Reflecting on cultural ties, he shared, "Deeply impressed by the magnificent mural



painting depicting the Ramayana... pleased to know that ASI will be taking up the restoration and conservation works." Guwahati, known for its thriving textile sector and traditional Assamese silk, sees Margherita's visit as a potential gateway for boosting exports to Southeast Asia. Industry experts believe

stronger India-Cambodia ties may lead to increased demand for handloom and handicrafts from the Northeast. The Minister will next travel to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from July 10–11, to participate in key ASEAN-led foreign ministerial meetings, furthering India's Act East policy and regional trade engagement.

Skilling workshop unveils ₹60,000 crore roadmap ahead key meet

Guwahati: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), in collaboration with DARE, hosted a high-level workshop on "Skilling: Future Ready Workforce" at Kaushal Bhawan, New Delhi, as part of the lead-up to the 5th National Conference of Chief Secretaries. Focused on the theme "Human Capital for Viksit Bharat", the workshop brought together policymakers, industry leaders, and academia to shape a unified skilling roadmap. Addressing the workshop, Rajit Punhani, Secretary, MSDE, said, "Skill training is the cornerstone of our vision for Viksit Bharat @2047. We must ensure that every youth and working professional is equipped with the right skills to contribute meaningfully to both organizational growth and the nation's development. Our focus must be on three key pillars—agriculture skilling, ITI upgradation, and future skills. Integration of agri-skilling into mainstream education will empower rural youth and make agriculture a viable, future-ready career path. The ITI upgradation will help us transform these institutions into dynamic skilling hubs aligned with evolving industry needs. Emphasis on future skills will enable our workforce to stay competitive in a rap-



idly changing global landscape. Above all, we must focus on making skilling aspirational—something that excites, empowers, and elevates the aspirations of our youth." States like Karnataka, Odisha, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal showcased inclusive, demand-based and grassroots skilling models. DARE's Rajbir Singh proposed converting Krishi Vigyan Kendras into rural incubation hubs. Industry players such as Adobe, Tata Strive, Lemon Tree Hotels, and PSUs like Indian Oil brought real-world insights into reskilling and service delivery. States and UTs have been asked to submit feedback notes by August 31. Outcomes from this workshop will shape India's long-term skill development agenda and guide future policy directions.

Nothing unveils Phone (3) and Headphone (1) in India, eyes premium market with bold design and tech

New Delhi: London-based consumer tech brand Nothing has launched two highly anticipated products in India—its first true flagship Phone (3) and debut over-ear Headphone (1)—available for purchase starting today via Flipkart, Vijay

Sales, Croma, and other major outlets. The Nothing Phone (3), starting at ₹62,999, features a powerful Snapdragon® 8s Gen 4 chipset, a pro-grade triple camera system with 1/1.3" main sensor, and a 6.67" AMOLED display with ultra-narrow 1.87 mm

bezels. Its standout Glyph Matrix offers intuitive visual alerts and playful user experiences, while the new tri-column layout enhances ergonomics. Consumers can opt for 12 GB + 256 GB or 16 GB + 512 GB variants, along with bank offers, exchange

deals, and no-cost EMI options. Priced at ₹21,999 (₹19,999 on launch day), the Nothing Headphone (1) promises an immersive listening experience with KEF-engineered 40 mm drivers, Spatial Audio with head tracking, and Hi-Res Audio support.

Tesla opens Mumbai Experience Centre

Mumbai: Global electric vehicle giant Tesla has officially launched its operations in India with the inauguration of its first Experience Centre at Maker Maxity Mall, Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), Mumbai. The event was presided over by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik, signaling a major milestone in India's electric mobility landscape.

The 4,000 sq ft showroom, located near the Apple flagship store, showcases Tesla's design ethos and technological innovation. The company has also leased a 24,565 sq ft facility in Kurla West to serve as a service centre.

Toyota Glanza reinvents safety and style with six airbags and prestige edition for next-gen drivers



Bangalore: Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) has upgraded its premium hatchback, the Toyota Glanza, by making six airbags standard across all variants. The move showcases TKM's focus on delivering smarter, safer mobility solutions for today's dynamic consumers—especially first-time buyers and urban millennials. Further

enhancing the value proposition, TKM has rolled out the limited-time 'Prestige Package', available until July 31, 2025. This accessory bundle includes premium dealer-fitted features like chrome-accented mouldings, rear lamp garnish, illuminated door sills, and a rear skid plate—offering a stylish edge that resonates with

design-conscious drivers. Under the hood, the Glanza is powered by a 1.2-litre K-Series petrol engine with high fuel efficiency (22.94 km/l AMT and 30.61 km/kg CNG) and advanced features such as a 360-degree camera, Head-Up Display, and Toyota i-Connect with 45+ smart features—making it a modern, connected car experience. A growing hub for young professionals and tech-forward consumers, dealers report rising interest in vehicles that offer both innovation and affordability. The upgraded Glanza, with its enhanced safety and stylish add-ons, is expected to strike the right chord in this evolving market. The updated Glanza starts at ₹6.90 lakh (ex-showroom).

Toyota strengthens Northeast network with new Gargya Toyota dealership in Guwahati



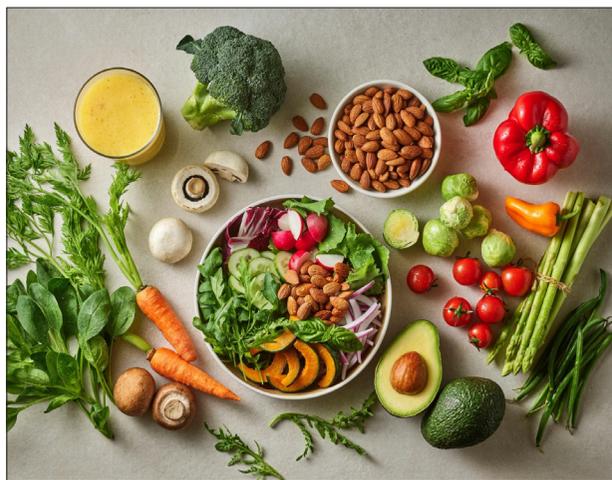
Guwahati: Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) has reinforced its presence in Northeast India by launching a new dealership—Gargya Toyota—in Guwahati, Assam. The 5,100 sq. ft. 1S (sales) facility, inaugurated by Mr. Arun G Nair, VP & Chief Representative – East Region, and Dealer Principal Mr. Rahul Dev Sharma, aims to meet the region's rising demand for reliable and sustainable mobility solutions. Strategically located at GS Road, Dispur, the outlet will offer Toyota's full range, including the In-

nova Hycross, Fortuner, Hilux, Urban Cruiser Hyryder, Camry Hybrid, and Vellfire. The facility also features Toyota U-Trust, enabling customers to buy, sell, or exchange used cars, aligning with the brand's focus on convenience and ownership experience. According to company officials, Guwahati's growing urban base and connectivity make it a vital automotive hub in the Northeast. With this addition, TKM's dealership network has expanded to 1,243 touchpoints across India.



Ayurvedic skincare sees monsoon surge; expert recommends diet-based remedies for radiant skin

Guwahati: With rising demand for natural wellness solutions during the monsoon season, Ayurvedic skin health is gaining momentum as consumers seek internal remedies over topical fixes. Dr. Madhumitha Krishnan, Ayurveda expert, advocates for diet-based approaches to maintain glowing skin, emphasizing foods that balance the body's three doshas—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. She recommends adding almonds, known for balancing Vata dosha and rejuvenating skin tissues, as a daily snack. Herbal teas like ginger, tulsi, and chamomile support diges-



tion and detoxification, while seasonal fruits such as pomegranates and apples help boost metabolism and enhance skin glow.

Leafy greens like spinach and fenugreek purify the blood, and turmeric, with its anti-inflammatory properties, reduces acne and

promotes radiance. Ghee, another Ayurvedic staple, nourishes the skin with healthy fats and antioxidants. In Guwahati, wellness stores and organic retailers report a notable uptick in consumer preference for Ayurvedic ingredients. Products like turmeric powder, cold-pressed ghee, herbal teas, and raw almonds are seeing higher footfall and online orders, especially among young professionals and health-conscious families. The trend reflects growing trust in traditional remedies as long-term solutions for skin and overall wellness during the monsoon.

Škoda Auto India expands footprint with 300 touchpoints across 172 cities

Guwahati: Škoda Auto India has achieved a major business milestone by crossing 300 customer touchpoints across 172 cities, marking a significant step in its expansion strategy aimed at deeper market penetration and enhanced customer engagement. The milestone comes on the heels of Škoda's highest-ever H1 sales in India in 2025, coinciding with the company's 25th anniversary in India and 130 years globally. With 75% of the new touchpoints located in Tier 2 and Tier 3 markets, Škoda is aggressively focusing on increasing accessibility to its product lineup—Kylaq, Kushaq, Slavia, and Kodiaq—backed by strong aftersales support. The company's enhanced



service infrastructure now enables annual servicing capacity of up to 5.5 lakh vehicles.

Guwahati, a growing urban centre in the Northeast, has emerged as a strategic market for Škoda. With increasing demand for premium and mid-size SUVs, the brand's expansion in the city is expected

to offer faster service turnaround and greater access to sales and maintenance packages. Škoda Auto India continues to strengthen its legacy through network growth, strategic partnerships, and offerings like the complimentary SuperCare maintenance package, ensuring long-term customer satisfaction.

SEBI launches settlement scheme for VCFs

New Delhi: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has announced the launch of the VCF Settlement Scheme 2025, a one-time compliance initiative aimed at Venture Capital Funds (VCFs) that migrated to the Alternative Investment Funds (AIF) regime but failed to wind up expired schemes. The scheme will be open from July 21, 2025, to January 19, 2026, offering eligible funds an opportunity to settle regulatory violations related to overdue liquidations and unliquidated investments.

Aviva India launches 'Bharat Bal Vikas Yojana' to target semi-urban savings market

Guwahati: Aviva India has introduced Aviva Bharat Bal Vikas Yojana, a Non-Linked Non-Participating life insurance savings plan designed to help families in rural and semi-urban India build financial security for their children's future. With premiums starting as low as ₹1,000 per month, the plan combines guaranteed maturity benefits with life cover—tailored to meet aspirations like higher education, skill training, or launching a small business. The product allows entry for individuals aged 3 to 50 years and offers policy terms from 12 to 30 years, with maturity up to age 80. Customers can pay premiums monthly, quarterly,

half-yearly, or annually, ensuring flexibility across income levels. In case of the policyholder's demise during the term, the nominee receives the highest of the death sum assured, surrender value, or at least 105% of total premiums paid. In Guwahati, where middle-income households are increasingly seeking structured savings tools, financial advisors believe this plan aligns well with local demand. The simplicity and fixed benefits make it a compelling choice for parents focused on long-term planning. Aviva says the product reflects its continued focus on financial inclusion and meeting the needs of "real Bharat."

Life insurance sector ramps up consumer outreach as protection gap widens to 87%



Guwahati: India's life insurance industry is intensifying efforts to bridge the growing protection gap, which has surged from 83% in 2019 to 87% in 2023—reaching over 90% among the 18–35 age group. In response, the Insurance Awareness Committee (IAC), comprising all 24 life insurers, has rolled out the next phase of its Sabse Pehle Life Insurance campaign, positioning life insurance as the foundational step in financial planning. The campaign focuses on behavioral economics—challenging the prevailing consumer

trend of prioritising savings and investments while neglecting risk protection. It combines emotional storytelling with a revamped digital knowledge hub to drive awareness and policy uptake. This aligns with IRDAI's mandate requiring insurers to cover 10% of lives in 25,000 Gram Panchayats and builds on a strong 96.82% claim settlement rate recorded in FY 2023–24. With the sector growing at a CAGR of 9.5% and projected to hit 10.5%, this campaign marks a strategic push toward inclusive financial security.

Flipkart Food Fest 2.0 drives gourmet commerce with 100M+ impressions and iconic brand showcases

Guwahati: Flipkart, India's homegrown e-commerce giant, successfully concluded the second edition of its flagship Food Fest 2025, held on July 8-9 at its Bengaluru campus. With over 25,000 on-ground footfalls, 100 million+ online impressions, 40+ engagement zones, and participation from leading brands, the event reinforced Flipkart's growing dominance in gourmet food commerce. The fest featured culinary icons like Chef Ranveer Brar and Pooja Dhingra, live



performances by Rosemary & The Herbs, and insights from top food creators and wellness brands. Signature launches and immersive activations by brands such as Dabur, Sugar Free, Happilo, Saffola, Nutralite, and True Elements highlighted the evolving tastes of Indian consumers. In Guwahati, consumer response to Flipkart's curated online gourmet sale was strong, with rising demand for healthy snacking, artisanal baking goods, and premium wellness products. The

Northeast market, particularly Guwahati, reflected the national trend of growing interest in clean-label and lifestyle-driven food choices, supported by better digital accessibility and awareness. Flipkart executives emphasized the platform's vision to fuse technology, storytelling, and food discovery. Partner brands praised the scale and engagement of the event, calling it a transformative platform for building community-led food experiences.



Screen Academy launch aligns with India's creative economy goals, boosts regional talent development

Mumbai: The Indian Express Group, in collaboration with the Lodha Foundation, has launched Screen Academy, a not-for-profit initiative that aligns with India's broader economic policy objectives of human capital development and creative industry

expansion. The initiative will annually provide fully-funded postgraduate fellowships to high-potential students from premier film institutions including FTII, SRFTI, and Whistling Woods International. With mentorship from leading industry figures like Oscar

winners Guneet Monga and Resul Pookutty and Cannes Grand Prix winner Payal Kapadia, the Academy aims to institutionalise creative excellence while addressing the accessibility gap in film education. The revival of the prestigious Screen Awards under the

Academy's purview ensures a robust framework for recognising and rewarding artistic innovation. This initiative represents a strategic move to boost India's cultural capital while fostering inclusive growth. Details are available at www.screenacademy.org.

New stylish TWS earbuds promise 40-hour battery, immersive audio and smart ambient controls

Guwahati: Sony India has introduced the WF-C710N Truly Wireless Noise Cancelling Earbuds, combining dual noise sensor technology, AI-based voice clarity, and long battery life in a compact, stylish design. Priced at ₹8,990, the earbuds are now available across Sony retail stores, www.ShopatSC.com, major electronics chains, and e-commerce platforms. Buyers can avail a limited-time ₹1,000 cashback offer valid until July 31, 2025. Designed for seamless switching between devices, the WF-C710N



features multi-point Bluetooth® connectivity, IPX4 water resistance, and up to 40 hours of battery life with fast charging. Sony's Precise Voice Pickup Technology, enhanced by

AI trained on over 500 million voice samples, ensures crystal-clear calling even in noisy environments. The earbuds also come with Adaptive Sound Control, Quick Attention

mode, and custom EQ via the Sony | Sound Connect app. In Guwahati electronics, local retailers anticipate strong demand for the WF-C710N, particularly among tech-savvy youth and working professionals. The availability of trendy colour options Glass Blue, Pink, Black and White has already generated buzz in the premium accessories segment. Sony's new launch underlines its commitment to style, sustainability, and delivering immersive audio experiences for today's on-the-go consumers.

Sebi unveils settlement scheme for VCs

New Delhi: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has announced the launch of the VCF Settlement Scheme 2025, a one-time compliance window for Venture Capital Funds (VCFs) that migrated to the Alternative Investment Funds (AIF) regime but failed to wind up expired schemes. The scheme will be open from July 21, 2025, to January 19, 2026, and aims to resolve violations related to unliquidated investments and overdue fund closures. VCFs were originally governed by the SEBI (Venture Capital Funds) Regulations, 1996, which were repealed following the introduction of the AIF Regulations in 2012.

Arbitrage funds rise as investors hedge volatile equity market bets

Guwahati: Arbitrage funds have gained traction as an investment option amid equity market volatility, particularly for those seeking low risk investment opportunity. By capitalising on price differences between the cash and futures markets, these funds seek to perform better in turbulent conditions, giving fund managers greater scope for intra-month trading opportunities. "In the current environment, arbitrage funds are uniquely positioned to capture the potential benefits of market volatility while shielding investors from direct equity risks," said Sailesh Jain, Fund Manager, Tata Asset Management. According to data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India



(AMFI), arbitrage funds attracted Rs 43,077 crore between April and June 2025, surpassing inflows into other hybrid and equity categories. Reflecting the broader industry trend, the Tata Arbitrage Fund too, saw inflows of Rs 5,217 crore between April and

June 2025, with Rs 15.5 crore coming from Guwahati. The fund had assets under management of Rs 14,274 crore as of June 30, 2025. The environment is especially conducive for arbitrage strategies, as elevated volatility and strong roll spreads have opened potential return opportunities. As global and domestic uncertainties continue to cloud market outlook, arbitrage funds are a choice for investors to help them navigate choppy waters. Arbitrage funds also offer tax efficiency, as they are taxed like equity mutual funds—giving them an edge over short-term debt instruments, particularly for high-income investors looking to optimise post-tax returns.

India's trade deficit narrows to \$18.78 billion in June



New Delhi: India's merchandise trade deficit narrowed to \$18.78 billion in June 2025, marking a notable improvement from \$21.88 billion in May, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The contraction was driven by a decline in both exports and imports, alongside a robust surplus in the services sector. The June trade deficit came in below market expectations, with economists previously forecasting a gap of \$22.24 billion. The moderation in imports reflects softening global commodity prices and stable domestic demand, while the services sector continues to bolster India's external balance. Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal highlighted the role of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and Production Linked Incentive (PLI)

schemes in supporting export competitiveness. The government remains committed to its \$1 trillion export target for FY26, with recent FTAs signed with the UK and UAE expected to enhance market access. India's trade performance comes amid ongoing global trade tensions, including tariff negotiations with the United States and disruptions in key shipping routes. Despite these challenges, exports to the U.S. rose significantly in April–May, indicating resilience in key sectors. The narrowing trade deficit is seen as a positive indicator for India's current account balance and broader macroeconomic stability. Policymakers are expected to continue focusing on structural reforms, export diversification, and strategic trade partnerships to sustain momentum.

Bank of Maharashtra Q1 profit rises 23% to Rs 1,593 crore



Mumbai: Bank of Maharashtra (BoM), a leading public sector lender, reported a robust 23% year-on-year increase in net profit for the first quarter of FY26, reaching ₹1,593 crore compared to ₹1,293 crore in the same period last year. The performance was driven by healthy growth in interest income, improved asset quality, and expanding business volumes. The bank attributed its strong performance to disciplined lending, a focus on low-cost deposits, and digital transformation initiatives. Despite a marginal dip

in other income and a sequential uptick in slippages to ₹727 crore, BoM maintained stable asset quality and profitability metrics. BoM's CASA ratio improved to 50.07%, reflecting a healthy deposit mix. The bank also received multiple accolades during the quarter, including the IBEX ESG Excellence Award and recognition for digital innovation from Finnoviti and IBA. For full financial disclosures and investor updates, visit BusinessWorld's coverage or Goodreturns' detailed report.

India's trade deficit in June at \$18.78 billion

New Delhi: India's merchandise trade deficit contracted to \$18.78 billion in June 2025, down from \$21.88 billion in May, according to provisional data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The improvement was driven by a decline in imports and a strong surplus in the services sector, offering a positive signal for the country's external balance. The June trade gap came in below market

expectations of \$22.24 billion. Economists attributed the moderation to softening global commodity prices and stable domestic demand. The services sector continued to outperform, helping offset

the merchandise shortfall. Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal emphasized the role of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes in enhancing export.



India's Fourth-Innings Collapse at Lord's Exposes Batting Frailties in 22-Run Defeat to England

London: India suffered a heartbreaking 22-run defeat to England in the third Test of the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy at Lord's, as a fourth-innings batting collapse once again highlighted persistent vulnerabilities in overseas chases. Set a modest target of 193, India were bowled out for 170 in 74.5 overs, handing England a 2-1 series lead with two matches remaining. India's chase began with early setbacks



as Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, and Karun Nair fell cheaply to England's pace trio of Jofra Archer, Chris Woakes, and Ben Stokes. The top order

failed to apply themselves on a deteriorating pitch, with poor shot selection and lack of discipline under pressure.

Vice-captain Rishabh Pant, nursing a finger injury, was bowled for 9 by Archer, while KL Rahul offered brief resistance with a counter-attacking 39 before being trapped LBW by Stokes. The middle and lower order crumbled, leaving Ravindra Jadeja to wage a lone battle.

Jyothi Yarraji undergoes ACL surgery, misses World Championships



New Delhi: Asian champion and national record holder 100m hurdler Jyothi Yarraji has undergone a successful knee surgery, which will keep her out of the World Championships in September. The surgery has also brought an end to her season. The 25-year-old announced via social media that she underwent surgery on Friday to repair an ACL (Anterior Cruciate Ligament) tear in her right knee. The surgery was performed by the well-known surgeon Dr. Dinshaw Pardiwala, who also helped in Rishabh Pant's recovery after his accident.

"Hello everyone, I'm happy to share that this Friday, I successfully underwent a successful surgery to repair an ACL tear on my right knee with Dr. Dinshaw Pardiwala. The past few weeks have been

tough for me, as this injury has stopped me from doing what I love the most," Yarraji wrote on Instagram. "However, with the support of my family, friends, the teams at TOPS, media. iccsai, afiindia official and rfyouthsports coachjameshillier and all of you, I am taking this in my stride and hoping to be back very soon. The journey to a stronger version of me starts now and I'm going to put in my 100% and more to be back on track soon." Yarraji suffered a freak knee injury during training earlier in the month, with her coach admitting that it was a serious one. Before being hit by the injury, she had a good chance of qualifying for the World Championships, despite not breaching the direct qualification time of 12.73 seconds.

Olympic cricket starts July 12



New Delhi: Cricket will make its much-anticipated return to the Olympics after a 128-year hiatus, taking center stage at the LA28 Games from July 12 to 29, 2028. The matches will be held at the Fairgrounds Stadium in the city of Pomona, roughly 50 kilometers from Los Angeles, and mark a historic moment for the sport, which last featured in the Olympics in 1900.

The 2028 Olympic cricket competition will feature six teams each in the men's and women's categories, totaling 180 players competing in the T20 format - a fast-paced, globally popular version of the game. According to the schedule released by the LA28 organizing committee, most matchdays will feature double headers, though no matches are set for July 14 and 21. The medal matches are scheduled for July 20 (women's) and July 29 (men's). Each team will consist of a 15-member squad, making full use of the 90 athlete quotas allocated per gender. This format allows for competitive depth while keeping the event compact and viewer-friendly, aligning with the Olympic movement's goal to attract new audiences.

Burnley's owners to take over LaLiga club Espanyol

Barcelona: Velocity Sport Limited (VSL), the owners of Premier League club Burnley, have reached an agreement to acquire Spanish top-flight side RCD Espanyol, marking a significant step in their multi-club investment strategy. The deal, announced by Espanyol on Monday, will see both clubs operate independently under a shared financial umbrella. Espanyol confirmed that the Chinese RASTAR Group, which has held majority ownership since 2015, will not fully exit but will integrate its shares into a new investment vehicle jointly managed with

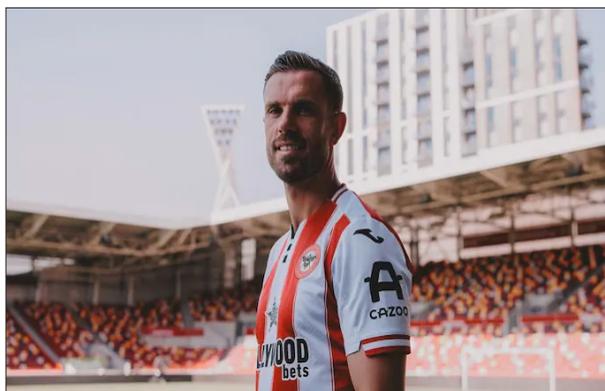


VSL. This structure allows both Burnley and Espanyol to remain autonomous while benefiting from common financial backing. The acquisition is still pending formal administrative approval, but once finalized,

Espanyol will become the second club under VSL's control. The move follows similar multi-club ownership models seen across European football, including City Football Group and RedBird Capital Partners.

Jordan Henderson returns to the Premier League with Brentford after Ajax exit

London: Former Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson has officially returned to the Premier League, signing a two-year contract with Brentford FC following his departure from Dutch club Ajax. The 35-year-old midfielder joins the Bees on a free transfer, bringing leadership and top-flight experience to a squad undergoing significant transition. Henderson's move comes after Ajax terminated his contract a year early to facilitate the transfer. He had joined the Eredivisie side in January 2024 after a brief stint with Saudi club Al-Ettifaq, where he reunited with former teammate Steven Gerrard. Prior to that, Henderson spent 12



seasons at Liverpool, captaining the team to Premier League and Champions League titles, among other honors. Brentford confirmed the signing on Tuesday, citing Henderson's fitness, motivation, and leadership as key factors. Head coach Keith Andrews,

newly appointed following Thomas Frank's move to Tottenham, said, "Jordan remains one of the most influential leaders in modern Premier League years. His professionalism and experience will drive standards and be a brilliant addition to our squad". Henderson's

arrival fills the leadership void left by Christian Norgaard, who recently joined Arsenal. Brentford also lost Mark Flekken and Ben Mee, prompting the club to prioritize experienced reinforcements. Henderson is expected to anchor the midfield and mentor younger players, including Vitaly Janelt and Mathias Jensen. Despite his age, Henderson remains in contention for England selection under manager Thomas Tuchel, having earned 84 caps and featured in recent international fixtures. Speaking to Brentford's media team, Henderson expressed enthusiasm: "I'm delighted to be here. I still have a lot to give and a lot to learn."

Indian teams meet King Charles III after Test

London: The Indian cricket teams, both men and women, met King Charles III at Clarence House in London on Tuesday. The King interacted with players Like Jasprit Bumrah, Rishabh Pant, Shubman Gill and other. King Charles also mentioned to the Indian team that he saw the highlights of the third India vs England Test at Lord's, which the Gill-led side lost by just 22 runs, despite being eight down quite early on Day 5. Mohammed Siraj was the last Indian wicket to fall off Shoaib Bashir's bowling as the ball rolled on to the stumps.