

Sovereignty over personal liberty in drug cases: SC



New Delhi, June 02: The Supreme Court on Tuesday said national sovereignty must take precedence over personal liberty when the two are in conflict, particularly in cases involving narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The court made the remarks while setting aside a Punjab and Haryana High Court order that had granted bail to a man accused of operating a drug-trafficking network from inside a jail using mobile phones. "Should there be any conflict between the sovereignty of the country and personal liberty, undoubtedly, the former shall prevail, particularly, when a war is waged against the nation, be it in the form of supply of drugs, which vitally affects the national economy and the health of people," a bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and N Kotiswar Singh said.

The apex court said in this case, there are antecedents involving commission of offences of the very same nature under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and therefore, it cannot be said that the accused is not likely to commit such an offence while on bail. Noting that the accused has only undergone a year and seven months in jail, the bench said if found guilty, a maximum prison sentence of 20 years may be imposed upon him. "Therefore, it cannot be said that he has suffered incarceration for a long period, warranting interference in view of Article 21 of the Constitution," it said.

The court said while on several occasions it has recognised that prolonged incarceration warrants the grant of bail in view of Article 21, the application of the concept is not uniform. "Moreover, there is no doubt that what constitutes 'prolonged incarceration' for the purposes of bail has not been expounded by this court or the law of the land," it added.

Seven Killed, 40 Injured in Gujarat Twin-Bus Crash and Fire

Fiery Highway Crash Prompts ₹10 Lakh Ex-Gratia For Families

Surat, June 2: Seven people were killed and around 40 injured when two Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) buses collided head-on near Bardoli in Gujarat's Surat district on Tuesday, causing one vehicle to burst into flames. The tragedy occurred on National Highway 53 near Uva village. According to Surat District Superintendent of Police Rajesh Ghadhiya, a Dhule-bound bus hit a tractor, lost control, and jumped

the divider. It then rammed into a second bus heading to Surat from Chalisgaon, causing the second vehicle to overturn into a low-lying area and catch fire. All seven fatalities were passengers trapped inside the burning bus.

Emergency teams from Surat and neighboring Tapi districts rushed to the site, rescuing trapped passengers and shifting the injured to a

hospital in Bardoli.

In Mumbai, Maharashtra Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik expressed deep grief over the incident and announced financial assistance of ₹10 lakh each for the families of the deceased. The MSRTC chairman also extended his condolences. Minister Sarnaik has directed local authorities to ensure that all injured passengers receive the best possible medical treatment free of cost.



Over 550 Indian peacekeepers receive UN Medal of Honour in South Sudan

United Nations, June 2: Over 550 Indian peacekeepers, including 53 women, serving with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) have been honored with the prestigious UN Medal of Honour. The award recognizes their exceptional dedication, commitment to protecting civilians, and vital support toward peacebuilding efforts in the conflict-affected nation.

A total of 565 Indian Blue Helmets and 464 Rwandan peacekeepers received the medals during a special ceremony held in Malakal city. UNMISS Force Commander Major-General Junhui Wu praised the recipients, stating that the medals celebrate the "courage and resilience of our brave peacekeepers, who demonstrate the highest standards of discipline, operational effectiveness, and teamwork in a challenging environment."

Reacting to the achievement, the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations congratulated the contingent, noting that Indian Blue Helmets consistently uphold the highest standards of professionalism globally. India is currently the second-largest contributor of uniformed personnel to UN peacekeeping operations, trailing only Nepal. The nation has deployed more than 4,200 military and police personnel, including 155 women, across vari-



ous volatile regions, including Abyei, Cyprus, Congo, Lebanon, and Western Sahara. However, this commitment has come at a heavy cost; nearly 180 Indian peacekeepers have lost their lives in the line of duty, the highest sacrifice among all troop-contributing countries.

The ceremony follows recent global recognition for Indian peacekeepers on the International Day of UN Peacekeepers. Lance Havildar Harbhajan Singh (MONUSCO) and Naib Subedar Sujit Kumar Pradhan (UNMISS) were posthumously awarded the Dag Hammarskjold Medal for their supreme sacrifice. Additionally, India's Major Abhilasha Barak was named the recipient of the 2025 Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award, further highlighting India's impactful and inclusive contributions to global peace.

BJP Deploys Leaders For Uttarakhand Seats

Dehradun, June 02: With the 2027 Assembly elections approaching, the BJP in Uttarakhand has launched a major strategic overhaul to reclaim ground in constituencies where it underperformed during the last state polls. As part of this tactical shift, the party has entrusted former Chief Minister and Haridwar MP Trivendra Singh Rawat, along with Nainital MP Ajay Bhatt, with the critical task of reviving its electoral prospects. The central leadership's immediate focus is on Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar districts, which emerged as major vulnerabilities after the party lost eight of 11 seats in Haridwar and five of nine in Udham Singh Nagar during the previous elections.

The restructuring follows a high-level visit by the BJP's national leadership to Dehradun to assess organizational standing. This visit has already triggered significant



structural changes, most notably the transfer of state General Secretary (Organisation) Ajay Kumar to Rajasthan after a controversial six-year tenure. Analysts suggest further leadership changes are highly likely in the coming months. Beyond organizational shifts, the leadership actively deployed "dinner diplomacy" to quell rising internal discontent. Senior leaders successfully bridged rifts with vocal dissidents like MLAs Arvind Pandey and Bishan Singh Chuphal. Public displays of reconciliation, including widely circulated photographs of Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami with Pandey, signaled a pause in internal discord as the party unites for 2027.

Rahul Gandhi Demands Pradhan's Dismissal Over CBSE

Demands Judicial Probe Into CBSE Evaluation Rows

New Delhi, June 02: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday termed the transfer of two senior CBSE officials a "cover-up" amid the ongoing controversy over the board's On-Screen Marking (OSM) system. He demanded the immediate dismissal of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and called for an independent judicial probe into the alleged irregularities. The reaction followed the Centre's sudden transfer of CBSE Chairman Rahul Singh and Secretary Himanshu Gupta. The government also ordered an inquiry into the procurement of digital evaluation services after widespread complaints regarding the Class 12 examination process.

Taking to X, Gandhi criticized the administrative shuffle, arguing that shifting officials while sparing the minister is not true accountability. "CBSE Chairman, transferred. CBSE Secretary, transferred... And



the real culprit, Dharmendra Pradhan, safe," Gandhi wrote. He stated that if Prime Minister Narendra Modi genuinely cared about the 18.5 lakh students affected, the education minister would have been

removed already. The controversy intensified after parents and students flagged severe lapses in the OSM system, including mismatches in digital answer sheets and a stark lack of transparency during the re-evaluation and verification processes.

In response to the backlash, the Cabinet Secretariat constituted a one-member committee, headed by S. Radha Chauhan (Chairperson of the Capacity Building Commission), to investigate the procurement of the digital evaluation system. The panel has been tasked with submitting its report to the Department of Personnel and Training within one month.

However, the opposition has rejected this internal probe. The Congress party maintains that a single-member committee is insufficient to address the systemic failures, reiterating that a thorough, independent judicial investigation is the only way to ensure justice for the lakhs of impacted students.



Tripura To Receive 200 MW Solar Power Plant Following Central Project Review



Agartala, June 01: Union Minister for Power and Housing and Urban Affairs, Manohar Lal Khattar, on Sunday said that Tripura has considerable potential for solar energy development, announcing that a 200 MW solar power project is in the pipeline with the tendering process already in progress. Speaking at a press conference following a review meeting at the Tripura State Guest House in Agartala, Khattar noted that while hydropower generation is not a viable option for the state, solar energy offers significant opportunities for growth and expansion. The minister said the review focused on the implementation and progress of projects under the Power and Urban Development sectors. He highlighted that over 9,300 loans have been sanctioned to street vendors in the state under a central government scheme, with financial assistance being disbursed in three phases. Discussing urban infrastructure, Khattar said waste management initiatives, including work related to the DC Nagar dumping ground, were reviewed and that Rs 100 crore has been allocated for the project. He added that household waste collection is being carried out through members of self-help groups (SHGs) and urged residents to actively participate in waste management efforts. Those not enrolled in doorstep

collection services should dispose of waste at designated segregation centres, he said.

Khattar further informed that a survey covering community, aspirational and public toilets across urban areas has been commissioned and is expected to be completed by June 20. Based on the findings, financial assistance will be extended, with funding shared by both the Centre and the state government. The Union minister also announced that 11 new sewage treatment plants (STPs) in and around Agartala are likely to be operational by December 2026. To improve urban sanitation, he said special efforts are being undertaken in four key towns—Agartala, Udaipur, Dharmanagar and Melaghar with Rs 27 crore sanctioned for cleanliness and sanitation-related projects.

Khattar also unveiled plans for projects worth Rs 1,200 crore under the Urban Challenge Fund. Under the funding structure, Rs 300 crore will be contributed by the state government, another Rs 300 crore by the Centre, while the remaining Rs 600 crore will be raised through financial institutions.

He explained that the proposed projects would be designed to generate revenue, enabling repayment of loans in accordance with the terms set by lending agencies. On the power sector front, Khattar said the rooftop solar initiative under the PM Surya Ghar Scheme is making steady progress in the state. He noted that transmission and distribution losses remain around 26 per cent, attributing part of the losses to power theft and illegal connections. He said stricter enforcement measures would be adopted to curb such practices. The minister also stressed the importance of expediting the installation of smart electricity meters across the state to improve efficiency and reduce losses.

Khandu To Continue As Arunachal CM

Bordumsa, May 31: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has strongly dismissed social media rumors regarding a potential leadership change in Arunachal Pradesh, confirming that Chief Minister Pema Khandu retains the complete confidence of the party high command. The clarification followed widespread digital speculation claiming that Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein was set to replace Khandu. Speaking at a late-night press briefing, state BJP spokesperson Mohesh Chai revealed that BJP National President Nitin Nabin and state unit chief Kaling Moyong held discussions to address the viral claims, categorically labeling them as entirely fabricated. Moyong reassured the public that Khandu's leadership remains stable and undisputed, urging citizens to ignore the misleading reports. Additionally, BJP MP Tapir Gao condemned the rumors as a "political hoax" and indicated that the party might pursue legal action, including filing FIRs against those spreading false information, to ensure public and organizational clarity.



Assam Cabinet Expansion Set For June 5



Guwahati, May 31: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday announced that his Council of Ministers will be expanded on 5 June 2026 with the induction of new ministers. Sarma, who was sworn in for a second consecutive term on May 12 by Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other senior dignitaries, said the expansion will take place next week. At present, alongside the Chief Minister, four ministers are part of the cabinet — BJP leaders Ajanta Neog and Rameswar Teli, Asom Gana Parishad's Atul Bora, and Bodoland People's Front's Charan Boro.

In a post on X, Sarma said: "I am pleased to inform that the Council of Ministers of the Government of Assam will be expanded on June 5, 2026." He did not disclose the number of ministers to be inducted or their names.

The BJP-led NDA secured a third consecutive term in the state, winning 102 of the 126 Assembly seats in the recent elections, with the BJP winning 82 seats and its allies AGP and BPF securing 10 each.

Manipur Urges Naga Council End Blockade

Guwahati, June 01: Manipur authorities have sought the United Naga Council's (UNC) cooperation in tracing six missing persons. Additionally, the state has urged the council to lift the ongoing economic blockade to facilitate the safe return of those affected. N. Ashok Kumar, Commissioner-cum-Secretary (Home), conveyed the government's response in a letter on Saturday, addressing concerns over the missing persons case and security-related issues raised by the UNC.

The government informed the council that the case has been handed over to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to ensure a thorough and impartial investigation. Officials said security agencies are conducting extensive search operations to locate the six persons. Search drives, patrols in sensitive areas and intelligence-based operations are underway as part of the effort.

The administration also said compliance with the ground rules of the Suspension of Operations (SoO) arrangement and camps occupied by armed groups will continue to be monitored strictly. Any decision on restructuring or relocating camps will be taken in consultation with the Central government. According to the



government, the NIA investigation is expected to identify all those involved in the alleged abduction of civilians. Authorities said legal action will be taken against anyone found responsible, irrespective of their background or organisational affiliation. Efforts to trace and arrest the accused are continuing.

The government further stated that maintaining peace and communal harmony remains a priority. It added that steps are being taken to strengthen security and protect residents in vulnerable areas. In its message to the UNC, the government sought the organisation's assistance in securing the release of the affected persons and urged it to ensure that public movement and the supply of essential goods are not disrupted by any blockade.

The Home Department's letter to UNC president Ng. Lorpho comes amid growing concern over the disappearance of six persons and the security situation in parts of Manipur.

Mizoram Targets Rs 650 Crore SASCI Incentives For 2026–27, Says CM Lalduhoma

Aizawl, June 01: Chief Minister on Monday called on all government departments to strengthen financial management and ensure effective implementation of the SNA SPARSH system to help Mizoram secure the full amount of reform-linked incentives available under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) programme. Addressing a Meeting-cum-Workshop on SASCI and SNA SPARSH at the Planning & Programme Implementation Conference Hall in Aizawl, the Chief Minister, who also holds the Finance portfolio, said advancements in technology have made the receipt and utilization of Central funds more efficient and transparent. He said SNA SPARSH serves as a key platform through which the State receives and manages a substantial portion of its funds, making it essential for all concerned departments to

fully understand and effectively use the system. The workshop was organised to improve implementation of the platform during the current year.

The Chief Minister noted that Mizoram received an incentive of Rs 350 crore under

year as well. To support this objective, the Government of Mizoram has delegated financial powers to all Administrative Heads under the Charter of Financial Advisers, a move aimed at expediting Administrative Approvals and Expenditure Sanctions. Lalduhoma



SASCI Part 9 for Efficiency in Financial Management due to its performance and coordinated efforts in the previous year. He said the State Government aims to secure all available reform-linked incentives under various SASCI components during the current financial

year as well. To support this objective, the Government of Mizoram has delegated financial powers to all Administrative Heads under the Charter of Financial Advisers, a move aimed at expediting Administrative Approvals and Expenditure Sanctions. Lalduhoma stressed the importance of timely utilisation of funds and prompt closure of SNA SPARSH accounts after the receipt of sanctions. He also urged Administrative Heads to ensure that Utilization Certificates are prepared and submitted without delay.



NSDC partners Fourth Valley to expand India-Japan talent mobility

Guwahati: National Skill Development Corporation has entered into a strategic partnership with Fourth Valley Concierge Corporation to strengthen workforce mobility opportunities for Indian professionals in Japan and build a more transparent recruitment ecosystem for overseas employment.

The partnership will leverage the "Credibility Check" framework of NSDC Trust to establish a structured verification mechanism for Indian candidates travelling to Japan through the Tokyo-based recruitment firm. The framework is aimed at improving employer confidence and strengthening the long-term employability and recognition of Indian talent in Japan.

Under the proposed system, the verification process may include identity verification, educational and qualification checks, employment history verification, criminal background checks where legally permissible, and consistency checks of submitted documents.

NSDC CEO Arunkumar Pillai said the collaboration reflects the organisation's commitment to creating secure and credible pathways for Indian professionals seeking global job opportunities. FVCC Founder and CEO Yohei Shibasaki said the initiative would help strengthen the confidence of Japanese employers while supporting responsible and sustainable workforce integration.

The move comes at a time when Japan is facing a growing labour shortage and increasing demand for foreign talent. During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Japan visit in 2025, both countries had agreed on a broader plan to facilitate the movement of at least 50,000 skilled Indian professionals to Japan over the next five years.

In Guwahati, the development is expected to create fresh overseas employment opportunities for skilled youth from Assam and the Northeast. The partnership could increase interest in Japanese language training, healthcare, manufacturing and technical skill programmes as demand for verified Indian professionals rises in Japan.

Team India wins two silver medals at Taipei Capital Cup 2026

Guwahati: Team India delivered an impressive performance at the Taipei Capital Cup 2026, securing two silver medals and three merit awards at the international skilling competition held in Taipei, Taiwan, from May 26 to 28. Competing against skilled professionals from 15 countries across Europe, Asia, the Americas and Oceania, the Indian contingent showcased excellence across emerging and industry-driven skill categories, further strengthening India's position as a global skills hub.

Among the medal winners, Ms. Muskan won a silver medal in Painting and Decorating, while Mr. Arjun Sumathi Vijayabashkar secured a silver medal in Mobile Applications Development. Merit awards were earned by Mr. Mohamed Mafaz Poonakannan Rabi Ahamed in Software Applications Development, Mr. Suresh Kumar Ganesan Meena in Digital Construction, and Mr. Md Seraj in Automobile Technology. The silver medalists received cash prizes of 8,000 Taiwan Dollars each, while merit award winners received 5,000 Taiwan Dollars each.

Congratulating the winners, Union Minister



of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Shri Jayant Chaudhary said the achievement reflected the confidence, capability and determination of India's youth. He noted that international competitions provide valuable exposure ahead of major events such as WorldSkills Shanghai 2026.

MSDE Secretary Smt. Debashree Mukherjee said the success highlighted the growing strength of India's skilling ecosystem and the global potential of Indian youth. The contingent was supported by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and the National Skill Development Corporation, with training assistance from industry partners including Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai Motors, Kia Motors, BIMLABS Global and YPSVEF by JK Cement.

Oriflame bets big on Northeast market with 5,000-km influencer campaign

Shillong: Swedish beauty and wellbeing company Oriflame has intensified its focus on Northeast India through a large-scale influencer-led outreach campaign covering over 5,000 kilometres across 13 cities, highlighting the region's growing importance in India's beauty, wellness and creator economy markets.

The month-long Northeast Yatra, conducted in partnership with Whosthat360, engaged more than 300 influencers and creators across Northeast India and West Bengal between April and May. Beginning in Shillong on April 7 and ending in Kolkata on May 10, the campaign passed through Agartala, Aizawl, Dimapur, Kohima,

Guwahati, Nagaon, Dibrugarh, Itanagar, Siliguri and Durgapur.

Industry observers see the campaign as part of a broader push by consumer brands to tap the Northeast's digitally connected youth population and rapidly expanding regional creator ecosystem. Through beauty masterclasses, skincare workshops and creator auditions hosted from the Oriflame Beauty and Wellness Partner Truck, the company generated extensive community-led engagement and regional-language social media visibility.

The campaign also promoted Oriflame's social selling business model by showcasing stories of women entre-



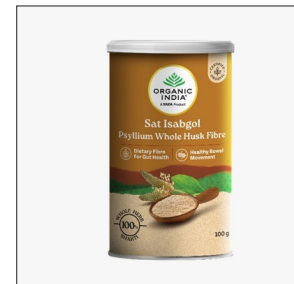
preneurs from smaller towns across the Northeast. The initiative concluded with the Oriflame Presents Whosthat360 Next2026 Influencer Awards in Kolkata, attended by personalities including Trina Saha and Srabanti Chatterjee.

Organic India promotes herbal digestive wellness range on World Digestive Health Day

Guwahati: Organic India has spotlighted its portfolio of certified organic digestive wellness products on World Digestive Health Day, underscoring the growing consumer focus on gut health and natural nutrition.

The company said its products are sourced directly from more than 2,000 organic farmers and undergo over 600 quality checks. According to Organic India, the herbs are cultivated in chemical- and pesticide-free soil and formulated using whole-herb preparations to preserve the complete spectrum of natural plant actives, enabling better absorption and enhanced digestive benefits.

Among the products highlighted is Triphala, available



in powder and capsule formats. Made from Amalaki, Bibhitaki and Haritaki, the traditional formulation supports digestion, detoxification and bowel regularity, while helping relieve constipation. The company noted that Amla, a key ingredient, is a rich source of Vitamin C and antioxidants.

Organic India also showcased its Psyllium Whole Husk Isabgol, a natural source

of dietary fibre that supports digestive function, bowel regularity and cholesterol management. Complementing the offering is Sat Isabgol Pre & Probiotic Fibre Powder, enriched with prebiotic fibre and 1.5 billion CFU of Bacillus coagulans probiotics. The sugar-free formulation is available in Orange and Cinnamon flavours.

The company further highlighted its caffeine-free Revitalise Gut Tea, a blend of spearmint, ajwain, cumin, ginger and black pepper, along with 1 billion CFU of Bacillus coagulans per three servings. Organic India said the herbal range is aimed at helping consumers build a balanced and healthy gut through natural wellness solutions.

Aditya Birla Health Insurance launches ActivYuva for wellness-driven young consumers

Guwahati: Aditya Birla Health Insurance Co. Ltd. (ABHICL), the health insurance arm of Aditya Birla Capital, has launched 'ActivYuva', a wellness-first health insurance product aimed at meeting the evolving lifestyle and healthcare needs of young Indians. The company said the plan is designed to make health insurance more relevant for consumers seeking preventive healthcare, wellness tracking and lifestyle-linked benefits.

The new offering builds on ABHICL's HealthReturns™ proposition, which rewards policyholders for healthy activities such as walking

Aditya Birla Health Insurance Co. Ltd.



HEALTH INSURANCE

over 10,000 steps daily or burning 300 calories in a single exercise session. Customers maintaining consistent activity levels and a strong Healthy Heart Score™ can earn up to 100 per cent of their annual premium back.

ActivYuva introduces a broader re-

wards structure under three wellness pillars — Eat, Move and Heal. Users logging two meals daily for 21 days in a month can receive a 10 per cent boost in monthly HealthReturns™, while those averaging over 7,500 steps or burning 250 calories can earn Bonus Active Dayz™. Maintaining

7-8 hours of sleep for 21 days can unlock up to a 15 per cent increase in rewards.

ABHICL Chief Executive Officer Mayank Bathwal said younger consumers are increasingly integrating wellness into their daily routines, creating opportunities for insurers to

move beyond conventional claims-based products and become active partners in everyday health management.

In Guwahati, digitally enabled wellness-linked insurance products are gaining traction among urban millennials, salaried professionals and fitness-conscious consumers in the Northeast. Industry experts believe products combining OPD coverage, wellness rewards and income protection features could witness stronger demand in Guwahati as awareness around preventive healthcare and lifestyle management continues to grow.



Shopsy bets on AI and gamification to drive Bharat's next e-commerce wave

Guwahati: Shopsy, the hypervalue e-commerce platform owned by Flipkart, has launched a new AI-powered shopping app aimed at Gen Z consumers and Bharat's next 100 million online shoppers, marking a major shift from traditional offers-led commerce to an engagement-driven digital shopping experience.

The company said the revamped app combines AI-powered personalization, video-led shopping, immersive product discovery and gamification features to create a more intuitive and rewarding shopping journey. Users can earn SuperCoins through app logins, games, streaks and interactive activities, which can later be redeemed during purchases. The platform also uses AI-based search and regional lan-



guage discovery tools to better understand local shopping preferences across metros and tier-2 and smaller cities.

According to the company, tier-2+ cities now contribute

nearly 65 per cent of new online shopper growth, while Gen Z makes up around 40-45 per cent of India's e-retail market. Balaji Thiagarajan, Chief Technology and Product Officer at Flipkart, said young consumers increasing-

ly prefer video-first and interactive shopping experiences.

The company also said the new platform will support MSMEs, artisans and regional manufacturers through AI-powered listing tools, video-enabled catalogues and a zero-commission marketplace model aimed at improving seller visibility and conversions.

The launch could positively impact Guwahati, where digital commerce adoption has been rising steadily among young consumers and small businesses. Retailers and entrepreneurs in Guwahati are increasingly using online platforms to expand their reach, and Shopsy's AI-led personalized discovery and low-cost seller ecosystem may open new growth opportunities for local MSMEs and regional brands.

Renault posts ninth straight month of growth as wholesales jump 64% in May

Guwahati: Renault India continued its strong growth momentum in the domestic passenger vehicle market, recording its ninth consecutive month of wholesale growth in May 2026. The company, a wholly owned subsidiary of Renault Group, said the sustained expansion extends a positive streak that began in September 2025.

Between September 2025 and May 2026, Renault India registered cumulative wholesale sales of 38,225 units, representing a robust 46 per cent growth over the corresponding period of the previous year. The performance highlights the automaker's growing foothold in the highly competitive Indian automobile market.

The company reported a 64 per cent year-on-year increase in wholesales during May 2026. According to VAAHAN data, Renault was also among



only two passenger vehicle manufacturers in India to post positive retail sales growth during the month, underlining strong customer demand and improving market acceptance of its products.

Industry observers said the performance reflects Renault's continued focus on offering products tailored to Indian consumers while strengthening its sales and distribution network across the country. The company's consistent growth comes at a time when several automobile

manufacturers are facing challenges from fluctuating demand and changing consumer preferences.

In Guwahati, demand for affordable and fuel-efficient passenger vehicles remains steady, supported by improving connectivity and rising consumer aspirations across the Northeast. Renault's sustained nationwide growth is expected to further strengthen its visibility in the region, where buyers continue to show interest in value-driven mobility solutions.

Guwahati students excel in SOF International Olympiads 2025-26



Guwahati: Students from Guwahati delivered an impressive performance in the Science Olympiad Foundation (SOF) examinations for the academic year 2025-26, bringing recognition to the city on the international stage.

The SOF Olympiads this year witnessed participation from millions of students across 72 countries, including more than 42,000 students from Guwahati.

Among the top achievers, Nishanth Chettri of Class 1 from St. Rose School secured International Rank 1 in the International General Knowledge Olympiad (IGKO). Arnab Bhagowati of Class 4 from Modern English School achieved International Rank 1 in the National Science Olympiad (NSO), while Rohit Mahto of Class 4 from Happy Montessori High School se-

cured International Rank 1 in the International Hindi Olympiad (IHO). All three students will receive gold medals.

Ahana Bhuyan of Class 1 from Maharishi Vidya Mandir-IV secured International Rank 3 in the National Science Olympiad and will be awarded a bronze medal. The students will also receive Certificates of Outstanding Performance and Certificates of Distinction.

SOF Founder and Director Mahabir Singh congratulated the students, parents and schools, stating that the Olympiads continue to encourage critical thinking and academic excellence among young learners.

The achievements have highlighted Guwahati's growing academic ecosystem and the increasing participation of students in global-level competitions.

ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India leads first PM-SETU rollout with Andhra Pradesh ITI project

Guwahati: ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) has become the first industry partner to secure approval for a Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) under the Government of India's ₹60,000-crore Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs (PM-SETU) scheme, marking a major milestone in the country's vocational education reform programme. The National Steering Committee (NSC), during its third meeting at Kaushal Bhawan in New Delhi, approved the SIP for the Visakhapatnam ITI Cluster in Andhra Pradesh. The approval makes Andhra Pradesh the first state to operationalise an industry partnership under PM-SETU and onboard an Anchor Industry Partner under the scheme's industry-led Hub-and-Spoke model.

The meeting, chaired by MSDE Secretary Debashree Mukherjee, was attended by senior officials from the Directorate General of Training, Capacity Building



Commission, NCVET, various central ministries, participating states, industry leaders including HAL, Hero MotoCorp, Bajaj Auto, ITC Limited and AM/NS India, as well as development partners such as the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank.

The approval is expected to accelerate the transformation of government Industrial Training Institutes into industry-managed, outcome-oriented institutions aligned with evolving workforce demands. Officials said the Visakhapatnam cluster could serve as a template for

other states looking to strengthen industry participation in skill development.

In Guwahati, the progress of PM-SETU is being viewed positively by industry stakeholders and training institutions. With Assam focusing on industrial growth, logistics, infrastructure and advanced manufacturing, stronger industry-led skilling models could help bridge workforce gaps, improve employability and create a larger pool of job-ready talent for businesses across the Northeast.

PM-SETU aims to modernise 1,000 government ITIs, establish National Centres of Excellence in high-growth sectors and strengthen employability through deeper government-industry collaboration. With 32 states and Union Territories having formed State Steering Committees and several moving ahead with industry partner selection, the scheme is entering a full-scale implementation phase aimed at building a future-ready workforce for Viksit Bharat 2047.

Gen Z fuels shift towards short, personalised travel experiences: Airbnb report

Guwahati: India's travel industry is witnessing a major behavioural shift as Gen Z travellers increasingly opt for shorter, more frequent and personalised trips, creating new opportunities for tourism and hospitality businesses, according to a new report released by Airbnb.

The report, *Never the Same: The New Rules of Gen Z Travel in India*, found that seven in 10 Gen Z travellers prefer three short trips over one long annual holiday, while 87 per cent favour vacations lasting less than a week. Airbnb's internal data showed searches by Indian Gen Z travellers for the summer period rose over 30 per cent year-on-year, with

domestic getaways of two to six nights emerging as the fastest-growing travel format, recording nearly 80 per cent growth.

The study revealed that 95 per cent of respondents want trips that feel personal and unique, while 87 per cent believe the way they travel reflects their identity. Accommodation is becoming a key driver of travel decisions, with 63 per cent choosing destinations because of a stay they discovered. Group travel is also gaining momentum, with domestic group bookings by Indian Gen Z travellers on Airbnb increasing nearly 55 per cent year-on-year.

Amanpreet Bajaj, Airbnb's Country Head for India and Southeast Asia, said travel has become a form of self-expression for Gen Z, influencing where they go, who they travel with and where they stay.

In Guwahati, the findings indicate growing demand for homestays, boutique properties and experiential tourism across Assam and the Northeast. Industry stakeholders expect young travellers seeking nature-based escapes, local culture, flexible itineraries and shared accommodations to boost business prospects for regional hospitality operators in the coming years.



MG launches MAJESTOR SUV at Rs 40.99 lakh with focus on premium off-road segment

Guwahati: JSW MG Motor India has launched the MG MAJESTOR, positioning it as India's first D+ SUV as the company strengthens its presence in the premium utility vehicle market. The MAJESTOR 4x2 Automatic Top Trim has been priced at Rs 40.99 lakh (ex-showroom), while the 4x4 Automatic Top Trim is priced at Rs 44.99 lakh.

The company said the SUV combines premium features, advanced technology and strong off-road capability to target customers seeking high-end performance vehicles. Powered by a twin-turbo diesel engine producing 215.5 PS and 478.5 Nm torque, the



MAJESTOR comes with an 8-speed automatic transmission in both 2WD and 4WD variants. MG highlighted that the SUV offers segment-first features such as triple differential locks, Level 2 ADAS,

crawl control mode and 10 off-road driving modes. The vehicle also comes with 219 mm ground clearance and 810 mm water-wading capability.

The MAJESTOR features a 2950 mm wheelbase and di-

mensions of 5046 mm length, 2016 mm width and 1870 mm height. Inside, it offers ventilated and massaging seats, panoramic sunroof, dual 12.3-inch displays, 12 JBL speakers, dual wireless chargers and over 75 connected car features.

JSW MG Motor India Managing Director Anurag Mehrotra said the MAJESTOR delivers a blend of performance, premium comfort and advanced technology while setting new benchmarks in the SUV segment. The company is also offering an assured buyback value of up to 70 per cent under its MG Shield ownership programme.

Godrej Launches New Wealth Venture

Mumbai: Godrej Industries Group on Tuesday announced its entry into the financial advisory sector with the launch of Godrej Wealth. Housed under Godrej Investments Ltd, the new venture has set an ambitious target of managing ₹1 lakh crore in assets under management (AUM) by 2031, aiming to capture India's rapidly growing affluent and high-net-worth investor segment. The firm plans to expand its footprint to 35 locations across the country over the next five years. Operating alongside Godrej Capital, the group's lending arm, Godrej Wealth will primarily cater to clients with investable assets of ₹2 crore and above, including entrepreneurs, corporate leaders, and non-resident Indians (NRIs). Its core services will span wealth management, private market investments, global opportunities, and legacy planning.

Pirojsha Godrej, Chairperson Designate of Godrej Industries Group, stated that the venture aims to bring the group's 129-year legacy of trust and institutional rigor to families navigating complex financial needs. Kunal Karnani, CEO of Godrej Wealth, emphasized that the platform will prioritize conflict-free, insight-led advisory services over traditional product distribution, relying on research-backed frameworks to help clients achieve long-term financial governance.

Godrej INDUSTRIES GROUP

Shopsy bets on AI and gamification to capture Bharat's next 100 million shoppers

Shillong: Flipkart-owned Shopsy on Thursday launched its new AI-powered shopping app, positioning itself as an engagement-led hypervalue commerce platform aimed at Gen Z consumers and Bharat's next 100 million online shoppers.

The company said the revamped platform moves beyond traditional offers-led e-commerce by integrating AI-native discovery, video-first product experiences and gamified shopping into a single ecosystem. Shopsy said the app has been designed for young, aspirational and value-conscious consumers across metros and tier-2 and smaller cities, amid rising digital adoption in India.

According to the company,

Tier-2+ cities now contribute nearly 65 per cent of new online shopper growth, while Gen Z makes up around 40-45 per cent of India's e-retail market. The platform uses AI-powered search and personalization tools to offer region-specific recommendations and vernacular-led discovery experiences. Features such as autoplay videos, real customer visuals and quiz-style onboarding have also been added to improve customer engagement and trust.

Shopsy has also introduced game-led commerce, where users earn SuperCoins through daily logins, gameplay and interaction on the platform. The rewards can be redeemed directly during purchases.

Balaji Thiagarajan, Chief

Technology and Product Officer at Flipkart, said the new app was built to adapt to evolving shopping behaviours of Indian consumers. Sakait Chaudhary, Senior Vice President at Flipkart, said the platform combines personalization, gamification and trust infrastructure to create a rewarding shopping experience.

The move could strengthen Shopsy's footprint in north-eastern markets such as Shillong, where smartphone usage and online shopping among young consumers are growing steadily. Retail observers say reward-based commerce and affordable product offerings could attract students and middle-income buyers in Shillong's expanding digital retail market.

Oakley bets on athlete-led branding with new Players Collection

Guwahati: Premium eyewear brand Oakley has expanded its athlete-inspired product portfolio with the launch of the latest chapter of its Players Collection, featuring signature eyewear series co-created with global sports icons Kylian Mbappé and Jaylen Brown. The launch reflects the company's strategy of combining sports performance with lifestyle fashion to strengthen its presence in the premium eyewear segment.

The new collection showcases products designed around the personal identities and journeys of the two athletes. Jaylen Brown's Signature Series introduces an exclusive cocoa brown colour palette, his personal logo and Prizm™ Ruby lenses engineered for enhanced coverage and sun protection. Inspired by Brown's off-field style, the eyewear features lightweight O-Matter™ frames designed for durability and long-term performance.

Meanwhile, Kylian Mbappé's Signature Series Permian features a bold deep-set lens construction with Prizm™ Road lenses. The design incorporates Mbappé's logo on the lens and the coordinates of Bondy, his hometown in France, engraved along the temple as a tribute to his roots. "Style is a signature. These glasses are more than an accessory – they carry my

roots, reflect my journey, and define how I move forward," Mbappé said.

Brown said the collection reflects the connection between "performance, creativity and identity" and how athletes prepare and present themselves beyond the field of play.

In Guwahati, the launch is expected to attract growing demand for premium and performance eyewear among



young consumers, professionals and sports enthusiasts. Retailers in the city have witnessed increasing interest in international lifestyle brands, and Oakley's latest athlete-led collection could further strengthen its appeal in the Northeast's expanding premium consumer market.

The Players Collection is now available through leading optical stores, Sunglass Hut, LensCrafters and major e-commerce platforms including Amazon, Myntra, AJIO and Tata Cliq Luxury. Prices start at Rs 11,690.

Sony launches BRAVIA 7II with True RGB technology in India

Guwahati: Sony India has launched its new BRAVIA 7II television series in the country, introducing its first True RGB LED technology aimed at delivering enhanced colour accuracy, deeper contrast and a more immersive home entertainment experience. The company announced that pre-bookings for select BRAVIA 7II models have commenced from May 28.

The new BRAVIA 7II series is powered by Sony's RGB Backlight Master Drive Pro technology, which independently controls red, green and blue LEDs to improve colour precision, brightness and black levels. Combined with the Cognitive Processor XR, the television is designed to reproduce visuals and sound in a way that mirrors human perception. The lineup includes 55-inch, 65-inch, 75-inch, 85-inch and 98-inch models, with larger variants scheduled for release later this year.

The television features RGB Triluminos Max, Smooth Colour Gradation, XR Contrast Booster, XR



Motion Clarity and XR Clear Image technologies. It also supports Dolby Vision, Dolby Atmos, HDR10, HLG and IMAX Enhanced content. For gaming enthusiasts, the BRAVIA 7II offers 4K 120Hz support, HDMI 2.1, Variable Refresh Rate (VRR), Auto Low Latency Mode (ALLM) and dedicated PlayStation 5 optimisations.

In Guwahati, the launch is expected to strengthen Sony's position in the premium television segment as demand for large-screen smart TVs continues to rise among urban consumers. Electronics retailers in the city have witnessed growing interest in premium home entertainment products, driven by increasing adoption of streaming platforms, gaming consoles and high-end home theatre setups. Industry observers believe Sony's focus on advanced display technology and AI-powered features could attract affluent buyers seeking a cinema-like viewing experience at home.

The BRAVIA 7II series will be available through Sony retail stores, the ShopatSC platform, major electronics outlets and leading e-commerce platforms across India. The 55-inch model is priced at Rs 2,21,990 as a best-buy offer, while the 65-inch variant is priced at Rs 2,74,990. Larger screen models are expected to be launched by the end of June and July 2026.

TVS Motor hits record sales of 5.67 lakh units in May on strong domestic and global demand

Guwahati: TVS Motor Company posted its highest-ever monthly sales in May 2026, reporting total sales of 5,66,585 units, up 31 per cent from 4,31,275 units in the corresponding month last year. The strong performance was driven by robust growth across domestic operations, international markets and electric vehicle sales.

The company's total two-wheeler sales rose 31 per cent to 5,43,111 units in May 2026 from 4,16,166 units a year ago. Domestic two-wheeler sales grew 24 per cent to 3,84,565 units compared to 3,09,287 units



in May 2025. Motorcycle sales increased 30 per cent to 2,73,802 units, while scooter sales climbed 32 per cent to 2,20,740 units during the month. TVS Motor also recorded its highest-ever electric vehicle sales, with EV volumes surging 56 per cent to 43,632 units from 27,976 units a year earlier. The company's international business achieved a new

milestone, with overseas sales rising 49 per cent to a record 1,75,991 units. International two-wheeler sales alone grew 48 per cent to 1,58,546 units.

In Guwahati, demand for premium motorcycles, scooters and electric two-wheelers has remained strong amid rising consumer preference for personal mobility. Industry observers noted that increasing EV awareness and

improved charging infrastructure across Assam are helping manufacturers such as TVS strengthen their presence in the Northeast.

The company's three-wheeler business also delivered strong results, with sales jumping 55 per cent to 23,474 units from 15,109 units in May 2025, underscoring broad-based growth across its product portfolio.

India Skills Accelerator sets roadmap for future-ready workforce and economic growth

Guwahati: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), in partnership with the World Economic Forum (WEF), on Monday convened the High-Level Roundtable of the India Skills Accelerator (ISA), bringing together government leaders, industry executives, academia and international organizations to address emerging skills gaps and strengthen India's position as a global talent hub. Held under the theme "From Insight to Action: Closing Skills Gaps for Growth," the roundtable focused on aligning skilling systems with evolving labour market needs, developing innovative skills financing models and accelerating workforce readiness in high-growth sectors such as artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing, supply chains and the green economy.

The India Skills Accelerator, approved by the Union Cabinet in January 2026 and hosted by MSDE as part of the WEF Global Accelerators Network, aims to foster public-private collaboration to create a future-ready workforce. The dialogue was co-chaired by Union Minister Jayant Chaudhary, Minister of State Dr. Sukanta Majumdar, Apollo HealthCo Executive Chairperson Shobana Kamineni and Bajaj Finserv CMD Sanjiv Bajaj, alongside WEF Managing Director Mirek Dušek.



Jayant Chaudhary said India's demographic strength could become a major driver of global growth if skills remain aligned with changing technological and industrial demands, while Dr. Majumdar stressed stronger integration between education and employability. In Guwahati, the initiative could create new opportunities for Assam and the Northeast by improving access to industry-relevant training and skilled employment. As sectors such as digital technology, advanced manufacturing and green industries expand, businesses in Guwahati are expected to benefit from a larger pool of trained talent, enhancing the region's attractiveness for investment and economic growth.

The roundtable concluded with a shared commitment from stakeholders, including representatives from Apollo Hospitals, Bajaj Finserv, JSW Group, Mahindra Group, RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group, TCS, Wipro, Reliance Foundation, IBM, Reliance Industries, CII, FICCI, AICTE, UGC and key government bodies, to advance workforce transformation and inclusive growth through structured public-private collaboration.

Nissan records 118% domestic sales growth in May as India momentum strengthens

Guwahati: Nissan Motor India Pvt. Ltd. (NMPL) reported a strong sales performance in May 2026, posting a 118 per cent year-on-year rise in domestic wholesales and marking its third consecutive month of domestic growth in the Indian market.

The company said domestic wholesales stood at 2,948 units in May, while exports accounted for 5,023 units. Total wholesales during the month reached 7,971 units, reflecting steady demand for Nissan vehicles in both domestic and overseas markets. Saurabh Vatsa, Managing Director of Nissan Mo-

tor India, said the sustained growth highlights growing customer confidence in the brand. He noted that the All-New Nissan GRAVITE has received a positive market response, while the Nissan Magnite continues to remain a key growth driver. The increasing adoption of Nissan's CNG offerings has also contributed to sales momentum.

"Our third consecutive month of year-on-year domestic sales growth is an encouraging reflection of the trust customers continue to place in Nissan," Vatsa said. He added that the company

remains focused on expanding its network footprint, improving accessibility and delivering a stronger customer experience across the country.

Nissan is also preparing for the world premiere of the Nissan TEKTON, which the company said will be an important milestone in its India growth journey and product portfolio expansion.

In Guwahati, demand for compact SUVs and fuel-efficient vehicles continues to remain strong, supported by growing consumer preference for feature-rich personal mobility options. Industry

observers believe models such as the Magnite and the newly launched GRAVITE are well-positioned to attract customers in the Northeast, where the SUV segment has been witnessing steady growth.

Nissan Motor India, a wholly owned subsidiary of Nissan Motor Co. Ltd., Japan, currently serves domestic and export markets across 65 international destinations. The company achieved 1.2 million cumulative vehicle exports in 2025 and currently retails the Nissan Magnite and the all-new Nissan GRAVITE in India.

Mother's Recipe refreshes iconic pickle range with new campaign and packaging identity

Guwahati: Mother's Recipe has unveiled a new national campaign for its iconic pickle range alongside a refreshed visual identity, marking the first major makeover for the portfolio since its launch as the brand seeks to strengthen its connect with consumers through a blend of tradition, emotion and regional authenticity.

The integrated campaign celebrates the idea that while pickle-making traditions differ across India, the love and care of mothers remain universal. The film showcases mothers preparing pickles using region-specific methods, from selecting raw

mangoes to slicing, drying, spicing and preserving them, before bringing them to family dining tables. Accompanied by music inspired by Indian folk melodies and traditional instrumentation, the campaign highlights the emotional bond between food, family and heritage.

The launch also introduces a redesigned packaging identity across all 64 pickle variants. Featuring regional-language labels, saree-inspired colour palettes, traditional bangles and brass utensil motifs, the new look aims to strengthen the connection between local food traditions and the Mother's

Recipe brand. The refresh is built around the company's "SwaadMamtaKa" proposition and represents a shift from product-focused communication to a broader brand narrative rooted in memories and regional cultures.

Speaking on the launch, Sanjana Desai, Executive Director of Desai Foods Pvt. Ltd., said the campaign celebrates the diversity of authentic regional flavours while reinforcing the emotion of motherly love associated with the brand. ViharPatkar, Group Creative Director at 82.5 Communications, said the campaign

was inspired by the shared values of love, patience and care that define pickle-making across Indian homes.

In Guwahati, the campaign is expected to resonate strongly with consumers across Assam and the Northeast, where homemade pickles remain deeply embedded in culinary traditions. With the North East identified as a key focus market in the rollout, the introduction of regional-language packaging and culturally rooted storytelling could help Mother's Recipe deepen consumer engagement and strengthen its market presence in the region.



The 360-degree campaign is being rolled out across television, digital, outdoor, in-store and on-ground consumer touchpoints, with visibility planned across major markets including Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru, Delhi NCR and the North East. The new packaging will be introduced nationally in line with product availability.



New Bengal Minister Backs Closer Assam Ties



Silchar, June 01: Assam-Bengal relations, shaped by shared history, language, culture and people-to-people bonds, must be strengthened further in the coming days, newly sworn-in West Bengal Minister of State Anandamoy Barman said, on Monday. Barman, an alumnus of Assam University, Silchar, who took oath as Minister in the Suwendu Adhikari-led West Bengal government, said Assam and West Bengal have always maintained a close relationship because communities on both sides have lived with deep social, linguistic and cultural connections. "Assam and Bengal have always shared a relationship, and that bond will remain. Many Bengali-speaking people live in Assam, while Rajbongshi and several other communities have close links with Assam and the Northeast.

His remarks assume significance in the backdrop of recent cordial political exchanges between the two states. Assam Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma was present during the oath-taking ceremony of West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari, while Adhikari attended the swearing-in ceremony of the Himanta Biswa Sarma-led Assam government in Guwahati on May 12.

Barman said such gestures are important for improving understanding and cooperation between the neighbouring states. "The relationship is already there. It should be strengthened further for the benefit of the people," he asserted. Barman's elevation as a minister has also brought pride to Assam University, where he completed his Masters in Education in 2013. Dr Sreeparna Bhattacharjee, Associate Professor in the Department of Education, said Barman's rise has made the department and the university proud. "I hope he would emerge as a pro-people leader guided by education, values and commitment to society," said Bhattacharjee. Responding to the affection from his teachers, Barman said he had personally contacted several of them after his swearing-in to seek their blessings. "I feel very happy that my teachers and well-wishers are rejoicing in this moment. I thank all my teachers of the department. Their blessings mean a lot to me," Barman said.

Myanmar assures PM Modi soil won't be used against India

Talks highlight Myanmar's strategic border importance

New Delhi, June 01: Prime Minister Narendra Modi held wide-ranging talks with visiting Myanmar President U Min Aung Hlaing on Monday, focusing on boosting bilateral cooperation across trade, connectivity, defence, and border security. The high-level meeting marks a significant diplomatic engagement following Myanmar's recent parliament elections, which saw Min Aung Hlaing transition to the presidency years after the 2021 military coup.

According to External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, both nations agreed to advance their partnership for peace, progress, and prosperity.



Given that India shares a sensitive 1,640-km border with Myanmar's militancy-hit northeastern states, border management remained a pivotal focus. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri confirmed that Myanmar

reiterated assurances that its territory would not be used against India's security interests.

Significantly, PM Modi raised the issue of detained leader Aung San Suu Kyi during the talks. Misri emphasized India's consistent stance supporting inclusive peace and bringing all stakeholders to the table, while clarifying that India's engagement is not a commentary on Myanmar's internal political arrangements. President Min Aung Hlaing, accompanied by a high-level delegation, is on a five-day trip to India. He is scheduled to travel to Mumbai next for business and industry interactions.

ECI Announces June 18 Rajya Sabha Polls For 27 Seats; NDA Looks To Gain

New Delhi, June 01: The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Monday issued notifications for Rajya Sabha elections to 27 seats across multiple states, scheduled for June 18. The polls include 24 regular biennial vacancies and three by-elections in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Odisha triggered by recent resignations.

Polling and counting will take place on June 18, with June 8 set as the final deadline for filing nominations. Prominent retiring members include Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, and Union Ministers Ravneet Singh Bittu and George Kurian. The ruling BJP-led NDA,

which currently commands 148 seats in the 245-member Upper House, is projected to maintain its dominant position and potentially increase its strength. Meanwhile, the opposition block is anticipated to claw back at least three seats based on current assembly strengths. Key regional shifts are expected: the TDP-led NDA is poised to sweep all four seats in Andhra Pradesh, and the BJP is projected to sweep Gujarat. In contrast, the Congress is set to secure three of four seats in Karnataka, while actor Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) is ex-



pected to debut in the Upper House by winning the Tamil Nadu by-poll.

Naga protests stall Kuki captives' release

Guwahati, June 01: Monday's planned release of 14 Kuki civilians in Manipur, who were being held captive by the "Naga Village Guard-Northern Command", was cancelled following protests by a section of the Naga community. "Considering the prevailing sentiments of the Naga public, the proposed release of the 14 Kuki detainees, earlier scheduled at 2 pm on June 1, 2026, hereby stands cancelled," the United Naga Council (UNC), which is Manipur's apex Naga organisation, said in a statement. The UNC had announced through a statement earlier in the day about the scheduled release of the 14 Kuki civilians. It stated that the persons were being released in view of appeals made by various organisations and assurances given by the Centre and Manipur government on tracing six abducted Nagas and taking action against those responsible for their abduction.

This position, however, ruffled the feathers of a section of Nagas. Protestors stormed the UNC office in Senapa-

ti. Elsewhere in the district, they vented their ire by burning tyres and shouting slogans. On May 13, three church leaders from the Thadou community were killed by unidentified gunmen in an ambush in Kangpokpi district. Later that day, different groups abducted Kuki and Naga individuals from different places in the state.



On May 15, Nagas released 14 Kukis, and similarly, Kukis released 14 Nagas. Fourteen other Kukis continued to remain in the custody of their Naga captors, while the status of the six abducted Nagas remained unknown.

Last week, Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh stated that the National Investigation Agency would probe

the cases relating to the abduction of the six Naga villagers and the killings of the three church leaders. Meanwhile, the CMs of Nagaland and Meghalaya appealed for the early release of the six Naga and 14 Kuki civilians. In a letter to the UNC, Nagaland CM Neiphiu Rio said he had, during a telephonic conversation with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, requested his personal intervention in tracing the six Nagas, securing their release and bringing the perpetrators to justice. Meghalaya CM Conrad K Sangma said he, as the president of the National People's Party as well as a fellow citizen and Christian, was deeply pained by the continued captivity of the civilians. "The abduction of civilians who have no role in any conflict inflicts unbearable pain and deepens divisions within our society. Mothers, children, and elders are living in fear and uncertainty. Such acts only widen the gap between communities that have lived together for generations," Sangma wrote in a letter addressed to the UNC and the Kuki Inpi Manipur.

Madhya Pradesh To Roll Out UCC Soon

Bhopal, June 01: Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav announced on Monday that the state will soon implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC). To ensure a collaborative process, the government has launched an online consultation portal, urging citizens, social organizations, and religious leaders to submit their feedback and suggestions. Yadav emphasized that a uniform legal framework is essential to eliminate social, familial, and religious disparities, particularly concerning women's rights in divorce cases and family traditions. He noted that Madhya Pradesh will follow the legislative frameworks already established by states like Uttarakhand and



Gujarat.

A six-member expert committee, led by retired Supreme Court Judge Justice Ranjana Prasad Desai, is currently touring various districts to gather comprehensive input from diverse stakeholders. Chief Minister Yadav stated that after compiling the public feedback, the panel will submit a draft bill to ensure the UCC is rolled out as swiftly as possible.

Fairytale finish for Kohli & RCB

Unbeaten 75 secures consecutive IPL title for champions

Ahmedabad, June 01: Fairytale finishes are hard to come by in sport. As much as one hopes for it, such moments do not happen to every sporting legend. Virat Kohli chased it for 18 years in the Indian Premier League (IPL) before the Royal Challengers Bengaluru came together to win their first title in 2025. On Sunday, in Ahmedabad, Kohli had his moment. Again. With an unbeaten 75 off 42 balls — also his fastest IPL fifty (25) in 19 years — the former captain took RCB to their second title, beating Gujarat Titans in front of 90000 fans who were cheering for him. However, the chase and title were possible because of their bowling attack, led by Josh Hazlewood and Bhuvneshwar Kumar, who removed Shubman Gill and B Sai Sudharsan early to break the contest. They were reduced to 115/6, and from thereon, despite a fighting Washington Sundar's fifty that took GT to 155/8, it was RCB's game to lose.



For the first 15 years, RCB remained a batting dynasty led by Kohli, AB de Villiers and Chris Gayle. Over the years, almost every batting superstar, especially overseas, would have turned up for the franchise. They headlined victories while

bowlers got the flak. Now, the batting stars are still there, but they aren't the lead protagonists anymore. It was the Kumars, Hazlewoods and Krunals who won them their first IPL title. And it is they who made the fairytale possible for Kohli.

'Happier and sharper' Gukesh fights to beat Pragm in Rd 5 at Norway Chess



Oslo, June 01: A day after sharing laughs during a rest-day boat race along the Oslo fjords, Indian prodigies D Gukesh and R Praggnanandhaa renewed their intense rivalry in the fifth round of Norway Chess. The high-stakes clash concluded with Gukesh securing his first Classical victory of the tournament. The win provided a massive boost for the youngster—who was celebrating his birthday weekend—having entered the round at the bottom of the standings. Meanwhile, Praggnanandhaa, who recently defeated Magnus Carlsen, walked away empty-handed from the complex battle.

Gukesh admitted to late nerves but noted his aggressive kingside onslaught paid off. "When you feel good about yourself, you also feel sharper on the board," he stated, attributing the win to improved mental clarity and quicker decision-making. The crucial victory silences critics and highlights the unique dynamic between India's elite grandmasters, who remain close friends off the board despite their fierce battles for global chess supremacy.

Visa delay resolved, Bafana depart Monday

Johannesburg, June 01: South Africa's World Cup squad will leave for the tournament on Monday after problems with travel visas delayed their departure, the national soccer body said. South Africa plays co-host Mexico in the opening game of the World Cup on June 11 in Mexico City. It plays one of its group games in the US. The South African team was due to depart Sunday but had not secured visas for the US for some players and backroom staff members, the sports minister said.

Sports Minister Gayton McKenzie posted on X that the "debacle" over visas was caused by an administrative error by team officials and called it embarrassing. He demanded a report from the South African Football Association. "We are being made to look like fools," McKenzie wrote on social media.

The association said Monday that it had now secured visas for all the players, though four staff members still didn't have visas. They were an assistant coach, the team doctor, the head of security and an analyst, McKenzie said.

The soccer federation said it hoped their travel documents would be finalized in time for them to also board the charter flight in Johannesburg



on Monday. It held an emergency meeting on Sunday night, it said. The federation apologized for the delay and said it had received help from the South African Foreign Ministry and the US Consulate in Johannesburg to resolve the problems. South Africa's team management came under scrutiny in World Cup qualifying after midfielder Teboho Mokoena played in a game against Lesotho despite being suspended. South Africa was stripped of its victory, threatening its hopes of qualifying. The team overcame that to qualify top of its group by one point. South Africa will play at the World Cup for the first time since hosting in 2010. It also faces the Czech Republic in Atlanta and South Korea in Monterrey, Mexico, in Group A.

PSG beat Arsenal to retain title

Oslo, June 01: Paris Saint-Germain secured back-to-back Champions League titles, defeating Arsenal 4-3 on penalties following a 1-1 draw after extra time on Saturday. Mikel Arteta's Premier League champions showed incredible resilience at the Puskas Arena but ultimately suffered a heartbreaking shootout defeat, 20 years after their only other final appearance against Barcelona. With this victory, Luis Enrique's side became only the second club in the Champions League era, alongside Real Madrid, to successfully defend the European crown. The Spaniard also joined an elite group of just five managers to win the competition three times.

Arsenal struck early in Hungary when Kai Havertz capitalized on a defensive mishap to fire the Gunners ahead in the sixth



minute. Despite managing the game with disciplined, compact defending, Arsenal's resistance was broken midway through the second half when Ousmane Dembele converted a crucial penalty for PSG. Tied after 120 minutes, the match moved to a tense shootout where Eberechi Eze and Gabriel missed from the spot for Arsenal. The victory sparked wild celebrations across Paris, while Arsenal were left devastated, their historic English title-winning season tinged with European regret.

Delighted Dubey ready for international cricket

Chennai, June 02: Fresh off an impressive IPL season with Sunrisers Hyderabad, 23-year-old left-arm spinner Harsh Dubey has earned his maiden national call-up for India's upcoming Test and ODI series against Afghanistan. Dubey's selection follows a spectacular domestic run, including a 69-wicket Ranji Trophy season for Vidarbha, captaincy duties, and a fruitful India "A" stint. The spinner also credited his growth to playing in the competitive TNCA first division league in Chennai, which honed his skills on diverse tracks.

Reacting to his selection, an



emotional Dubey expressed gratitude for his family's immense sacrifices and admitted it took time for the news to sink in. "I am mentally prepared to play for India," Dubey stated, emphasizing that the high pressure of first-class cricket has equipped him for the international stage. He vowed to grab the opportunity with both hands if given a chance in the playing eleven.

Too young Sooryavanshi wins SUV

New Delhi, June 01: Vaibhav Sooryavanshi swept the end-of-season IPL awards and in doing so won an SUV -- but the 15-year-old cricket prodigy will have to wait three years to drive it. The Indian batting sensation plundered 776 runs at an average of 48.50 and a punishing strike-rate of 237.30 in 16 matches. On Sunday he was named most valuable player, despite his team Rajasthan Royals narrowly failing to reach the final, and he also scooped the Orange Cap for leading the batting charts.

He was also named emerging player of the season, among other prizes. The boy wonder was gifted a car, a TATA Sierra SUV, which at top price comes in at 2.1 million rupees



(\$22,000). His total prize money was over \$57,000. However, he won't be able to get behind the wheel in the near future because the minimum

driving age in India is 18. "It feels good, but I'm feeling a little pressure because I'm here for an interview," Sooryavanshi said on winning the

awards. "But yes, it's a proud moment, it feels great, and I'll try to do even better next season."

Virat Kohli led Royal Challengers Bengaluru to their second straight title after they beat Gujarat Titans in the final in Ahmedabad. Player of the match Kohli was seen speaking to Sooryavanshi during the presentation ceremony well past midnight. Sooryavanshi struck 97 and 96 in his final two innings of this edition of the IPL, adding to the growing clamour for him to earn a maiden call-up to the senior national team. According to Indian media, Sooryavanshi has been included in a 30-member of probabilities for the Asian Games in September-October in Japan.