

PM Modi to visit France, Slovakia for G7 summit and VivaTech First Indian PM visit to independent Slovakia

New Delhi, June 09: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will undertake an official visit to France and Slovakia from June 13-19, during which he will hold bilateral talks with French President Emmanuel Macron and Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, participate in the G7 Summit in France, and attend the VivaTech technology summit in Paris. Modi will visit France from June 13-14 in Nice and again from June 16-19 in Evian and Paris. He will also travel to Slovakia from June 14-16. During the first leg of the visit, Modi will hold a bilateral meeting with Macron in Nice on June 14. The two leaders are expected to review the full spectrum of India-France ties, which were elevated to a "Special Global Strategic Partnership" earlier this year.

The two leaders will also jointly inaugurate the 'Bharat Innovates' event in Nice, bringing together leading startups and venture capital funds from India, France and other countries. The event is being organised during the India-France Year of Innovation. The MEA said the event "reinforces the vibrant innovation partnership that exists between the two countries." In the second leg of



the tour, Modi will pay a State Visit to Slovakia from June 14-16 at the invitation of Prime Minister Robert Fico. The visit will be the first by an Indian Prime Minister to Slovakia since the country's independence in 1993. Modi is scheduled to hold talks with Fico and meet Slovak President Peter Pellegrini. The visit follows President Droupadi Murmu's State

Visit to Slovakia in April 2025 and Pellegrini's visit to India for the AI Impact Summit in February 2026. The MEA statement said that the visit "will reaffirm India's commitment towards strengthening its bilateral relationship with Slovakia in various sectors, including trade, investment, and automobile and railway manufacturing." Modi will then

travel to Evian, France, to participate in the G7 Summit on June 16-17. At the summit, he will exchange views with G7 leaders, invited partner countries and international organisations on issues including "Forging New Partnerships and Rebuilding International Solidarity," "Reviving Balanced, Shared and Sustainable Economic Growth for all," and "En-

sureing a Safe, Rapid and Efficient Rollout of AI."

The Prime Minister is also expected to hold several bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the summit. On June 18, Modi will visit Paris for further bilateral engagements and attend the VivaTech Summit, Europe's largest technology and startup event. He is also expected to address members of the Indian community in the French capital. The MEA said the visit would further deepen India's partnerships with France, Slovakia and the G7 grouping. "Prime Minister's presence at the G7 reflects India's standing as a leading voice of the Global South and a key partner in addressing global challenges," the ministry said.

It added that Modi's participation in both Bharat Innovates and VivaTech "will spotlight India as a global hub for innovation, digital transformation and entrepreneurship, and is expected to catalyse new partnerships between Indian, French and European technology ecosystems." The visit will also reaffirm India's commitment to advancing its broader strategic partnership with the European Union, the MEA said.

VIP darshan racket busted at Kedarnath, one held for duping pilgrims

Dehradun, June 08: Rudraprayag Police have arrested a man for allegedly cheating pilgrims at Kedarnath by promising them "VIP darshan", as authorities step up vigilance amid the ongoing Char Dham Yatra rush. The accused, identified as Chirag, son of Chunni Lal, a resident of Batl village in Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh, was taken into custody from the Kedarnath temple premises on Monday, police said. According

to officials, the Kedarnath police post received information that Chirag, allegedly in connivance with a local resident and a hotel owner, was luring devotees with the false promise of arranging priority access for darshan. "Ten pilgrims were cheated of Rs 3,000 each on the assurance of VIP darshan. A total of Rs 30,000 was collected fraudulently," a police official said.

Speaking to TNIE, Superintendent of Police Neeharika Tomar said, "Acting swiftly on the complaint, a police team detained the accused in the shrine area and recovered ₹5,000 in cash from his possession. During questioning, Chirag allegedly admitted that he had been carrying out the fraud with the help of a local person." A case has been registered



at Sonprayag police station under Sections 318(4), 319(2) and 317(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. The accused was produced before a court, which remanded him to judicial custody at Chamoli district jail.

Police said further investigation is underway to identify and arrest others involved in the racket. "Strict action will be taken against anyone attempting to disrupt pilgrimage arrangements or exploit devotees," Neeharika Tomar, Superintendent of Police, Rudraprayag, told TNIE, urging pilgrims to use only official channels for darshan, accommodation, and travel-related services.

The incident comes amid a sharp rise in pilgrim footfall across Uttarakhand's Char Dham circuit, where fraudsters have also been reported targeting devotees through fake helicopter tickets and travel packages. According to the Uttarakhand Tourism Department's Yatra division, over 33.45 lakh devotees had visited the four shrines and Hemkund Sahib till Tuesday evening. Around 48.68 lakh pilgrims have registered for this year's pilgrimage, which began on April 19 and will continue till November 13.

Mamata Banerjee meets Sonia Gandhi, discusses strategy amid rebellion in TMC

Sonia Gandhi, Mamata Banerjee share warm hug at opposition meet

New Delhi, June 09: A day after an opposition INDIA bloc meeting stressed unity and better coordination among the alliance partners, Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday met senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi at her 10, Janpath residence. Sources said the two leaders are learnt to have discussed the strategy between the two parties going forward after the opposition bloc meeting, and following an exodus of Trinamool members after the party's defeat to the BJP in the recent Bengal polls. The meeting followed after Gandhi, the chairperson of the Congress Parliamentary Party, and Banerjee met each other warmly with a hug at the opposition bloc's meeting here on Monday.



The Congress shared pictures of the bonhomie between the two leaders.

In a post on X, Trinamool Congress spoke about the warmth between the two leaders. "The smiles said what words could not... a bond strengthened through decades of dedicated service to the nation. Our Hon'ble Chairperson with Sonia Gandhi Ji, today in Delhi." The meeting comes in the wake of a rebellion within the Trinamool, with

several party MPs deciding to form a separate group and align with the ruling NDA.

A majority of Trinamool's 80 MLAs have already formed a separate group led by Ritabrata Banerjee as the leader of opposition in the state Assembly.

This was the first closed-door meeting between Banerjee and Gandhi after Trinamool's defeat in the polls, and alleged attacks on party workers and MP Abhishek Banerjee after the elections.



Nagaland CM urges release of Naga hostages



Kohima, June 9: Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio on Tuesday welcomed the safe and humane release of Kuki hostages by the United Naga Council and Naga civil society organisations, following appeals made by church bodies led by the Baptist World Alliance. Digital Media Consulting The Chief Minister said he had held several discussions with representatives of Naga civil society groups over the past weeks in efforts to resolve the situation on humanitarian grounds. He noted that he had also

formally appealed for the safe release of the hostages, emphasizing compassion, human dignity, and the values of the Naga people. He described the development as a reflection of respect for human life, commitment to human rights, and the belief that humanity must prevail even during conflict. Expressing hope for lasting peace in Manipur, the Chief Minister said the move could help restore trust, heal divisions, and promote harmony among communities. He stressed the importance of dialogue, compassion, and mutual understanding in building reconciliation and peace. He also renewed his appeal for the safe release of six Naga hostages in a reciprocal and humanitarian manner, saying their return would help strengthen trust and support ongoing efforts toward peace, reconciliation, and harmony among communities.

Assam Cabinet Reshuffle: Sarma Ally Jayanta Malla Baruah Gets Finance

Jayanta Malla Baruah Appointed Assam's Finance Minister

Guwahati, June 08: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday allocated portfolios to 12 newly inducted ministers while retaining crucial departments, including Home, Political, PWD, and Power. The allocations were announced via social media following the cabinet expansion.

Sarma's close associate, Jayanta Malla Baruah, was handed the high-profile Finance Ministry alongside Environment and Forest, and Mines and Minerals.

Among other senior leaders, Ranaj Pegu retained Education while gaining Tribal Affairs (Plains) and Information Technology. Ashok Singhal took charge of Health & Family Welfare, and Bimal Borah was assigned Cultural Affairs and Industries.

Former Assembly Speaker Biswajit Daimary received Handloom, Textiles & Sericulture, along with Sports and Youth Welfare. AGP

powerment, while first-time MLA Nilima Devi took over Animal Husbandry, Veterinary, and Fishery. Susanta Borgohain was allocated the

fare; Ajanta Neog handles Women and Child Development alongside Tourism; Atul Bora commands Panchayat and Rural Development; and Charan Boro retains Transport and Welfare of Bodoland. "I am confident that working together with dedication... we will further accelerate the journey of progress," Sarma posted on X. The current strength of the Assam Cabinet stands at 17, just shy of its maximum permissible limit of 19. Reflecting the ruling alliance's historic 102-



leader Keshab Mahanta was allocated Revenue & Disaster Management, while Pijush Hazarika secured Agriculture, Irrigation, and Parliamentary Affairs. Among the newly inducted faces, Ashwini Ray Sarkar was given Social Justice & Em-

Water Resources and Judicial departments.

The portfolios for four ministers sworn in on May 12 alongside the Chief Minister had been previously finalized. Former Union Minister Rameswar Teli holds Labour Welfare and Tea Tribes Wel-

seat victory in the 126-member assembly, the council of ministers features a coalition balance comprising 13 representatives from the BJP, two from the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), and one from the Bodoland People's Front (BPF).

Meghalaya: Kyrmen Shylla Rejects Open-Cast Mining In East Jaintia Hills

Shillong, June 08: Former Cabinet Minister Kyrmen Shylla has asserted that open-cast coal mining is not a viable option in the East Jaintia Hills, pointing to the region's distinctive geographical and mining conditions. Addressing media representatives on Monday, Shylla explained that while open-cast mining could be feasible in certain parts of Meghalaya, the terrain and circumstances in East Jaintia Hills make it impractical. He revealed that a representation is being drafted for submission to the Chief Minister, outlining an alternative



method of coal extraction. This proposed model, he clarified, would differ from both the traditional rat-hole mining system and open-cast mining. Once submitted, the State Government is expected

to review the proposal and, if deemed suitable, forward it to the Central Government for necessary approvals.

Shylla expressed optimism that the suggested approach would offer a sustainable and workable solution for coal mining in the region, while also addressing long-standing concerns tied to existing practices. He emphasized that the new method aims to balance economic needs with environmental and safety considerations, ensuring that coal extraction in East Jaintia Hills can proceed responsibly.

TMP MLA Slams Tripura CM's Silence on Indigenous Issues

Agartala, June 08: PRA Motha MLA Ranjit Debbarma has strongly criticized Tripura Chief Minister Dr. Manik Saha for his silence on key state issues, contrasting it with Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma's proactive stance on regional interests. Speaking on the recent North Eastern Council Plenary Session, Debbarma highlighted how Sangma asserted Meghalaya's voice by raising the Inner Line Permit (ILP) issue with Union Home Minister Amit Shah. In contrast, Debbarma alleged that Chief

Minister Saha has failed to address the pressing influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh into Tripura. The opposition legislator expressed deep concern over the state government's lack of focus on implementing the ILP system, promoting language development, and empowering the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC). "There has been no mention of the proposed 125th Amendment Bill aimed at strengthening the TTAADC," Debbarma stated, noting that the Chief Minister has remained completely



silent on these matters even in his public and social media communications. Urging immediate action, the TIPRA Motha leader pressed the state government to adopt a more aggressive role in safeguarding indigenous communities to ensure socio-political stability in Tripura.

ECI Secretary Reviews Electoral Roll Revision Progress In Mizoram

Aizawl, June 08: The Secretary of the Election Commission of India (ECI), Binod Kumar, and Director Shubhra Saxena visited Mizoram on Monday for a two-day official tour. During the visit, they held a review meeting with election officials in Aizawl district to assess the progress of the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral roll in the state. The meeting, held at the Planning & Programme Implementation Department Conference Hall in Aizawl, focused on the current status of the revision exercise, measures already implemented, and strategies required for its timely and

effective completion. Shubhra Saxena addressed the officials and outlined the objectives and process of the SIR exercise. She stressed that the revision of electoral rolls is a sensitive and important task that requires strict adherence to the provisions of the Constitution of India and the Representation of the People Act, 1950. She emphasized the need to ensure that all eligible citizens are included in the electoral roll while ineligible entries are removed. She also noted that Mizoram shares a long and porous international border and urged officials to

remain vigilant against illegal migration and fraudulent entries during the revision process. Mizoram Chief Electoral Officer Garima Gupta also addressed the meeting. She urged officials to work in coordination, maintain close support for Booth Level Officers (BLOs), and ensure regular field-level engagement to facilitate the smooth conduct of the exercise. The meeting was chaired by Shubhra Saxena. It was attended by Mizoram CEO Garima Gupta, Aizawl District Election Officer and Deputy Commissioner Er. Lalhriatpui, Electoral Registration Officers



(EROs), Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs), Booth Level Officers (BLOs), and other election officials.



Flipkart bets on Gen Z with GRWM GRWM fashion sale

Shillong: Flipkart has launched its latest fashion-led shopping event, 'GRWM GRWM', aiming to tap into the growing influence of Gen Z consumers and creator-driven fashion trends in India. Running from May 29 to June 7, the fashion carnival is expected to attract more than 550 million visits, with Gen Z shoppers projected to contribute nearly 50 per cent of the demand.

Inspired by the globally popular "Get Ready With Me" trend and reimagined with an Indian twist as "Garam Garam", the campaign marks Flipkart Fashion's effort to transform the traditional end-of-season sale into a trend-first shopping destination. The sale features more than 10 lakh fashion styles from over 50 international and homegrown brands,



alongside marketplace sellers and emerging D2C labels.

Consumers can avail discounts of up to 90 per cent on brands such as Levi's, Titan, Red Tape, Nike, Puma, Asics, Safari, Rare Rabbit and The Bear House, along with additional savings through bank offers, Scratch Cards and SuperCoins. Flipkart said the initiative supports its broader goal of bringing the next 200 million Indians online for

fashion.

Speaking on the launch, Kapil Thirani, Vice President, Flipkart Fashion, said fashion discovery is increasingly being shaped by creators, communities and digital culture. He noted that the campaign is designed to make fashion more accessible, relevant and inclusive for consumers across Bharat.

The campaign is being amplified through a high-energy

television commercial featuring the catchy 'GRWM GRWM' jingle and showcasing everyday professionals in trend-led fashion settings. Flipkart has also engaged more than 1,000 creators across Meta and YouTube to drive fashion-focused content and consumer engagement during the sale period.

In Shillong, the growing adoption of e-commerce among young consumers and rising interest in international and D2C fashion brands are expected to boost participation in the campaign. Retail observers believe Shillong's digitally connected youth are increasingly influenced by social media creators and online fashion trends, making creator-led shopping events such as GRWM GRWM particularly relevant in the region.

TVS Motor pushes nature-positive business agenda with TNFD report and white paper

Guwahati: TVS Motor Company has strengthened its sustainability strategy by releasing a white paper on nature capital and publishing its inaugural Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD)-aligned report, positioning itself among the first automotive companies in India to adopt the global framework. The announcements were made during a World Environment Day 2026 workshop hosted by the company in partnership with UN Global Compact Network India at the TVS Institute for Quality and Leadership in Bengaluru. The event brought together leaders from business, academia, policy institutions and civil society to explore pathways for nature-positive and climate-resilient growth.

The company unveiled the white paper, "Nature Capital as a Strategic Business Imperative in India," developed jointly with PwC and TERI School of Advanced Studies. The report highlights the financial and strategic impor-



tance of ecosystem services such as water, biodiversity, soil health and climate regulation, while outlining approaches to integrate nature-related risks into governance, strategy and reporting. TVS Motor also released "Mobility in Harmony with Nature," its first TNFD-aligned report, aimed at assessing and disclosing nature-related dependencies, impacts, risks and opportunities.

Speaking at the event, Chief Sustainability Officer Thakur Pherwani said sustainability is embedded across the company's products, operations and supply chains. UN Global Compact Network India Executive Director Ratnesh Jha said businesses are increasingly recognising biodiversity and climate resilience as key drivers of long-term enterprise value.

HSBC Mutual Fund unveils RedHex Hybrid Long-Short Fund under SIF category

Guwahati: HSBC Mutual Fund has launched the RedHex Hybrid Long-Short Fund, a new Specialised Investment Fund (SIF) strategy aimed at investors seeking a combination of regular income and capital appreciation through a diversified portfolio. The New Fund Offer (NFO) opened on June 2 and will remain available for subscription until June 16, 2026.

The fund invests across multiple asset classes, including fixed income, equity arbitrage, Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) and Infrastructure Investment Trusts (INVTs), with the objective of delivering tax-efficient, risk-adjusted returns across market cycles. The strategy is benchmarked against the NIFTY 50 Hybrid Composite Debt 50:50 Index. HSBC Mutual Fund said

SIFs were introduced to bridge the gap between traditional mutual funds and higher-ticket investment products such as Portfolio Management Services (PMS) and Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs). The RedHex Hybrid Long-Short Fund targets "mid-ticket" investors with a minimum application amount of ₹10 lakh, while accredited investors can participate with ₹1 lakh.

Kailash Kulkarni, CEO of HSBC Mutual Fund, said investors are increasingly seeking professionally managed solutions capable of navigating complex market conditions. He said the fund has been designed to offer lower volatility and superior tax-efficient risk-adjusted returns while retaining the transparency associated with mutual funds. Shriram Ramanathan, CIO –



Fixed Income, said the strategy focuses on robust credit selection and strict risk controls while selectively investing in growing asset classes such as REITs and INVTs to enhance return potential.

In Guwahati, the launch reflects growing demand among affluent and emerging high-net-worth investors for sophisticated investment products that offer diversification beyond conventional mutual funds and fixed deposits. Market participants in Guwahati are witnessing increasing in-

terest in structured and tax-efficient investment avenues, making products such as SIFs relevant for investors seeking balanced returns with controlled volatility.

Structured as an interval investment fund, the RedHex Hybrid Long-Short Fund allows subscriptions on any business day and offers weekly redemption opportunities, supported by active portfolio management and strategy-level risk controls aimed at reducing volatility while generating regular income.

Generali Central Life reinforces commitment to Sikkim with healthcare initiative

Guwahati/Jorhat: Generali Central Life Insurance has announced the donation of two fully equipped life-support ambulances to Sir Thutob Namgyal (STNM) Hospital in Gangtok, further strengthening its commitment to community development and healthcare accessibility in Sikkim. The initiative is aimed at enhancing emergency response services and improving access to critical medical care across the state's remote and hilly regions.

The company, which has served as the lead insurer for Sikkim since 2022, said the ambulances are equipped with advanced life-support systems and will help facilitate faster patient transfers, improve emergency response efficiency and support healthcare providers in delivering timely treatment.

Commenting on the initiative, Managing Director and CEO Alok Rungta said the company remains focused on being a trusted "Lifetime Partner" by extending its role beyond insurance and contributing to the well-being of communities. He noted that the insurer will continue to expand financial literacy programmes, deepen insurance access and strengthen financial resilience across the state.

The initiative received support from the Government of Sikkim, with Health Minister G.T. Dhungel describing it as a meaningful contribution to public healthcare delivery. Mahendra Pradhan, Director-Finance and Nodal Officer, Government of Sikkim, said such partnerships will be vital in achieving the state's target of "Insurance for All" by 2027.

Generali Central Life also organised a blood donation camp at STNM Hospital, witnessing active community participation. As of May 31, 2026, the insurer had extended insurance coverage to more than 6,500 lives in Sikkim through its Rural and Social Sector Obligations mandate. Through collaborations with government agencies, Gram Panchayats, NABARD, police and local institutions, the company has implemented financial literacy campaigns, grassroots outreach programmes and community engagement initiatives aimed at improving insurance awareness and accessibility across the state.

Vi and Meta aim to make digital life safer for millions of users

Shillong: In a move aimed at simplifying and securing everyday digital experiences, Vodafone Idea (Vi) and Meta have partnered to introduce Silent Mobile Verification (SMV) capabilities for Vi users across WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram.

The new network-based authentication solution allows users to verify their mobile numbers in the background without entering OTPs, switching between applications or waiting for verification messages. For millions of users who depend on social media and messaging platforms for communication, business and personal connections, the technology promises a faster and more seamless experience. Vi users will be able to experience SMV-supported journeys during new registrations, mobile number verification, login and re-login, account recovery and security checks. By validating requests directly through Vi's telecom network, the system reduces manual steps while offering stronger protection against phishing attempts and digital identity risks. Speaking on the partnership, Abhijit Kishore, CEO of Vodafone Idea Limited, said telecom networks are increasingly helping create safer digital experiences at scale. Meta India Managing Director and Country Head ArunSrinivas said network-based authentication is an important step toward making verification simpler, more secure and frictionless for users across Meta's platforms.

The collaboration comes as India's digital ecosystem continues to grow, increasing the need for trusted authentication and fraud-prevention solutions. Industry observers view the launch as an important milestone in the evolution of telecom network APIs and trusted digital infrastructure. In Shillong, the initiative could particularly benefit small entrepreneurs, local businesses, students and content creators who rely heavily on WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram for outreach and engagement. Improved account security and smoother access to digital services may help build greater trust in online platforms and support the continued growth of Meghalaya's digital economy.



Navachar Mantra launched to scale grassroots innovation across India

Guwahati: In a move aimed at strengthening India's innovation-driven economy, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) on Wednesday launched 'Navachar Mantra', a national initiative designed to identify, nurture and scale grassroots innovators and early-stage entrepreneurs from Tier-2, Tier-3 towns and rural regions.

Launched by Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education Shri Jayant Chaudhary at IIT Delhi, the programme will be implemented by the National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD) with the Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer (FITT), IIT Delhi, serving as the technical knowledge partner. Calling for India to become a global hub for technology-led innovation, Chaudhary said the next wave of transformation in sectors such as artificial intelligence, semiconductors, green energy, biotechnology, digital public infrastructure and advanced manufacturing should carry India's intellectual imprint. He also urged young innovators to pursue ideas driven by



purpose and passion.

The initiative will support ventures in Agritech, Health-Tech, EdTech and Skilling, Climate and Sustainability, Rural Commerce and MSME Enablement. Applications have opened on a dedicated digital platform and will remain open until July 5, 2026. Selected innovators will join a year-long programme featuring mentorship roundtables, thematic webinars, innovation showcases, investor interactions, business development support, regulatory guidance, intellectual property assistance and market-linkage opportunities.

A fireside chat on scaling innovation featured leading entrepreneurs including Droom founder Sandeep Agarwal, MobiKwik founder and CEO Bipin Preet Singh, Fruvetech founder Dr Jagadis Gupta Ka-

puganti and Easiofy Solutions founder Meenal Gupta, who shared insights on building sustainable businesses.

In Guwahati, the initiative could open new growth avenues for startups and entrepreneurs across Assam and the Northeast. Innovators working in agriculture, rural commerce, skilling, sustainability and MSME-focused solutions are expected to benefit from national-level mentorship, investor access and industry partnerships, helping local innovators reach larger domestic and global markets.

The programme will culminate in a national showcase event, providing selected innovators with visibility through ministerial podcasts, digital campaigns, innovation showcases and interactions with policymakers, investors and industry leaders.

Birla Fertility expands Northeast footprint with Pasighat partnership

Guwahati: Birla Fertility & IVF, one of India's largest IVF networks, has partnered with Health Care Hospital in Pasighat to expand access to advanced fertility care in Arunachal Pradesh, marking a significant step in strengthening specialised healthcare services across the Northeast.

The collaboration aims to reduce the dependence of patients on metro cities and distant treatment hubs for fertility services. Under the partnership, consultations, scans, ovulation monitoring and IUI procedures will be made available locally at Health Care Hospital, Pasighat, under the clinical guidance and treatment protocols of Birla Fertility & IVF's Guwahati centre. The model is expected to ease financial and logistical challenges faced by couples seeking fertility treatment.

Speaking on the initiative, Dr. Kalpana Jain, Senior Consultant and Centre Head, Birla Fertility & IVF, Guwahati, said the partnership seeks to ensure that access to advanced fertility care is not restricted by geography. Health Care Hospital CMD Dr. K Megu said the collaboration would help patients access essential fertility services closer to home, while Dr. James Modi highlighted the importance of timely consultations and specialist support.

In Guwahati, the partnership underscores the



city's growing importance as a healthcare hub for the Northeast. As healthcare providers increasingly adopt regional collaboration models, Guwahati-based institutions are extending specialised services into underserved markets, creating new growth opportunities while improving access to quality medical care across neighbouring states. As part of the initiative, Birla Fertility & IVF hosted the 'Fertility Unscripted' CME programme in Pasighat, bringing together gynaecologists, fertility specialists and healthcare professionals from across the region. The programme featured sessions on successful IUI practices, recurrent pregnancy loss, decentralising fertility care, and medical ethics, while fostering knowledge-sharing and stronger clinical collaboration in the Northeast.

Renault Duster Turbo TCe 100 delivers 19.41 km/l fuel efficiency, strengthening value proposition

Guwahati: Renault India has announced that the new Renault Duster Turbo TCe 100 has achieved an ARAI-certified fuel efficiency of 19.41 km per litre, a development that is expected to enhance the SUV's appeal among customers seeking a balance between performance and running costs.

The company said the Duster Turbo TCe 100 is powered by a turbocharged petrol engine that produces 100 PS of power and 160 Nm of torque. Paired with a six-speed manual transmission, the powertrain has been engineered to deliver responsive performance, smooth drivability and improved fuel economy across diverse driving conditions.

Speaking on the achievement, Dr. V. Vikraman, Chief of Renault Engineering, Renault Group India, said the fuel-efficiency certification reflects Renault's focus on practical engineering and customer value. He noted that the Turbo TCe 100 engine combines turbocharging technology with effi-



cient combustion to provide strong fuel economy without compromising performance.

Renault said the new Duster TCe 100 is built on the all-new RGMP platform, with the engine and powertrain comprehensively engineered and calibrated specifically for the platform's dynamics. The powertrain is exclusive to the Duster and has been designed to offer an efficient and balanced driving experience.

In Guwahati, the certified fuel-efficiency figure could boost the Duster's prospects among SUV buyers in Assam and the Northeast, where long-distance travel and fuel costs significantly influence purchase decisions. Industry

observers believe the combination of 100 PS power, 160 Nm torque and improved mileage may help Renault strengthen its position in the region's growing SUV market.

Renault, a pioneer in electric mobility in Europe, is pursuing its global 'Renaulution' strategy focused on innovation, technology and electrification. In India, the company manufactures vehicles at its Oragadam facility near Chennai, which has an annual production capacity of 480,000 units. Renault India also operates nearly 638 sales and service touchpoints nationwide, including more than 200 Workshop on Wheels locations.

Xiaomi targets premium smartphone segment with Leica-powered Xiaomi 17T launch

Guwahati: Xiaomi India has expanded its premium smartphone portfolio with the launch of the Xiaomi 17T, a flagship device co-engineered with Leica that aims to strengthen the company's position in India's competitive high-end smartphone market.

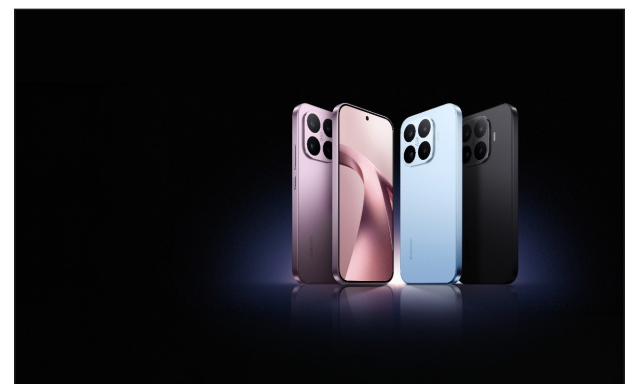
The Xiaomi 17T combines advanced imaging capabilities, AI-powered features, premium display technology and long battery life in a single package. The smartphone features a Leica-powered triple-camera system with a 50MP main camera and, for the first time in the Xiaomi T Series, a Leica 5x periscope telephoto lens. Xiaomi has also introduced Leica Live Moment and Leica Live Portrait, designed to capture motion, emotion and cinematic portraits with enhanced detail and realism.

The device comes with a 6.59-inch 1.5K AMOLED display offering up to 3500 nits peak brightness and a 120Hz refresh rate. It is equipped with Xiaomi Vision Care technology and has received TÜV Rheinland Intelligent Eye Care Certifi-

cation. Powered by Xiaomi HyperOS, Xiaomi HyperAI, Google Gemini and Circle to Search with Google, the smartphone is backed by a 6500mAh silicon-carbon battery with 67W HyperCharge support.

In Guwahati, the Xiaomi 17T to generate strong

variants. The 12GB+256GB model is priced at ₹59,999, while the 12GB+512GB version costs ₹64,999. Customers can avail an instant bank discount of ₹5,000, bringing the effective prices down to ₹54,999 and ₹59,999 respectively. Xiaomi is also offering flexible financing,



interest among premium smartphone buyers, content creators and young professionals. The combination of Leica imaging technology, AI-driven features and attractive financing options is likely to boost demand in North-east India, where consumers are increasingly upgrading to flagship devices.

The Xiaomi 17T is available in Violet, Blue and Black

exchange benefits, an assured buyback programme guaranteeing up to 60% of the invoice value for one year, and complimentary subscriptions to Google AI Pro, YouTube Premium, JioHotstar, Google Gemini Pro cloud storage and Spotify Premium. The smartphone will go on sale from June 10 via Amazon, mi.com and Xiaomi retail stores across India.



Malabar Group report highlights expanding impact of Hunger Free World initiative

Mumbai: Malabar Group has spotlighted the growing impact of its flagship social responsibility initiative, Hunger Free World, with the release of a rehabilitation impact report that demonstrates how a daily meal can serve as a catalyst for broader social transformation.

Released on World Hunger Day, the report, "Impact Stories: How a Daily Meal Opens the Door to a Transformed Life", outlines the outcomes of the Street Meal Distribution Programme, implemented by Thanal. What began as an effort to provide nutritious meals to individuals facing hunger has evolved into a structured outreach model that facilitates healthcare access, rehabilitation, shelter support, dignity restoration and family reunification.

The programme currently operates across 20 states in India and nine countries, including six GCC countries, the United States, the United Kingdom and Zambia. Through its Street Meal Distribution Programme and Micro Learning Centres, Hunger Free World reaches



approximately 1.43 lakh beneficiaries. Commenting on the initiative, M. P. Ahammad, Chairman of Malabar Group, said regular meal outreach helps establish trust with vulnerable communities, creating opportunities for long-term intervention and support. "A meal may appear simple, but when it is delivered consistently and with human attention, it becomes much more than food," he said.

The report highlights several success stories, including the rehabilitation of an elderly man in Nagercoil, support for a bedridden individual in Kumbakonam, assistance for a distressed woman in Chen-

nai, a family reunification effort connecting Udipi and Chennai, and medical care and shelter placement for a physically challenged senior citizen in Tiruchirappalli.

The initiative forms part of Malabar Group's wider CSR framework, under which the company allocates five per cent of its net trading profit towards programmes focused on hunger eradication, education, healthcare, housing, women empowerment and environmental sustainability. The report underscores how sustained corporate investment in community welfare can generate meaningful and measurable social outcomes.

MSDE strengthens inclusive workplace culture with new daycare facility at Kaushal Bhawan

Guwahati: In a move aimed at enhancing employee welfare and fostering a more inclusive work environment, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education, Shri Jayant Chaudhary, inaugurated a daycare facility for children of employees at Kaushal Bhawan, the headquarters of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).

Spread across nearly 600 square metres, the facility has been designed to provide a safe and nurturing environment for children aged six months to six years. It features dedicated sleeping and resting areas, play and activity zones, age-appropriate learning resources, child-friendly furniture, hygienic washrooms, and specially designed feeding and baby-changing rooms. The centre will be managed by trained caregivers and support personnel.

The ministry said the initiative reflects its commitment to creating a people-centric workplace that supports work-

ing parents while enabling them to balance professional and family responsibilities. The facility is expected to improve employee well-being and contribute to a more productive and inclusive workforce.

Senior officials present at

MSDE, DGT, NCVET and NSDC.

In Guwahati, such workplace childcare initiatives are becoming increasingly relevant as organisations seek to attract and retain skilled talent. With more women joining the workforce across sectors



the inauguration included Secretary Debashree Mukherjee, Director General (Training) Dilip Kumar, NCVET Executive Member Prof. (Dr.) Ashok Kumar Gaba, Additional Secretary Niranjan Kumar Sudhansu, Senior Economic Advisor Manisha Sensarma, Joint Secretaries Hena Usman, Manasi Sahay Thakur and M. Subramanian, along with officials from

in Assam and the Northeast, employee-friendly infrastructure such as daycare facilities is being viewed as an important factor in boosting productivity, workforce participation and long-term organisational growth. The initiative also aligns with the government's broader vision of building progressive institutions that support a future-ready and inclusive economy.

AirAsia strengthens crisis preparedness with counselling partnership

Guwahati: AirAsia X (AirAsia Group) has signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Board of Counsellors Malaysia (BOC) to strengthen its crisis response framework and enhance psychosocial support capabilities across its regional operations.

The agreement, signed in Kuala Lumpur, was witnessed by Malaysia's Deputy Minister of Women, Family and Community

Development Lim Hui Ying and AirAsia Group Chief Safety & Quality Officer Captain Saravanan Subramaniam. The collaboration aims to integrate professional counselling services into the airline group's emergency preparedness and humanitarian assistance ecosystem.

Under the partnership, BOC will deploy trained registered counsellors to support employees, survi-

vors, victims and family members affected during emergencies and crisis situations. The two organisations will also collaborate on emergency response preparedness, psychosocial first aid (PFA), disaster response exercises, specialised training programmes, simulation drills and knowledge-sharing initiatives to improve operational readiness across all AirAsia operating units.

AirAsia Group Chief Op-

erations Officer Captain Suresh Bangah said the initiative strengthens both operational preparedness and the human aspect of crisis response by ensuring timely care and assistance during challenging situations. BOC CEO Tuan Haji Sadli bin Osman said the partnership would reinforce psychosocial support services and humanitarian response capabilities within the aviation industry.

In Guwahati, the move reflects a growing focus on passenger welfare, safety resilience and mental health support in the aviation sector. As air travel demand continues to rise in Northeast India, enhanced crisis-management systems and passenger-care protocols by major airlines are expected to boost consumer confidence and support the region's expanding aviation market.

As part of the agreement, AirAsia will provide transportation and logistical support for counsellors deployed during emergencies, training programmes and simulation exercises across selected destinations. The MOA also aligns with both organisations' commitment to building a stronger culture of safety, preparedness, resilience and compassionate care in crisis management.

TVS Motor bets on premium segment with launch of exclusive retail channel TVS Paddock

Guwahati: TVS Motor Company, part of TVS VENU and a global player in the two and three-wheeler industry, on Saturday unveiled TVS Paddock, an exclusive retail channel for its premium motorcycle portfolio, as it seeks to deepen customer engagement and strengthen its position in India's rapidly expanding premium mobility market.

The company said TVS Paddock will offer a bespoke retail and ownership experience by integrating immersive brand engagement, personalised consultations, special-

ised service capabilities and world-class aftersales support into a single premium ecosystem. The initiative reflects the changing preferences of affluent consumers who increasingly seek self-expression, customisation, community participation and immersive brand experiences beyond the product itself.

Designed by London-based retail design agency Checkland Kindleysides, the new format reimagines the customer journey through dedicated consultation and customisation zones, premium commu-

nity spaces, seamless digital retail experiences, immersive merchandise and accessories sections, specialised service facilities and industry-first swim-lane-based product experiences.

Announcing the initiative, TVS Motor Chairman Sudarshan Venu said the future of premium motorcycling would be shaped not only by products but also by the experiences, communities and ecosystems built around them. He added that TVS Paddock represents the company's strategic commitment to redefining premi-

um ownership through innovation, personalisation and deeper customer connections.

The launch is expected to have positive implications for Guwahati, where demand for premium motorcycles has been rising steadily among young professionals, entrepreneurs and lifestyle-focused consumers. Industry observers believe the introduction of an exclusive premium retail ecosystem could further boost aspirational motorcycle purchases across Assam and the wider Northeast region.

TVS Paddock is scheduled



to be rolled out through an exclusive premium retail net-

work in the second quarter of FY27.



TRAI drive test highlights mobile network performance across Meghalaya's Jaintia Hills

Shillong: The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has released the findings of an Independent Drive Test (IDT) conducted across East Jaintia Hills and West Jaintia Hills districts and along the Ratha Cherre Khasia Punjee-Jowai stretch of NH-6 in Meghalaya, providing consumers and industry stakeholders with a detailed assessment of mobile network quality in the region.

The tests, conducted from March 11 to March 16, 2026 under the North East Licensed Service Area (LSA), covered 213 km of city routes, 98.9 km of highways, 10 hotspot locations and a walk test at District Civil Hospital, Ialong. The exercise evaluated key quality parameters including network coverage, call setup success rate, dropped call rate, speech quality, download and upload throughput, latency and packet loss.

According to the report, Reliance Jio recorded the high-



est average download speeds, reaching 97.89 Mbps in city areas and 122.77 Mbps on highway routes. Airtel followed with 72.24 Mbps and 88.50 Mbps respectively. The drive test also identified coverage gaps and dropped calls across operators, with BSNL and Vodafone Idea reporting relatively higher instances of weak signal strength and call drops. During city drives, BSNL recorded 34 dropped calls and Vodafone Idea 30, while Jio reported only two.

The survey covered major locations including Jowai,

Khliehtyrshi, Nartieng, Shangpung, Sutunga, Rachai and several stretches along NH-6 passing through Umkiyang, Sonapur, Lad Rymbai and Mukhla. Hotspot testing was conducted at hospitals, educational institutions, government offices and commercial centres.

In Shillong, the findings are significant as telecom connectivity has become a critical driver of digital commerce, online banking, e-governance services and business operations. Improved network quality can support Meghalaya's growing digital economy, while areas with persistent coverage gaps may require additional infrastructure investments to meet rising consumer and enterprise demand.

TRAI said the findings have been shared with telecom service providers for necessary corrective measures and service improvements across the region.

Dell, NSDC roll out five new solar skill vans to expand AI-led skilling across India

Guwahati: Dell Technologies and the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) on Monday launched five new Solar Community Hub Skill Vans aimed at accelerating digital inclusion and future-ready workforce development across India. The initiative was flagged off by Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education Jayant Chaudhary. Implemented by the Learning Links Foundation, the new solar-powered mobile hubs will serve communities in Uttar Pradesh, Delhi-NCR, Karnataka, Telangana and Maharashtra. Equipped with laptops, interactive screens, internet connectivity and AI-enabled learning tools, the vans are designed to deliver job-relevant skills, education, local connectivity and essential services directly to underserved communities. The expansion marks the next phase of Dell Technologies' efforts to bridge the digital divide. Going beyond basic digital literacy, the programme introduces customised skilling modules and structured employability pathways for more than 50 vocational, higher education and community institutions. The training is aligned with emerging industry demands, preparing learners for future job opportunities in a rapidly evolving digital economy.

"The Solar Community Hub Skill Vans are centres of aspiration that combine clean energy, AI-enabled learning and industry-aligned skilling," Jayant Chaudhary said. Dell Technologies



India President and Managing Director Manish Gupta said the initiative demonstrates the impact of collaboration between government, industry and communities in creating a future-ready workforce.

In Guwahati, the initiative highlights the growing importance of technology-driven skilling in emerging regional economies. Industry stakeholders believe similar programmes can strengthen the talent pool in the Northeast, support digital transformation efforts and improve employment opportunities for youth as demand rises for AI, technology and digital service-related skills.

Since the first Solar Community Hub Skill Vans were introduced in FY23, the programme has reached 18 districts across 14 states and directly impacted 2.67 million beneficiaries. Globally, the initiative operates 63 skill vans across 12 countries, underscoring Dell Technologies' commitment to expanding access to technology, skills and economic mobility.

TRAI drive test highlights mobile network performance on key Assam highway corridor

Guwahati: The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has released the findings of an Independent Drive Test (IDT) conducted along the Lanka-Narainpur Railway Bridge stretch on NH-27 and NH-627 in Assam, providing a detailed assessment of mobile network quality offered by telecom service providers in the region.

Conducted between March 10 and 18, 2026, under the supervision of TRAI's Kolkata Regional Office, the exercise covered 189.7 km of highway routes and seven hotspot locations. The drive test evaluated critical quality parameters such as network coverage, call drop rates, call setup success rates, speech quality, call silence instances, and data download and upload speeds across 2G, 3G, 4G and 5G networks.

Among operators, Reliance Jio recorded the highest average download speed of 88.21 Mbps, followed by Airtel at 66.50 Mbps, Vodafone Idea at 16.84 Mbps and BSNL at 4.86 Mbps. Airtel led upload performance with 13.63 Mbps, while Jio, VIL and BSNL recorded 6.61 Mbps, 3.99 Mbps and 3.10 Mbps, respectively. The report also identified coverage gaps and dropped calls across operators, with VIL recording the highest number of dropped calls at 21.

The drive covered areas includ-

ing Bamun Gaon, Dijabora, Mupa, Didaodip, Retzol and Damchara, while hotspot assessments were conducted at seven locations along the Lumding-Silchar Road corridor and Tiniali Bazar.

In Guwahati, the findings are significant for businesses, logistics operators, digital service providers and consumers who depend on reliable connectivity across Assam's transport network. Improved telecom performance along major highways can support smoother digital transactions, e-commerce growth and business communication, strengthening economic linkages between Guwahati and other commercial centres in the Northeast.

TRAI said the findings have been shared with telecom operators for necessary corrective measures and service improvements.



Tata AIG launches MediCare Reserve to strengthen long-term health insurance protection

Kohima: Tata AIG General Insurance Company has announced the launch of MediCare Reserve, a new health insurance solution designed to provide customers with flexible and long-term medical coverage. Built on a Super Top-up structure, the product offers aggregate deductible options ranging from ₹3 lakh to ₹50 lakh and sum insured choices from ₹5 lakh to ₹5 crore.

The company said MediCare Reserve introduces an industry-focused 'Waiver of Aggregate Deductible' feature, enabling eligible policyholders to transition to a comprehensive health insurance policy after five consecutive policy years without the need for fresh underwriting. The plan is aimed at addressing evolving healthcare needs, rising treatment costs and gaps in employer-sponsored Group Medical Coverage (GMC).

Additional features include the optional TransiCare Wallet, which provides financial protection during job transitions, Pocket Protect for out-of-pocket expenses during prolonged hospitalisation, and a Consumables Benefit covering specified non-medical expenses. The product is targeted at working professionals aged 18-55 years across sectors such as IT, manufacturing, technology services, startups, sales and field operations. It also offers Emergency Hospitalization Due to Accident Cover of up to ₹3 lakh for NRIs and OCIs visiting India.

Pankaj Shrivastava, Head - Agency & Health at Tata AIG, said the product combines affordability with flexibility and reflects the company's commitment to delivering future-ready health insurance solutions.

In Kohima, the launch is expected to resonate with sal-



aried employees, entrepreneurs and professionals seeking higher health coverage beyond employer-provided insurance. Growing awareness of healthcare planning and increasing medical costs are driving interest in flexible protection products, making comprehensive and high-value health insurance solutions increasingly relevant in the Kohima market.

Tata AIG, a joint venture between the Tata Group and AIG, currently operates through more than 262 locations, supported by over 100,000 agents, 13,000 network hospitals, 6,500 workshop tie-ups and more than 1,100 full-time claims experts across India.



SC Warns CBSE: Student Careers at Stake



New Delhi, June 08: Acting on a plea filed by a student in Saudi Arabia, the Supreme Court of India on Monday issued notices to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and its concerned regional officer directing them to declare his Class 12 improvement examination results. An SC bench comprising Justices Manmohan and Vijay Bishnoi has agreed to examine this plea and said it is about the career of petitioner. "This is about the career of a child, he will miss all his admissions... Whatever it is, burn the midnight oil," the bench orally remarked while directing CBSE's counsel to seek instructions in the matter.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by Pransu Jigarkumar Patel, who challenged the CBSE's failure to declare his result despite an assessment scheme having been framed for students affected by the cancellation of examinations in several Gulf countries. The petition contended that the non-declaration of his result had jeopardised his higher education prospects and deprived him of admission opportunities. According to the plea, Patel appeared as a private candidate in the CBSE Class 12 Improvement Examination 2026 from Al Jubail, Saudi Arabia, in Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, English and Computer Science. Patel further claimed that his representations to the CBSE on May 17, May 21 and May 30 seeking resolution of the issue received no response.

The CBSE had cancelled Class 12 board examinations in seven Middle Eastern countries — Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE — owing to escalating regional tensions arising from the Iran-Israel-US conflict.

Jharkhand HC bans two-finger test, mandates Zero FIRs

Ranchi, June 09: In a landmark judgment, the Jharkhand High Court has directed the state government to completely ban the controversial "two-finger test" in all hospitals, ruling that the practice violates a survivor's privacy, bodily integrity, and dignity. A division bench comprising Chief Justice M.S. Sonak and Justice Rajesh Shankar warned that violations would be treated as professional misconduct.

Hearing a suo-motu PIL, the court also mandated the registration of Zero FIRs and directed that survivors' statements be recorded sensitively, preferably by female officers. Emphasizing rehabilitation, the bench ordered free education up to Class 12 and premier institute scholarships for children born out of rape. Furthermore, the state must establish mechanisms to relocate victims facing social ostracization.



Modi Marks 12 Years: Poor Remain Government's Core Focus

New Delhi, June 08: A day after his government completed 12 years in office on June 7, Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted its achievements, saying India had undergone significant transformation during this period, with the welfare of the poor and marginalised remaining at the heart of the government's efforts. "Over the last 12 years, India has witnessed remarkable change, and at the core of these developments has been the welfare of the poor and the underprivileged. Inspired by the principle of Antyodaya, our constant endeavour has been to ensure that the benefits of development reach those who had been left behind for decades," he said.

The Prime Minister said major initiatives, including Jan Dhan accounts, Direct Benefit Transfers, Swachh Bharat, PM Awas Yojana, Jal Jeevan Mission and Ayushman Bharat, were driven by the objective of providing people with dignity, opportunity and an improved quality of life. Taking to his official account on X on Monday, he said, "It is also gladdening that technology has played a vital role in ensuring a better quality of life for the poor. Through Direct Benefit Transfer and digital

platforms, support is reaching people directly and transparently. This has reduced leakages, improved efficiency and strengthened trust in governance".

He said this was how the "journey of furthering Garib Kalyan has become a collective movement towards human empowerment and realising our dream of a Viksit

of the poor its primary objective an approach grounded not in appeasement, but in genuine fulfillment".

The publication described the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana as a "protective shield" for a large section of the population. It said, "Numerous schemes, designed to realize the pledges of 'Garib Kalyan' (Welfare for the Poor) articu-



Bharat". Marking 12 years of the Narendra Modi-led NDA government at the Centre, the BJP and NDA leaders described the period as dedicated to "Garib Kalyan" and used the hashtag #12YearsOfGaribKalyan. A government publication said, "Today, whenever the achievements of the government in India are discussed, the welfare of the poor stands paramount. Over the past 12 years, the central government made the welfare

lated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014, have brought about a transformative change in the lives of villagers and the underprivileged". Citing global reports, it further claimed, "Credible global reports indicate that poverty in India has declined rapidly; this is because, in every decision taken by the top leadership, the welfare and empowerment of the poor-guided by the philosophy of Antyodaya-have become an enduring mindset".

Manipur: Thousands rally in Imphal demanding NRC updation before Census exercise

Guwahati, June 08: A massive rally was taken out in Manipur capital Imphal on Monday, with the participants demanding the updation of the 1951 National Register of Citizens (NRC) before the conduct of Census exercise in the state. Thousands of people, including members of 14 civil society organisations, took part in the rally. They were livid with the government over the Census exercise before the updation of the NRC. After the "Peoples' Convention," the civil society organisations resolved to urge the Manipur government and the Centre to update the NRC before the Census exercise. It was also resolved to request the Manipur Chief Minister to initiate a meaningful dialogue with the Centre on this issue. The organisations further resolved to urge the Centre-constituted "High Level Committee on Demographic Change" to include a nominee or agency of the Manipur government. The request was made in light of growing concerns

over demographic changes in Manipur. Shanta Nahakpam, president of United Committee Manipur, criticised the central government for its alleged inaction on the NRC in Manipur. He

itation exercise depending on "unverified" demographic figures could affect electoral representation and erode constitutional safeguards for the indigenous communities.

camps. He said civil society organisations had already petitioned the Centre seeking the deferment of the Census exercise in Manipur. Last week, Kuki organisation Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM)



categorically stated that the updation of the NRC in Manipur was needed for the protection of indigenous identity, land rights and political representation. Another concern is that a future delimitation

Nahakpam wondered whether a fair and credible Census could be conducted when thousands of people, internally displaced by the 2023 ethnic violence, continued to live in relief

whether direct or indirect, of these people from the SIR process renders the exercise incomplete and unacceptable in its present form," KIM stated in a statement.

Manipur: Missing Naga 'village guard' found dead

Guwahati, June 08: A 57-year-old Naga village guard, Chunjanglung Panmei, was found dead with multiple bullet wounds on Monday following an ambush in Manipur's Noney district. The Naga Village Guard, Eastern Command (NVG-EC) alleged that Kuki militants ambushed Rongmei Naga villagers collecting firewood between Pongringlong and Charoi Pondaijang. While others escaped, Panmei was captured and shot dead. The Joint Tribes Council Manipur condemned the unprovoked attack, urging the government to remove Kuki militant camps from Naga areas. Meanwhile, the Tangkhul Naga Long announced a 24-hour shutdown protesting alleged excessive force by Assam Rifles personnel against women demonstrators.



Harmanpreet Confident for World Cup

India Aims to Double World Cup Dominance

London, June 08: India captain Harmanpreet Kaur believes her side has all the ingredients required to lift the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026 title, stressing the need to remain balanced and focus on playing quality cricket rather than being weighed down by expectations. Speaking at the Captains' Carnival in London ahead of the tournament, which begins on June 12, Harmanpreet highlighted the transformative impact of India's recent success on the growth of women's cricket across the country. "We have seen that during last year's World Cup when we won. After that, we have seen a massive change," Harmanpreet said. "Many girls are coming



to play cricket, and I think when we do well, a lot of things change. Hopefully, we play our best cricket and try to make an impact on women's cricket."

India enter the tournament as reigning Women's ODI World Cup champions, having clinched the title on home

South Africa, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Netherlands.

The Harmanpreet-led side will open its campaign against arch-rivals Pakistan at Edgbaston in Birmingham on June 14. They will then face the Netherlands in Leeds before taking on South Africa in Manchester. India will remain in Manchester for their clash against Bangladesh before wrapping up their group-stage fixtures against Australia in London on June 28. Despite heading into the tournament on the back of a 4-1 T20I series defeat to South Africa under Laura Wolvaardt, India will be eager to put that setback behind them and rediscover their momentum on the biggest stage.

Hardik Pandya cleared for ODI return

Bengaluru, June 09: India all-rounder Hardik Pandya has been cleared to return for the upcoming three-match ODI series against Afghanistan. The 32-year-old had been stationed at the BCCI's Centre of Excellence (CoE) since June 2 to recover from back spasms that sidelined him during the IPL.

Pandya successfully completed intense fitness assessments, including match simulations and bowling his full 10-over quota without any discomfort. CoE strength and conditioning coaches have approved his fitness data. Pandya's return provides vital balance to India's white-ball squad. Meanwhile, former captain Rohit Sharma is also at the CoE assessing a hamstring niggle.



Ashwin Slams Suryakumar's T20 Dropping

New Delhi, June 08: Former India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has criticized the selection committee's "ruthless" decision to drop Suryakumar Yadav from the T20I squad, warning that axing a World Cup-winning captain sets a dangerous precedent for the future. Suryakumar, who led India to a successful T20 World Cup title defence just

T20 cricket demands high-risk batting that can easily skew personal statistics. While Ashwin acknowledged Iyer's impressive leadership credentials—having led Kolkata Knight Riders to an IPL title—he questioned the decision to elevate someone from outside the World Cup-winning contingent over existing players like vice-captain Axar Patel. "If I am one of



months ago, was entirely omitted from the upcoming tours of Ireland and England following a dip in batting form. The Ajit Agarkar-led selection committee subsequently named Shreyas Iyer as India's new T20I captain. Speaking on ESPNcricinfo, Ashwin expressed strong reservations about the optics and long-term implications of the landmark decision. "I'm a little apprehensive about the whole thing," Ashwin said. "Sure, his batting form has let him down over the last 15 months... But then he managed to win a T20 World Cup for the country. Has there been an instance where a captain who's won the T20 World Cup has been left out without any ultimatum?" Ashwin argued that Suryakumar deserved the high-profile England series to defend his spot, especially given that

the other 14 members in that World Cup-winning side, I'm looking at one another and saying, 'Hey, haven't we done enough to warrant a position as a captain?'" Ashwin noted, adding that bypassing the established hierarchy could disrupt team ethos. Concluding his critique, Ashwin urged the selectors to maintain the same ruthless standards moving forward to ensure long-term stability and consistency in Indian cricket.

Alexander Zverev Rules Roland Garros to Claim First Grand Slam Title

Paris, June 08: Germany's Alexander Zverev finally shattered his Grand Slam jinx, defeating Italy's Flavio Cobolli in a dramatic five-set thriller to claim his maiden French Open title on Sunday. The second seed weathered a fierce comeback from the 10th-seeded Cobolli to triumph 6-1, 4-6, 6-4, 6-7 (5/7), 6-1 in a grueling four hours and 16 minutes. With the victory, Zverev became the first German man to lift a major trophy since Boris Becker at the 1996 Australian Open.

The triumph marks a poignant redemption for the 29-year-old at Court



Philippe Chatrier, the site of his horrific 2022 ankle injury and a painful five-set final loss to Carlos Alcaraz in 2024.

Watching from the stands was Dominic Thiem, who famously denied Zverev from two sets up at the 2020 US Open.

"We've been through losses in the most important moments," Zverev said, addressing his team. "But at the end of the day, we're Grand Slam champions now."

Cobolli, bidding to become Italy's first Roland Garros men's champion in 50 years, fought valiantly despite an error-strewn start. However, Zverev's experience anchored him through a tense deciding set, sealing his place in tennis history.

Somali referee won't officiate in World Cup after being denied entry into the United States

Miami, June 09: Somali referee Omar Artan won't officiate in the World Cup after being denied entry into the United States. US Customs and Border Protection said Monday that a Somali national who was planning to referee in the World Cup had been denied entry after arriving to Miami International Airport from Istanbul on Saturday. While the CBP statement didn't mention the person by name, Artan is the only World Cup referee from Somalia. FIFA confirmed later Monday that Artan wouldn't be able to train and officiate at the World Cup, then released a statement on the referee's behalf. "Despite the circumstances, I am in a positive mood and I am focused on the next challenges in my refereeing career," Artan said in the statement. "I would like to thank FIFA and (the African federation) for all their support and I promise to keep my refereeing levels up as I concentrate on the future. I want to thank the football family for their messages and wish my colleagues all the best success during the World Cup and

I look forward to joining them again in future competitions."

In its own statement, FIFA said it was not involved in the immigration processes and was informed by authorities that Artan's "status will not be changed at present." "In line with previous FIFA events, a host government ultimately determines who receives a visa and who is admitted into their country," soccer's governing body said. CBP issued a release explaining why Artan was denied entry. "During processing, the traveler underwent additional inspection, a routine part of CBP's inspection process when officers need to verify information or determine admissibility," CBP said in its statement. "Following inspection, the traveler, a referee for the FIFA World Cup, was determined to be inadmissible due to vetting concerns and



was denied entry."

CBP noted that all travelers seeking entry into the US — including athletes, coaches and staff — are subject to CBP inspection and vetting. "Admissibility determinations are made on a case-by-case basis using law enforcement, national security, and immigration information available at the time of inspection," the CBP statement said. "CBP officers have the authority to question travelers, conduct inspections, and determine admissibility consistent with US law."