

Indo-Pacific must remain driver for global growth: EAM Jaishankar at Quad meet



New Delhi, May 26: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday said the Indo-Pacific should continue to serve as a key engine of global growth and stability. He further said that the Quad must focus on strengthening maritime security and expanding economic opportunities across the region. In his opening remarks at the Quad foreign ministers' meeting, he specifically called for "trusted and transparent" partnerships to bring peace and prosperity to the Indo-Pacific.

The New Delhi meeting was attended

by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong, and Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, with Jaishankar presiding over it. The Quad meeting came amid rising global concerns over China's increasing military muscle-flexing in the Indo-Pacific. "Our focus will clearly be on the Indo-Pacific, which is the specific limit of the Quad," the external affairs minister said in his televised opening remarks. "At the global level, we have to address issues like supply chain resilience, connectivity

choke points, manufacturing and resource concentrations and gaps in critical infrastructure. Each one of them offers a new argument for more partnerships," he said. Jaishankar, without elaborating, also talked about specific "concerns" facing the Indo-Pacific. "This will require enhancing strategic confidence, ensuring maritime security, promoting economic choices, and fostering a deeper collaborative ethos. And that is best done by promoting trusted and transparent partnerships," he said.

The external affairs minister added, "As maritime democracies, pluralistic societies and market economies, we share the responsibility towards a free and open Indo-Pacific. The region must remain a driver for global growth and stability." Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong called for making the Quad as strong and as effective as possible. We are determined to continue the momentum of the Quad, and we want a peaceful, stable, prosperous Indo-Pacific, she said.

Rubio said the areas in which the Quad has been working together became more relevant because of recent events around the world. Quad can address some of the most significant problems facing the world, including in areas of energy security, freedom of navigation, and critical minerals, he said.

Four Held Over Abduction of Naga Civilians

Imphal, May 26: A joint team of the Manipur Police, CRPF and Assam Rifles have arrested four people for their alleged involvement in the abduction of six Naga civilians, who are believed to be still held hostage amid simmering tensions in the ethnic-conflict hit state. According to police, the four men were arrested from the stretch between P Molding and Leilon Vaiphei inter-village road in the Kangpokpi district on Monday. The arrested persons were identified as Thangkhomang Khongsai (51), Seikhole Khongsai (40), Lunminthang Dimngel (27) and Kamgoulal Khongsai (30). Police said the four are suspected to be active members of armed village volunteer groups operating in the district and may have been involved in anti-social activities such as extortion, criminal intimidation, and illegal possession of arms and ammunition. "The role of the apprehended individuals in the abduction

of six persons is suspected and will be ascertained during the course of investigation," a police statement said, adding that further investigation is underway.

Several people were allegedly abducted and taken hostage by armed groups in Kangpokpi and Senapati dis-

tricts on May 13, hours after three church leaders were killed in an ambush. Police said 31 people, 14 Nagas, 16 Kukis and one Meitei, have since been released. However, six Nagas are still missing. The Kuki Inpi Manipur, the apex body of the Kuki tribes in the state, claimed that 14 members of the community are also being held hostage by Naga groups.



Amit Shah Calls for 'Four-Dimensional' Border Security

Four-Dimensional Grid Ensures Foolproof Border Security

Jaipur, May 26: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday visited the Sanchu Border Outpost along the India Pakistan international border in Rajasthan, where he proposed a new and modern security framework for the country's border defence. During the visit, he called for the establishment of a robust 'Four Dimensional Grid' to ensure what he described as foolproof border security. The International Border between India and Pakistan lies barely five km from the Sanchu Post. Addressing officers and personnel at the Border Security Force headquarters located at the historic Sanchu Post in Bikaner, Shah emphasised the need for a four pronged coordination mechanism involving the BSF, the Army, local administration and vigilant citizens to strengthen border security. He said this integrated structure would enable threats along the border to be countered with full strength.

Shah stated that this Four Dimensional framework involving the BSF, the Army, vigilant citizens in border areas and the local administration, including the District Collector and the Cyber Wing, would work together to dismantle infiltration and smuggling networks at the grassroots level. He asserted, "When these four pillars function in unison and act like an impenetrable fortress, any threat emanating from across the border, any arms smuggling attempt, or any reconnaissance drone will be



instantly shot down. We must not only maintain a vigilant watch over cross-border threats but also deliver a crushing response to anyone who dares to challenge our nation." During his visit, Shah also dedicated the Vibrant Villages Programme 2 for border regions of the state. Under the initiative, infrastructure and essential facilities such as education, roads and electricity will be strengthened in villages located along the international border. Villages in Sri Ganganagar, Barmer, Bikaner and Jaisalmer districts have been included in the

programme. Dedicating the initiative, Shah said it aims at ensuring effective development for people living in border areas. He added that the primary objective of the scheme is to transform the country's 'last villages' into its 'first villages' and to completely halt migration from these regions.

Under the programme, four districts of Rajasthan sharing an international border with Pakistan, Sri Ganganagar, Barmer, Bikaner and Jaisalmer, have been included. A total of 184 remote border villages in these districts

will see the development of basic amenities including clean drinking water, 24 hour electricity, all-weather paved roads, high-speed 4G and 5G mobile connectivity and television services on priority. The government believes that once employment opportunities and modern facilities are established in border villages, national security will become more robust. Recalling the history of the Sanchu Post, Shah said it had stood as a silent witness to the India Pakistan wars of 1965 and 1971. Praising the courage of BSF personnel during 'Operation Sindoor,' he said the military museum established at the Sanchu Post would serve as a lasting source of inspiration for future generations.

Focusing on women empowerment and welfare of female personnel deployed on the borders, the Home Minister also inaugurated 14 high-tech barracks designed for their comfort and convenience. These barracks are equipped with modern amenities to ensure safety, privacy and improved living conditions for women personnel. Shah stated, "As far as amenities are concerned, we will ensure that adequate facilities are provided for all our daughters [female personnel] by 2030." Shah also announced the construction of a 1,096 km border road project across the Rajasthan desert, which he said would ease several hardships faced by people living in border areas.



Two Suspected ULFA Operatives Injured in Assam



Guwahati, May 25: Two suspected ULFA-linked extortion operatives were injured during an exchange of fire with police at Bogidol Mola village in Assam's Sivasagar district on May 25, police sources said. According to police, the group had allegedly been demanding money in the name of ULFA from local businessmen for several days. Bus Officials said the suspects allegedly opened fire on spotting the police, prompting retaliatory firing by the security personnel.

In the exchange, Ritu Gogoi of Mola gaon sustained multiple bullet injuries. Police sources said he suffered four bullet wounds in the thigh area and another injury near the waist, leaving him critically injured. Another injured person, identified as Jitu Gogoi, a relative of Ritu Gogoi, reportedly sustained a bullet graze injury to his abdomen. Innessman Lachit Gogoi of Sivasagar had reportedly received an extortion demand of Rs 8 lakh. Police said the alleged extortion group arrived near Mola gaon on Sunday to collect the demanded amount, where they encountered a police team. Police said the suspected extortion group comprised six members, of whom four remain absconding. A search operation has been launched to trace them.

Ritu Gogoi was shifted to the Dibrugarh Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) for advanced treatment, while Jitu Gogoi is undergoing treatment at Sivasagar Civil Hospital. Officials said two motorcycles and a firearm were recovered from the spot. Police sources added that the same group had allegedly issued a similar extortion demand to Lachit Gogoi around 15 days ago. An earlier attempt to apprehend the group had reportedly failed. Investigation into the case is underway.

Tabling of UCC Bill will ensure on-record discussion on its need: Himanta

Guwahati, May 25: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday said the tabling of a Bill on the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in the state assembly will lead to an on-record discussion on the need for such a law. He also maintained that it will help realise the path envisaged by the founding fathers of the nation. "The introduction of the Uniform Civil Code 2026 Bill in the Assam Vidhan Sabha paves the way for an on-record discussion on why #UCCAssam is the need of the hour and how it will help realise the path laid down by

our founding fathers," Sarma said in a post on X.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Atul Bora tabled 'The Uniform Civil Code, Assam, 2026 Bill' in the assembly, on behalf of the chief minister, earlier during the day. Monday marks the third day of the first session of the 16th Assam Legislative Assembly. The Bill seeks to ban polygamy and make registration of live-in relationships compulsory, though the provisions will not be applicable to any of the Scheduled Tribes residing in Assam, among other provisions. The opposition parties,



including Congress, Rajgor Dal and Trinamool Congress, opposed the move and de-

manded wider consultation with all the stakeholders before its introduction.

Assam Maternal Mortality Rate Dips Below National Average

Guwahati, May 26: Assam has achieved a historic milestone in public health, with the state's Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) dropping to 84 per lakh live births below the national average of 88 for the first time in its history. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma described the achievement as one of the most moving moments of his public life, recalling that when he first took charge of the Health Department in 2006, Assam's MMR stood at 480. The decline, Sarma noted, is the result of years

of sustained effort by doctors, nurses, ASHA workers, health officials, and frontline staff who worked "silently, tirelessly and with compassion" across towns, villages, and remote communities. "This achievement belongs to them. Behind this number are countless mothers who returned safely home to their families," he said. Health experts attribute the turnaround to improved antenatal care, increased institutional deliveries, better emergency obstetric services, and greater commu-

nity awareness. The state's challenging geography and underserved populations made the achievement particularly significant, with ASHA workers playing a crucial role in connecting expectant mothers to institutional care. Sarma, visibly moved, expressed gratitude to the healthcare workforce and the people of Assam. "What once seemed impossible has become reality through collective effort and the blessings of the people of Assam," he wrote on social media.

Khandu Decries Activist's Alleged Custodial Torture



Itanagar, May 26: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu voiced deep concern Tuesday over the alleged custodial torture of prominent anti-drug activist Gumin Mize. Images and videos showing severe bruises on Mize's body sparked widespread outrage across Arunachal Pradesh and neighboring Assam.

Khandu praised Mize, president of Arunachal Anti-Drug Warriors, for his extensive anti-narcotics work and stated he has urged the Assam government to ensure no further mistreatment occurs.

Assam Police arrested Mize in Itanagar on May 20 following a violent clash in Lakhimpur district involving alleged gunfire. While police claim Mize was part of an armed assault, his supporters argue he fired in self-defense after being attacked by drug traffickers during an operation. A complaint has been filed with the National Human Rights Commission alleging physical abuse at Bihpuria Police Station. Local authorities have denied the allegations, claiming the viral images are AI-generated.

Northeast Can Become Fisheries, Dairy Hub

Agartala, May 25: Tripura's Animal Resources Development and Fisheries Minister Sudhangshu Das on Monday highlighted the state government's commitment towards strengthening the animal husbandry and fisheries sectors while addressing a Regional Review Meeting held in Mizoram. Speaking in the presence of Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh, ministers from various Northeastern states, senior officials and delegates, Das said the fisheries and animal husbandry sectors play a vital role in improving rural livelihoods, nutritional security, employment generation and economic empowerment across the Northeast. Expressing gratitude to the Government of Mizoram for organizing the meeting, the minister said Tripura has been implementing several centrally sponsored schemes in a mission-oriented manner under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the guidance of the Union Ministry. News Media Platform Das stated that schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sam-



pada Yojana (PMMSY), Rashtriya Gokul Mission, National Livestock Mission and Livestock Health & Disease Control Programme have helped improve production, infrastructure, disease control and income generation for farmers and beneficiaries in Tripura.

Highlighting achievements in the fisheries sector, he said the state has made notable progress in scientific aquaculture, fish seed production, integrated fish farming and ornamental fisheries. He also stressed the importance of developing modern infrastructure including cold chain

facilities, fish feed mills and marketing support systems. On the animal husbandry front, the minister said the government is focusing on veterinary healthcare services, artificial insemination coverage, breed improvement, vaccination drives, fodder development and doorstep veterinary services in rural and remote areas.

Das further emphasized the vast potential of the Northeastern region in fisheries, dairy, livestock, poultry and piggy sectors owing to its rich biodiversity and favourable climatic conditions. He called for stronger regional cooperation, advanced technology support, improved connectivity and increased investment to fully harness the region's potential.

Reaffirming Tripura government's commitment towards effective implementation of centrally sponsored schemes, the minister expressed confidence that the Northeastern states would emerge as a major hub for fisheries, dairy and livestock development in the country through coordinated efforts and collective action.



Campus Activewear unveils new brand identity to deepen connect with youth market

Guwahati: Campus Activewear has unveiled a new brand identity as part of its next phase of growth, positioning itself as a more culture-led and youth-focused sports and athleisure brand. The announcement was made during the company's Annual Distributors' Meet, Shoecase 2026, attended by over 300 distributor-partners from across the country.

The refreshed identity reflects Campus' "Move Your Way" philosophy and focuses on individuality, movement and self-expression. The new visual design featuring three outward arrows symbolises multidirectional paths, choices and possibilities, highlighting the idea that there is no single route to growth or success. The company said the new identity combines fashion,



sport and everyday lifestyle while strengthening emotional relevance with consumers. The three-day event, held from May 16 to 18, included leadership interactions, product showcases, fashion presentations and influencer-led engagements hosted by Suhana Sethi. Former Indian cricketer and current India men's cricket

team coach Gautam Gambhir attended as chief guest and addressed distributors and stakeholders.

Nikhil Aggarwal, Whole Time Director and CEO of Campus Activewear, said the brand evolution reflects a generation that values authenticity, ambition and freedom of expression while reinforcing

the company's consumer-first approach.

Founded in 2005, Campus Activewear has built a strong nationwide presence with over 23,000 retail touch-points, more than 300 exclusive outlets and a significant omni-channel footprint across e-commerce platforms.

In Guwahati, footwear retailers say demand for affordable athleisure and fashion-forward sports footwear has witnessed steady growth among young consumers in Assam and the Northeast. Campus' renewed youth-centric branding and expanding product portfolio could further strengthen its market position in Guwahati, where lifestyle-driven footwear demand continues to rise across urban and semi-urban segments.

Tata AIA launches dividend leaders pension fund targeting long-term retirement wealth

Mumbai: Tata AIA Life Insurance has launched the Tata AIA Dividend Leaders Index Pension Fund, a new retirement-focused investment solution aimed at helping consumers build long-term wealth through investments in India's leading dividend-paying companies. The fund will track the BSE 500 Dividend Leaders 50 Index and invest in 50 financially resilient companies with a strong history of rewarding shareholders across market cycles. Tata AIA said the fund follows a passive investment strategy aligned with IRDAI regulations and is designed to combine market-linked growth with life insurance protection.

According to the company, dividends earned from

portfolio companies will be reinvested into the fund to strengthen long-term compounding benefits and retirement corpus creation. The fund will maintain an equity allocation between 70 per cent and 100 per cent, while 0-30 per cent may be invested in cash and money market instruments for portfolio flexibility.

The New Fund Offer (NFO) is open from May 20 to May 27, with policies issued during the period priced at an NAV of ₹10. The fund is available through Tata AIA Smart Pension Secure and Tata AIA Premier Pension Secure plans. Tata AIA reported a total premium income of ₹31,484 crore in FY25, registering a 23 per cent growth over FY24.

Tata Soulfull bets on millet wellness segment with new muesli range



Guwahati: Tata Soulfull has expanded its breakfast cereals portfolio with the launch of its new Ultimate Millet Muesli range as the company sharpens its focus on India's fast-growing health and wellness foods market. The launch is accompanied by the brand's new campaign, "Nourish Your Goals with Millets", aimed at promoting goal-oriented nutrition among consumers. The new range includes three variants tailored to specific consumer needs — Tata Soulfull Ultimate Millet Muesli Slimcare for weight management goals, Ultimate Millet Muesli Hi-Protein to support protein intake, and Ultimate Millet Muesli Probiotic for gut health. The company said the products are built around millets to combine traditional nutrition with modern breakfast formats.

Speaking on the launch, Deepika Khattar Bhan, President-Packaged Foods, Capital Foods and Soulfull, said consumers are increasingly seeking foods aligned with specific wellness goals rather than generic healthy eating options. She said the campaign highlights how consistent nourishment plays a key role in achieving long-term goals.

The campaign will be rolled out through a digital-first strategy across YouTube, Meta platforms, social media and influencer collaborations targeting evolving consumer cohorts.

In Guwahati, retailers and nutrition-focused stores have witnessed rising demand for millet-based and functional food products, especially among health-conscious urban consumers. Industry observers believe the launch could strengthen Tata Soulfull's presence in Northeast India, where awareness around healthier packaged breakfast options has grown steadily in recent years.

Tea brands push regional and wellness blends on International Tea Day

Guwahati: On the occasion of International Tea Day, major tea brands have intensified their focus on regional flavours, wellness offerings and energy-based products as companies look to tap changing consumer preferences in India's expanding tea market.

Tata Tea Premium continued to strengthen its "Desh Ki Chai" proposition with customised blends, state-specific packaging and localised campaigns reflecting regional pride and taste preferences. The company said the initiative aims to provide con-

sumers with locally inspired tea experiences backed by a national brand presence. The products are available through retail outlets, Amazon and Tata NutriKorner.

At the same time, Tata Tea Agni introduced Agni Extra Josh, positioned as India's first tea with added natural caffeine. Built around the brand's "Josh Jagaye Har Roz" proposition, the blend targets consumers seeking an energising tea experience for busy mornings and demanding daily schedules.

In the wellness segment,

Organic India showcased its Masala Black Tea and Tulsi Masala Chai variants, combining Assam black tea with spices and herbs including Tulsi, ginger, cinnamon, cardamom and clove. The company said the certified organic blends are designed to support immunity, reduce stress and deliver antioxidant benefits.

In Guwahati, demand for premium and wellness-focused tea products has been rising steadily across the city. Traders noted that consumers are increasingly shifting towards flavoured, organic and



immunity-based tea blends, while e-commerce platforms are helping brands expand their reach in the Guwahati market.

Škoda Auto India drives performance push with new 'G.O.A.T.' campaign

Guwahati: Škoda Auto India has launched its latest brand campaign, 'G.O.A.T. – Greatest On A Track', aimed at reinforcing the company's performance-driven identity and motorsport legacy in India. The campaign was unveiled with the company setting an India and Asia Book of Records title for the "Fastest Multi-Car Relay of a Single Manufacturer on a Circuit" at the Coimbatore Automotive Sports and Technical Training (CoASTT) track.

The relay featured five Škoda models — Kylaq 1.0 AT, Kushaq 1.5 DSG, Slavia 1.5 DSG, Octavia RS and Kodiaq Selection L&K — which together clocked a total timing of 12:30.97, including pit-lane



changeovers. The Octavia RS emerged as the fastest model with a lap timing of 2:10.85 on the 3.8-km circuit. The company said the campaign underlines its focus on steering precision, chassis balance, braking performance and overall driving dynamics.

Ashish Gupta, Brand Director of Škoda

Auto India, said motorsport DNA is an inherent part of every Škoda vehicle and the campaign reflects the company's strategy of democratising performance across segments. The initiative also marks over 50 years of the RS badge and builds on Škoda Auto's 125-year motorsport heritage.

In Guwahati, demand for premium SUVs and performance-oriented vehicles has been steadily rising in the Northeast, driven by young professionals and aspirational buyers. Industry observers noted that Škoda Auto India's expanding network across India, including growing customer interest in Guwahati, could help strengthen its presence in the region's premium automobile segment.



Medanta doctors stress lifestyle changes to curb rising heart disease cases

Dimapur: Medanta – The Medicity has highlighted the growing burden of heart-related diseases in India and stressed that nearly 90 per cent of such deaths can be prevented through timely lifestyle changes and awareness. The hospital’s specialists said rising stress, sedentary work culture, unhealthy eating habits and lack of physical activity are increasingly affecting younger people.

Padma Shri awardee Dr. Praveen Chandra said conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, obesity and stress-related heart disorders are now common among younger adults. He stated that regular exercise, balanced diets,

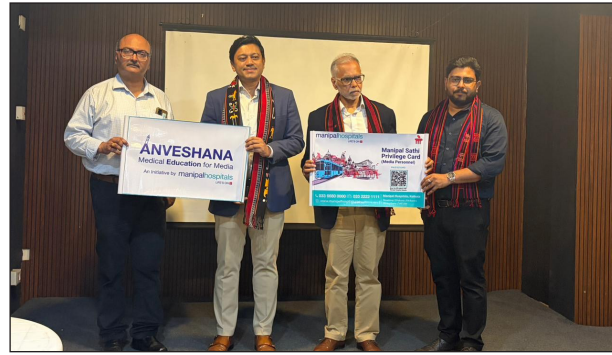
avoiding smoking and stress management can significantly reduce cardiovascular risks.

Dr. C Manpa Phom said simple activities such as walking for 45 minutes at least four to five times a week, along with proper sleep and healthy food habits, can help improve long-term heart health.

The hospital also underlined India’s growing strength in advanced cardiac treatment and healthcare technology. Medanta has signed an MoU with the Government of Nagaland for accreditation under the Chief Minister’s Health Insurance Scheme and partnered with IDAN to promote public health awareness in the state.

In Kohima, healthcare and wellness services are witnessing increased demand as awareness about lifestyle diseases grows among urban consumers. Hospitals, diagnostic centres and preventive healthcare providers in Kohima are seeing higher interest in regular health screenings, specialised consultations and cardiac wellness services. Nagaland residents can consult Dr. C Manpa Phom from Dr. Praveen Chandra’s team at Faith Hospital, Dimapur, on May 23, 2026, from 9 am to 1 pm. Medanta has also launched a dedicated North East helpline to assist patients in Assamese, Bengali, Nagamese, English and Hindi.

Manipal Hospitals expands Northeast healthcare outreach with CPR awareness drive in Nagaland



Dimapur: Manipal Hospital EM Bypass has organised ‘Anveshana – Medical Education for Media’ along with a CPR Training and Awareness Session in Nagaland as part of its broader strategy to strengthen healthcare awareness and specialised medical outreach across Northeast India. The initiative brought together senior specialists including Dr. Harsh Jain, Senior Consultant – Neurosurgery, Dr. Arya Chaudhuri, Consultant – Cardiology, Dr. Subhankar Chakraborty, Consultant – Emergency, and Dr. Arunava Roy, HOD – Gynaecologic Oncology. The experts highlighted the growing burden of neurological disorders, cardiovascular diseases and cancer cases in the Northeast, while stressing the importance of early diagnosis, preventive healthcare and timely emergency response.

The CPR training session focused on equipping participants with basic life support skills and emergency response techniques during cardiac emergencies before professional medical assistance arrives. Doctors also highlighted the increasing demand for advanced healthcare services as patients from Nagaland and other Northeastern states continue to travel outside the region for specialised treatment.

Dr. Harsh Jain spoke on the rise in stroke and neurological disorders in Northeast India, while Dr. Arunava Roy highlighted advancements in robotic-assisted cancer surgeries and multidisciplinary oncology care at Manipal Hospitals Kolkata. Dr. Arya Chaudhuri stressed that CPR awareness can significantly improve survival chances during cardiac arrest, while Dr. Subhankar Chakraborty underlined the importance of creating trained first responders within communities. The programme also marked the launch of a Media Privilege Card offering journalists enhanced healthcare access and benefits across Manipal Hospitals facilities. In Dimapur, healthcare awareness campaigns and specialised medical outreach programmes are gaining importance amid rising demand for advanced treatment among patients from Nagaland. Healthcare providers are increasingly focusing on preventive care, emergency preparedness and technology-driven treatment options as the Dimapur healthcare market continues to witness growing patient awareness and demand for super-specialty services.

Medanta expands healthcare outreach as liver diseases rise across India

Aizawl: Gurugram-based Medanta has stepped up its healthcare outreach in the North East amid growing concerns over lifestyle-related liver diseases, with specialists stressing the need for early diagnosis, preventive healthcare and healthy living practices.

Doctors at Medanta – The Medicity, recently named India’s Best Hospital by Newsweek 2026, said liver diseases such as fatty liver, viral hepatitis, cirrhosis, alcohol-associated liver disease and liver cancer are witnessing a steady rise due to obesity, diabetes, sedentary lifestyles, unhealthy diets and excessive alcohol consumption. Dr. Swapnil Dhampalwar, Senior Consultant, Hepatology at Medanta Gurugram, said many liver conditions progress silently and are detected only after significant damage occurs. “Timely diagnosis through regular health check-ups and blood tests can help detect liver disease early and prevent long-term complications,” he said. He added that non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, also known as metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease, is increasingly affecting people with poor dietary habits and low physical activity. He advised people to avoid self-medication, smoking and unnecessary supplements while adopting balanced diets, regular exercise, hydration and proper sleep. In Aizawl, the expansion of specialised healthcare consultations and growing awareness campaigns indicate increasing demand for preventive and advanced medical services in Mizoram’s urban healthcare sector. Health experts believe rising lifestyle disorders are driving more residents towards organised multi-specialty healthcare providers.

Medanta has signed an MoU with the Government of Mizoram for empanelment under the Mizoram Universal Health Care Scheme (MUHCS), enabling cashless treatment for registered beneficiaries. Residents of Aizawl and nearby areas can consult Dr. Dhampalwar on May 26 at Gastro and Liver Centre, Mission Vengthlang, Tlang Veng Road, Aizawl. The hospital group has also launched a dedicated North East helpline with multilingual support to improve access to care across the region.

Star Health bets on Guwahati with affordable ‘Value Plus’ health insurance launch

Guwahati: Star Health and Allied Insurance Company Limited has launched its new affordable health insurance product ‘Value Plus’ in Guwahati as part of its strategy to deepen penetration in Tier 2, 3 and 4 markets while marking 20 years of its operations in India.

The standalone health insurer said the new offering comes with nearly 20 per cent lower premiums and sum insured options ranging from ₹7.5 lakh to ₹25 lakh for individuals and family floater covers. The product targets young Indians and families seeking higher health protection with premium efficiency through a curated network of hospitals.

The company said customers completing five consec-

utive claim-free years would receive a refund of the full first-year base premium. Other features include cumulative bonus benefits of up to 100 per cent, wellness-led services, unlimited tele-consultations, home care, AYUSH treatment, ambulance cover and long-term policy discounts.

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

Managing Director and CEO Anand Roy said the launch

aligns with the company’s “Insurance for All” vision and aims to make quality healthcare protection more accessible in underserved markets. Business Head for North-East and Odisha Aditya Biyani said the plan has been designed to address rising medical costs while improving affordability for households.

In Guwahati, the launch highlights growing demand for affordable and higher-coverage health insurance products in Assam as healthcare expenses continue to rise. Products combining lower premiums, wellness benefits and curated hospital access could see strong traction among middle-income families and first-time insurance buyers in the region.

Classic Legends launches nationwide care camp focused on rider safety and customer support

Bongaigaon: Classic Legends has announced a nationwide “Legends’ Care Camp” across authorised Jawa, Yezdi and BSA dealerships from May 23 to May 31, 2026, as part of its broader effort to promote rider safety, responsible vehicle maintenance and customer welfare.

The nine-day initiative will be organised across multiple cities and will provide customers with comprehensive motorcycle health check-ups along with benefits on servicing, labour charges, spare parts and genuine accessories. The campaign is aimed at encouraging preventive vehicle care ahead of the monsoon season, when road safety and motorcycle maintenance become especially important for riders.

Under the programme, trained technicians will



conduct a detailed 72-point inspection covering engine performance, brakes, clutch systems, suspension, tyres, electrical components and battery health

to ensure safer and more reliable riding conditions. Customers will also receive expert consultation on motorcycle upkeep and riding preparedness during adverse weather conditions.

The company is additionally offering finance and exchange benefits for customers visiting participating dealerships during the service camp period.

Commenting on the initiative, Jayapradeep Vasudevan said customer experience and rider satisfaction remain central to the company’s approach. He said the “Legends’ Care Camp” is designed to provide proactive support and strengthen long-term relationships with riders while maintaining the performance and reliability associated with the Jawa, Yezdi and BSA brands.



NCVET moves to strengthen India's skilling ecosystem with dedicated research division

Guwahati: The National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET), under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), has initiated efforts to strengthen India's vocational education ecosystem through evidence-based policymaking and institutional research.

NCVET convened the first meeting of its Research Advisory Committee (RAC) under the chairpersonship of Smt. Debashree Mukherjee, Secretary, MSDE and Chairperson, NCVET. The meeting brought together experts and representatives from government, academia, industry, think tanks and research organisations including NITI Aayog, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Directorate General of Training (DGT), Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), IIM Calcutta, NCAER, TISS, Ashoka University, NIEPA and Young Lives India.



The committee discussed short, medium and long-term priorities for strengthening institutional collaboration, consolidating research efforts and improving regulatory effectiveness in the vocational training sector. Members also stressed skill gap analysis, adoption of emerging technologies, integrated solutions and greater youth participation in the skilling agenda.

Mukherjee said research and data-driven insights would play a critical role in building future-ready skilling policies as India moves towards becoming a global skill capital. Prof. (Dr.) Ashok Kumar Gaba, Executive Member, NCVET, said the initiative would help create a globally benchmarked vocational education framework.

The proposed Research Division, approved during the 12th NCVET Council meeting in January 2026, will function as a national research and knowledge hub supporting labour market analysis, quality assurance, regulatory reforms and assessment systems.

In Guwahati, the initiative could boost Assam's skill development landscape by improving workforce planning and industry-oriented training in sectors such as tourism, tea, logistics, retail and digital services, helping businesses access a more skilled and job-ready workforce.

Airbnb unveils expanded travel platform with new services, hotels and FIFA experiences

Mumbai: Airbnb has announced a major expansion of its global travel platform with the introduction of car rentals, grocery delivery, airport pickups, luggage storage, boutique hotels and exclusive FIFA World Cup 2026 experiences as part of its 2026 summer release.

The company said the latest additions are designed to offer travellers a more con-

nected and seamless travel experience beyond accommodation bookings. Airbnb co-founder and CEO Brian Chesky said the company aims to make travel more meaningful through curated stays, local experiences and integrated travel services.

Under the rollout, users can access grocery delivery through Instacart in select US cities, airport pickup

services through Welcome Pickups in over 160 cities, and luggage storage through Bounce across 175 cities worldwide. Airbnb will also introduce car rentals directly on its app later this summer, alongside AI-powered review summaries, trip comparison tools and shared itinerary features.

The platform is further expanding Airbnb Experiences

with more than 3,000 landmark tours, over 2,500 food culture programmes and exclusive World Cup-themed activities featuring football personalities including Abby Wambach and Javier Mascherano. Thousands of boutique and independent hotels in destinations such as Paris, Madrid and Singapore are also being added to the platform.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor strengthens biodiversity push under TEC 2050



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

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

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

During the reporting period, the company planted 747 saplings within its campus and 1,492 saplings externally. It also developed over 6.6 acres of land at the Channapatna Police Training School with nearly 4,090 saplings across 33 native species. TKM further stated that nearly 89% of its water needs are met through rainwater harvesting and recycled water, while 100% renewable grid electricity helped avoid 509,000 tCO₂e emissions.

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

Green tea emerges as part of consumers' daily wellness lifestyle

Guwahati: Growing consumer focus on balanced lifestyles and mindful wellness habits is driving increased preference for green tea across different parts of the day, with brands such as Tetley witnessing rising relevance in everyday routines.

According to industry observations shared by the company, consumers are increasingly incorporating green tea into morning, afternoon and evening schedules as part of manageable wellness habits rather than extreme lifestyle changes. Tetley said mornings are becoming a preferred time for green tea consumption, with many consumers opting for a refreshing beverage alongside breakfast or before beginning work.

The company noted that afternoon hours, often marked by hectic schedules, meetings and prolonged screen time, are also creating demand for short refreshment breaks where green tea is emerging as a preferred choice. Evening consumption is also rising as consumers seek calming rou-



tines after busy days.

Tetley further highlighted growing interest in wellness-focused beverages such as Tetley Slim Care, which combines premium green tea with added L-Carnitine, known to support body fat reduction when combined with balanced diets and regular physical activity. The company positioned the product as an everyday beverage designed to support gradual and sustainable wellness goals.

In Guwahati, retailers and supermarkets are witnessing increasing demand for green tea variants, particularly among young professionals, fitness-conscious consumers and urban households. Local sellers said wellness beverages are steadily gaining shelf space as consumers look for practical and affordable lifestyle-oriented products.

Rising plantar fasciitis cases put spotlight on footwear and preventive healthcare

Guwahati: Growing cases of plantar fasciitis are driving awareness around preventive healthcare and orthopaedic care in India, with doctors at Medanta – The Medicity warning that delayed treatment and poor footwear habits could lead to chronic pain and reduced mobility.

The concern comes amid increasing complaints of recurring heel pain among working professionals, athletes, dancers and people above 40 years of age. Doctors said plantar fasciitis, estimated to affect 4-7% of India's population, occurs when the plantar fascia — the tissue connecting the heel bone to the toes — becomes inflamed due to repeated stress, obesity, prolonged standing, or unsupportive footwear.

Dr. Attique Vasdev, Vice Chairman, Orthopaedics at Medanta Gurugram, said many people ignore early symptoms such as sharp heel pain after waking up or prolonged standing, allowing the condition to worsen over time. He added that high heels and improper footwear are emerging as major contributors to the problem. Doctors said early diagnosis through X-rays, ultrasound scans or MRI imaging, along with physiotherapy, supportive insoles, stretching exercises and lifestyle changes, can significantly reduce long-term complications.

In Guwahati, healthcare providers and footwear retailers are witnessing growing demand for orthopaedic consultations, physiotherapy services and supportive footwear products as awareness about foot health rises among urban consumers. Industry observers say the city's healthcare market is increasingly focusing on preventive care and lifestyle-related disorders.

Medanta has also expanded its outreach in the North East through a multilingual helpline and specialist consultations in Guwahati on May 23.



India steps up global skilling push with Taipei WorldSkills participation



Guwahati: India has intensified its global skilling ambitions with Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education Jayant Chaudhary flagging off a five-member Indian contingent for the 2026 Taipei Capital Cup WorldSkills Invitational Tournament in Taiwan. The tournament, scheduled from May 26 to 28 in Taipei, will see competitors from around 15 countries participate across technical and

vocational skill categories. Organised as a preparatory platform ahead of WorldSkills Shanghai 2026, the competition is aimed at promoting technical excellence, workforce innovation and international collaboration. The Indian team includes Arjun Sumathi Vijayabashkar in Mobile Applications Development, Mohamed Mafaz Poonaikannan Rabi Ahamed in Software Applications Development, Muskan in Painting and Decorating, Md Seraj in Automobile Technology

and Suresh Kumar Ganesan Meena in Digital Construction. The participants are gold medal winners from the IndiaSkills National Competition 2025-26 along with wildcard entrants.

Speaking at the send-off event attended by Skill Development Secretary Debashree Mukherjee and NSDC CEO Arunkumar Pillai, Chaudhary said global competitions help Indian youth gain exposure to international standards while building confidence and industry-ready capabilities.

In Guwahati, the Centre's focus on skill development and emerging technologies could create fresh opportunities for technical institutes and startups in the Northeast. Experts believe sectors such as digital construction, software applications and Industry 4.0 could see rising interest among students and businesses in Assam as demand grows for globally skilled professionals.

Indian Silk House Agencies strengthens Northeast expansion after one year in Guwahati



Guwahati: Indian Silk House Agencies, a leading saree retail brand from East India, has completed one year of operations in Guwahati, marking a significant milestone in its expansion strategy across Northeast India. The company said the Guwahati outlet has emerged as a key destination for saree buyers in the region and has strengthened the brand's customer connect in the Northeast. The retailer, which has over five decades of presence in the saree market, recently expanded further with a new store in Silchar, taking its Northeast footprint to two states within a year. The company is currently opening one new store every seven to ten days across the country as part of its target to establish 500 stores nationwide by 2030. The Guwahati store offers a wide range of traditional weaves including Kantha, Baluchari, Matka and Tussar from Bengal, along with

Banarasi, Paithani, Bandhej and Kanjivaram sarees from different parts of India. Indian Silk House Agencies also works with over 15,000 artisans across more than 60 weaving clusters nationwide. In Guwahati, the strong response to the store highlights rising demand for organised ethnic fashion retail and authentic handcrafted products in the city. Industry observers believe Guwahati is rapidly emerging as a major retail and lifestyle hub for Northeast India, attracting national brands looking to tap into growing consumer spending and evolving fashion preferences. Commenting on the milestone, CEO Darshan Dudhuria said the company had entered Guwahati believing the Northeast market lacked organised saree retail and added that the positive response has encouraged the brand to deepen its presence in the region.

North-East pollution surge raises concern over rural emissions and industrial growth

Guwahati: North-East India has witnessed a nearly 50 per cent rise in pollution levels over the past two decades, with researchers warning that the region has shifted from "polluted" to "highly polluted" due to growing biomass burning and industrial emissions, according to a new 25-year satellite study published in Atmospheric Environment.

The research, led by Prof Abhijit Chatterjee and research fellow Soumen Raul of Bose Institute, tracked particulate matter pollution across the Indo-Gangetic Plain, North-East India and the Himalayas from 2000 to 2024.

The study found that organic carbon and sulphate particles linked to slash-and-burn farming and biomass-based cooking and heating rose sharply between 2010 and 2019 compared to the previous decade. Pollution hotspots ini-

tially concentrated in Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura have now expanded across the region and into Bangladesh.

Researchers also flagged Assam's industrial belt as a growing concern. Sulphate emissions increased by over 30 per cent after the implementation of India's National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), driven by thermal power plants, oil refineries and cement industries in Bongaigaon, Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Digboi, Numaligarh and Bokajan.

In Guwahati, worsening air pollution could impact tourism, logistics, healthcare costs and investor confidence if industrial and rural emissions remain unchecked. Experts said cleaner fuel adoption and stricter industrial emission monitoring will be crucial for sustaining long-term economic growth in the region.

TVS Motor emerges as global leader in shareholder value creation



Guwahati: TVS Motor Company has secured the top global position in the 'Durable Consumer Goods' category in the annual 'Best Stocks in the World' ranking published by Germany's leading business weekly WirtschaftsWoche based on the Boston Consulting Group Value Creators analysis. The independent study assessed over 2,000 listed firms across 35 industries worldwide. Between 2021 and 2025, TVS Motor delivered an average annual Total Shareholder Return of nearly 51 per cent, outperforming major peers from Japan, Chi-

na, the United States and India. The report attributed the company's growth to strong revenue expansion, premium market valuation, improving profitability and a strengthened balance sheet. Professor Sir Ralf Speth said the recognition reflected the strategic leadership of Chairman Sudarshan Venu and the company's continued focus on innovation, sustainability, manufacturing excellence and electric mobility. He also highlighted the revival of the iconic Norton brand under TVS ownership. In FY 2025-26, TVS Motor posted its highest-ever annu-

al sales of 5.89 million units, up 24 per cent year-on-year, while international business grew 33 per cent across more than 90 markets. Revenue rose 30 per cent to Rs 47,270 crore and operating PBT increased 40 per cent to Rs 4,975 crore. In Guwahati, the company's strong global ranking is expected to boost customer confidence in the Northeast region. Dealers noted growing demand in Guwahati for premium motorcycles and electric mobility products, with TVS steadily strengthening its market presence among young consumers and urban buyers in Assam.

Air India extends loyalty programme benefit to Air India Express flights

New Delhi: Air India has expanded its loyalty program, allowing frequent flyers to earn and spend Club Maharaja points on Air India Express flights. Previously, points could only be earned or redeemed on the airline's full-service flights, excluding its low-cost subsidiary. This integration allows members to utilize points across more than 55 destinations in South, Southeast, and West Asia. Maharaja Club members can immediately accumulate Maharaja and Tier Points on Air India Express flights booked via official websites, mobile apps, and authorized travel agents. These flights will also contribute to tier progression, accelerating upgrades. Members must enter their loyalty ID during

booking, as retrospective claims and airport counter modifications are currently unavailable. Air India Chief Commercial Officer Nipun Aggarwal noted the move addresses a long-standing customer expectation. Future integration phases will introduce priority check-in, priority boarding, and seat selection.



SC Backs CBI Probe In Twisha Sharma Death Case

SC Urges Media Restraint, Avoids Sound Bites

New Delhi, May 25: The Supreme Court on Monday said it was 'pained' by the narrative suggesting that the judiciary was shielding the accused and assured an impartial probe into the death of model-actor Twisha Sharma. The apex court said that the 'unfortunate incident' must be investigated fairly and in accordance with the law. The Court noted that a CBI probe into the sensational case has been recommended and recorded the Solicitor General's assurance that a decision on handing over the investigation to the agency would be taken shortly. The court also urged the media to exercise restraint while reporting developments in the case and requested that statements of the victim's family not be recorded or reduced to "sound bites", saying some actions had caused pain and the matter should be allowed to proceed as per legal process. "We are slightly in pain because of some of the actions. We will request our media friends to not go for the statements of the victim's family or the other family," the court said. "We request media not to record statements of the victim's family and reduce their pain



to sound bites," the bench said, adding that a narrative should be avoided.

During the hearing, the Supreme Court also hailed the Madhya Pradesh High Court for promptly ordering a second autopsy in the case. Counsel for the accused assured the bench that a former judge would not make statements to the media regarding the investigation. Appearing for the Madhya Pradesh government, the Solicitor General submitted that media intervention had contributed to significant progress in the case and remarked that "it is better to have a divorced daughter than face such an unfortunate incident." "We would like to impress upon the family members of the victim as well as the accused

that instead of making statements in public or before a media platform, they should get their versions recorded before the investigating agency so that no prejudice or adverse impact is had on the ongoing investigation," the bench said. "We also request the media to avoid recording statements of persons who are likely to be potential witnesses, as it may unnecessarily impact the outcomes on certain issues which are to be investigated. "We also request the public that they should refrain from speculation and to have trust and faith in one of the premier investigating agencies. We are sure that in due course of time it will take the investigation to a conclusion," it said while disposing of the suo motu case.

CBI to take over Twisha Sharma death case after SC's recommendation



Bhopal, May 25: The probe into the death of Twisha Sharma is set to be handed over to the CBI, with the agency already dispatching a team to Bhopal to take charge of the investigation, officials said on Monday. Twisha, a 33-year-old model-turned-actor, was found dead at her marital home in Bhopal's Katara Hills area on May 12. The CBI will

take over the case from the state police and gather all evidence and documents linked to the investigation. Hearing the matter on Monday, the Supreme Court said it would ensure a fair, independent, and impartial probe into the case.

Police had earlier registered an FIR under Sections 80(2), 85, and 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita, along with

relevant provisions of the Dowry Prohibition Act, naming Twisha's husband, Samarth Singh, and Giribala Singh.

The top court took note of the solicitor general's submission that he would raise the matter with authorities to facilitate an immediate CBI takeover. "We would like to impress upon the family members of the victim as well as the accused that instead of making statements in public or before a media platform, they should get their versions recorded before the investigating agency so that no prejudice or adverse impact is had on the ongoing investigation," the bench said.

Twisha's family has alleged that harassment by her in-laws drove her to death, while her in-laws have claimed she struggled with drug addiction.

Kejriwal Attacks Pradhan Over CBSE

New Delhi, May 25: AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal launched a fierce attack on Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Monday, calling him "incompetent" and demanding his immediate resignation. Kejriwal alleged that major irregularities and technical glitches in the CBSE evaluation process have thrown the future of lakhs of Class 10 and 12 students into darkness. Linking the crisis to past NEET controversies, he urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to fire Pradhan. To relieve traumatized families, Kejriwal demanded a fast, manual revaluation process with reduced fees. Meanwhile, the Education Ministry announced it is engaging IIT experts to resolve the portal's technical issues.



Operation 'Sheruwali' enters third day in J-K's Rajouri



Rajouri, May 25: Operation 'Sheruwali' launched to track down suspected terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district has entered the third day on Monday, officials said. A joint team of the Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) had launched the operation in the area on Saturday following specific inputs about the movement of suspected terrorists. An encounter broke out between terrorists and security forces in the Dorimal-Gambhir Moghla belt on Saturday following the launch of 'Operation Sheruwali'. "The operation to track down suspected terror-

ists is going on amid a strong cordon. Surveillance has also been put in place," they said.

The operation led to a brief exchange of fire after contact was established with the suspected terrorists, prompting security forces to continue extensive searches in the forested terrain. According to preliminary reports, the movement of two to three terrorists was suspected in the area. The Army's White Knight Corps said on X that contact was established with terrorists around 11:30 am on Saturday in the general area of Gambhir Moghla during an intelligence-based joint operation carried out with the police and CRPF.

Rahul Gandhi Slams PM Modi Over Fuel Price Hikes

New Delhi, May 25: Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Monday slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the increasing fuel prices, calling him "inflation man" and alleging that he is attacking the "public's pockets." Reacting to the latest round of fuel price hikes on Monday, when petrol and diesel prices were raised by Rs 2.61-2.71 per litre, Gandhi alleged that the prime minister has just one job of making promises during elections and attacking people's pockets at other times. Monday's price hike marks the fourth increase in less than two weeks as state-owned fuel retailers continued to pass on rising international oil prices to consumers. "Mehangai manav' Modi strikes again. He raises petrol and diesel prices in installments - ensuring that your pockets are quietly picked, bit by bit," the Congress leader said in his post on X. "For months, I had been warning of an impending economic storm. But Modi Ji, true to form, was busy with



elections at the time and the moment the elections ended, he hiked the prices of petrol and diesel by Rs 8," he added. Gandhi warned that the upward trend would only continue. "'Mehangai manav' Modi has just one job: promises during elections, and attacking people's pockets at other times," Gandhi said. With the latest revision, cumulative increases in petrol and diesel prices have nearly touched Rs 7.5 per litre since fuel price revisions resumed on May 15 after a prolonged freeze, stoking concerns over inflationary pressures and higher transportation costs

across the economy.

The latest revision pushed petrol prices higher by Rs 2.61 per litre and diesel by Rs 2.71, according to industry sources. Petrol prices were raised to Rs 102.12 a litre in Delhi from Rs 99.51 previously, while diesel rates were increased to Rs 95.20 per litre from Rs 92.49. The back-to-back increases come after global crude oil prices surged more than 50 per cent since late February following US-Israeli strikes on Iran and disruptions to shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global oil transit route.

Teen Prodigy Targets Sunrisers' Defeat

Te Teen Prodigy Eyes Revenge in High-Stakes Eliminator Clash

Chennai, May 26:

The stage is set for a blockbuster Round 3 as 15-year-old batting prodigy Vaibhav Sooryavanshi leads Rajasthan Royals against Sunrisers Hyderabad in a high-stakes knockout clash in New Chandigarh.

The rivalry is perfectly poised at 1-1. In Round 1, SRH pacer Praful Hinge rattled the Royals, dismissing Sooryavanshi for a first-ball duck. The teenage sensation exacted sweet revenge in Round 2, smashing



a breathtaking 36-ball century in Jaipur, though SRH ultimately won both regular-season encounters.

Boasting a staggering tournament strike rate of 232.27,

Sooryavanshi remains SRH's biggest hurdle. Experts like Irfan Pathan suggest targeting the teenager outside off-stump or using pinpoint yorkers to curb his explosive Yuvraj Singh-like bat swing. Former India pacer Vinay Kumar advises bowlers to employ variations and cramp him for room. Led by Pat Cummins, SRH's lethal pace attack possesses the weapons, but countering them will define Sooryavanshi's ultimate destiny.

KSCA Finalizing Chinnaswamy Stadium Architects



Bengaluru, May 25: Karnataka State Cricket Association president Venkatesh Prasad has said that the state body is looking to finalise the team architects to renovate the M Chinnaswamy Stadium and increase the capacity on Friday. Speaking at the

launch event of the Maharaja Trophy and Maharani Trophy here, Prasad said: "One of the reasons why the IPL final was moved from Bengaluru to Ahmedabad could have been the seating capacity. We had close to 28 architects - from across the globe - show

interest in redesigning and redeveloping the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium. We are in the process of shortlisting the final team of architects." Prasad also went on to add that new LED lights are to be installed at the iconic venue along with the Srikantadatta Narasimha Raja Wodeyar Cricket Stadium (Mysuru) and KSCA Stadium (Hubballi). Meanwhile, the six-team Maharaja Trophy is set to be held in Mysuru and Hubballi from June 20 to July 12. The upcoming edition will see two new owners — Mangaluru (owned by Klene Paks Ltd) and Shivamogga (owned ICS Mobile Pvt Ltd) — in the men's event while the wom-

en's tournament will see four teams fight against each other.

Each franchise are allowed to pick 16-18 players with two from the catchment area. "To ensure that there is no compromise on the quality of players in this tournament, the pool of players will be picked by the KSCA selection committee. We will give franchises a pool of 130 to 150 players to pick their squads. Nobody outside of this pool will be allowed to participate in the tournament. Even the catchment area players have to undergo the scrutiny of the KSCA selection committee," KSCA secretary Santosh Menon said.

Runner Shivaji Bounces Back Strong

Ranchi, May 25: In his quest to achieve his Asian Games dream, Shivaji Parashuram M had expended every ounce of his energy during the men's 10,000m final just a few days ago. So much so that he had fainted on the finish line. However, all that had gone in vain as he was disqualified for violating lane norms in National Senior Athletics Federation competition at the Birsra Munda Football Stadium here. That had taken a toll on him mentally and his confidence had taken a massive nosedive. However, Shivaji put that setback aside to pull off a notable victory in the men's 5000m final on Monday.

The 22-year-old from Karnataka stopped the clock at 14:14.13 seconds to emerge victorious. While that timing was not enough to breach the



Commonwealth Games mark (13:19.64s), it fell under the qualification mark for the Asian U23 athletics championship in China. Given what he had been through not so long ago, this was a big shot in the arm for him. "At the 10,000m final, I was trying to breach the qualification mark for the Asian Games. I was leading and doing well for most of the race. Then, I started feeling weird in the last three laps. I didn't know

what was happening, I felt unconscious," he told the New Indian Express. "I came here wanting to do well in my pet event, in a meet like the Federation competition. My body did not feel good, I was mentally shattered after getting hospitalised. But thanks to my coaches and the staff from Reliance Sports Foundation, I found my way back," he said.

His coaches — Ajith Marikose from Reliance Foun-

dation, Vishwanath Gowda from DYES, Bengaluru and Prakash Revanthkar, his first coach from Karwar — played a pivotal role in helping him find his range ahead of his latest test. "They told where I went wrong, they helped me rectify the mistakes and kept motivating me. I didn't want to call anyone back home because they were already nervous," he said. In his latest outing, Shivaji was locked in from the word go. He took a patient approach and gradually got past his fellow competitor. Coming into the final stretch, Shivaji's smile grew wider and as he finished on top. Having had his confidence restored, Shivaji is now aiming to breach the qualification mark for the Asian Games later this year. "I hope to qualify and do well in Japan," he said.

Messi Exits MLS Game Injured Before World Cup



Miami, May 25: Lionel Messi exited Inter Miami's Major League Soccer match against Philadelphia Union with an apparent leg injury on Sunday, just weeks before the start of the World Cup. Argentina superstar Messi was substituted in the 73rd minute after clutching the back of his left leg and requesting to come off. The 38-year-old icon headed straight down the tunnel after exiting the game, which Miami went on to win 6-4. There was no immediate word from Inter Miami on the exact reason for Messi's substitution.

Any significant injury to the eight-time Ballon D'Or winner, though, would deal a huge blow to Messi and Argentina's hopes of defending their World Cup crown

in the United States, Canada and Mexico. The tournament kicks off in Mexico City on June 11, with Argentina due to play their opening game against Algeria in Kansas City five days later. Inter Miami's game on Sunday was the last before MLS takes a break ahead of the World Cup. Messi has not formally confirmed he plans to play in the World Cup, but is widely expected to return for what will be a record-equalling sixth appearance at the finals.

Argentina's squad is due to be named next week, and the South American giants will head to the United States shortly afterwards for pre-World Cup friendlies against Honduras in Texas on June 6, followed by a game against Iceland on June 9.

Haaland Wins Third Premier League Golden Boot

Manchester, May 25: Manchester City striker Erling Haaland won the Golden Boot as top scorer in the Premier League on Sunday (May 24, 2026) for the third time in his four seasons in English soccer. The Norway international didn't feature at all in City's final game of the campaign — a 2-1 loss to Aston Villa — and finished on 27 goals, five more than Brentford striker

Igor Thiago in the list of top scorers. No other player in the league reached 20 goals.

Haaland was also the top scorer in the 2022-23 season (36 goals) and 2023-24 season (27 goals). Liverpool winger Mohamed Salah won the Golden Boot last season with 29 goals.

Haaland is heading to a first World Cup with Norway this summer.

