

PM Modi: India advances with 'reform, perform, transform' mantra

Jakarta, July 07: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said India is moving ahead with the mantra of "reform, perform and transform", highlighting the country's economic growth and expanding global role during his address to the Indian diaspora in Jakarta. Addressing the gathering in the presence of Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto and senior ministers, Modi described Prabowo as a "true friend of India" and said India's transformation was driven by continuous reforms and consistent performance. "India has carried out one reform after another. We have consistently performed, and that's why the country is transforming today," Modi said. The Prime Minister said India's growth could be summed up as "1.4 billion aspirations in motion", adding that the country was not only among the world's fastest-growing economies but also contributing significantly to global growth.

He highlighted India's progress in sectors including energy, connectivity and semicon-



ductor manufacturing, saying the country was working not only for its own development but also for the growth of friendly nations under the principle of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas". Modi said India's self-reliance was a "multiplying force" for Indonesia and the wider ASEAN region. He also stressed cooperation in maritime development, saying Indonesia remained a key partner as India modernises ports, builds ships and explores new sea routes. Recalling global challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic and West Asia crises, Modi said India's economy continued to move forward despite disruptions. President Prabowo, who

attended the event, praised India's development journey and said Indonesia could learn from India's experience. He highlighted the deep cultural links between the two countries, noting the influence of Indian civilisation and Sanskrit on Indonesian heritage. Responding to Prabowo's remark about having Indian DNA after a genetic test, Modi said the bond between the two nations was built on "mutual trust, shared heritage and shared memories". Modi said India and Indonesia were connected not only by history but also by a shared future, with cooperation spanning culture, trade and strategic partnerships.

Largest batch of over 8,800 pilgrims leave Jammu for Amarnath Yatra

Jammu, July 07: The largest batch of pilgrims so far this year, comprising 8,815 devotees, including 31 foreign nationals, left the Bhagwati Nagar base camp here on Tuesday for the annual Amarnath Yatra in Kashmir amid tight security. More than 93,000 pilgrims have paid obeisance at the 3,880-metre-high cave shrine in the south Himalayas during the first four days of the pilgrimage, with the figure expected to cross the one-lakh mark later in the day. Officials said the sixth batch comprised 5,831 men, 2,193 women, 31 children, 598 sadhus, 131 sadhis and 31 foreign nationals. Of them, 3,989 pilgrims travelling in 181 vehicles left for the Baltal base camp in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district, while 4,826 pilgrims in 182 vehicles proceeded towards the traditional Pahalgam route in south Kashmir's Anantnag district, taking the convoy strength to 363 vehicles.

With Tuesday's departure, a total of 34,829 pilgrims have left the Jammu base camp for

Kashmir since the yatra commenced on July 2. The Bhagwati Nagar base camp echoed with chants of "Bam Bam Bhole", "Har Har Mahadev" and "Jai Barfani Baba Ki" as devotees set out on the pilgrimage. Many pilgrims expressed satisfaction with the arrangements made for the

uled to conclude on August 28, coinciding with the festival of Raksha Bandhan. Meanwhile, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has urged unregistered devotees planning to undertake the pilgrimage to defer their journey for a few days as all registration slots have been booked



smooth conduct of the yatra.

Tuesday's convoy was the largest since the start of the pilgrimage, surpassing the previous highest of 6,721 pilgrims on Sunday, an official said. A total of 5,794 pilgrims had left on Monday, while 4,812 departed on July 4. The 57-day pilgrimage to the holy cave shrine is sched-

till July 9 due to an unprecedented rush.

Officials have also announced that only registered pilgrims will be allowed to proceed towards Kashmir, while unregistered devotees will be stopped at designated checkpoints until fresh registration quotas become available.

Himachal CM Sukhu calls alleged Ayodhya temple donation theft a 'theft of faith'

Chandigarh, July 07: Ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections in Himachal Pradesh, the Ram Mandir donation theft has snowballed into a major political issue in the hill state. Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, Himachal Congress president Vinay Kumar and several state cabinet ministers offered prayers at the Ram temple and Hanuman temple in Shimla on Tuesday. After offering prayers, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu accused the BJP of politicising Lord Ram and said that any irregularity in donations made in the Ayodhya Temple of Lord Ram is not merely financial wrongdoing but amounts to 'Theft of Faith' of millions of devotees.

He added that those responsible for the alleged irregularities in the donations made in the name of Lord Ram should introspect. "Almost everyone, including me, made donations towards the construction of the temple," he said. Sukhu said, "We prayed to Lord Rama to show the right path to the people who collected donations in the name of Lord Rama and in the name of religion. It is an emotional issue for every Hindu, and Congress would stand up against the fraud. The BJP seems to believe in 'Ram naam japna, chanda-chadwa apna,' he said.

Sukhu said, "A true devotee of Lord

Rama will never use his name for politics." BJP retorted, alleging that people have already certified Congress as 'Anti-Ram'. Himachal Pradesh BJP President Dr Rajeev Bindal, after the core committee meeting of the party, alleged that Congress has a long history of opposing the construction of the Ram Temple at the birthplace of Lord Ram. "They even contested the issue in courts and resisted the



Ram Janmabhoomi movement. The party pursued a policy of appeasement at the cost of the religious sentiments of millions of devotees," he added. Bindal further stated that the Congress leaders' visit to the Ram Temple reflects political compulsion rather than genuine faith.

He said Lord Ram is a symbol of faith and devotion for the people of India, whereas Congress has historically considered the issue as one of political convenience. He also alleged that Congress cannot erase its history of opposing the

Ram Janmabhoomi movement and the actions taken against Ram devotees during that period. He claimed that the people of the country have not forgotten such events and are fully aware of the Congress party's changing political narrative. Responding to the Chief Minister's assertion that Congress would return to power in 2027, Bindal said the same electorate that rejected Congress in the recent Panchayati Raj and Urban Local Body elections would also decide the outcome of the assembly elections. He alleged that the Congress government's much-publicised guarantees have remained largely unfulfilled, including promises related to financial assistance for women, free electricity and procurement of milk and cow dung. Instead, he claimed, the burden on the common people has increased while development has slowed. Bindal said the BJP's objective is not merely to attain political power but to serve as the voice of every section of society.

He said the Core Group has resolved to intensify organisational activities, strengthen public outreach and launch a series of mass movements to expose the failures of the Congress government. He also said that issues related to the welfare, development and good governance of Himachal Pradesh.

Nadda reviews Kerala health programmes, initiatives

New Delhi, June 30: Union Health Minister JP Nadda on Tuesday held a virtual review meeting with Kerala Health Minister K Muraleedharan to assess the progress of key health programmes and public health initiatives in the state. The meeting focused on flagship schemes including the TB-Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan, free drugs and diagnostics initiatives, human resources for health under the National Health Mission (NHM), medical education, drug regulation and food safety measures. Discussions centred on strengthening healthcare delivery, improving access to affordable medicines and diagnostic services, expanding health infrastructure, enhancing medical education and improving regulatory systems for drugs, blood banks and food safety.

Nadda appreciated Kerala's efforts in implementing various health initiatives and assured continued support from the Centre to further strengthen the state's healthcare system. The Kerala Health Minister



briefed Nadda on the progress of ongoing programmes, challenges faced by the state and areas requiring support from the Union government. He also reaffirmed Kerala's commitment to working closely with the Union Health Ministry to achieve national health goals.

The meeting concluded with both sides emphasizing stronger Centre-state coordination to ensure accessible, affordable and quality healthcare services for citizens. Senior officials from the Union Health Ministry and Kerala government, including Health Secretary Purna Salila Srivastava and senior state health officials, attended the meeting.

Arunachal: POCSO Convict, 29, Escapes Aalo Judicial Jail; Manhunt On

Arunachal Pradesh, July 07: Police have launched a massive search operation after a convict escaped from Aalo Judicial Jail on Monday evening at around 20:30 hrs. The escapee has been named as Dorik Doji, 29 years old, a resident of Doji Jeko village. He was undergoing a five year prison term under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, WPS Aalo Case No. 11/23 Us 376/511/354/342/506 IPC

R/w Sec 8 of POCSO Act. Jail authorities said he had been in custody for over six months. Doji is also an accused in two pending cases under the NDPS Act,

Aalo PS Case No. 21(a)/21(b) NDPS Act R/w 109(1)/221/281/125 BNS and Aalo PS Case No. 14/2026 U/s 21(a)/27(a)/27(A) NDPS Act R/w Sec 238/3(5) BNS As per initial findings, the prisoner allegedly broke through an old ventilator inside his cell. He then exit-



ed via the jail's main compound gate. Officials stated the breach happened when the sentry in charge had briefly gone to collect dinner and inadvertently left the gate open. CCTV cameras reportedly recorded him walking out of the jail premises. In the wake of the incident, a case has been registered under Sections 261, 262 and 324(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Police have issued a lookout circular and put all stations, outposts, and check posts on high alert. Multiple teams have been pressed into service to track down and rearrest the fugitive as soon as possible.

Describing Doji as medium-built with a wheatish complexion and with thin moustache & small goatee beard, police have appealed to citizens to pass on any credible information about him to the nearest police station without delay.

Assam CM Urges Assembly Support For Crackdown On Drug Peddlers

Guwahati, July 07: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday called upon all political parties to extend unequivocal support to the government's intensified campaign against drug trafficking. Addressing the Assembly during a discussion on drug abuse and trafficking, Sarma emphasized that while members had pledged cooperation in the fight against narcotics, the credibility of law enforcement was undermined whenever questions were raised about police operations.

He noted that the police have been taking firm measures against traffickers, but objections voiced in the House risk weakening the morale of officers engaged in the crackdown. "All



members in the House have today pledged cooperation in the fight against drugs. But when police take tough action against the criminals, questions are raised in this very Assembly on the police," Sarma remarked.

The Chief Minister urged legislators to stand united behind the government's anti-drug drive, stressing

that consistent support from the Assembly was vital to sustain the momentum of enforcement efforts. He reiterated that the administration's resolve to combat drug trafficking would remain uncompromising, and appealed for collective responsibility in tackling the menace that threatens Assam's youth and society at large.

Sangma Seeks Support To Revive Coal Mining



Shillong, July 07: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma on Tuesday met Union Coal and Mines Minister G. Kishan Reddy in New Delhi and sought greater powers for the state to facilitate the lawful revival of small-scale coal mining under a regulated framework. During the meeting, Sangma highlighted that Meghalaya is a Sixth Schedule state where land and mineral resources are owned by individuals, clans and local communities. He requested the Centre to empower the state to oversee and regulate small-scale coal mining, with the aim of restoring livelihoods in coal-bearing regions while ensuring compliance with safety standards and preventing illegal mining. The Chief Minister said the Union Minister heard the state's concerns and proposed the formation of a joint committee comprising representatives of the Union Ministry of Coal and Mines and the Government of Meghalaya to examine the issue. Sangma welcomed the proposal and said the committee would be constituted shortly to take the discussions forward. The Chief Minister was accompanied during the meeting by Sutnga Saipung MLA Santa Mary Shylla.

No Fencing Along 4.35 km Of India-Bangladesh Border In Assam

Guwahati, July 06: The Assam government has revealed that fencing could not be erected along 4.35 kilometres of the state's border with Bangladesh due to objections raised by the border guards of the neighbouring country. Border Protection and Development Minister Atul Bora, in a written reply to a query by AGP MLA Diptimayee Choudhury, stated that another 34.609 kilometres of the boundary remain unfenced as those stretches fall within riverine areas. Bora informed the Assembly that barbed



wire fencing has been completed along 228.541 kilometres of the international boundary out of the total

267.5 kilometres that Assam shares with Bangladesh. The fenced portions cover areas across Dhubri, South Salmara-Mankachar, Cachar, and Sribhumi districts.

The disclosure emphasizes the challenges in securing the border, particularly in riverine zones and stretches where objections from across the border have stalled construction. The Assam government has maintained that fencing is crucial to prevent illegal crossings and enhance security along the sensitive frontier.

Manipur CM Reviews CAF & PD, Stresses Service Delivery



Guwahati, July 07: Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Tuesday chaired a review meeting of the Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (CAF & PD) Department at the Cabinet Hall of the

Secretariat to assess the implementation of key programmes and strengthen service delivery. The meeting, attended by senior officials, focused on the Department's performance in ensuring food security through the

effective implementation of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and the National Food Security Act (NFSA).

The Chief Minister also reviewed measures to safeguard consumer rights and ensure the efficient supply of essential commodities, petroleum products and LPG across the state. Reaffirming the government's commitment to public welfare, Khemchand Singh said the Manipur Government will continue to enhance the Department's efficiency, transparency and service delivery to better serve the people of the state.

Tripura LoP Meets Monoshree's Family, Seeks Support



Agartala, July 07: Leader of Opposition Jitendra Chaudhury on Tuesday visited the residence of Manashree at Badharghat to express his concern over her health and assure her family of every possible assistance during her treatment. As doctors have advised that Manashree remain in isolation, Chaudhury was unable to meet her personally. Instead, he interacted with her mother and other family members to enquire about her condition and convey his support. Speaking to the media, Chaudhury said he had assured the family that he would stand by them in every possible way. "I have spoken with Manashree's mother and other family members and assured them that we will extend all possible support for her treatment. Whatever personal assistance is within our capacity, we will certainly provide," he said.

Expressing confidence in her recovery, the Leader of Opposition said the prayers and support of the people of Tripura would help Manashree overcome her illness. "I sincerely believe that with the goodwill and cooperation of the people of the state, Manashree will recover soon. I wish her a healthy, happy and long life," he remarked. Chaudhury also appreciated the spontaneous response from people across society who have come forward to support the family. He said he witnessed a steady stream of visitors extending financial and moral assistance during his visit. "I am not aware of the exact medical expenses or the details of her treatment, as those are matters for the doctors and the hospital. However, seeing the overwhelming support from people gives me confidence that arranging the necessary funds for her treatment will not be a major challenge," he said.

The Leader of Opposition's visit comes amid growing public solidarity for Manashree, with individuals from different sections of society continuing to rally behind her and her family during this difficult period.

TVS Motor welcomes Delhi's new EV policy, reaffirms commitment to sustainable mobility



Guwahati: TVS Motor Company has welcomed the Delhi government's newly announced electric vehicle (EV) policy, describing it as a proactive and forward-looking initiative that will accelerate the adoption of clean mobility solutions in the national cap-

ital. Commenting on the development, Sudarshan Venu, Chairman of TVS Motor Company, said the company is fully committed to developing sustainable mobility products and solutions that will drive further EV adoption across the country. He also expressed gratitude to customers for making TVS Motor the number one electric two-wheeler player in Delhi, adding that the company will continue investing in innovation and customer-centric solutions to strengthen its leadership in the fast-growing EV segment.

The company said the new policy is expected to provide a favourable ecosystem for electric mobility by encouraging wider adoption of EVs

and supporting the transition towards cleaner transportation. TVS Motor believes the policy will further boost consumer confidence and contribute to the long-term growth of India's electric mobility ecosystem.

The Delhi government's policy could have a positive ripple effect on markets such as Guwahati, where interest in electric two-wheelers has been steadily increasing. Improved policy support, expanding charging infrastructure and rising consumer awareness are expected to encourage greater EV adoption in the Northeast, creating new opportunities for manufacturers like TVS Motor while supporting the region's shift towards sustainable mobility.

Monsoon raises respiratory health risks, awareness session held in Aizawl on Doctors' Day

Aizawl: Highlighting the rise in respiratory illnesses during the monsoon season, Manipal Hospital Broadway organised a pulmonology awareness session in Aizawl on the occasion of National Doctors' Day to educate residents about seasonal lung diseases, early diagnosis and timely medical intervention.

The programme was led by Dr. Debraj Jash, Head of Pulmonology at Manipal Hospital EM Bypass & Salt Lake Cluster

(Broadway + Salt Lake), who explained that increased humidity, damp conditions, airborne allergens, fungal growth and viral infections during the rainy season can aggravate respiratory diseases. He said patients suffering from asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), allergies and weakened immunity face a higher risk of complications during the monsoon. Dr. Jash advised people to maintain proper ventilation, avoid damp environments, practise good hygiene, wear masks in crowd-



ed places and seek medical attention if symptoms such as persistent cough, breathlessness or fever develop. The session also highlighted that asthma flare-ups, allergic respiratory illnesses, pneumonia, bronchitis, viral infections and fungal infections become more common during the rainy season. Former patients who had received treatment under Dr. Jash at Manipal Hospital Broadway shared their recovery experiences, including successful treatment for pneumonia, fungal infections and lower respiratory tract infections.

In Aizawl, healthcare professionals say growing awareness of seasonal respiratory diseases is expected to increase demand for preventive consultations, diagnostic services and respiratory care during the monsoon. The programme also underscored the importance of public awareness campaigns in encouraging early diagnosis and reducing complications through timely medical intervention.

TVS Motor posts record quarterly sales as June dispatches jump 47%

Guwahati: TVS Motor Company reported its highest-ever quarterly sales for the first quarter of FY2026-27, selling 16.31 lakh units, driven by robust demand across domestic and international markets, strong growth in electric vehicles and a sharp rise in three-wheeler volumes. The company also recorded its highest-ever monthly sales in June 2026, with dispatches rising 47 per cent year-on-year to 5,90,003 units from 4,02,001 units in the corresponding month last year. Two-wheeler sales during the April-June quarter increased 27 per cent to 15.64 lakh units from 12.32 lakh units a year ago, while three-wheeler sales surged 48 per cent to 67,000 units. International business also



touched a record high, growing 33 per cent to 4.68 lakh units during the quarter. The company further achieved its highest quarterly electric two-wheeler sales at 1.30 lakh units.

In June, domestic two-wheeler sales climbed 46 per cent to 4,11,014 units. Motorcycle sales rose 42 per cent to 2,67,096 units, while scooter sales grew 53 per cent to 2,47,950 units. Electric two-wheeler sales registered a sharp increase to 48,537 units from 14,400 units a year earlier. International sales advanced 47 per cent to 1,72,355 units, while

three-wheeler sales rose 51 per cent to 24,586 units.

In Guwahati, TVS Motor's strong nationwide growth is expected to reinforce demand across Assam and the North-east, where the company has an expanding dealer network and a growing customer base for motorcycles, scooters and electric vehicles. Industry observers believe the record sales momentum could translate into improved vehicle availability, higher festive season demand and greater consumer interest in premium as well as electric mobility options in the Guwahati market.

Renault refreshes Kwid with simpler lineup, Climber now effectively priced at ₹4.99 lakh

Guwahati: Renault India has launched the refreshed Renault Kwid with a redesigned look, a simplified variant lineup and revised pricing aimed at making first-car ownership more accessible for Indian buyers. The updated hatchback now carries Renault's new brand identity and is available in just two variants—Evolution and Climber—offering customers a simpler purchase decision.

The New Kwid is priced between ₹4.52 lakh and ₹5.60 lakh (ex-showroom) under Renault's new "All India One Price" strategy. The company has also introduced a digital sales initiative, offering a ₹15,000 cash benefit on online purchases of the fully loaded Climber variant, bringing its effective transactional price down to ₹4.99 lakh. Buyers can choose between a 5-speed manual and Easy-R AMT transmission.

Renault India Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Francisco Hidalgo said first-car ownership continues to be a major aspiration for millions of Indians, particularly among the growing middle class and two-wheeler owners looking to upgrade. He noted that more than 4.5 lakh customers have purchased the Kwid since its debut in 2015, adding that the latest update focuses on making the product simpler, clearer and more relevant for today's buyers.

The refreshed Kwid retains its SUV-in-



spired styling while offering features such as 184 mm ground clearance, a 279-litre boot, a 1.0-litre petrol engine, an 8-inch touchscreen infotainment system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, a digital LED instrument cluster, rear-view camera, dual front airbags, ABS with EBD, and 17 standard safety features. The Climber variant also receives exclusive styling elements, dual-tone interiors and rugged exterior accents.

In Guwahati, the updated Kwid is expected to strengthen Renault's position in Assam's growing entry-level passenger vehicle segment, where affordability, fuel efficiency and compact dimensions remain key buying factors. The effective ₹4.99 lakh pricing for the Climber variant, coupled with online purchase benefits and SUV-inspired styling, could attract young professionals and first-time buyers in Guwahati, where demand for budget-friendly hatchbacks continues to remain steady amid rising urban mobility needs.

Nissan posts 129% jump in June domestic sales, total wholesales rise 16%

Guwahati: Nissan Motor India Pvt. Ltd. (NMIPL) reported a 129 per cent year-on-year rise in domestic wholesales to 3,006 units in June 2026, marking its fourth consecutive month of domestic sales growth. The company also recorded exports of 5,340 units during the month, taking total wholesales to 8,346 units, up 16 per cent from the corresponding period last year.

The company attributed the sustained growth to rising customer demand for its product portfolio, particularly the New Nissan Magnite and the recently launched all-new Nissan

GRAVITE. Nissan said the continued domestic momentum reflects improving customer confidence and strengthening market presence across the country.

Commenting on the performance, Nissan Motor India Managing Director Saurabh Vatsa said the company's fourth straight month of domestic growth highlighted the effectiveness of its market strategy, dealer network and expanding customer reach. He added that Nissan is preparing for the global premiere of the Nissan TEKTON on July 9, which will mark the next phase of its India growth strategy and

product expansion plans.

The company said it remains focused on strengthening its domestic business through network expansion, enhanced customer experience and a broader product portfolio while maintaining India's role as a key export hub.

In Guwahati, Nissan's sustained sales momentum is expected to support stronger demand in the Northeast, where the compact SUV segment continues to witness steady growth. Dealers in Guwahati are likely to benefit from increased customer enquiries for the Magnite and GRAVITE, while the upcoming launch of



the Nissan TEKTON could further enhance the brand's presence and competitiveness in the region's fast-growing passenger vehicle market.



Trinity Business Park aims to reshape Northeast's commercial landscape with mega Guwahati project

Dibrugarh: Trinity Business Park has announced the launch of a large integrated commercial development in North Guwahati, with plans to create one of Northeast India's biggest organised business ecosystems. Spread across 16 acres with over 3 million sq. ft. of planned built-up space, the project will integrate retail, office spaces, hospitality and exhibition infrastructure within a single campus, with the first phases expected to become operational from 2027 onwards.

Located at Amingaon, the development is designed to serve as a gateway for multinational corporations, technology firms and leading Indian enterprises looking to establish operations in the Northeast. The project comes amid rising demand for organised commercial infrastructure as Guwahati strengthens its position as a regional economic and logistics hub. Trinity said the development has already attracted significant interest, with members of the Assam Textile

Merchants' Association committing retail space while discussions continue with several other trade bodies. Partner Hemant Agarwal said the project would provide organised commercial infrastructure at an unprecedented scale



es, 18 goods elevators, 25 passenger elevators, parking for more than 3,000 vehicles, a 22,000 sq. ft. food court, outdoor dining areas, landscaped spaces, an amphitheatre and dedicated business networking zones. It is designed to accommodate corporate offices, distributors, manufacturers, showrooms, professional services, startups and industry events, including trade fairs and exhibitions. In Dibrugarh, the project is expected to create new opportunities for businesses from Upper Assam seeking greater access to organised commercial infrastructure in Guwahati. Manufacturers, tea-related enterprises, distributors and service providers based in Dibrugarh could benefit from improved market connectivity, exhibition facilities and expanded business networking opportunities, strengthening trade linkages across the Northeast and supporting regional economic growth.

Sony launches BRAVIA 9II and BRAVIA 7II True RGB TVs in India

Guwahati: Sony India has expanded its premium television portfolio with the launch of the BRAVIA 9II and BRAVIA 7II, introducing its latest True RGB display technology to the Indian market. Announced on June 29, the BRAVIA 9II becomes Sony's flagship television for 2026, while the BRAVIA 7II, launched earlier, also features the company's next-generation RGB display technology. Both models are powered by Sony's proprietary RGB Backlight Master Drive Pro, designed to independently control red, green and blue LEDs for improved colour accuracy, wider colour volume, enhanced brightness and deeper blacks.

The televisions are equipped with the Advanced AI Cognitive Processor XR, Acoustic Multi-Audio+ with beam tweeters, Dolby Vision, Dolby Atmos, DTS:X and IMAX Enhanced support, along with Google TV. Sony said Gemini for Google TV will be introduced through a future over-the-air software update to enable AI-powered interactions. The new lineup also includes features such as Ambient Optimization, Voice Zoom 3, Studio Calibrated modes for streaming platforms, and Sony Pictures Core with mov-



ie credits. The BRAVIA 9II is available in 75-inch and 85-inch variants, while the BRAVIA 7II is offered in 55-inch, 65-inch, 75-inch and 85-inch screen sizes. Best Buy prices start at Rs 2,21,990 for the 55-inch BRAVIA 7II and go up to Rs 6,69,990 for the 85-inch BRAVIA 9II. The televisions will be sold through Sony retail stores, ShopatSC.com, leading electronics outlets and major e-commerce platforms across India. In Guwahati, the launch is expected to strengthen Sony's presence in Assam's premium consumer electronics segment, where demand for large-screen smart televisions has been growing alongside increasing adoption of high-speed broadband and OTT streaming services. Retailers in Guwahati anticipate interest from affluent households, home entertainment enthusiasts and premium residential projects, particularly as consumers increasingly seek immersive viewing experiences and AI-enabled smart home devices.

Bandhan Large Cap Fund marks 20 years with focus on disciplined long-term investing

Guwahati: Bandhan Large Cap Fund has completed 20 years, marking a milestone in its long-term investment journey built around stability, disciplined portfolio management and wealth creation through investments in fundamentally strong large-cap companies. The fund said it has remained focused on quality businesses capable of delivering consistent growth while navigating multiple market cycles, including periods of volatility, correction and economic expansion. The fund follows its Business, Management and Valuation (BMV) investment framework, selecting companies with established busi-

ness models, sound corporate governance, strong management teams and reasonable valuations. It also employs a five-parameter stock selection process that evaluates return on equity, long-term growth potential, capital allocation, management execution and earnings predictability. While maintaining a predominantly large-cap portfolio, the scheme retains the flexibility to invest up to 20 per cent in mid- and small-cap stocks when valuations present attractive opportunities. According to the fund, the current market environment has strengthened the case for large-cap investing. It noted that the Nifty 100 was trading



at a price-to-earnings multiple of 21.1 as of May 2026, below its five-year average of 24.5, while mid- and small-cap segments continued to trade at relatively higher valuations. The fund said this valuation gap offers investors an opportunity to balance long-term growth with portfolio stability. In Guwahati, financial advisers and mutual fund distributors say investors in the

city are increasingly favouring diversified and relatively stable investment options amid heightened market volatility. With growing participation in mutual funds across Assam, large-cap oriented schemes are gaining attention among first-time and long-term investors seeking consistent returns, disciplined risk management and exposure to India's long-term economic growth story.

Renault India reports 55% rise in June wholesales, H1 sales jump 61%

Guwahati: Renault India, a wholly owned subsidiary of Renault Group, reported a strong sales performance in June 2026, with domestic wholesales rising 55 per cent year-on-year to 4,063 units. The automaker also posted a 61 per cent increase in first-half sales, reaching 25,844 units, extending its streak of double-digit monthly growth to ten consecutive months.

The company attributed the sustained momentum to growing customer acceptance of its evolving product strategy and rising demand across its vehicle portfolio. The latest sales figures underscore Renault India's continued expansion in the domestic passenger vehicle market amid improving consumer sentiment. In another key development, Renault India commenced exports of the all-new Re-

nault Duster during June. The company dispatched the first shipment of 750 units to South Africa, marking the beginning of international deliveries of the latest-generation SUV from its Indian operations. The move is expected to strengthen India's role as an export hub for Renault's global markets. In Guwahati, the company's consistent growth is expected to support demand across the region, where interest in compact SUVs and value-driven passenger vehicles continues to remain strong. Industry observers believe the commencement of Duster exports and sustained domestic sales momentum could further reinforce Renault's presence in Northeast India, with dealerships in Guwahati likely to benefit from increased customer enquiries and improved market confidence.

Skoda Auto India posts record H1 sales, grows 7.5% to 38,894 units



Guwahati: Skoda Auto India has reported its highest-ever half-yearly sales, delivering 38,894 units in the first half of 2026, marking a 7.5 per cent increase over the corresponding period last year. The performance extends the company's growth momentum after achieving its best-ever annual sales in 2025 and represents the second consecutive year of

record-breaking first-half sales in India. Ashish Gupta, Brand Director, Skoda Auto India, attributed the milestone to rising customer confidence and a focused product strategy. He said demand for the new Kushaq, updated Kodiaq and the all-new Kodiaq RS remained strong, with the Kodiaq RS selling out within six minutes of launch. The Kylaq continued to drive volumes, while the Slavia strengthened the company's position in the premium sedan segment. The company also expanded its retail and service footprint to more than 340 customer touchpoints across 189 cities. It recently launched Skoda Express Care to improve service convenience and customer experience. On the performance

front, the company's lineup created an India and Asia Book of Records by setting the fastest multi-car relay by a single manufacturer on a circuit at the CoASTT track in Coimbatore, reinforcing its motorsport heritage. In Guwahati, Skoda's expanding nationwide network and customer-centric initiatives are expected to strengthen its presence in Northeast India. Growing demand for premium SUVs in Assam, supported by improving road infrastructure and rising disposable incomes, could provide fresh opportunities for the brand's Kushaq, Kylaq and Kodiaq models, while enhanced service accessibility is likely to boost buyer confidence in the region.



ColdStar enters Northeast with Guwahati cold-chain hub

Guwahati: ColdStar Logistics has marked its entry into Northeast India with the launch of a 20,000 sq. ft. multi-temperature warehousing facility in Kamrup, strengthening its presence in the country's fast-growing Tier II markets. The new distribution centre will serve businesses in the FMCG, dairy, confectionery, processed food, healthcare and retail sectors across Assam, while also functioning as a logistics hub for the Seven Sisters region, including Tripura, Mizoram and Manipur. The company said the facility has been designed with four temperature-controlled zones — Ambient, Tropical (+15°C to +25°C), Chiller (+2°C to +8°C) and Frozen (-20°C) — enabling seamless storage and movement of temperature-sensitive products under one roof. The warehouse is equipped with AI and machine learning-based logistics planning, predictive analytics, IoT-enabled monitoring and smart warehousing systems to ensure product integrity and support ColdStar's "Zero Stock-Out" commitment across its supply chain. Executive Director Sameer Varma said the company's expansion into Guwahati reflects its long-term vision for Northeast India, driven by the rapid growth of organised retail, quick commerce and food delivery platforms in Tier II cities. He said the facility will strengthen supply-chain access across the region while supporting the company's expanding national distribution network. In Guwahati, the investment is expected to strengthen the city's position as the logistics gateway to Northeast India. With consumer demand rising across Assam and neighbouring states, the availability of advanced cold-chain infrastructure is likely to improve the movement of perishable goods, support organised retail expansion, enhance healthcare and food distribution, and create new employment opportunities while boosting regional supply-chain efficiency. Founded in 2011 with the backing of Tuscan Ventures, ColdStar Logistics operates 45 distribution centres across India, providing temperature-controlled supply-chain solutions to clients in the QSR, FMCG, food processing, retail, healthcare and e-commerce sectors.

Sony raises the bar with Alpha 7R VI, brings 66.8MP flagship camera to India

Guwahati: Sony India has expanded its premium Alpha camera portfolio with the launch of the Alpha 7R VI, a flagship full-frame mirrorless interchangeable-lens camera featuring a 66.8-megapixel back-illuminated Exmor RS CMOS sensor and the latest BIONZ XR2 image processing engine. Designed for professional photographers and filmmakers, the new camera combines ultra-high resolution, AI-powered subject recognition, blackout-free continuous shooting at up to 30 frames per second, and advanced 8K video recording capabilities. Sony also introduced the XLR-A4 XLR adaptor, enabling professional-grade 32-bit float audio recording for enhanced video production. The Alpha 7R VI offers up to 16 stops of dynamic range, 5-axis optical image stabilization, Real-time Recognition AF+ with skeletal-based subject tracking, dual USB Type-C ports, a high-capacity NP-SA100 battery, and support for Sony's Camera Authenticity Solution based on the C2PA standard. For video creators, it supports 8K 30p and full-frame 4K recording at up to 120p, alongside improved stabilization and professional audio integration. Sony India Head of Imaging & Professional Solution Business Mukesh Srivastava said the new model reflects the company's commitment to delivering cutting-edge imaging technology for creators seeking uncompromising performance. The Alpha 7R VI will be available across Sony Center stores, ShopatSC.com and Amazon from July 3 at an MRP of ₹4,70,990. As a limited-period launch offer, customers purchasing the camera will receive a complimentary



mentary NP-SA100 battery worth ₹10,490. Sony has also introduced compatible accessories, including the VG-C6 vertical grip, BC-SAD1 battery charger, DC-C2 power coupler and the XLR-A4 audio adaptor, to enhance professional workflows. In Guwahati, the launch is expected to strengthen Sony's position in the premium imaging segment as demand grows among professional photographers, wedding filmmakers, wildlife enthusiasts and digital content creators across Assam and the Northeast. With Guwahati emerging as a regional hub for creative professionals and media production, the Alpha 7R VI's high-resolution imaging, AI-driven autofocus and advanced video capabilities are likely to appeal to users seeking flagship-grade equipment for commercial and cinematic projects.

Axis Max Life crosses ₹2 lakh crore AUM milestone with steady growth

Guwahati: Axis Max Life Insurance Company Ltd. has crossed ₹2 lakh crore in Assets Under Management (AUM) as of June 30, 2026, marking a major milestone for the life insurer. The company said its AUM grew by over 8 per cent year-on-year, driven by a disciplined investment strategy, customer-focused offerings and sustained business growth. According to the company, the milestone reflects its emphasis on prudent risk management, diversified distribution channels, product innovation and a technology-driven operating model. Axis Max Life's investment portfolio spans government securities, corporate bonds, equities, commercial real estate, Alternate Investment Funds (AIFs), Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs) and Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs). More than 95 per cent of its debt investments remain allocated to sovereign and AAA-rated securities, while ESG principles continue to form part of its investment framework. Sachin Bajaj, Chief Investments Officer, Axis Max Life, said crossing the ₹2 lakh crore AUM mark reflects the trust reposed by millions of customers and reaffirmed the company's commitment to disciplined investing, strong governance and long-term financial security for policyholders. The company also reported strong business performance for FY26, with Individual Adjusted First Year Premium (APE) rising 19 per cent to ₹9,885 crore, increasing its private market share to 10.4 per cent. It also achieved its highest-ever Individual Death Claims Paid Ratio of 99.8 per cent during the financial year, settling 20,529 claims worth ₹1,641 crore. In Guwahati, the milestone is expected to strengthen confidence among customers in Assam and the Northeast, where demand for long-term financial protection and investment-linked insurance products has been steadily rising. Industry observers believe Axis Max Life's strong claims settlement record and disciplined investment strategy could further enhance its appeal among individuals seeking reliable life insurance and wealth creation solutions in the region.

TRAI drive test flags mobile network performance across Dibrugarh and Tinsukia

Guwahati: The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has released the findings of its Independent Drive Test (IDT) conducted across Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts in Assam, offering consumers a detailed assessment of mobile network quality delivered by telecom service providers. The tests were carried out from April 13 to 17, 2026, under the supervision of TRAI's Regional Office, Kolkata, covering 374.5 km of city routes, 13 hotspot locations and 2.2 km of walk-test areas. The exercise evaluated key Quality of Service (QoS) parameters, including network coverage, Call Setup Success Rate (CSSR), dropped call rate, call silence instances, speech quality, and data download and upload speeds across 2G, 3G, 4G and 5G networks using live voice and data sessions.

According to the report, Reliance Jio recorded the highest average download speed at 225.08 Mbps, followed by Airtel at 116.52 Mbps, Vodafone Idea at 27.27 Mbps and BSNL at 9.81 Mbps. Airtel reported one dropped call out of 447 established calls, Reliance Jio recorded two out of 446, Vodafone Idea 11 out of 445, while BSNL registered 144 dropped calls out of 501 established calls. Coverage gaps and call silence instances also varied among operators, with TRAI mapping affected locations for further action. The drive covered areas including Dibrugarh Airport, Naharkatia, Duliajan, Digboi, Makum and Tinsukia, along with key public locations such as Dibrugarh Railway Station, Dibrugarh University, IOCL

Digboi Refinery, Tinsukia Medical College and Hospital, and Assam Medical College and Hospital. From a Guwahati market perspective, the findings are significant as the city remains Assam's largest telecom and digital services hub, where network reliability is critical for businesses, startups, educational institutions and consumers. The publication of independent performance data is expected to encourage operators to strengthen infrastructure and improve service quality across the state, while helping users make informed choices based on objective network performance indicators. TRAI said the findings have been shared with the respective telecom operators for necessary corrective measures, with the detailed report available on its official website.

MSDE extends Navachar Mantra registration deadline to July 15

Guwahati: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has extended the registration deadline for Navachar Mantra, its flagship national innovation platform, to July 15, 2026, following an overwhelming response from aspiring entrepreneurs and innovators across the country. The decision is aimed at enabling greater participation and providing more innovators with the opportunity to transform promising ideas into successful business ventures. According to the Ministry, thousands of registrations have already been received through the official Navachar Mantra portal. The extended registration window is expected to attract



more participants and bring forward a wider range of innovative ideas from across India. Implemented by the National Insti-

tute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD) under the aegis of MSDE, the initiative is supported by the Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer (FITT), IIT Delhi, as its Knowledge Partner. The programme offers structured mentorship, incubation support, industry partnerships, investor connect and institutional handholding to help innovators refine, validate and scale their ideas into sustainable enterprises. Navachar Mantra seeks to strengthen India's startup ecosystem by encouraging participation from students, startups, professionals and grassroots innovators, including those from Ti-

er-II, Tier-III and rural areas, in line with the government's vision of fostering innovation-driven growth and job creation. In Guwahati, the extended deadline is expected to generate increased interest among startups, educational institutions and young entrepreneurs in Assam and the Northeast. With the region witnessing a growing innovation ecosystem and government-backed entrepreneurship initiatives, Navachar Mantra could provide aspiring innovators from Guwahati and neighbouring states with valuable mentorship, industry exposure and access to funding opportunities, helping local ideas reach national markets.



Keeway enters premium electric scooter segment with Hypevolt-R launch

Mumbai: Keeway India on Saturday expanded its electric mobility portfolio with the launch of the all-new Hypevolt-R, marking the company's entry into India's premium performance electric scooter segment. The scooter has been introduced at an introductory ex-showroom price of Rs 1.99 lakh, while online bookings have opened for Rs 5,000 through the company's official website. Deliveries are expected to commence shortly across Keeway India's network of more than 40 authorised dealerships.

Powered by a 5.04 kWh dual removable NMC battery architecture and a 12 kW peak mid-mounted permanent magnet synchronous motor, the Hypevolt-R delivers an IDC-certified range of 180 km, a top speed of 115 kmph and accelerates from 0-40 kmph in 2.3 seconds. The scooter supports 0-80 per cent charging in approximately three hours and offers Eco, Normal and Sport riding modes.

The Hypevolt-R comes equipped with premium rider-assistance and safety technologies including



Dual-Channel ABS, Traction Control System, Hill Hold Control, Hill Descent Control, Intelligent Cruise Control, Blind Spot Detection and a Rear Reverse Camera. Other features include a Bluetooth-enabled 5-inch TFT display, projector LED headlamps, 27-litre under-seat storage, USB Type-A and Type-C charging ports, reverse mode, 14-inch alloy wheels, adjustable suspension, 130 mm ground clearance and a 770 mm seat

height. It will be offered in Crystal White and Platinum Grey.

Managing Director Vikas Jhabakh said the launch represents a significant milestone for Keeway India as customers increasingly seek electric vehicles that combine performance, intelligent technology, premium design and everyday practicality. The company also said parent firm Adishwar Auto Ride India is expanding its dealer network across the country.

Rasna eyes Rs 1,000 crore RTD market with nationwide launch of Jumpin family pack

Guwahati: Rasna has strengthened its presence in India's fast-growing ready-to-drink (RTD) beverage segment with the nationwide launch of its Jumpin 1-litre Tetra Pak carton, targeting an estimated Rs 1,000 crore premium fruit nectar market. The family-size pack, priced at Rs 110, is fortified with 10 vitamins and minerals and will be available through modern retail, e-commerce, quick-commerce platforms and other retail channels across the country.

The new range, available in Litchi, Mixed Fruit and Orange variants, complements Rasna's existing 125 ml and 200 ml packs. Manufactured in India under the 'Make in India' initiative using Tetra Pak packaging, the beverages are made from fruits sourced and processed within the country. Rasna Group Chairman Piruz Khambatta said the launch reflects the company's commitment to offering international-quality fruit beverages at affordable prices while supporting Indian

farmers and domestic manufacturing. Cassio Simões, Managing Director of Tetra Pak South Asia, said the partnership addresses rising consumer demand for safe, convenient and high-quality beverage solutions.

Backed by a nationwide marketing push, Rasna is reviving Jumpin's iconic rap-



per-led campaign alongside television, outdoor, digital, OTT and social media promotions. The company is also undertaking trade activations, product sampling and promotional initiatives to boost consumer engagement.

In Northeast, particularly

Guwahati, presents a promising growth market for premium RTD beverages as organised retail, quick-commerce services and online grocery platforms continue to expand in the region. Rising disposable incomes, increasing demand for convenient packaged beverages and a young consumer base

are expected to support sales of value-added fruit drinks. Rasna's nationwide distribution strategy could help the brand strengthen its footprint in Assam and neighbouring states, where demand for family-sized packaged beverages has been steadily increasing.

Manipur graduate records 250% salary jump after switching to data science

Imphal: A 25-year-old graduate from Manipur has reported a more than 250 per cent increase in salary within two years after transitioning into the technology sector through a data science upskilling programme. Ulenkhomba Konthoujam, a Mathematics graduate from Delhi University and a resident of Imphal East, shifted from preparing for government examinations to pursuing a career in data analytics following personal and financial challenges.

According to details shared by Scaler, Ulen's career plans changed after the death of his father in 2021, leaving him responsible for supporting his mother and two younger sisters. Looking for a stable and growth-oriented career, he explored Data Science after learning about the field through a cousin and enrolled in Scaler's Data Science and Machine Learning programme despite having no technical background.

Through structured coursework, hands-on projects, mentorship and interview preparation, he developed the required skills and secured his first job as a Data Analyst at Reveal HealthTech in 2024. Within two years, he advanced to global commerce media and advertising technology company Criteo as a Data Analyst, with his salary increasing by more than 250 per cent.

Speaking about his journey, Ulen credited consistency and continuous learning for his



career transformation, encouraging aspiring professionals to stay committed while building practical skills and project experience.

In Imphal, Ulen's success reflects the growing interest among young professionals in the city in technology-focused careers as an alternative to traditional government employment. With rising awareness of online upskilling programmes and increasing demand for data analytics and artificial intelligence talent, such career transitions could encourage more graduates from Manipur to pursue opportunities in the digital economy while remaining competitive in the national job market.

IIMA Ventures and SAP open applications for third North East Growth Lab cohort

New Delhi: IIMA Ventures, in partnership with SAP has launched the third cohort of the North East Growth Lab (NEGL), inviting applications from 25 high-potential startups and social enterprises across Northeast India to accelerate innovation and enterprise growth.

The programme is open to entrepreneurs from Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura working in sectors such as agriculture, food processing, climate, livelihoods, biotechnology, financial inclusion and deep technology. Selected ventures will receive mentorship, strategic guidance, investor access, market linkages and capacity-building support to help scale their businesses. The latest cohort builds on the success of previous editions, which have supported more than 40 ventures across the region. In the first cohort alone, 41 social enterprises were backed, with 31 ventures receiving grants and investments worth Rs 2.38 crore. These enterprises later secured an additional Rs 2.29 crore through grants, debt and equity financing, while generating over 44 business opportunities and 27 active commercial engagements.

Ahead of the launch, IIMA Ventures conducted roadshows in Guwahati, Dimapur, Imphal and Agartala during June in collaboration with startup incubators and innovation hubs. Around 175 founders participated in the outreach programme, which also featured workshops on value proposition development and customer segmentation. Announcing the launch, Chintan Bakshi, Partner – Incubation at IIMA Ventures, said the Northeast continues to emerge as a vibrant entrepreneurial hub, with founders developing scalable solutions rooted in local needs. He said the initiative aims to connect startups with funding, networks and market opportunities while strengthening the region's innovation ecosystem. Applications for the third cohort are now open, with ventures to be evaluated on innovation, scalability, impact potential and their ability to generate sustainable livelihoods.



Air India planes avoid runway mishap in Mumbai



Mumbai, July 07: Two Air India and Air India Express planes came face-to-face on the same runway at the Mumbai airport on Tuesday evening, with the Air India aircraft aborting its take-off run on the air traffic controller's instructions to avert a possible disaster, sources said. The incident took place at around 10 pm. The Air India Express plane was yet to vacate the runway after landing when the Delhi-bound Air India aircraft was preparing to take off from the same runway, the sources said.

In a statement, an Air India spokesperson said the take-off run was aborted following instructions from the air traffic controller. Specific details were not disclosed. Air India flight AI816 from Mumbai to Delhi was to be operated with a wide-body Boeing 777-300 ER aircraft, while the Air In-

dia Express flight AIX1547 that landed from Siliguri was operated with the narrow-body Boeing 737 MAX 8 plane, the sources said. "The crew operating flight AI816 from Mumbai to Delhi on July 7 discontinued the take-off run after receiving an instruction to do so from the Air Traffic Control and returned to the bay," the Air India spokesperson said in the statement. Generally, a take-off run refers to an aircraft rolling before gaining take-off speed.

The spokesperson said the aircraft would undergo necessary checks as per standard operating procedures, adding that an alternative arrangement was being made to fly the passengers to their destination at the earliest. Further details, including the number of passengers on board the two planes, could not be immediately ascertained.

BRICS adopts Guwahati Declaration to strengthen cooperation against illicit drug trafficking

Nations pledge intelligence sharing and action against synthetic drugs, crime

Guwahati, July 07: The BRICS nations on Tuesday adopted the Guwahati Declaration, reaffirming their commitment to strengthening cooperation to prevent and combat illicit drug trafficking and related transnational organised crime. The declaration was adopted at the conclusion of the two-day BRICS Heads of Anti-Drug Agencies Meeting in Guwahati. The member countries agreed to enhance the timely exchange of information, intelligence and best practices in line with national laws and international obligations. They also stressed the need to promote innovative technologies, digital tools and data-driven approaches to strengthen law enforcement and regulatory efforts against illicit drug trafficking.



The declaration expressed concern over the changing nature of the global drug trade, including the proliferation of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances, the diversion of precursor chemicals, the misuse of emerging technologies and virtual assets, and the growing use of maritime routes and digital platforms by transnational criminal networks. The BRICS countries also underlined the importance of expanding specialised initiatives aimed at reducing drug demand, promoting healthy lifestyles and protecting vulnerable groups, particularly children and youth, through evidence-based, comprehensive and people-centric approaches. According to a government statement, the member nations emphasised the need

to strengthen preventive measures alongside enforcement to effectively address the growing challenge of drug abuse. During the meeting, India urged BRICS drug law enforcement agencies to build a partnership based on speed, mutual trust and seamless real-time intelligence sharing that transcends borders and enables decisive action against transnational drug syndicates.

Director General of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) Anurag Garg said India follows a zero-tolerance policy against drugs and has adopted a three-year roadmap (2026-2029) based on a network-centric approach. The strategy focuses on dismantling entire criminal networks, preventing drug abuse through mass awareness campaigns, and strengthening treatment, de-addiction

and rehabilitation measures. Delegates from the member countries reviewed the drug situation in their respective nations and participated in thematic sessions on emerging global challenges. Discussions focused on leveraging digital technologies for real-time drug interdiction, countering trafficking through the darknet, tackling the growing threat posed by new psychoactive substances, and securing global supply chains against precursor diversion and chemical leakage.

India's BRICS Chairship is guided by the theme, "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability." BRICS continues to serve as a key platform for consultation and cooperation on issues of regional and global significance, including global political and economic governance.

Punjab Congress feud deepens as leaders skip Baghel meetings

Chandigarh, July 07: The political row within the Punjab Congress over the retention of Amarinder Singh Raja Warring as the state unit president showed no signs of easing on Tuesday, with senior leaders close to former chief minister and MP Charanjit Singh Channi and former deputy chief minister and MP Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa conspicuously absent from meetings convened by AICC Punjab in-charge Bhupesh Baghel. Baghel, who arrived in Chandigarh on Monday, began interacting with the heads of election committees at the Punjab Congress office as part of preparations for the Assembly elections due next year. Of the three working presidents recently appointed to the Punjab Congress, Sukhwinder Singh Danny and former minister Raj Kumar Verka attended the meeting, while Sangat Singh Gilzian stayed away. Amid signs of

discontent within the party, Baghel stepped up efforts to placate disgruntled leaders. Verka met Channi before later joining Baghel for breakfast and attending the meeting. Punjab Leader of Opposition Partap Singh Bajwa, who has maintained a middle path in the ongoing factional tussle, appealed for unity. "The Congress is a democratic party with many experienced leaders. I urge everyone to remain united if they aim to bring about change in Punjab," Bajwa said. Besides Channi and Randhawa, several other leaders also skipped the meetings. However, Punjab Congress president Amarinder Singh Raja Warring sought to downplay the absences, saying both Channi and Randhawa had informed the chairman of the PPCC meeting that they were out of town and would be available after a couple of days. "We held meetings with the leaders, and we discussed

the future course of action. Many senior leaders and former ministers also came to meet Bhupesh Baghel. There have been continuous interactions and discussions are underway regarding future strategies," Warring said.

He added, "Someone says that three-four zilla presidents did not come; they are gone for Amarnath Yatra. You can call them and ask them. The way this meeting has happened, at least one or two people would not be able to attend. People are asking for masala, but I cannot give masala as there isn't anything to say. All the leaders will address the media together, in a show of unity, and all the leaders of Punjab Congress will be on one stage." Baghel reached Chandigarh on Monday to hold key discussions with the Punjab Congress leadership as the party steps up preparations for the Assembly elections scheduled next year.

Climate change altering behaviour of Indian monsoon, say experts

New Delhi, July 07: El Nino and climate change are increasingly influencing India's monsoon together, with one delaying rainfall and the other intensifying extreme rain events, climate experts said. A rapidly developing El Nino in the Pacific delayed the monsoon onset and kept rainfall subdued through June, resulting in a 40 per cent rainfall deficit by the end of the month. However, the situation changed sharply as the monsoon entered an active phase, bringing intense rainfall to Mumbai and several parts of India's West Coast. Meteorologists said active weather systems, including a depression over Odisha and a cyclonic circulation over Maharashtra, combined with continuous moisture supply from the Arabian Sea to trigger heavy rainfall.

According to climate experts, global warming has

altered the character of the Indian monsoon. Rising temperatures in the Arabian Sea and changing wind patterns are increasing moisture availability, causing weather systems to produce heavier downpours in shorter periods. Raghu Murtugudde, Emeritus

three-digit rainfall spells have become more frequent during July and August across Maharashtra, Gujarat, South Rajasthan and Southwest Madhya Pradesh. Former India Meteorological Department chief K J Ramesh said monsoon rainfall patterns have changed



Professor at the University of Maryland, said El Nino contributed to the delayed monsoon, but warming oceans and shifting atmospheric circulation are now major factors behind extreme rainfall events. Experts noted that intense

due to global warming, with rains increasingly occurring as short-duration, high-intensity events. Scientists warned that these changing patterns are likely to continue regardless of whether an El Nino year occurs.



Afghanistan pacer Shapoor Zadran dies at 38 after prolonged illness

Zadran was a key pillar in Afghanistan’s bowling rise



New Delhi, July 07: Former Afghanistan fast bowler Shapoor Zadran has died at the age of 38 after battling a rare and life-threatening condition, Hemophagocytic Lymphohistiocytosis (HLH) syndrome. The Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) confirmed his death on Tuesday, describing him as one of the key figures in the country’s rise in internation-

al cricket. The left-arm pacer represented Afghanistan from 2009 to 2020, playing 44 One-Day Internationals and 36 T20 Internationals. The ACB paid tribute to Zadran, calling him a “foundation-laying figure” whose dedication and passion helped shape Afghan cricket’s journey onto the global stage. Known for his long hair, aggressive style, and ability to

generate pace, Zadran was one of Afghanistan’s leading bowlers during the team’s development in limited-overs cricket. He played a crucial role in the 2015 ODI World Cup, finishing as Afghanistan’s highest wicket-taker with 10 wickets. Zadran made his ODI debut against the Netherlands in 2009, taking career-best figures of 4/24. In total, he claimed 43 wickets in 44 ODIs and 37 wickets in 36 T20Is, with his best T20I figures coming against Bangladesh in 2018. The fast bowler was shifted to Delhi earlier this year for medical treatment. Several Afghanistan players, including captain Hashmatullah Shahidi, Rashid Khan, and Mohammad Nabi, visited him in hospital. The ACB said Zadran’s fighting spirit and contribution to Afghan cricket would never be forgotten, adding that his legacy would continue to inspire future generations of cricketers.

Messi inspires Argentina's 3-2 comeback over Egypt to reach World Cup quarters

Messi rebounds as Argentina seals dramatic quarter-final berth

Atlanta, July 07: Argentina came from 2-0 down to beat Egypt 3-2 and reach the World Cup quarter-finals on Tuesday, with Lionel Messi inspiring a dramatic late comeback. Egypt led through Yasser Ibrahim and Mostafa Ziko after Messi had a penalty saved. Cristian Romero started Argentina’s fightback before Messi equalised and Enzo Fernandez headed in the stoppage-time winner. Messi, who scored in his ninth straight World Cup game, celebrated emotionally after the final whistle, while Egypt were left devastated and angered by controversial officiating decisions. Argentina survived another major scare to book a World Cup quarter-final against either Colombia or Switzerland. Egypt took the lead through Yasser Ibrahim, while Lionel Messi had a penalty saved by goalkeep-

er Mostafa Shoubir. Shoubir also denied Alexis Mac Allister and Julian Alvarez with outstanding saves. Egypt briefly thought they had doubled their lead, but a VAR review ruled out Mostafa Ziko’s goal for a foul earlier in the move. Minutes later, however, Mohamed Salah set up Hassan, whose cross was finished by Ziko to give Egypt a 2-0 advantage before Argentina mounted their dramatic comeback. Trailing 2-0, Argentina

looked set for elimination before Cristian Romero’s header sparked a dramatic comeback. Lionel Messi then created a chance for Lautaro Martinez before redeeming himself with a powerful equaliser, his 21st World Cup goal. Enzo Fernandez completed the turnaround with a stoppage-time header from Lautaro Martinez’s cross, sealing a remarkable 3-2 victory and sending the defending champions into the quarter-finals.



Nat Sciver-Brunt and Heather Knight help England set up the Women’s T20 World Cup final against Australia

London, July 07: On her comeback from injury, England captain Nat Sciver-Brunt led from the front with a brilliant 75 in a 40-run Women’s T20 World Cup semi-final win against South Africa at the Oval on Thursday. England, called in to bat, crashed to 23-3 after four overs, raising worries of yet another knockout loss in a major tournament. Sciver-Brunt, who had missed the previous three group games due to a calf injury, counter-attacked to the joy of almost 21,000 fans. She received excellent support from former skipper Heather Knight (58) as the two survivors from the last England side to win a major international trophy -- the 2017 50-over World Cup -- turned the tide with a fourth-wicket partnership of 133 that took their team to a total of 169-5. Tournament hosts England will play arch-rivals Australia in Sunday’s final at Lord’s. Both sides have won all six of their matches. A chase of 170 was always going to be a tough task for South Africa and they finished well short on 129-8. “I was probably nervous, the occasion gets quite big as well and so that increased the



nerves,” said Sciver-Brunt, the player of the match, at the presentation ceremony. “I missed a few games (with my injury). There was a lot of emotion pre-game.” She added: “Marizanne Kapp and

Shabnim Ismail are world-class opening bowlers who can do some damage. So Heather and I wanted to nullify the threat and make sure we were in and able to capitalise on other bowlers.

We used our experience, got out heads together and got the job done. “We showed composure. We could have tried to go harder earlier and it might not have worked out, so we were really smart.” Kapp

took 1-16 in her maximum four overs and Ismail 2-31. But Ayabonga Khaka’s and Nadine de Klerk’s combined seven wicketless overs cost 79 runs. South Africa captain Laura Wolvaardt said her side had been “outplayed”, adding: “We were happy with 170, which we thought was par. They bowled well, had good plans and we weren’t able to step up.” Earlier, South Africa enjoyed a brilliant start by taking three England wickets inside the first four overs. Fast bowler Ismail struck with her first ball, Amy Jones cutting straight to point. England opener Danni Wyatt-Hodge, whose previous five innings had yielded a tournament record 282 runs at a stellar average of 94, was bowled for just 12 by Kapp’s well-disguised slower ball. England were three down when Alice Capsey was lbw to Ismail. But Sciver-Brunt and Knight, England’s 2017 World Cup-winning skipper, revived the innings. The 33-year-old Sciver Brunt, on her Surrey home ground, completed a fine fifty when she whipped De Klerk through midwicket for a ninth four in 35 balls faced. Knight, 35, slog-swept Khaka for a huge six to go to a 42-ball

fifty and Sciver-Brunt also cleared the ropes when hoisting de Klerk over midwicket. Both Sciver-Brunt and Knight fell in the penultimate over to left-arm spinner Nonkululeko Mlaba (2-25) but by then the damage had been done. South Africa suffered a major setback in their chase when skipper Wolvaardt was well caught for 17 by a leaping Sophie Ecclestone at mid-on off spinner Linsey Smith. The Proteas’ 43-1 was quickly transformed into 49-2 when Annerie Dercksen sliced a slower ball from Freya Kemp to point. England then captured the key wicket of Kapp for just five when the all-rounder, trying to turn off-spinner Charlie Dean legside, got a leading edge and gave a gentle catch to an elated Sciver-Brunt at extra-cover. South Africa opener Tazmin Brits made fifty at better than a run-a-ball before she fell to Dean. The Proteas, who defeated England in both the semi-finals of the 2023 edition and in last year’s 50-over World Cup, were now all but beaten at 95-5. Six-time champions Australia eased into the final with an eight-wicket rout of the West Indies in Tuesday’s first semi-final at the Oval.

