



CM Reaffirms Support for Indigenous Polo

Manipur, July 28: Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Tuesday met a delegation of Manipur's women polo players at the Secretariat to discuss the current status of women's polo and the challenges faced by the athletes. During the interaction, the Chief Minister acknowledged polo as a sport that originated in Manipur and was later introduced to the world, describing it as an enduring symbol of the state's rich cultural and sporting her-

itage.

He noted that nearly three-fourths of India's women polo players are from Manipur, highlighting the state's leading role in nurturing talented athletes in the sport. Reaffirming the government's commitment, Khemchand Singh said the State Government will continue to preserve and promote indigenous sports while creating greater opportunities for women athletes to excel at both the national and international levels.

Roing Hospital Gets ₹10 Lakh Upgrade Boost From MLA Mithi

Arunachal Pradesh, July 28: Mutchu Mithi, MLA Roing accompanied by Fwrmn Brahma, IAS, Deputy Commissioner, paid a visit to Roing District Hospital on Tuesday to assess the existing facilities.

During the inspection, the MLA noticed wall paneling work in progress at the hospital. It was informed that the work has been undertaken as a private initiative by local JE Luno and Contractor Saji Baby using their own resources, with plans to extend the work to additional areas.

Commending the effort, Mithi said the gesture reflects a strong sense of community responsibility and will help in enhancing the healthcare environment for patients and staff. To further support the hospital, the MLA sanctioned ₹10 lakh from his Local Area Development Fund to the District Medical Officer for carrying out other urgent and essential minor works. He also informed that the Dialysis Center at Roing District Hospital is set to become operational by August, which will be greatly benefiting patients in the district.



Assam floods: Survivors recount terror as Sivasagar begins long road to recovery

Sivasagar, July 28: Forced to spend 12 hours atop a wooden divan floating in the floodwaters that engulfed their home in the worst-hit Sivasagar district of Assam, septuagenarian couple Mukul and Bonti Bezborra survived the deluge but lost everything. Communication ceased when their mobile phone batteries ran out. Rescued by boat 10 days ago from the heart of the eastern Assam town of Nazira, retired professor Mukul Bezborra and his wife now face an uncertain future with

nothing but the clothes on their back and a house filled with silt and debris. In the ONGC Colony in Sivasagar, Madhusmita Borthakur's experience was no less terrifying. She may have been spared by the deluge, but was nearly marooned with her two daughters as the campus got inundated fast. With her husband out on field duty, she managed to hitch a ride in an open van

with her two daughters and spent the next few days at a friend's house. The deluge that hit Assam over a week ago hit Sivasagar the worst, pushing the death toll this year's flood in the state to 68 and impacting more than six lakh people at its peak. Bezborra and his wife barely survived the horrors of the night of July 19. "We heard the sound of a raging torrent around 8 pm. There was commotion outside. My wife and I climbed on an old wooden divan we had, where we stored old quilts. The stuff inside was wringing wet while the divan itself was floating with us on top," he recalled. "The water

current was so strong that it toppled the fridge and almirahs. Nothing survived. We escaped with only the clothes we were wearing."

They were rescued on the morning of July 20 by boats sent out by the administration. As the floodwaters started receding, the couple returned home to find that almost all of their belongings had been destroyed. Two truckloads of mud and debris were cleared out of his house. Even then, two to three inches



of silt remained. "We don't know if we will be able to salvage anything at all," the retired professor of Gargaon College told PTI. A resident of Nazira town since 1992, Bezborra claimed they had never seen or heard of such a massive flood in the area ever. "There has been waterlogging in the area following heavy rains. But such a deluge was unimaginable." While lamenting his own loss, Bezborra expressed equal concern for others affected by the floods. "I have some means to put my life back together. My son has also come. But there are many who are still reeling under the flood and have lost

even their livelihood," he said, urging expeditious rehabilitation for the affected people. In the ONGC colony, Borthakur faced an ordeal unlike anything she had ever known. As floodwaters crept higher, she watched helplessly, trapped inside her home with her nine-year-old and three-year-old daughters. "My husband was away on field duty and was not to return for another week. Though we were relatively safe, I got scared as the water continued to rise with great speed. I didn't have anyone to fall back on if there was any emergency," she said.

The mother of two managed to hitch a ride in an open van with her daughters and spent the next few days at a friend's house in the area, which was miraculously saved from being inundated. The initial days of the floods were as scary for those living outside, with family and friends residing in the affected areas. "My sister-in-law and her son live near the Simaluguri railway station in Sivasagar. News showed that the area was under deep water and the train tracks were also damaged. We were scared, but had no means to contact them," a police personnel posted in Guwahati said. He heaved a sigh of relief when his nephew called him up after two days. The receding floodwaters have brought little relief. For survivors, the first phase of the disaster may be over, but the daunting task of clearing the debris, rebuilding their homes and recovering from the emotional scars has only just begun.

'Children disagree': Assam CM backs minister whose daughter joined protesters

Guwahati, July 27: Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday defended his cabinet colleague Keshab Mahanta of BJP ally Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) over his daughter's participation at a protest against the NEET-UG irregularities. Social media videos showed Dibisa, the daughter of the minister, speaking out against the NEET-UG paper leak. "Paper leaks are a national issue. I feel for the students who lost their lives, and I stand for justice for them," she said at the protest which was organised in Guwahati's Chachal area on July 23. She allegedly also shouted slogans against PM Narendra Modi and demanded Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation. Defending her father, Sarma said parents and chil-



dren might have differing political views. "I do not agree with the slogans she chanted. I will talk to her when I meet her," the CM said, adding that targeting her father would not be justified. He was candid in

saying that his son and daughter do not agree with him on many things. "My son will practise law tomorrow and defend somebody I may not like. We must not link the actions of children with their parents

when they are adults," Sarma said. He further stated that Mahanta had been entrusted with a major responsibility and was helping the flood-affected people. "None of us will gain anything by putting him under mental stress," Sarma added. Mahanta, the state's Revenue and Disaster Management Minister, did not say anything. He is the working president of the AGP, which is a key constituent of the NDA government.

The protestors held placards which read "NEET is not neat", "Empathy is political", "Please save our future", "Scrap NTA", etc., and sang the popular Bollywood number "Give Me Some Sunshine..." from the movie '3 Idiots' in unison.

Star Health strengthens monsoon healthcare network with expanded virtual consultations in Assam

Assam: Star Health and Allied Insurance Company Limited has announced the expansion of its monsoon healthcare support services in Assam, strengthening access to Home Healthcare and Virtual Doctor Consultations as seasonal cases of dengue, malaria, fever and other infectious diseases rise across the state. The company said its FY25-26 data recorded a sixteen-fold increase in Home Healthcare utilisation for fever and infectious diseases in Assam, while its recently

launched Virtual OPD service has witnessed strong adoption nationwide, with more customers opting for virtual consultations as their first point of medical care.

As part of the initiative, policyholders can access the 'Talk to Star' helpline at 7200 222 333, pressing 1 for Home Healthcare and 2 for planned hospitalisation support. The service offers guidance on cashless claims, network hospitals, required documentation and treatment pathways. Eligible policyholders can

also receive cashless Home Healthcare, including doctor-prescribed nursing care, blood tests, IV fluids, injections and patient monitoring at home. Non-policyholders can access free 24/7 Virtual Doctor Consultations through the Star Health Customer app.

Business Head (Northeast) Amitabh Chatterjee said the initiative aims to promote early medical intervention and improve healthcare access, particularly for children, senior citizens and patients who may find hospital visits

difficult during the monsoon.

Citing the National Statistical Office's 2026 survey, the company noted that average private hospitalisation costs stand at ₹52,766 in rural Assam and ₹79,406 in urban Assam, highlighting the importance of timely and accessible healthcare. Star Health said the expanded outreach is designed to help families seek medical advice early, reduce treatment delays and improve patient care during the monsoon season.

Vi targets digital consumption growth with Rs. 200 bundled OTT offering

Mumbai: Vodafone Idea (Vi) has launched a new Rs. 200 prepaid Vi Movies & TV value pack, strengthening its strategy to drive digital consumption through bundled entertainment and connectivity services. The 28-day recharge combines access to 20 leading OTT platforms, more than 200 live TV channels, 30GB of high-speed data and unlimited 5G data, offering consumers a single subscription for entertainment and mobile connectivity. The pack brings together premium streaming platforms including JioHotstar, SonyLIV, ZEE5, Lionsgate Play, ShemarooMe, ManoramaMAX, FanCode, Playflix, Klikk, At-rangii, Chaupal, OTTplay Live, Pocket Films, YuppTV, Adda-times, Kanccha Lannka, TimesPlay and NextGTV, among others. Vi Movies & TV offers content in 16 languages, enabling users to access national, international and regional programming through one platform. Customers can stream across four devices with simultaneous viewing on two screens across major OTT platforms, excluding SonyLIV. The recharge is available through the Vi App and other recharge channels.

From an economic perspective, the bundled offering reflects the telecom sector's shift toward value-added digital services as operators seek to improve customer retention and increase average revenue per user (ARPU). By integrating premium entertainment with mobile data, Vi aims to stimulate higher data consumption while reducing consumers' dependence on multiple paid subscriptions. The strategy also aligns with India's expanding digital economy, rising smartphone penetration and the ongoing rollout of 5G infrastructure.

Škoda adds exclusive colours to Slavia Monte Carlo, targets premium sedan buyers

Guwahati: Škoda Auto India has expanded its premium sedan portfolio by introducing two new limited-edition dual-tone colour options—Shimla Green and Steel Grey—for the Slavia Monte Carlo, reinforcing its focus on offering greater exclusivity to customers. The new editions will be limited to just 200 units and will be available in both the 1.0-litre TSI automatic and 1.5-litre TSI DSG variants, the company said.

Announcing the launch, Ashish Gupta, Brand Director, Škoda Auto India, said the Slavia Monte Carlo has received strong customer response for its premium styling, engaging driving dynamics and motorsport-inspired character. He said the latest additions further enhance the model's individuality while strengthening the company's sedan portfolio in line with evolving consumer aspirations.

The Slavia Monte Carlo retains its signature blacked-out exterior styling, black-and-red interior theme and premium feature package. Customers can



choose between the 115 PS 1.0-litre TSI engine paired with a six-speed torque converter automatic transmission or the 150 PS 1.5-litre TSI engine mated to a seven-speed DSG gearbox. The larger engine also features Active Cylinder Technology and Plasma-Coated Cylinder Liners for improved fuel efficiency and thermal management.

The Monte Carlo badge celebrates Škoda Auto's motorsport heritage dating back to its participation in Rallye Monte Carlo since 1912. Recently, the company's India lineup—including the Slavia Monte Carlo, Kushaq Monte Carlo, Kylaq, Ko-

diaq and limited-edition Octavia RS—set an India and Asia Book of Records for the fastest multi-car relay by a single manufacturer at the CoASTT circuit in Coimbatore.

The launch is expected to strengthen Škoda's appeal in Guwahati's growing premium passenger vehicle segment, where demand for technologically advanced and performance-oriented sedans continues to rise. The limited availability of just 200 units is likely to attract enthusiasts and affluent buyers looking for exclusive products, while supporting the brand's expansion in the Northeast through its wider retail network.

Škoda Auto India currently sells the Kylaq, Slavia, Kushaq and Kodiaq models through more than 340 customer touchpoints across 189 cities. The company recorded sales of 72,665 vehicles in 2025, registering a robust 107 per cent year-on-year growth, while parent Škoda Auto delivered more than 1.04 million vehicles globally during the year.

Axis Max Life unveils Smart RISE to strengthen retirement planning solutions

New Delhi: Axis Max Life Insurance Ltd. has announced the launch of Smart Retirement Income with Sustained Earnings Plan (Smart RISE), a retirement-focused insurance product that combines a guaranteed annuity with a NIFTY 50-linked variable annuity, offering customers a blend of assured income and market-linked growth opportunities.

The company said the plan enables policyholders to customise their retirement journey by selecting a deferment period during which their retirement corpus can accumulate before annuity payouts commence. After the deferment phase, customers receive a fixed

guaranteed annuity throughout the policy term, complemented by a variable annuity linked to the performance

nominated beneficiaries in the event of the annuitant's demise, subject to policy terms and conditions.



of the NIFTY 50 Index. The product also includes a legacy-planning feature that returns the purchase price to

Vaibhav Kumar, Head – Products, Ecommerce and Enterprise COE at Axis Max Life Insurance, said

the launch represents a key milestone in the company's strategy to expand its retirement portfolio. He said the index-linked variable annuity has been introduced to address evolving customer expectations for financial protection, flexibility and dependable retirement income while supporting long-term financial security.

Formerly known as Max Life Insurance Company Ltd., Axis Max Life Insurance reported a gross written premium of Rs 38,877 crore in FY2025-26, underscoring its continued growth in the life insurance sector and its focus on expanding protection and long-term savings solutions across the country.

TRAI drive test highlights mobile network performance in south Mizoram

Aizawl: The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has released the findings of an Independent Drive Test (IDT) conducted across Lunglei, Lawngtlai and Siaha districts and adjoining areas in Mizoram to evaluate the real-time quality of mobile network services offered by telecom service providers (TSPs). Conducted between May 20 and 23, 2026 under the supervision of the TRAI Regional Office, Kolkata, the exercise covered a 342.4-km city drive, 11 hotspot locations and 1.3 km of walk tests, assessing voice and data performance across 2G, 3G, 4G and 5G networks.

The assessment measured key Quality of Service (QoS) parameters, including coverage gap, call setup success rate, dropped call rate, call silence instances, download and upload throughput, latency, jitter and packet loss. The report recorded average download speeds of 69.89 Mbps for Reliance Jio, 59.88 Mbps for Airtel, 16.05 Mbps for Vodafone Idea and 5.46 Mbps for BSNL. Average upload speeds stood at 11.83 Mbps for Airtel, 5.22 Mbps for Reliance Jio, 3.43 Mbps for Vodafone Idea and 2.10 Mbps for BSNL. Operator-wise data also highlighted coverage gaps, dropped calls and call silence instances across the surveyed routes. The drive covered major



locations, including hospitals, colleges, district courts, government offices and commercial centres in the three districts. TRAI said the findings have been shared with telecom operators for necessary corrective action to improve service quality. In Aizawl, the report serves as an important benchmark for consumers, enterprises and telecom operators as digital adoption continues to accelerate in Mizoram. While the drive test did not include Aizawl city, the findings from southern districts are expected to influence network investment strategies across the state. Improved mobile connectivity will support digital payments, e-commerce, banking, education, healthcare and MSME operations in Aizawl, where demand for reliable high-speed mobile services continues to grow, encouraging operators to strengthen network coverage and enhance customer experience.



TVS Motor rides strong demand to post record Q1 revenue and profit



Guwahati: TVS Motor Company reported its highest-ever quarterly financial performance for the first quarter of FY2026-27, driven by robust vehicle sales across domestic and international markets. The company's revenue rose 38% year-on-year to a record Rs. 13,896 crore from Rs. 10,081 crore in the corresponding quarter last year, while profit after tax (PAT) surged 51% to an all-time high of Rs. 1,174 crore from Rs. 776 crore.

The company recorded its highest-ever quarterly EBITDA of Rs. 1,779 crore, marking a 41% increase over Rs. 1,260 crore in the year-ago period. EBITDA margin im-

proved by 30 basis points to 12.8% despite a sharp rise in commodity prices and higher input costs caused by global market uncertainties. TVS Motor said selective price revisions, cost optimisation initiatives and scale benefits helped cushion the impact.

Operationally, the company achieved its highest-ever quarterly sales, with overall two- and three-wheeler volumes rising 28% to 1.63 million units. Motorcycle sales increased 19% to 0.74 million units, scooter sales climbed 36% to 0.68 million units, and international business expanded 33% to 0.47 million units. Electric two-wheeler sales jumped

86% to 129,940 units, taking the company's EV customer base beyond one million, while three-wheeler sales grew 48% to 66,697 units.

The strong quarterly performance is expected to bolster TVS Motor's business prospects in Guwahati and the wider Northeast, where demand for scooters, motorcycles and electric vehicles has been steadily increasing. Higher EV adoption and sustained sales growth could strengthen the company's dealer network, improve customer confidence and support further investments in mobility solutions and after-sales services across the region.

Shree Cement plans sustainable water stewardship for Meghalaya project

Shillong: Shree Cement Limited has announced that it will integrate advanced water conservation and sustainable manufacturing practices into its upcoming integrated cement manufacturing project in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district, reinforcing its commitment to environmentally responsible industrial growth.

The company said the project will adopt a 100 per cent Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD) model, under which industrial wastewater will be treated and reused for cooling, dust suppression and greenbelt development, reducing dependence on freshwater sources. Shree Cement added that the facility will incorporate energy-efficient technologies and resource management practices aligned with circular economy principles from the outset.

According to the company, its nationwide water management framework has enabled it to achieve an eight-times water-positive status by replenishing significantly more water than it consumes through rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge and complete wastewater recycling. The company also plans to support water conservation and replenishment initiatives in communities surrounding the Meghalaya project.

A company spokesperson said the expansion reflects Shree Cement's commitment to balancing industrial productivity with environmental resilience through sustainable operations and community-focused water stewardship.

In Shillong, the proposed investment is expected to strengthen industrial activity

in Meghalaya while reflecting the growing emphasis on sustainable infrastructure development. Industry observers believe environmentally responsible manufacturing practices could support long-term investment confidence in the state, where infrastructure expansion is increasingly being evaluated alongside ecological conservation. The project is also expected to contribute to employment opportunities and regional economic growth.

Shree Cement said the Meghalaya initiative builds on its ongoing watershed development and groundwater recharge work under the Mukhyamantri Jal Swavalamban Abhiyan in Rajasthan, a model the company intends to replicate across its operational locations.

ITC's YiPPee! blends Odisha's festive flavours with innovation during RathYatra

Festival Origin	Fusion Dish	Festival Origin	Fusion Dish
① Pousa Sankranti	YiPPee! Posto	② Boli Jatra	YiPPee! Thunka Puri
③ Raja Purnima	YiPPee! Luni Poda Pitha	④ Pranhastami	YiPPee! Enduri Pitha
⑤ Rath Yatra	YiPPee! Dalma	⑥ Bata Osha	YiPPee! Chuda with Aushiravand Soya
⑦ Ganha Purnima	YiPPee! Dahi Bara Aloo Dum	⑧ Joranda Mela	YiPPee! Pakhala Bhat
⑨ Naukha	YiPPee! Saga Bhaja	⑩ Dola Purnima	YiPPee! Ghanta Tarkari
⑪ Durga Puja	YiPPee! Khichdi	⑫ Rama Navami	YiPPee! Muga Dali Khichdi
⑬ Kousa Purnima	YiPPee! Chanda Bara		

Odisha's 12 Months, 13 Festivals. Now Reimagined As Delicious YiPPee! Fusion Dishes.

Guwahati: ITC Ltd.'s SunfeastYiPPee! has unveiled a first-of-its-kind cultural and culinary campaign, 'Baro Masa, YiPPee! Parba', during the RathYatra in Puri, leveraging Odisha's rich festive traditions to strengthen consumer engagement. Inspired by the state's philosophy of 'Baro Masa, Tero Parba' (12 months, 13 festivals), the initiative reimagines 13 iconic Odia festive recipes into innovative noodle-based dishes, showcasing the brand's versatility while celebrating regional cuisine.

The experience, hosted at a grand pavilion on Puri Beach, featured 12 month-themed

windows representing the Odia calendar and inspired by the storytelling tradition of Pattachitra art. Traditional favourites such as Potala Posta, Dahi Bara Aloo Dum, Chaula Bara and Muga Dali Khichdi were recreated using YiPPee! noodles, offering consumers a contemporary twist on familiar flavours. Master-Chef Season 6 winner Abhinav Nayak interacted with visitors and presented the specially curated recipes, while an interactive Pattachitra-inspired experience zone enabled visitors to explore Odisha's festivals, art and culture. Guests also received personalised Pattachitra-style portraits, exclusive YiPPee! calendars and tote bags as commemorative keepsakes.

Ali Harris Shere, BU Chief Executive, Snack Foods & Beverages, Foods Division, ITC Ltd., said the campaign celebrates Odisha's festival traditions by bringing together culture, food and innovation, while encouraging consumers to discover new ways of enjoying YiPPee! noodles.

The campaign underlines ITC's strategy of using region-specific cultural engagement to build stronger brand affinity in eastern India. In Guwahati, where demand for packaged foods and convenience products is steadily expanding, such localized marketing initiatives can help drive consumer interest, particularly among younger demographics seeking modern interpretations of traditional flavours. The approach also reinforces the growing importance of experiential marketing in strengthening brand visibility across the Northeast.

TVS Motor charts global growth after record FY26 performance

Guwahati: TVS Motor Company has outlined an aggressive global growth strategy after reporting its best-ever financial and operational performance for FY2025-26, with Chairman Sudarshan Venu highlighting record sales, expanding international operations, electric mobility leadership and sustained investments in technology and sustainability during the company's Annual General Meeting.

The company recorded its highest-ever annual sales of 5.89 million vehicles, up 24 per cent year-on-year, while revenue rose to a record ₹47,270 crore and EBITDA reached an all-time high of ₹6,079 crore. International operations contributed more than a quarter of total revenue, with sales exceeding 1.59 million units across 90-plus countries. TVS said Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe will remain key growth markets, while Norton Motorcycles is set to expand globally with the launch of the Manx R, Atlas and Atlas GT models.

The company's electric vehicle business also maintained strong momentum, with sales of over 3.71 lakh electric two-wheelers, a 33 per cent increase, driven by the expanded TVS iQube portfolio and the newly launched Orbiter scooter. TVS has built a network of more than 1,000 EV dealerships and 5,000 public charging points. Premium offerings, including the TVS Apache RTX 300 and TVS NTORQ 150, received encouraging customer response, with the Apache RTX winning the Indian Motorcycle of the Year 2026 award.

TVS invested over ₹1,250 crore in research and development during the year, employing more than 2,000 engineers to develop connected mobility, electrification, next-generation vehicles and generative AI capabilities. The company also established a new engineering hub in Bologna, Italy, strengthened its premium retail network through TVS Paddock, and reported



that 97 per cent of the energy used across its Indian operations now comes from renewable sources. Its financial services arm, TVS Credit, posted 26 per cent growth in disbursements, ending the year with assets exceeding ₹30,000 crore, while the Board approved an interim dividend of ₹12 per share, up 20 per cent from last year.

In Guwahati, TVS Motor's continued focus on electric mobility, premium motorcycles and wider dealer expansion is expected to strengthen its position in Assam and the Northeast. Rising consumer interest in electric scooters, performance motorcycles and affordable financing, supported by TVS Credit and expanding charging infrastructure, is likely to boost demand across Guwahati's rapidly growing two-wheeler market while offering new opportunities for local dealerships and service networks. Looking ahead, Venu said the company expects its international business to maintain momentum despite global uncertainties and will continue investing in new products, advanced technologies and sustainable manufacturing as India remains one of the world's fastest-growing major economies, with projected GDP growth of 6.4-6.5 per cent in FY2026-27.

Tata Consumer delivers strong Q1 on volume growth, profit rises 29%

Guwahati: Tata Consumer Products Ltd. (TCPL) reported a strong start to FY27, posting a 12 per cent year-on-year increase in consolidated revenue from operations to Rs 5,349 crore for the quarter ended June 30, 2026, driven by robust volume-led growth across its India branded business. Consolidated EBITDA rose 19 per cent to Rs 730 crore, while net profit climbed 29 per cent to Rs 427 crore.

The India branded business recorded an underlying volume growth (UVG) of 13 per cent, with the company's high-growth portfolio expanding 47 per cent and contributing 36 per cent to the India business. Salt revenue increased 7 per cent, tea volumes grew 2 per cent, while coffee revenue surged 24 per cent. Tata Sampann posted a 58 per cent jump in revenue, supported by strong demand across pulses, spices, dry fruits and cold-pressed

oils. The ready-to-drink business grew 41 per cent, aided by premiumisation and new Tetley Kombucha Zero variants, while Capital Foods and Organic India recorded revenue growth of 40 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively. TCPL also launched 14 new products during the quarter to strengthen its innovation pipeline.

The international business registered 16 per cent revenue growth, led by strong performance in the US, while UK brands Teapigs and Good Earth continued to gain market share in specialty tea segments. Tata Starbucks reported an 11 per cent rise in revenue, driven by strong same-store sales growth, and expanded its footprint to 498 stores after opening four new outlets, including Reserve stores in Kolkata and New Delhi.

Managing Director and CEO Sunil D'Souza said the

company delivered another quarter of double-digit topline growth backed by strong execution, category expansion and innovation. He added that the company remains focused on strengthening its core portfolio while scaling growth businesses to deliver sustainable and profitable long-term growth.

In Guwahati, TCPL's expanding portfolio of packaged foods, beverages, health and wellness products and premium offerings is expected to find increasing traction amid the city's growing urban consumer base. With organised retail expanding across Assam and the Northeast, rising demand for branded staples, ready-to-drink beverages and convenience foods is likely to support the company's long-term growth strategy in the region, while strengthening its presence in one of eastern India's fastest-growing consumer markets.

Skill development push lifts outlook for North East employment ecosystem

Guwahati: The Centre's decision to expand the Special Intervention for Promotion of Apprenticeship in the North-Eastern Region (NER) under the Prime Minister's National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (PM-NAPS) is expected to strengthen the region's employment ecosystem, with higher government spending and industry participation set to support workforce development during FY 2026-27.

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has earmarked ₹57.58 crore for the initiative, to be implemented by the Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), Guwahati, while increasing the apprenticeship target to 30,000, around 15 per cent higher than the pilot phase launched in May 2025. Half of the apprentices will be placed outside the North East, including in Central government departments and



public sector undertakings, while the remaining 15,000 will be engaged within the region, including in their domicile states.

The revised intervention also extends an additional financial incentive of ₹1,500 per month to apprentices training within their home states, alongside existing PM-NAPS benefits, and will continue employer outreach, awareness campaigns, workshops and collaborations with educational institutions to strengthen the apprenticeship ecosystem.

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Jayant Chaudhary said the expanded

programme would improve access to quality apprenticeship opportunities, encourage industry participation and equip youth with workplace skills across sectors.

The enhanced allocation and expanded apprenticeship target are expected to benefit the North East's labour market by improving the availability of industry-ready talent, supporting employer hiring requirements and strengthening the long-term skills pipeline. The initiative is also likely to encourage greater participation by both public and private sector employers, contributing to regional economic growth and improving workforce competitiveness. The pilot programme had achieved over 90 per cent of its target by engaging 23,470 apprentices, while apprenticeship participation in the region rose 51 per cent, with Meghalaya registering the highest growth of 95 per cent.

Sunfeast Marie Light expands Vitamin D awareness drive with Surya Vardaan at Puri Rath Yatra

Guwahati: ITC Ltd's Sunfeast Marie Light has strengthened its health and consumer engagement strategy with the launch of its 'Surya Vardaan' initiative at the Puri Rath Yatra, leveraging one of Odisha's largest cultural gatherings to promote awareness about Vitamin D deficiency. The campaign builds on the brand's long-standing proposition of the "Goodness of Vitamin D" and aims to encourage healthier lifestyle choices through education and digital engagement.

Carrying the message "Har Kiran Mein Chhupa Hai Vitamin D Ka Vardaan," the initiative featured Surya Sahayaks at the Rath Yatra who helped devotees complete a two-minute Vitamin D requirement check, distributed educational material and facilitated free Vitamin D medical tests for select participants. The awareness drive was also extended digitally through a WhatsApp-based assessment, where consumers answer simple behavioural questions on sunlight exposure, outdoor routines and Vitamin D awareness.

Suraj Kathuria, VP and Head of Marketing - Biscuits, Foods Division, ITC Ltd, said Odisha's enduring relation-

ship with the Sun provided a meaningful platform to make Vitamin D awareness simple and relevant. He said the campaign combines technology, community engagement and the scale of Rath Yatra to encourage people to understand their Vitamin D needs, spend more time in the Sun and include Sunfeast Marie



Light with Vitamin D in their everyday tea-time. Renowned Odia actress and the brand's ambassador in Odisha, Archita Sahu, said Rath Yatra holds a special place in her heart and urged people to take the two-minute Vitamin D requirement check as part of the awareness initiative.

Guwahati is witnessing rising demand for health-oriented packaged foods as consumers increasingly prioritise nutrition and preven-

tive wellness. Awareness-led campaigns such as Surya Vardaan, supported by digital tools like WhatsApp-based assessments, are expected to find traction in the city, where brands are increasingly blending health education with consumer engagement to strengthen market presence and expand the fortified foods

segment.

With the latest edition of Surya Vardaan, Sunfeast Marie Light continues to position itself beyond a conventional biscuit brand by transforming a major cultural event into a platform for public health awareness while reinforcing its association with Odisha. Consumers can also take the two-minute Vitamin D requirement check through the campaign's dedicated WhatsApp platform.

Royal Stag becomes world's largest-selling whisky brand in 2025

Guwahati: Pernod Ricard India has announced that its flagship brand, Royal Stag, has been ranked the world's largest-selling whisky brand for calendar year 2025, according to the latest IWSR 2025 rankings. The brand recorded annual sales of 32.6 million cases, marking a significant milestone in its 30-year journey and reinforcing the company's leadership in the global spirits industry.

Pernod Ricard India CEO Jean Touboul said the recognition reflects the trust consumers have placed in Royal Stag over three decades. He noted that the brand's continued focus on innovation, authenticity and evolving consumer aspirations has enabled it to emerge as a global category leader.

Since its launch in 1995, Royal Stag has introduced grain whisky to a wider Indian audience and expanded its premium portfolio with offerings such as Royal Stag Barrel Select and Royal Stag Double Dark. The company said quality initiatives including its Mark of Purity programme and Double



Tamper-Evident Technology (DTET) closures have further strengthened consumer confidence. The brand is now available in 33 countries.

Chief Marketing Officer Debasree Dasgupta said Royal Stag's global leadership has been built through sustained innovation, premiumisation and strong con-

sumer engagement across cricket, music and youth culture, including Royal Stag Boombox and the ICC T20 World Cup. Pernod Ricard India said the milestone reinforces its ambition to build globally admired brands from India with enduring cultural relevance and commercial scale.

An In-Depth Tutorial on How to Create Chilli Paneer at Home



Chilli Paneer is a cherished Indo-Chinese dish that seamlessly combines soft, succulent paneer cubes with a spicy, tangy sauce. **Ingredients:** 250 grams of paneer (cubed), 3 tablespoons of all-purpose flour (maida), ½ teaspoon of black pepper powder, salt to taste, ½ teaspoon of red chili powder, 4 tablespoons of oil (for shallow frying), 1 onion (cubed), 1 green capsicum (cubed), 2 green chillies, 1 tablespoon of garlic (finely chopped), 1 tablespoon of ginger (chopped), 1 tablespoon of red chili sauce, 1 tablespoon of tomato ketchup, 1 teaspoon of vinegar, ½ teaspoon of sugar (optional), 2 tablespoons of spring onions (chopped), ¼ cup of water, and 1 teaspoon of cornflour mixed with 2 tablespoons of water. Take a bowl and mix cornflour, maida, salt, pepper, and chilli powder to make a smooth paste. Coat the paneer cubes in the paste evenly. Now, shallow-fry the coated paneer cubes over medium heat until golden and crisp on all sides. In a pan, heat a little oil and saute chopped garlic, ginger, green chillies, onion, and capsicum until they turn a bit crunchy and are half cooked through. Now, add soy sauce, chilli sauce, tomato ketchup, vinegar, sugar, and water. Mix everything well and then pour in the cornflour slurry and mix again. Next, add the fried paneer, spring onions and toss everything so that each piece is coated in gravy. Serve while hot and enjoy.

Mango-Orange-Vanilla Ice Cream Cake

Combining mango ice cream with vanilla and orange in this ice cream cake creates a delightful tropical essence within a traditional flavor mix. The process of assembling is quite straightforward; however, ensure you allocate ample time for freezing as you construct it to maintain distinct layers. Grease an 8-inch springform pan with butter. Take a piece of parchment paper measuring 7 by 26 inches; fit the strip around the inner side of the pan so that it rises above the edge. Secure the paper in place by locking the ring of the pan. Pulse the graham crackers in a food processor until finely ground. Add the melted butter and pulse until combined. Press the mixture into the bottom of the prepared pan and freeze until firm, about 10 minutes. Meanwhile, cut the carton of mango ice cream in half with a serrated knife. Return one

half to the freezer. Transfer the other half to a stand mixer and let soften slightly, then beat with the paddle attachment on medium speed until spreadable but not melted. Spread the ice cream evenly onto the crust with an offset spatula. Freeze until firm, 30 minutes to 1 hour. Rinse out the bowl, then repeat step 3 with the vanilla ice cream, using half of the carton. Freeze the cake. When firm, repeat with the orange-vanilla ice cream, using half of the carton. Return to the freezer. Repeat the layers with the remaining mango, vanilla and orange-vanilla ice cream, making sure each layer is firm before adding the next. Freeze the ice cream cake until completely firm, at least 1 hour. Remove the springform ring and parchment. Cover the cake with whipped cream and freeze at least 10 minutes more.

How To Make Traditional Kashmiri Rogan Josh At Home

One of the most famous mutton curries in India is Kashmiri Rogan Josh, which is rich, fragrant, and full of comforting spices. The traditional recipe, in contrast to many restaurant variations, uses slow cooking and aromatic spices to create its distinctive rich red hue and flavour.

Ingredients: 1 kg mutton (bone-in pieces), 4 tbsp mustard oil, 2 bay leaves, 4 green cardamoms, 2 black cardamoms, 4 cloves, 1-inch cinnamon stick, 2 tsp fennel powder, 1 tsp dry ginger powder (saunth), 2 tbsp Kashmiri red chilli powder, ½ tsp turmeric, 1 cup whisked curd, Salt to taste, 2 cups warm water

Method: Mustard oil should be heated to the smoking point. Before adding the whole spices, let it cool a little. This gives the curry a fragrant basis while reducing the oil's pungency. Sear the mutton chunks over medi-



um-high heat until they are browned all over. This enhances the curry's depth and preserves its flavour. Reduce the heat and mix in the turmeric, fennel, dry ginger, and Kashmiri red chilli powders. Stir thoroughly to coat each piece of meat with the spices

without burning it. To keep the whipped curd from separating, add it gradually while stirring constantly. The curd balances the warmth of the spices and produces a thick, velvety gravy. After adding the warm water and adding salt, cover the saucepan.

Simmer the curry over low heat for 60 to 90 minutes, or until the gravy has thickened beautifully and the mutton is tender. For an authentic dish, serve over steamed basmati rice, Kashmiri naan, roomali roti, or tandoori roti. Garnish lightly.

Crispy, soft & traditional: Authentic Nepali Sel Roti Recipe

Made with soaked rice, sugar, and ghee, sel roti is a classic sweet, ring-shaped fried rice bread from Nepal. Soaking raw rice, mixing it with sugar and ghee to make a thick batter, and properly frying the rings in hot oil are

melted ghee, Half a teaspoon of cardamom powder, Water: When blending, oil or ghee: When deep-frying.

Detailed Instructions:
Immerse and Drain: After giving the rice a thorough wash, immerse it in water



important procedures. **Components:** Two cups of raw rice (soaked for four to six hours or overnight), 1/2 cup sugar (to taste), 1/4 to 1/2 cup of

for four to six hours, or overnight. Empty all of the extra water.

Blend the Batter: Put the soaking rice in a blend-



er to make the batter. Add the cardamom powder, sugar, and melted butter. Blend, adding 2 to 3 teaspoons of water at a time, until the batter is pourable, thick, and smooth—slightly thicker than pancake batter. **Rest the Batter:** To make the batter light and fluffy, move it to a basin and whisk or rapidly whip it with a ladle. Let it sit for one to two hours while covered.

Heat the Oil: Over medium

heat, add oil or ghee to a deep, heavy-bottomed frying pan.

Shape and Fry: Using a piping tool, a squeeze bottle, or your hand or ladle, pour the batter into the hot oil in a circular motion to form a ring.

Cook and Turn: Carefully flip with thin wooden sticks or chopsticks after frying for about a minute till light golden brown. Cook until crisp and golden on the opposite side. Drain and remove any extra oil.



Good decisions, not contemporary fads and tricks, shape a healthy lifestyle



Numerous habits that appear beneficial may inadvertently undermine your well-being if practiced without moderation. Optimal health is not merely about increasing activity; it involves engaging in the appropriate actions in a proper manner. Recent findings from ekincare's report on India's silent health crisis indicate that 1 in 3 individuals exhibit signs of obesity, highlighting the escalating risks associated with lifestyle choices, and demonstrating that typical wellness practices may not suffice for safeguarding long-term health. A healthy lifestyle is formed through good choices and not through modern fads and tricks. It consists of a healthy diet and physical activity during the day together with sufficient sleep, stress management and regular health check-ups. Those simple and informed health routines practised every day will help maintain good health more than any other trendy habits. Dr Seema Dhir, Unit Head and Senior Consultant, Internal Medicine, Artemis Hospitals, shares 5 such habits that might feel healthy in the short term but are actually causing your body more harm than good.

Skipping meals to lose weight A lot of people think that meal-skipping works to lose weight faster. In fact, skipping meals may slow down metabolism, create cravings and lead to overeating later in the day. It may also lead to low energy, poor focus and make it harder to meet daily nutrient needs. Having a balanced meal with adequate protein, fiber and healthy fat would be better than staying hungry for hours. Depending on supplements instead of food Vitamin and mineral supplements can help if recommended by a doctor, but they cannot be a substitute for a healthy diet. Supplements cannot substitute all nutrients, fiber and antioxidants found in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, dairy and pulses. Despite taking supplements, many Indians still suffer from vitamin deficiencies as the overall eating habits are poor. Good nutrition should always be based on real food. **Exercising but sitting for the rest of the day** Ten hours of sitting can not be offset by one hour of exercise. Sitting and lying for long periods of time can increase your risk for heart disease, diabetes and bad posture. It's not just about planned exercise but also regular movement throughout the day. Taking short walking breaks, using stairs as well as stretching and standing while working can improve circulation and reduce health risks. Choosing only low-fat or sugar-free foods The foods that carry labels stating, "low fat", "diet", or "sugar free" may appear to be healthy, but many of them also add extra sugar, salt and artificial ingredients to make them tasty. The health benefits of such products don't exceed those of healthy whole foods. Check the labels and choose fresh and minimally processed food rather than rely on the marketing claims. Ignoring health check-ups because you feel fine You may feel healthy, but all may not be normal inside your body. High cholesterol, high blood pressure, fatty liver disease, thyroid issues and early diabetes often occur without any symptoms. According to ekincare's report, 31.7% of individuals have shown abnormal cholesterol levels, reflecting increased cardiovascular risk. Many adults do not learn about these conditions until they have complications. Regular health screenings can help find problems early, making treatment easier and more effective.

How Much Alcohol Is Really Safe?

You might be surprised by the reality about booze. Here are scientific findings regarding the amount of alcohol that is truly safe to consume. Even light or infrequent drinking may pose health hazards, according to recent studies. Drinking less or not at all is now the safest course of action for your health, according to experts. Moderate alcohol use was thought to protect the heart for many years. However, more recent research has cast doubt on that notion and found scant evidence of a health advantage.

Lifestyle variations may have had an impact on previous research. Alcohol appeared more advantageous than it actually was because moderate drinkers frequently had generally healthier habits. A significant analysis revealed that research endorsing moderate drinking frequently had flaws, casting doubt on the long-held notion that alcohol enhances health. Low levels of alcohol intake did not consistently lower



the risk of heart disease, cancer, or death as compared to non-drinkers.

Your risk of alcohol-related malignancies increases with the amount of alcohol you drink. Over time, even slight increases in daily consumption may increase the risk. Alcohol consumption is associated with high blood pres-

sure, liver illness, injuries, accidents, and many cancers. There is no level of drinking that is totally risk-free. When alcohol is consistently drunk, it can affect almost every major organ, including the liver, heart, brain, and digestive system. 350 millilitres of beer, 150 millilitres of wine, or 45 millilitres of

spirits make up one typical drink. Many meals at restaurants include far more than one typical drink. Reducing alcohol consumption is the healthiest option. If you do drink, do it infrequently, adhere to suggested limits, and refrain from binge drinking. Your self in the future will be grateful.

5 Seemingly Healthy Habits That Experts Say Can Be Harmful



Many seemingly healthy practices might actually be detrimental to your well-being if they are not balanced. Doing the right things the right way is more important for good health than doing more. Good decisions, not contemporary fads and techniques, are the foundation of a healthy living. It includes eating a balanced diet, exercising during the day, getting enough sleep, managing stress, and getting regular checkups. More than any other fad, maintaining excellent health will be aided by those straightforward, well-informed daily practices. These five such behaviours that may seem healthy at first but are actually detrimental to your body.

Skipping meals to lose weight : Many people believe that skipping meals can help them lose weight more quickly. In fact, missing meals can cause cravings, slow down metabolism, and result in overeating later in the day. It may also make it more difficult to achieve daily dietary needs and cause low energy and poor focus. It would be preferable to eat a balanced meal that includes enough fibre, protein, and healthy fat than to go hours without eating.

Depending on supplements instead of food : A healthy diet cannot be replaced by vitamin and mineral supplements, though they may be helpful if prescribed by a physician. All of the minerals, fibre, and antioxidants present in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, dairy products, and pulses cannot be replaced by supplements. Many Indians still have vitamin deficiencies

despite taking supplements because of their generally poor dietary habits. Real food should always be the foundation of good nutrition.

Exercising but sitting for the rest of the day : One hour of exercise cannot make up for ten hours of sitting. Long-term sitting and lying can raise your risk of diabetes, heart disease, and poor posture. Regular movement throughout the day is equally as important as scheduled exercise. Stretching and standing while working, as well as taking quick walks and using the stairs, can enhance circulation and lower health risks.

Choosing only low-fat or sugar-free foods : Foods labelled as low fat, diet, or sugar free may seem healthy, but many of them also include artificial additives, extra sugar, and salt to make them taste good. These products' health advantages are not greater than those of nutritious whole foods. Instead of depending on the marketing claims, read the labels and select foods that are fresh and little processed.

Ignoring health check-ups because you feel fine : Even while you may feel well, your body may not be functioning normally. Thyroid problems, fatty liver disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and early diabetes may have no symptoms. 31.7% of people had abnormal cholesterol levels, indicating a higher risk of cardiovascular disease, according to the Ekincare research. Until they have issues, many adults are unaware of these illnesses. Frequent health checks can assist in identifying issues early on, simplifying and improving treatment.

Final Ahmedabad crash probe report to be submitted in October: SC

New Delhi, July 28: The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it would first await the final report into the Ahmedabad Air India Flight AI171 crash before deciding whether any further inquiry by an independent body or a Court of Inquiry was warranted into the accident that killed 260 people. The top court deferred the hearing on petitions seeking an independent probe to October 13 after noting that the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) had substantially progressed with its investigation. The Bench was informed by the government that the AAIB's draft final investigation report would be filed before the court in a sealed cover in the first week of October. The Bench also took note of the submissions of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that the Federation of Indian Pilots

could provide its inputs to the AAIB, which could examine and consider them, if found necessary, during the course of the investigation. The court was hearing a batch of petitions filed by an NGO, a law student and Pushkar Raj Sabharwal, the father of the deceased pilot, seeking an independent, court monitored investigation into the crash. The Bench has now posted the pleas for further hearing on October 13. During the hearing, the government run probe body clarified before the Bench that the investigation was not an "in house" exercise limited to officials of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). It also includes experts and officials from countries whose citizens were among those killed in the crash. Officials told the court that the investigation involves



simulations and technical analysis to help reconstruct the sequence of events and determine the cause of the crash.

Recently, the AAIB told the Supreme Court in a counter affidavit that it opposed the batch of pleas seeking directions for an independent judicial probe into the accident that claimed more than 260 lives. "In all probability... investigation activities... are anticipated to be completed within approximately 6

weeks," the affidavit said, subject to the resolution of pending "external dependencies". The Bureau argued that the Chicago Convention, ICAO Annex 13, the Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam, 2024, and the Aircraft (Investigation of Accidents and Incidents) Rules, 2025, form a "complete code" for aircraft accident investigations. "This constitutes a complete code, leaving no lacuna that could justify the creation of a parallel investi-

gative body," the AAIB submitted. It further contended that the statutory and treaty framework vests investigative authority "primarily and exclusively" in the Bureau. The AAIB also opposed the petitioners' demand for access to cockpit voice recorder (CVR) recordings. It said Rule 17(5) of the 2025 Rules imposes an "absolute prohibition" on the public disclosure of cockpit voice recordings and airborne image recordings. "Rule 17(5) specifically and separately provides that the audio content of cockpit voice recordings... shall not be disclosed to the public. This is an absolute statutory prohibition," the counter affidavit states. The Bureau also added that the prayer for disclosure was contrary to the protections under Rules 17(1) and 17(5), read with Schedule C of the 2025

Rules.

The London bound Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner crashed into the BJ Medical College hostel complex less than a minute after take off from Ahmedabad on June 12, 2025. Of the 242 people on board, 241 were killed, along with 19 people on the ground. Among the petitioners are Pushkar Raj Sabharwal, the father of the deceased pilot Captain Sumet Sabharwal, and the Federation of Indian Pilots. They have sought the constitution of an independent committee headed by a retired Supreme Court judge to conduct a "fair, transparent and technically robust" investigation. They have alleged that the AAIB's preliminary report "focused on pilot actions without conclusive evidence" and that a prejudiced inquiry would endanger future passengers.

Air India Express waives transportation fee on relief materials for flood-hit Assam

New Delhi, July 28: Air India Express (AIX) has announced a waiver of cargo charges for the transportation of relief material to Assam to support the ongoing humanitarian response to the floods that have affected several parts of the state.

The waiver will be available on Air India Express flights to Guwahati from Delhi, Bengaluru and Kolkata. An official release from AIX said, "The initiative aims to facilitate the movement of essential relief supplies by registered NGOs and recognised relief agencies working to support flood-affected communities."



Eligible consignments include relief materials such as food and dry rations, drinking water, medicines, hygiene and sanitation kits, clothing, blankets, tarpaulins and other essential humanitarian supplies,

it said. "It is subject to applicable regulatory requirements and AIX verification, acceptance, and carriage policies," the statement added. Air India Express currently operates six daily flights from Delhi, three

daily flights from Bengaluru and two daily flights from Kolkata to Guwahati, providing multiple daily options for the movement of relief cargo. Registered NGOs and recognised relief organisations wishing to dispatch relief material may email the airline at relief@airindiaexpress.com or call +91 7982118680, along with details of their organisation and cargo requirements.

The airline's cargo team will coordinate shipment acceptance, documentation, packaging guidelines and flight allocation, subject to operational feasibility and available capacity.

Punjab Police Heighten I-Day Vigil

Chandigarh, July 28: With Independence Day 2026 less than three weeks away, the Punjab Police has stepped up security measures across the state after receiving fresh intelligence inputs indicating that Pakistan's ISI and affiliated terror groups are planning to trigger disturbances. The inputs suggest that pro-Khalistan terrorist modules, mainly linked to the Babbar Khalsa International (BKI), along with transnational organised criminal networks operating from abroad, are likely to attempt terror attacks involving weapons, espionage and drone activity. Sources claimed that the latest intelligence inputs indicated a possible significant increase in attacks as part of the ISI's strategy, which has allegedly sought to destabilise the law and order situation in the state and vitiating communal harmony for over a decade. The intelligence inputs suggested that the ISI had recalibrated and intensified its efforts after Operation Sindoor in May this year. Pro-Khalistan terrorist organisations such as the Babbar Khalsa International (BKI), besides transnational organised criminal networks operating from the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, France, Portugal, Malaysia and other countries, were reportedly being used to push militant hardware into

Punjab to foment terror attacks, the fresh intelligence inputs suggested. Officials, on condition of anonymity, said, "The ISI was planning a series of attacks through its own operatives as well as under the cover of pseudo pro-Khalistani groups, a move aimed at ensuring deniability of its direct involvement." "Newly designed remote-controlled RDX-based prefabricated IEDs and petrol bombs, low grade, easy to fabricate and equally effective for terror objectives, had also entered this mix," it added. Sources claimed that the threat had also expanded to include random targeting of police personnel, railway infrastructure and other critical infrastructure.

The threat was not limited to police, CAPF and defence establishments, but also included serving and retired Punjab Police personnel linked to counter terror operations, as well as offices and leaders of right wing parties. This year, 10 terror modules were busted by the state police through intelligence led operations and sustained investigations. As many as 137 people were arrested, while seven automatic rifles, 76 revolvers and pistols, 12 RDX-based prefabricated IEDs, 3.756 kg of RDX, nine detonators, 49 hand grenades, one RPG with launcher and seven walkie talkie sets were recovered.

Everyone in South Asia knows who is 'stymieing' SAARC cooperation: India slams Pakistan

New Delhi, July 28: India on Monday sought to hold Pakistan responsible for "stymieing" cooperation under the framework of the SAARC grouping and said New Delhi favours strong regional cooperation. The remarks by External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal came in response to a question on Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu pitching for reviving the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). In an address on Sunday, Muizzu called for resolving differences between the SAARC member nations through dialogue.

"India favours strong regional cooperation and has been working towards it for several decades," Jaiswal said at his bi-weekly media briefing. "Everyone in South Asia is aware of which country and

what activities are responsible for stymieing SAARC. After all, cooperation does require goodwill," he added.

The SAARC is a regional bloc comprising



ing India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The grouping has not been very

effective since 2016 as its biennial summits have not taken place since the last one in Kathmandu in 2014.

The 2016 SAARC Summit was to be held in Islamabad. But after the terrorist attack on an Indian Army camp in Uri in Jammu and Kashmir on September 18 that year, India expressed its inability to participate in the summit due to "prevailing circumstances".

The summit was called off after Bangladesh, Bhutan and Afghanistan also declined to participate in the Islamabad meet. In the last few years, India has made concerted efforts to make BIM-STEAC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) a vibrant forum for regional cooperation as initiatives under SAARC were not moving forward.



France hires former soccer great Zinedine Zidane as men's national team coach

Paris, July 28: Zinedine Zidane is France's new coach, replacing Didier Deschamps at the helm of the team he led to glory as arguably its greatest ever player. French Football Federation president Philippe Diallo announced Zidane's appointment at the FFF headquarters in Paris on Tuesday, saying he has been given a 4-year contract. "I'm excited," Zidane said, clenching his fists. "The France team makes you dream," he said. "We have extraordinary players, an extraordinary team. "I've waited five years for this chance, so that's why I'm a bit emotional," said Zidane, adding that it was the happiest day of his career as coach.

His usually calm voice broke a little as he spoke more about what it meant to him. "I've always watched this side as a fan and also as a future coach, I won't hide it," Zidane said. "That's why I didn't take a club side. I told myself that the only thing I wanted to do after Madrid was taking the France team."

Diallo called the hiring of Zidane "an exceptional moment, exceptional because of the person sat next to me," adding that Zidane "is one of the legends of French soccer." The 54-year-old Zidane has not coached since leaving Real Madrid in 2021. "For me it's a



continuity, a dream," Zidane said. "I had some offers during the five years I was away to take charge of a club but I turned them all down for the France team. It was the only thing I wanted to do."

Zidane called it "an immense

joy" to take charge of the team he starred for. "I have so many emotions, I am ready for the challenge," he said. "That's what motivates me." Zidane praised Deschamps who won the 2018 World Cup and stepped down after the recent World Cup, where Les Bleus

lost in the semifinals to Spain. "Today I have the opportunity to be in charge of this team and I will give everything so that this team can win," Zidane said. "I would also like to congratulate DD (Deschamps) for these remarkable

years." Diallo said he met Zidane for talks in February, 2025 after Deschamps said he would stand down after the 2026 World Cup. Zidane said France would play differently to how it did under Deschamps. "What motivates me is the game, I was a No. 10, I like goals," Zidane said. "I was a leader on the field and now I want to be a leader by experience."

His first game as France coach will be away to Turkey in the Nations League on Sept. 25, followed by a match in Belgium three days later. Home fans need to wait until Oct. 2 for a glimpse of Zidane at Stade de France, when France plays Italy, 20 years after he was sent off against Italy in the 2006 World Cup final for headbutting Italy defender Marco Materazzi in the chest. "I've noted all of the four matches to come, they're in my head," Zidane said. "Italy is special, because I played there, because I know people, because I speak Italian. All of those things."

Chepauk Ready for TNPL: Srinivasaraj

Chennai, July 28: THE trophy for the upcoming season of the Tamil Nadu Premier League (TNPL) was unveiled on Sunday. TJ Srinivasaraj, the president of the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA), and other TNCA office-bearers, were part of the festivities during the unveiling function, also attended by Sekhar Samiappan, a senior representative of YouTube.

At the ceremony, Srinivasaraj revealed that preparations for the 10th season, scheduled to begin at NPR College in Dindigul on August 4, were in full swing. He also said that the fraternity is excited as the season culminates in Chepauk. "It's a great feeling for us that the TNPL will be played at Chepauk once again," he said. "The point for having all the matches in the districts was to promote cricket in districts. But at the same time, we also want the TN cricket fans in Chennai to also witness some cricket. So, this time, what we have done is, we wanted to have the second part of



the matches to be hosted in Chennai. We are very excited about it." "In fact, most of the people were insisting that we should have some matches here (Chennai). So one of the reasons why we want to have the matches here is because people wanted to watch it. Plus, also our YouTube partner was also insisting that we should have some matches in Chepauk. So these are the two reasons why we want to host it." In all, Chepauk will host the playoffs and the final apart from the last few league games. Tiruppur Tamizhans are the defending champions. Like last year, there will be eight teams battling it out.

Apart from the prominent names, Deepesh, Pranav Raghavendra, BK Kishore Shavin and VK Vineet are a few young talents to watch out for.

2026 CWG: Kushare continues incredible run with silver medal

Chennai, July 28: Sarvesh Kushare knows how to use momentum. After that historic sixth place in the Tokyo World Championships, the jumper from Maharashtra has been on a one-way trip towards success. Ending 2025 with a personal best of 2.28m, the jumper went up a notch, to break the national record at the National Inter-State meet in Bhubaneswar last month. That leap had more significance because he has come close to breaking the record, which stood for eight years under Tejaswin Shankar's name. Days later, Kushare made his debut in the coveted Diamond League in Monaco, and finished third with a 2.26 mark.

Later on Monday, the 31-year-old marked his incredible run with silver in the men's high jump final at the Scotstoun Stadium with a 2.25m jump. This marked India's best finish at this event in the Commonwealth Games. Jamaica's Romaine Beckford takes home gold as he took lesser attempts to leap past the bar measured at the same height.

His coach from the Army Sports Institute (ASI) Jithin Thomas was delighted with



his performances. He said that Kushare worked on his long strides and strength and conditioning during the off-season. "We worked on his explosiveness and his physical strength. With his height at 1.79m, it was important to work on his explosiveness," he told this daily from Glasgow.

Kushare's 2.25m is his fourth best in the season. What the coach expects from his ward is to breach marks without as many attempts as possible. "That is what we are working more on. To clear the bar in the first attempt," he added. While there might be debate on the levels of competitions due to Hamish Kerr's last-minute withdrawal, Kushare's feat from the last 12 months is nothing but inspiring.

Top-ranked Sinner, 24-time Grand Slam champ Djokovic withdraw from the National Bank Open

Montreal, July 25: World No. 1 Jannik Sinner and 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic have withdrawn from the National Bank Open. Tennis Canada announced Friday that neither will compete in Montreal after both players were included on the entry list for the ATP Masters 1000 tournament beginning Aug. 1.

Seven-time Grand Slam champion Carlos Alcaraz was not included on the player list as he continues to recover from a right wrist injury that forced him to miss the French Open and Wimbledon. "After carefully considering all the factors together with my team, we have made the difficult decision to withdraw from Montreal," said Sinner, who won at Wimbledon earlier this month. "It is never easy to miss such an important event, but we believe this is the right decision to prioritize my health. I'm disappointed not to be there, but I look forward to returning to Montreal in the future."

French Open champion and Wimbledon runner-up Alexander Zverev will be the tournament's top seed. Montreal's Félix Auger-Aliassime will be seeded second, making him the highest-seeded Canadian in the tournament's history.

Sinner, Djokovic and Alcaraz — the three biggest draws in men's tennis —



also missed last year's event in Toronto, when the 12-day tournament began just two weeks after Wimbledon. Tournament officials had expected fewer withdrawals this year, with the event starting three weeks after the Wimbledon finals, and expressed their frustration in a press release. "We are obviously very disappointed that Jannik and Novak won't be joining us in Montréal this year, especially after they also withdrew from last year's tournament in Toronto. We respect their decisions and understand that, with such a demanding schedule, players' health

must remain the priority," NBO tournament director Valérie Tétreault said in a statement. "That said, we believe the frequency of these last-minute withdrawals in the last few years raises a broader issue for our sport. Masters 1000 events are among the flagship tournaments on the tour, and fans rightfully expect to see the world's best compete." The 24-year-old Sinner and the 39-year-old Djokovic could return to action at the Cincinnati Open, with main draw play beginning the day the National Bank Open ends, before the U.S. Open in late August.