



Marwari Community Has Played Key Role In Sikkim's Growth: CM Tamang

Gangtok, Sep 22: Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on Tuesday emphasized the significant contribution of the Marwari community to the social and economic development of the state while attending the Foundation Day celebration of the Sikkim Marwari Samaj in the presence of Governor Om Prakash Mathur.

Addressing the gathering, Tamang said the Marwari community has played an important role in strengthening trade, commerce and the rural economy, particularly during the early days when basic facilities and resources were limited.

He appreciated the community's spirit of unity, entrepreneurship, hard work, philanthropy and social service, and said its journey and contributions offer valuable lessons for Sikkim. The Chief

Minister also emphasized various steps taken by the state government to recognise and support the community, including representation in urban local governance, income tax exemption, ₹1 crore assistance for the Marwari Dharamshala in Gangtok, its inclusion among the 21 recognised Sikkimese communities, state-level recognition of Holi and support through various Chief Minister's Welfare Schemes.

Tamang expressed confidence that the Marwari community would continue to remain an important partner in Sikkim's growth and development as the state works towards "Sunaulo, Samriddha and Saamarth Sikkim" and "Vikshit Sikkim @ 2047." He extended his best wishes to the Sikkim Marwari Samaj for continued unity, progress and prosperity.

'Minority Community Votes For BJP': Assam CM Himanta On Nagaon Bypoll

Guwahati, Sep 22: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday said members of minority communities have supported the BJP in the past and claimed that the party receives votes from Muslim-majority areas of the Nagaon Lok Sabha constituency. Speaking to reporters in Diphu ahead of the October 6 Nagaon Lok Sabha bypoll, Sarma cited the voting pattern in the constituency's assembly segments, saying the BJP secured more than 40,000 votes in Dhing, Rupohihat, Laharighat and Samaguri in the last Lok Sabha election. "There are not many Hindu people in these assembly segments, which implies that the minority community regularly votes for the BJP," Sarma said, adding that although the percentage of support may be limited, the party receives a share of minority votes.

Sarma said the BJP expects this support to increase in the upcoming bypoll. He attributed the support to what he described as the state government's development initiatives, peace and social harmony. The



chief minister also said Nagaon was not traditionally a BJP-held seat but claimed that the party had witnessed a change in support in recent weeks. The bypoll was necessitated by the resignation of former Congress MP Pradyut Bordoloi, who later joined the BJP and contested the

Assam Assembly election from Dispur. Polling is scheduled for October 6, with counting on October 9.

BJP candidate Debashish Sharma, Congress nominee Sibamoni Bora and AI-UDF chief Badruddin Ajmal are among the prominent candidates in the contest.

45 student suicides reported from 23 IITs in five years, 28 victims from SC, ST, OBC groups

New Delhi, Sep 22: Twenty-three Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) reported 45 student suicides between 2020-21 and 2024-25, 28 of them involving students from Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) communities, according to official data. The numbers were compiled after data was obtained from all the IITs for a provisionally-admitted Lok Sabha starred question dated December 8, 2025. The 28 students accounted for more than 62 per cent of all suicides reported by the IITs during the period. Twelve of those who died were from OBC, nine from SC and seven from ST communities. Sixteen were from the General category and one from the Economically Weaker Sections category.

The number of suicides rose sharply

in 2023-24, when the IITs reported 16 deaths, up from six the previous year. Thirteen suicides were reported in 2024-25. IIT-Hyderabad reported the highest number of suicides over the five years at seven. IIT-Kharagpur, IIT-Delhi and IIT-Kanpur reported six each, while IIT-Madras reported five and IIT (BHU)-Varanasi four. In 2024-25, four of the 13 students who died by suicide were from OBC, three from ST and two from SC communities, while four were from the General category. The compilation separately records eight unnatural deaths over the five years. They are not included in the figure of 45 suicides. However, the document does not provide the course-wise break-



up of the students who died by suicide or details of the circumstances surrounding their deaths. The raw numbers, therefore, cannot be used to draw conclusions about the reasons for the deaths. The compilation was prepared in connection with the Lok Sabha Provisionally Admitted Starred Diary No. 3682 dated December 8, 2025.

SC: No criminal action for not singing

New Delhi, Sep 22: Taking a fresh turn in a case that has remained unresolved for more than a decade, the Supreme Court, in its verdict has ordered a fresh investigation into the 2012 rape and murder of a 17-year-old girl at Belthangady, Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka. A Bench comprising Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva and Justice Sanjay Kumar allowed the appeal filed by the mother of the deceased victim, Kusumavati Gowda, and set aside the Karnataka High Court's order of August 30, 2024 which had dismissed the petition seeking reinvestigation. "The manner

in which the investigation had progressed shocks the very conscience of the court. Injustice to a person falsely charged can be compensated, but injustice to a victim who has been brutally raped and murdered cannot be compensated," the court observed, in its 49-page judgement, accessed by the TNIE.

The bench reiterated that fair investigation is a constitutional right under Article 21, and that investigation must be fair, transparent and judicious. It added that in exceptional circumstances a Constitutional Court can order fresh investigation to pre-



vent miscarriage of criminal justice. The Advocates who fought the case in the top court were; Senior advocates, Sobha Gupta, Shekhar G Devasa and Thashmitha Muthanna, Advocate. In its verdict, the Supreme Court has directed the State of Karnataka to constitute a Special Investigation

Team (SIT) headed by a senior police officer and comprising investigators experienced in modern investigative technology. Importantly, no officer associated with the earlier investigations by the Belthangady Police, CID or CBI can be part of the new SIT. The deceased girl, aged approximately 17 years, was a second-year Pre-University student at Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College, Dharmasthala.

On October 9, 2012, she left home for college and returned later in the afternoon and was last seen walking towards her house. When she did

not return home, her family and local residents searched for her and a missing complaint was lodged with the Belthangady Police. On October 10, 2012, her dead body was found in thick bushes near Mannasanka. The body was found in a half-naked condition, with one hand tied to a tree using part of her college uniform. The post-mortem indicated injuries, strangulation and sexual assault. Sections 376 (Rape) and 302 (Murder) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) were subsequently added to the case. The initial investigation was conducted by the Belthangady Police.



NSE IPO priced at Rs 1,700-1,785; mega offer to test investor appetite ahead of September 17 opening

Shillong: National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE) has announced the price band for its initial public offering (IPO) at Rs 1,700 to Rs 1,785 per equity share of face value Rs 1 each. The IPO will open for subscription on September 17, 2026 and close on September 21, with anchor investor bidding scheduled for September 16. The minimum bid lot has been fixed at eight equity shares and in multiples of eight thereafter.

The IPO comprises an offer for sale of up to 126,436,650 equity shares by existing corporate shareholders, including State Bank of India, Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, Aranda Investments (Mauritius) Pte Ltd, MS Strategic (Mauritius) Ltd, The New India Assurance Company Ltd, SBI Capital Mar-



kets, Bank of Baroda, Stock Holding Corporation of India, General Insurance

Corporation of India and United India Insurance Company.

The book-built issue will have no more than 50% reserved for Qualified Institutional Buyers, not less than 15% for Non-Institutional Investors and not less than 35% for Retail Individual Investors.

NSE reported revenue from operations of Rs 4,560 crore in the June 2026 quarter, compared with Rs 4,032 crore a year earlier, while net profit increased to Rs 3,121 crore from Rs 2,811 crore.

As of June 30, 2026, NSE had 132.37 million unique registered investors, 261.36 million registered investor accounts, 1,328 trading members and 3,005 listed entities. The equity shares are proposed to be listed on BSE.

Kalyan Jewellers unveils redesigned Guwahati showrooms with launch offers

Guwahati: Kalyan Jewellers is expanding its presence in Assam with the launch of redesigned showrooms at Lachit Nagar and A.T. Road in Guwahati, as the jewellery retailer seeks to strengthen its footprint in the state's growing retail market. The revamped outlets will be inaugurated by Bollywood actor Ajay Devgn on September 23 at 5 pm and 5:45 pm, respectively. The two showrooms will offer contemporary designs and an upgraded shopping experience, taking Kalyan Jewellers' total presence in Assam to three outlets.

In Guwahati, the expansion comes amid sustained consumer demand for wedding jewellery, traditional designs, diamonds and everyday wear. The company's wider portfolio is expected to cater to different segments, with collections including Muhurat, Mudhra, Nimah, Glo, Ziah, Anokhi, Apoorva, Antara, Hera, Rang and its recently launched Lila range.

To mark the launch, Kalyan Jewellers is offering 30% off on making charges and zero deduction on old gold exchange, along with its Special Gold Board Rate across showrooms. Ramesh Kalyanaraman, Executive Director, said Assam remains an important market and the redesigned outlets would offer greater convenience, accessibility and value. The company said all jewellery is BIS-hallmarked and undergoes multiple purity checks. Customers will also receive its 4-Level Assurance Certificate covering purity, lifetime maintenance, product information and transparent exchange and buy-back policies.

Himani Best Choice unveils new identity, targets Rs 15,000 crore brand revenue

Aizawl: Himani Best Choice (HBC), the Rs 10,000-crore edible oil brand of Emami Agrotech Ltd, has unveiled a refreshed brand identity, new packaging and a marketing campaign as it enters the next phase of its growth strategy, with a target of achieving Rs 15,000 crore in brand revenues over the next three to five years.

The company has also expanded beyond edible oils by entering the Foods segment with a portfolio of Multipurpose Maida, Bakery Maida, Atta and Matar Besan, primarily targeting institutional consumers. The initial products are available in 30 kg and 50 kg packs, with further category expansion planned.

The packaging revamp covers HBC's Soyabean, Palm, Sunflower and Kachchi Ghani Mustard Oil variants and features a new logo, contemporary colour palette, graphics and food imagery. Pack formats across pouches, PET bottles, jars, tins and bulk containers have also been standardised in line with new Central Government guidelines.

Launched in 2014, HBC is the market leader



in Soyabean and Palm Oil in West Bengal and holds the No. 1 position in Palm Oil across Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand and East Uttar Pradesh. It has an estimated 70% market share in Mizoram.

Emami Group Director Vibhash V. Agarwal said the company aims to build a Rs 1,000-crore HBC portfolio in Foods over the next three years.

Emami Agrotech, with annual turnover of Rs 20,000 crore, has 12,000 TPD refining capacity and four manufacturing facilities across India.

NISM-SEBI quiz in Guwahati puts Northeast's young investors to the test



Guwahati: The National Institute of Securities Markets (NISM), in collaboration with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), held the North-Eastern Regional Round of the National Financial Literacy Quiz (NFLQ) 2026 at Cotton University on September 12-13, bringing together undergraduate and postgraduate students from seven Northeastern states.

The fifth regional round of the nationwide initiative tested participants on financial products, market mechanisms, investment principles, investor rights, regulations, market intermediaries and responsible financial practices. More than four lakh students participated in the college and online qualifying rounds, with leading teams progressing to regional contests across six zones.

NISM Director Sashi Krishnan said financial literacy must go beyond basic con-

cepts to include risk awareness and understanding when to exercise caution with money. SEBI officials M.V.N. Surya Kumar and K. Satish Babu said informed investors are critical to building a resilient and trustworthy securities market.

Cotton University emerged as the major winner in Guwahati. Its Department of Arts teams won the top Rs 40,000 prizes in both undergraduate and postgraduate categories. Tripura University and Jorhat Engineering College secured second and third positions in the UG category, while Girijananda Chowdhury University and Tezpur University finished second and third among PG teams.

Twelve UG and 12 PG institutions from the Northeast qualified for the national rounds, culminating in the November finale at NISM Campus, Patalganga, Maharashtra.

ICICI Prudential Life's 99.31% claim settlement ratio signals focus on customer payouts

Imphal: For families dealing with the loss of a loved one, timely access to insurance benefits can provide crucial financial support. Against this backdrop, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance reported a claim settlement ratio of 99.31% in Q1-FY2027, the highest among leading life insurers in India based on public disclosures through Form L-39 and L-40.

During the quarter, the company settled individual death claims worth Rs.414.08 crore. Its average value per claim was around Rs.15 lakh, which the company said was the highest among leading life insurers for Q1-FY2027. The

average settlement turnaround time for non-investigated claims was one day from the date of receipt of the last document.

Mr. Sarang Gokhale, Chief - Underwriting and Retail Claims, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance, said, "At ICICI Prudential Life, we are committed to making the claims process simple, seamless and timely for our customers and their families. In Q1-FY2027, our claim settlement ratio was highest in the industry at 99.31% and our average claim settlement turnaround time for non-investigated claims was just 1 day from last document received date. Besides,



we settled Rs.414.08 crore in death claims."

The company said customers can lodge and track claims through its mobile app, WhatsApp, chatbot and website. Under its 'Claim for

Sure' initiative, around Rs.75 crore was paid within one day for eligible claims.

Gokhale said, "Our customer-first approach and strong focus towards digitalisation empowers us to settle claims

quickly and provide timely financial relief when families need it the most. We continue to strengthen our digital processes, so families receive timely support when it matters most."

SBI General Insurance targets flood-hit Assam households with food and relief support



Mumbai: SBI General Insurance has stepped up its relief and recovery efforts for flood-affected communities in Assam, partnering with The Akshaya Patra Foundation and Ayang Trust to provide hot meals and essential relief materials.

Under the initiative, The Akshaya Patra Foundation

is facilitating fresh, hygienic and nutritious hot meals for flood-affected families in Jorhat district. In parallel, Ayang Trust is supporting the distribution of essential relief kits to 1,000 households across Jorhat, Sivasagar and Charaideo. The allocation covers 300 households in Jorhat, 400 in Sivasagar and

300 in Charaideo, benefiting around 4,000 individuals. The kits, prepared in coordination with district administrations, contain bed sheets, blankets, plastic buckets with mugs, sanitary pads and essential utensils.

SBI General Insurance MD and CEO Naveen Chandra Jha said the company aims to provide meaningful support to communities during natural disasters. Head-Marketing & CSR Rathin Lahiri emphasised timely assistance based on ground-level needs.

Established in 2009, SBI General reported gross direct premium of Rs 15,904 crore in FY2025-26, registering 14.5% year-on-year growth. The insurer has over 9,900 employees and 182 branches, and is also providing motor and property claims assistance to affected customers in Assam.

Siemens opens applications for 14th scholarship programme to build industry-ready engineering talent

Mumbai: Siemens Limited has announced the launch of the 14th edition of the Siemens Scholarship Program, inviting applications from deserving and meritorious first-year engineering students enrolled in government engineering colleges across India.

The four-year scholarship initiative provides financial assistance to students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and aims to promote equal access to technical education. As part of its focus on gender inclusion, 50% of the scholarships are reserved for girls.

Based on the German Dual Education model, the programme combines academic learning with industry exposure to support the holistic development of students and prepare them for sustainable careers in engineering, research and development and manufacturing. Siemens said the initiative leverages its expertise in in-

novative technologies and industry know-how to promote technical education and develop industry-ready talent.

As of 2026, more than 2,300 students from 176 government engineering colleges across 28 states have been part of the Siemens Scholarship Program.

First-year students from Mechanical/Production, Electrical, Electronics/Instrumentation, Electronics and Telecommunication, and Computer/Information Technology streams are eligible. Applicants must be up to 20 years old, have a minimum 60% SSC aggregate and at least 50% HSC aggregate, including 60% in PCM. Annual family income must not exceed Rs 2 lakh.

The last date to apply is October 10, 2026. Applications can be submitted at www.siemens.co.in/scholarship.

Mahindra expands XUV 3XO REVX range with new variants

Guwahati: Mahindra & Mahindra has expanded its XUV 3XO REVX portfolio, introducing the XUV 3XO REVX EDGE at ₹9.39 lakh (ex-showroom) and a petrol automatic version of the REVX M(O) at ₹9.99 lakh, strengthening its offering in the competitive sub-₹10 lakh SUV segment.

The REVX EDGE is available with a 1.2-litre mStallion TCMPPi petrol engine with manual and automatic transmissions, and a 1.5-litre turbo-diesel engine with manual and AMT options. The ₹9.39-lakh EDGE features black leatherette seats, a 26.03 cm HD infotainment system with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay, cruise control, rear-view camera, rear AC vents and rear armrest. The EDGE (O), priced at ₹9.89 lakh, adds a panoramic sunroof, roof rails, electrically foldable ORVMs, passive keyless entry, push-button start, automatic headlamps and wipers.

Both variants come with 35 standard safety features, including six airbags, ESC, ISOFIX



mounts, reverse parking sensors and three-point seat belts with reminders.

In Guwahati, the new pricing and feature mix could strengthen Mahindra's positioning among buyers seeking premium compact SUVs without moving significantly beyond the ₹10-lakh price band. The availability of petrol, diesel, manual, automatic and AMT options also widens customer choice in the city's growing SUV market. Mahindra said the XUV 3XO has crossed 2.5 lakh sales in under 2.5 years, becoming its fastest SUV to reach the milestone. The range is offered in five colours.

Aviva Life Insurance adds return-of-premium option to protection portfolio

Guwahati: Aviva Life Insurance Company India Ltd has launched the Aviva Smart Return of Premium Term Plan, expanding its protection portfolio with a term insurance proposition that returns the total premiums paid if the policyholder survives until maturity, subject to policy terms and conditions.

The plan offers policy terms of 10 to 30 years and life cover ranging from ₹5 lakh to ₹50 lakh, subject to eligibility. Individuals aged 18 to 60 years can enter the plan, with the maximum maturity age set at 75 years. Premiums can be paid monthly, quarterly, half-yearly or annually.

The product also provides optional Accidental Casualty and Critical Illness riders, while customers can opt for coverage under the Married

Women's Property Act (MWPA) to safeguard policy benefits for their spouse and/or children. A policy loan of up to 80% of the surrender value is available, subject to policy conditions, while tax benefits will apply according to prevailing laws.

In Guwahati, the launch adds another option for customers seeking life protection alongside longer-term financial planning. The availability of multiple premium frequencies and policy durations could offer flexibility to households with different financial commitments and protection requirements across Assam.

Aviva Life Insurance CEO and MD Asit Rath said the proposition combines life



protection with a defined return of applicable premiums. Chief Distribution Officer Rajat Srivastava said the offering would strengthen the company's protection portfolio and support wider customer engagement across channels and markets, in line with the industry vision of "Insurance for All by 2047".

Xiaomi raises mid-range smartphone stakes with Redmi Note 17 Pro series

Guwahati: Xiaomi India has launched the REDMI Note 17 Pro Series, comprising the REDMI Note 17 Pro and REDMI Note 17 Pro Max, as the company seeks to strengthen its position in the competitive mid-range smartphone market with a focus on battery capacity, durability, imaging and performance.

The REDMI Note 17 Pro Max comes with a 10,000mAh silicon-carbon battery and 100W Xiaomi HyperCharge, while the Pro features a 9,000mAh battery with 67W HyperCharge. Both models support wired

reverse charging and include their respective charging adapters. Xiaomi has also equipped the devices with SGS and TÜV Double Five-Star Quality Certifications, Corning Gorilla Victus 2 and IP66, IP68, IP69 and IP69K ratings.

Both smartphones feature a 6.83-inch 1.5K AMOLED Super Sunlight Display with 3,500 nits peak brightness, 120Hz refresh rate, 12-bit colour depth and TÜV Triple Eye Protection. The Pro Max gets a 50MP OIS main camera with an f/1.5 aperture, while the Pro features a

50MP OIS main camera with an f/1.8 aperture.

In Guwahati, the launch expands Xiaomi's premium-feature offering in the mid-range category, where demand is increasingly centred on long battery life, 5G connectivity, cameras and durability. The combination of large batteries and fast charging could particularly appeal to consumers seeking all-day smartphone usage.

The Pro 5G goes on sale from September 17 and the Pro Max 5G from September 23 through mi.com, Amazon.in and Xiaomi Retail. Offers



include up to ₹5,000 instant bank discount or eligible cashback, along with You-

Tube Premium Lite, Google One and EazyDiner Prime benefits. Eligible Jio users

can also access an OTT Pass and 18 months of Google Gemini Pro benefits.



RSL Group, Casio partner to scale contemporary keyboard education across India



New Delhi: RSL Group and Casio have announced a strategic partnership to strengthen keyboard education across India through co-branded learning resources and a nationwide teacher development programme. The collaboration brings together RSL's expertise in contemporary music education and Casio's global experience in musical instrument manufacturing.

As part of the partnership, the companies will jointly develop three physical learning method books — Beginner Piano Method Book, Beginner Keyboard Method Book and Advanced Keyboard Method Book — supported by interactive digital lesson content featuring Casio instruments. The books will be supplied with selected Casio keyboard models. The programme will provide a structured progression using Casio's Slim & Smart keyboard range for beginners, Standard and Indian series keyboards for progressive learning, and its premium Digital Piano lineup for advanced and professional users. The initiative targets more than 150,000 music enthusiasts and 1,000 music teachers across India over the next three years. Teacher development workshops will commence in 2026 and will be conducted by experienced RSL trainers from India and the UK, covering teaching techniques, learner engagement, contemporary repertoire and creativity.

RSL CEO Tim Bennett-Hart, RSL India Country Director Arup Gohain and Casio India Managing Director Takuto Kimura welcomed the collaboration as a step towards making music education more accessible and engaging.

TATA Starbucks enters Meghalaya as Shillong gets its first outlet



Shillong: TATA Starbucks is set to enter Meghalaya with its first store in Shillong, expanding its presence in Northeast India and adding to the organised café market in the region. The outlet, located at the iconic Police Bazar, will open to customers on September 19, 2026, and operate from 8 am to 11 pm. The launch comes as café consumption in urban markets increasingly combines food, beverages and social experiences. TATA Starbucks said the Shillong store has been designed to reflect the city's character through natural materials, warm timber, woven detailing, earthy tones, patterned textiles, deep green tiles and greenery. A central lounge, intimate seating pockets, artwork and open shelving are intended to provide customers with a space to connect beyond home and work.

In Shillong, the Police Bazar location gives the brand a presence in a key commercial and high-footfall zone, with the potential to serve both residents and visitors to the city. The outlet will offer signature beverages such as Java Chip Frappuccino and Zesty Orange Cold Brew, along with Strawberry Açaí and Mango Dragon-fruit Refreshers. Customers will also have protein cold foam and zero-sugar flavour options. The food menu includes Mushroom Melt Sandwich, Tofu & Spinach Croissant Sandwich, Bhuna Chicken Puff, Double Chocolate Chip Cookie and Banana Chocolate Loaf Cake. Adrit Mishra, Chief Operating Officer, TATA Starbucks, said the company was delighted to bring the Starbucks experience to Shillong, with coffee, quality sourcing and trained baristas at the centre of its offering.

KISNA opens 167th exclusive showroom in Itanagar, expands Northeast retail footprint

Itanagar: KISNA Diamond & Gold Jewellery has strengthened its retail presence in the Northeast with the launch of its exclusive showroom at BB Plaza, opposite PYBBS Hotel in Itanagar, marking its 167th exclusive showroom in India.

The showroom was inaugurated in the presence of Techi Kaso, MLA, 13th Itanagar Assembly constituency and Advisor to the Minister of Urban Affairs, Land Management, Food & Civil Supplies, Government of Arunachal Pradesh; Likha Nari Tadar, Mayor, Itanagar Municipal Corporation; and Harsh Shah, Business Head, East Zone, KISNA.

For the launch, KISNA is offering a flat 35% discount on diamond jewellery making charges and 20% on gold



jewellery making charges. Customers exchanging old gold can receive 105% value on purchases of diamond jewellery. The festive campaign also includes a pan-India Shop & Win lucky draw offering a car or scooter and double rate protection on

gold jewellery with a 25% down payment, subject to terms and conditions.

The Itanagar jewellery market presents an expanding opportunity for organised retail, particularly during the festive and wedding seasons. The entry

of another national jewellery brand adds to the city's evolving organised jewellery retail landscape and gives consumers access to a wider range of diamond and gold collections.

KISNA Founder and Managing Director Ghanshyam Dholakia said the Itanagar expansion marked a significant milestone in the brand's Northeast journey. CEO Parag Shah said the showroom aims to offer consumers an extensive jewellery range and festive benefits.

The launch also included food distribution for underprivileged people, a cleanliness drive supporting Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, tree plantation and a blood donation camp, reflecting the company's community and environmental initiatives.

Renault India resumes Sri Lanka exports, expands Made-in-India global push

Guwahati: Renault India has resumed exports to Sri Lanka, expanding its international export footprint to 16 countries as the automaker looks to strengthen India's role as a global manufacturing and export base. The company has dispatched its first shipment of 100 vehicles from Chennai, comprising the all-new Tribes, Kwid and Kiger.

Renault India, a wholly owned subsidiary of Renault Group, will re-enter the Sri Lankan market in partnership with AMW Motors, one of the country's leading automotive distributors. The partnership is expected to support Renault's renewed commercial presence and provide a platform for long-term growth in the market.

Francisco Hidalgo, Vice President, Sales & Marketing, Renault India, said the resumption of exports was an important step in the company's international growth journey. He added that Renault would focus on expanding the reach of vehicles engineered and manufactured



in India, supported by local partnerships and products suited to customer requirements.

The vehicles are manufactured at Renault India's Oragadam facility in Chennai, which caters to domestic as well as international markets. The company plans to introduce the New Duster in Sri Lanka as part of an expanded portfolio.

In Guwahati, the development highlights the wider role of Indian automotive manufacturing and distribution networks, with growing export activity potentially supporting regional market confidence and supply-chain opportunities. Renault has exported nearly 200,000 vehicles from India to date, with destinations including South Africa and Saudi Arabia.

Tata AIA launches Shubh SIP, combines wealth creation, protection and retirement planning



Mumbai: Tata AIA Life Insurance has launched Tata AIA Shubh SIP, a unit-linked insurance plan (ULIP) that combines market-linked wealth creation, family protection and retirement planning in a single long-term financial

solution. The plan is designed to provide flexibility as financial priorities change through different stages of life.

Tata AIA Shubh SIP offers market-linked investment opportunities with Loyalty Additions and Maturity Boosters,

subject to applicable terms and conditions. Its protection features include Waiver of Premium benefits with 1X, 2X and 3X options, while the Family Income Continuation Benefit provides additional monthly income to dependents. The Retirement/Whole Life option allows policyholders to build a retirement corpus and opt for an automatic Systematic Withdrawal Plan from age 60. Partial withdrawals

and an Automatic Partial Withdrawal Facility are also available. Commenting on the launch, Jeelani Basha, Chief Business Officer – Partnership Distribution and Group Business, Tata AIA Life Insurance, said, "Financial priorities do not remain constant throughout life... With Tata AIA Shubh SIP, our aim was to bring these evolving needs together within one flexible solution."

ICICI Prudential Life launches Partner Stack 2.0 to accelerate digital-led distribution



Ke Saath Zimmedari Lagey Pyaari

Trusted
by over
20 crore
Indians in

25
YEARS

Shillong: ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has announced the launch of 'ICICI Life Partner Stack 2.0', an upgraded digital ecosystem aimed at strengthening the capabilities of its advisors and distribution partners across sales, onboarding and customer servicing.

The enhanced platform brings together AI-enabled tools, deeper partner-system integrations and digital capabilities to simplify the customer journey. The eQuote App features an AI-based product recommender that suggests relevant products based on customer segment and life stage and enables advisors to generate personalised quotations. LIVA,

an AI-enabled chatbot, provides conversational access to product features and quotations.

Commenting on the initiative, Amish Banker, Chief Distribution Officer, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance, said the platform is designed to make daily operations simpler, faster and more customer-friendly, enabling partners to focus on understanding and serving customer needs.

Partner Stack 2.0 integrates with partner CRM platforms and supports API-based customer service requests, including group claims and servicing requirements. Integrations with UIDAI, CERSAI, Vahan, GSTN, EPFO, CAS and Perfios can

pre-fill up to 70% of application forms, reducing KYC and income-document requirements.

The platform also offers ASBA and WhatsApp-based premium payments and AI-enabled pre-issuance video verification.

The company has over 200 partner-system integrations, with 99% of business applications received digitally. In Q1 FY2027, it recorded 27 million digital service interactions, while 54% of savings policies were issued the same day. Its claim settlement ratio stood at 99.3%, with a one-day average turnaround for non-investigated individual death claims.

TVS Motor upgrades Apache, Ronin range ahead of festive season

Guwahati: TVS Motor Company has strengthened its premium motorcycle portfolio with new variants and feature upgrades across the TVS Apache and TVS Ronin ranges ahead of the festive season.

The company said the Apache brand, which has crossed 7 million riders across 90 countries, will receive technology and performance enhancements across the RTR 160, RTR 160 4V and RTR 200 4V. The Apache RTR 160 gets traction control, hazard lamps and LED TSLs, with prices starting at Rs 1,27,990. The RTR 160 4V adds a TFT display with Google Map Mirroring, Panic Brake Alert and Type-C charger at Rs 1,41,440, while the RTR 200 4V gets front adjustable USD suspension along with the same connectivity features, starting at Rs 1,49,990.

The flagship Apache RR 310 and RTR 310 will be offered in Black Diamond



Editions featuring new liveries and an all-black finish. The RR 310 also gains Keyless Ride technology. Prices start at Rs 2,87,790 and Rs 2,48,990, respectively. TVS Ronin gets a new Base+ variant priced at Rs 1,42,490, while Mid and Top variants receive upgrades including connected cluster, Type-C charger, traction control and premium seat.

In Guwahati, the expanded premium

portfolio is expected to give TVS dealerships a wider range of feature-rich motorcycles to cater to festive-season buyers, particularly urban customers seeking connected technology and distinctive designs.

All prices are ex-showroom Delhi, and the updated motorcycles are available at TVS dealerships across India from September 17.

HYBE India to hold Shillong audition on September 25 in search for next generation of talent

Shillong: HYBE India is expanding its nationwide talent search with an on-ground audition in Shillong on September 25, 2026, as part of its HYBE India Audition: Final Call initiative. The move comes after an overwhelming response to the initial audition round and forms part of an expanded search across eight additional cities. The Shillong audition will target female participants born between 2005 and 2011, with opportunities spanning vocals, rap, dance, acting and modelling. Pre-registration is open from September

11-14 through HYBE India's official audition website, with shortlisted candidates to receive individual notifications on September 18 containing their time slots and venue details. Only invited candidates can attend the on-ground audition.

In Shillong, the initiative positions the city as an important talent market within the Northeast, tapping into its established youth, music and creative ecosystem while potentially creating wider pathways for regional performers to access India's growing entertainment industry and glob-

al platforms. Besides Shillong, the on-ground search will cover Lucknow, Dimapur, Kohima, Jaipur, Indore, Goa and Kochi. Online applications remain open until October 31, with additional access through academies, institutes, WhatsApp and casting partners.

Tess Joseph Casting will lead the on-ground campaign, while Panchami Ghavri Casting will handle online casting in India and globally. HYBE India said the expanded phase is being supported by KIA, Nongshim and Project B.

LG eyes double-digit export contribution in next two financial years

Mumbai: Consumer electronics major LG expects exports to contribute more than 10% of its overall revenue within the next two financial years, as it looks to expand its presence in overseas markets, said Sanjay Chitkara, Director and Co-Chief Sales and Marketing. Exports currently account for 6-7% of the company's revenue, amounting to around \$150 million. The company expects the contribution to cross the double-digit mark within the next two financial years. "Our exports are growing very fast. Currently, exports contribute around 6% to 7% of our overall revenue, amounting to approximately US\$150 million. Our objective is to take exports to a double-digit contribution very soon," said Chitkara. "It is difficult to give an exact timeline, but based on the way we are growing, we expect to cross double-digit contribution within the next two financial years," he added. The company currently exports its Essential series to around 22 countries and plans to export its newly launched range of semi-automatic washing machines to 10 countries, primarily in Africa and Asia.

On rising component costs, which could push up prices of LG appliances, Chitkara said price increases were inevitable across industries, including automobiles and consumer durables. However, he said LG would take a category-specific approach rather than implement an across-the-board price increase. "We are closely observing input costs and currency movements. Any decision will also depend on the affordability of our products, our profitability situation and the competitive environment. These three factors are very important. We will take decisions on a segment- or category-specific

basis rather than making an overall price increase across the board," he added. The company, which is completing 29 years of operations in India this month, currently operates two manufacturing plants — one in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, established in 1997, and another in Pune, Maharashtra, set up in 2004. Construction of its third plant at Sri City in Andhra Pradesh began in May last year.

LG said its localisation level in India is around 55%, while work on its third manufacturing facility is progressing as planned. The first production line at the facility is expected to begin operations in December this year, initially for air conditioners, followed by AC compressor manufacturing from January. The company plans to begin AC production first as the season starts early in southern states, particularly Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The new facility will primarily cater to the southern market, which contributes around 38% of LG's business and is growing rapidly. The facility is expected to help the company reduce logistics costs and improve time to market, besides supporting its future growth. On festive season sales, LG said it had started strongly with Onam, recording double-digit growth. The company expects the festive season to remain favourable, partly because Diwali falls in November this year compared with October last year, giving consumers and manufacturers a longer festive window.

The executive said last year's uncertainty over the implementation of GST had also affected consumer purchases. GST changes were announced on August 15 and implemented on September 22, creating uncertainty among consumers even in product categories that were not directly affected by the changes.



Scallion Pancakes with Dim Sum Dipper

Prepare the hot water dough: Using a stand mixer equipped with a dough hook, blend together the flour, salt, and approximately two-thirds of the boiling water. Process at medium speed while gradually incorporating the remaining water until the mixture becomes thoroughly combined, a cohesive ball develops, and the dough reaches a temperature suitable for handling, approximately 3 to 5 minutes. Should the dough become excessively moist during this process, dust it lightly with additional flour.

On a floured surface, knead the dough until it becomes a smooth, elastic ball. Place back in the bowl and cover with a damp cloth. Allow to rest for 10 minutes. Make the scallion pancakes: On a floured surface, roll out the dough into a log. Cut the log into four pieces. Keep the remaining dough covered as you roll one piece thin into



an 1/8-inch circle/oval shape. In a small bowl, combine the grapeseed oil and sesame oil. Brush the oil over the pancake. Starting with the long side nearest you, roll the dough, jelly-roll fashion, to make a tight log. Twist each end of the log in opposite direction 4

or 5 times (this will make additional pancake layers), then wrap the log around itself to make a coil, tucking the outside end beneath the coil. With a rolling pin, flatten the coil to 1/4-inch thick, brush with the oil, season with salt and cover with a quarter of the scallions.

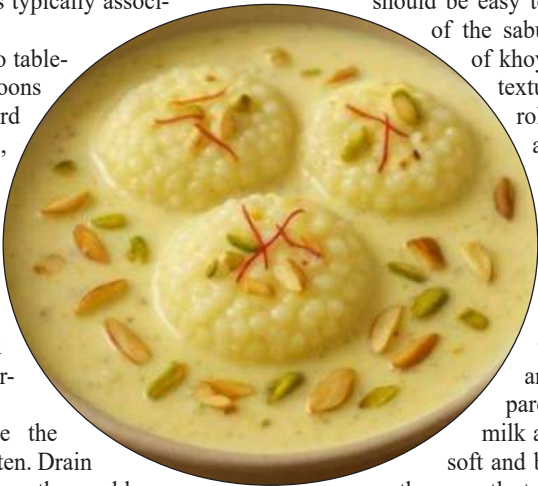
Starting with the long side nearest you, roll the dough, jelly-roll fashion, to make a tight log. Twist each end of the log in opposite direction 4 or 5 times (this will make additional pancake layers), then wrap the log around itself to make a coil, tucking the outside end beneath the coil. Roll out to a pancake. Repeat to make 4 pancakes. Heat a wok or cast-iron pan over medium heat. Add oil and swirl to coat the pan. Add the pancakes, one at a time, and cook, turning once and moving and spinning the pancake for even cooking, until golden brown and crispy on both sides, 2 to 3 minutes per side, wiping out the skillet and adding additional oil in between as needed. Season lightly with flaky sea salt and cut pancakes into wedges. Make the dim sum dipper: Combining all ingredients in a small bowl and mix well. Serve with the pancakes.

Turn Sabudana Into A Creamy, Festive Rasmalai

This festive tweak transforms the ordinary tapioca pearls into a creamy rasmalai, while sabudana is typically associated with vrat-friendly foods.

Ingredients: One cup sabudana, two tablespoons powdered sugar, two tablespoons milk powder, one tablespoon custard powder, khoya (optional, for filling), and water (for soaking) are needed to make the sabudana balls. One litre of full-fat milk, four to five tablespoons sugar (or to taste), half a teaspoon cardamom powder, and a few saffron threads are needed to make the kesar milk. Rose petals and chopped dried fruits are needed as garnish.

Method: After cleaning, immerse the sabudana in water until the pearls soften. Drain all the extra water when it has been thoroughly wet. Mash the softened sabudana thoroughly in a bowl. To the mashed sabudana, add powdered sugar, milk powder, and custard powder. All ingredients should be mixed and mashed until



a soft dough forms. The mixture shouldn't be too liquid, but it should be easy to shape. Gently flatten a tiny piece of the sabudana dough. Add a small amount of khoya to the center for an extra creamy texture. This is an optional step. Gently roll the filling into a little round ball after bringing the edges together and sealing it. Continue with the remaining dough. Pour the full-fat milk into a pan and bring it to a gentle boil. Add the sugar, saffron strands and cardamom powder, then simmer over low heat until the milk thickens slightly and becomes rich and creamy. Carefully add the prepared sabudana balls to the simmering milk and cook on low heat until they turn soft and begin to float to the surface. Handle them gently to prevent them from breaking. Once cooked, allow the sabudana balls to soak in the fragrant milk. Garnish with chopped dry fruits and delicate rose petals, then refrigerate until well chilled. Serve cold.

Spicy, Savory & Delicious: Easy Szechuan Chicken

You can cook a quick and spicy Szechuan chicken stir-fry at home in just 25 minutes with tender chicken, dried chilies, and tingly Sichuan peppercorns.

Ingredients: 500g boneless chicken (thighs or breasts), cut into bite-sized pieces, 1 tbsp dark soy sauce, 1 tbsp light soy sauce, 1 tbsp Chinese rice wine (Shaoxing wine), 2 tbsp cornstarch (cornstarch), 1.5 tsp Sichuan peppercorns (ground), 15 to 20 dried red chilies, 1 chopped onion or bell pepper, 3 cloves garlic (minced), 2 tsp ginger (minced), 1 tbsp chili bean paste (Toban Djan), 1 tbsp sugar, cooking oil for frying.

Instructions: Marinate the chicken: Combine the chicken with light and dark soy sauces, rice wine, a bit of white pepper, and



cornstarch. Allow it to rest for 30 minutes.

Fry the chicken: To fry the chicken, heat neutral oil in a wok over medium-high heat. Cook the chicken in batches for 4 to 5 minutes, until golden and fully cooked. Remove and set aside.

Aromatics and spices: In the same wok, heat a little oil and stir-fry the dried red chilies, ground Sichuan peppercorns, minced garlic, and ginger for 1 to 2 minutes, until fragrant.

Toss and coat: Combine the onions, chili bean paste, sugar, and a splash of soy sauce or rice wine. Place the cooked chicken back in the wok.

Serve: Cook for 1 minute on high heat, then garnish with spring onions and serve hot over rice.

How To Make Crispy Ghee Podi Idli At Home



Ghee Podi Idli is made with creamy, warm clarified butter, aromatic, spicy spiced lentil powder, and soft, pillowy steamed rice cakes.

Ingredients: 8-10 steamed idlis, 2-3 tablespoons ghee, 2 tablespoon peanuts, 1 tablespoon chana dal, 1 tablespoon urad dal, 3 dried red chillies, 1 teaspoon sesame seeds, 1/2 teaspoon cumin seeds, 1/4 teaspoon tamarind, 2 pinches of jaggery, 1/4 teaspoon of salt, 1 sprig of curry leaves, 1 pinch

mustard seeds.

Method: The peanuts, lentils, and spices should first be dry roasted on medium heat until golden brown. The roasted components should next be ground into a fine powder. Cut the already-steamed idlis into bite-sized pieces. Cut the already-steamed idlis into bite-sized pieces. Add the mustard seeds and the crispy idlis to the heated ghee. Apply the podi mixture to the pieces, top with curry leaves, and savour.

The Perfect Make-Ahead Dessert: Homemade Tiramisu



To prepare classic homemade tiramisu, layer coffee-soaked ladyfingers with a rich, velvety mascarpone cream and top with cocoa powder.

Ladyfingers (Savoirdi): 30-40 cookies. Espresso or strong coffee: 1.5 to 2 cups cooled. Mascarpone cheese, 16 ounces (450g), cold. Two cups of cool heavy whipping cream. Granulated sugar: 1/2 cup. Four huge egg yolks. Dark rum or Marsala wine, 2 to 4 teaspoons (optional). Vanilla extract, 1/2 teaspoon. For dusting, use unsweetened cocoa powder.

Instructions: Brew the Coffee: Prepare 1.5 to 2 cups of strong espresso or coffee. If you want alcohol flavor, stir in 2 tablespoons of rum or wine, then allow to cool fully.

Make the Egg Base: In a heatproof bowl set over a pot of hot water (double boiler), whisk together the four egg yolks and sugar until thick and pale, or beat pasteurized eggs until glossy.

Add Mascarpone: Gently fold the cold mascarpone cheese, vanilla essence, and remaining rum into the egg yolk mixture until smooth and creamy.

Whip the Cream: In a separate dish, whip the heavy cream until it forms stiff peaks. To keep the mascarpone mixture light and airy, gently fold in the whipped cream with a spatula.

Dip the Ladyfingers: Quickly dunk each ladyfinger into the cold coffee, only one or two seconds per side. Don't allow them to soak or become soggy.

Make the Egg Base: In a heatproof bowl set over a pot of hot water (double boiler), whisk together the four egg yolks and sugar until thick and pale, or beat pasteurized eggs until glossy. Spread half of the mascarpone cream equally on the cookies. Add another layer of dipped ladyfingers and the remaining cream.

Chill and Serve: Refrigerate for at least 4 to 8 hours (ideally overnight) to allow the dessert to solidify and soften. Dust liberally with cocoa powder just before slicing and serving.



Bangladesh moves to send its senior-most diplomat to Delhi as envoy

New Delhi, Sep 22: Bangladesh is moving to post Foreign Secretary Asad Alam Siam as its next High Commissioner to India, a move that comes as Dhaka and New Delhi explore ways to bring bilateral ties back on progressive track and discuss a possible visit by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to India. Siam, a career diplomat, is set to succeed Riaz Hamidullah, who will be appointed as Bangladesh's permanent representative to the UN at Geneva. Siam has previously served in diplomatic assignments including Washington, Bangkok, Jakarta, Manchester, and Milan.

The proposed appointment comes against the backdrop of a difficult phase in India-Bangladesh relations following the ouster of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Dhaka has repeatedly sought her extradition, while New Delhi has said the request is being examined under its legal framework. The issue remains one of the key points of friction even as both sides seek greater engagement.

India's Ministry of External Affairs on Tuesday said the country desires positive, constructive and forward-look-



ing ties with Bangladesh, and New Delhi is ready to discuss with Dhaka all bilateral issues within the existing structured mechanisms. The comment by MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal came during his bi-weekly briefing on multiple queries related to the current state of bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh, and whether External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is going to have a meeting with a Bangladesh delegation on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in New York.

The choice of Siam is significant because he is currently

Bangladesh's foreign secretary and would move directly from the country's top diplomatic policymaking post to its most important bilateral mission to India. Diplomatic sources said that agreement or host-country approval, for Siam's appointment has been given. The proposed move also follows India's appointment of Dinesh Trivedi, a former Union minister and BJP leader, as its High Commissioner to Bangladesh with a cabinet rank. Trivedi assumed office in June and has since held meetings with senior Bangladeshi officials, including Tarique Rahman.

Congress urges ECI to probe into alleged attack on top leaders during Assam campaign

New Delhi, Sep 22: Condemning the attack on the party's top leaders, including former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, Gaurav Gogoi and several others, during the election campaign in Nagaon district of Assam on Monday, the Congress urged the Election Commission to order an independent probe into the incident. Addressing a press conference in the national capital, Congress general secretary Dr Naseer Hussain termed the incident as a 'murderous attack' by masked men on senior Congress leadership, with the intent of scaring and intimidating Opposition leaders and workers during the elections.

This was an old pattern adopted by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, he said, adding that whenever it feels weakened and stares at defeat, it resorts to violence and fear-mongering. "This is a clear attempt to subvert and undermine democracy in the country", said the Congress leader. "The politics of intimidation and threats has been carried out in the country for the past 12 years," he said. Questioning the Election Commission's silence over the attack on Opposition leaders, he asked why no action

was being taken and whether free and fair elections were being conducted. He urged the EC to stop discriminating against Opposition parties and order an independent probe.

Dr Hussain said that the masked men were carrying black flags and were armed with iron rods and other weapons during the attack on the senior Congress leadership. He said this was not the first time such a thing had happened, pointing out that similar incidents involving masked persons had taken place in the past at Jawaharlal Nehru University and Shaheen Bagh, which were intended to foment riots. The senior Congress leader said the attack took place despite the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee alerting the administration in advance. He said the administration took no preventive measures to stop the violence. Hussain said that not only Opposition leaders but two journalists were also manhandled, which led to a protest dharna by members of the journalist fraternity. He said the dharna was called off only after the police apologized to the journalists. "The intention is obvious to create a sense of fear so that Opposition party workers and voters stay away

from the election, resulting in lower polling that would benefit the ruling party.

He remarked that this was another facet of the BJP's "vote-chori" tactics aimed at intimidating, scaring and discouraging voters from casting their votes. "In the past, the ruling party stole elections, parties, symbols, MPs, MLAs and governments," he added. He also referred to the collusion between the BJP and the ECI, through which parties like the Shiv Sena, the NCP and now the Trinamool Congress had been robbed of their election symbols. Besides, he added, the Opposition candidates were being slapped with false cases and arrested, citing the example of a Congress candidate in West Bengal who was arrested in connection with an old case. The senior Congress leader demanded that the Nagaon attack be independently probed and that officers who failed in their duty be suspended. He also demanded that all those involved in the attack be punished and that the findings of the probe be made public. The Election Commission must ensure the security of all candidates and voters for smooth, free and fair elections, he said.

'Doctor removed his eyes': School's anti-mobile drill sparks probe in Uttarakhand

Dehradun, Sep 22: An attempt by a private school in Uttarakhand to discourage children from excessive smartphone use has triggered an official inquiry after a video of the emotionally charged exercise went viral on social media. The incident was reported from a school in Khatima in Udham Singh Nagar district. In the video, a blindfolded child is presented before other students, who are told that doctors had removed both his eyes because he spent too much time using a mobile phone. Several children can be seen crying, screaming and appearing visibly frightened after hearing the claim. Some repeatedly promise not to use mobile phones, even as a teacher is heard asking them whether they want to use one.

The disturbing scenes have prompted questions over the psychological impact of fear-based awareness activities on young children. The school reportedly organised the exercise to educate students about the possible consequences of excessive screen time and addiction to smartphones, online games and social media. As part of the activity, colour was allegedly applied around one child's eyes before they were covered with a bandage. The child then told his classmates that he used a mobile phone excessively

and that doctors had consequently removed both his eyes.

While the school is said to have described the programme as an "emotional activity" intended to deter children from overusing smartphones, the distress visible among the students has drawn widespread

as it came to the department's notice. "The Khatima Block Education Officer has been directed to investigate the incident. Necessary action will be taken against those concerned on the basis of the facts that emerge during the inquiry," Mishra said.

He added that the investigating officer had been asked to submit the report to the department's headquarters at the earliest. Rising screen time among children has become a growing concern for parents and educators, particularly amid increased access to smartphones, social media platforms and online gaming. Schools frequently conduct awareness programmes to encourage balanced and responsible use of digital devices.

However, education experts have consistently stressed that such initiatives should be age-appropriate and should not cause fear, anxiety or emotional trauma among children. The inquiry will examine the purpose of the activity, the manner in which it was planned and conducted, and whether the school followed prescribed norms relating to children's safety and emotional well-being. Officials said the responsibility of the school and its staff, if any, would be determined only after the inquiry report is submitted.



attention and criticism online.

Following the circulation of the video, the district education authorities ordered an inquiry into the circumstances in which the exercise was conducted. Udham Singh Nagar Chief Education Officer Harendra Mishra said the matter was taken up as soon

Tagam Kena becomes first national referee



Arunachal Pradesh, Sep 22: In a first for the state, Tagam Kena has qualified as a National Referee in volleyball, becoming the maiden official from Arunachal Pradesh to achieve the national-level certification. Kena's elevation to the national panel is a landmark for Arunachal's volleyball fraternity, which has long awaited representation at the national officiating level. The recognition is a result of Kena's sustained commitment to the game and his active involvement in promoting volleyball across the state.

The achievement, will open doors for more technical officials from Arunachal and motivate the younger generation to take up both playing and officiating roles in the



Davis Cup qualifier: India 0-2 vs South Korea after Day 1

Chennai, September 18: Both Sumit Nagal and Dhakshinawar Suresh generated chances but couldn't convert on the opening day of the Davis Cup qualifier between India and South Korea in Seoul on Friday.

After Suresh, who had emerged as the hero during India's last Davis meeting against The Netherlands earlier this year, went down fighting on the slow hardcourts of Seoul, Nagal, India's highest ranked singles player, lost out in the clutch.

In fact, both players had won the opening sets but struggled to close it down. "It was a long day," Nagal was quoted as saying by PTI after losing 6-2, 4-6, 5-7. "I was expecting a tough match and it was a tough match. I had chances in the second set. I didn't close it

down. I went for it, missed it, and then from there the match pretty much changed," the World No. 274 added.

His opponent, Hyeon Chung, who had famously eliminated Novak Djokovic in the fourth round of the 2018 Australian Open, served better when it mattered most. "I mean, the speed is okay," Nagal, who will play the first reverse singles on Saturday, explained. "It's a little bit dead, the conditions. It's not easy to hurt if somebody is very good at defence, and I felt like Chung played pretty good defence," he said.

For India to stay alive in the tie, they will need to win the doubles rubber before Nagal's match against Kwon. In Friday's first match, Kwon had given the hosts the lead as he beat Suresh 6-3, 3-6, 4-6.



Asian Games Flag-Hoisting Ceremony Delayed For India

Chennai, September 18: The traditional flag hoisting ceremony at the Asian Games was delayed and later disrupted on Friday due to unspecified "trouble", leaving India and several other participating countries awaiting clarity from organisers amid criticism over the event's logistical chaos. India's four deputy chef-de-missions A Sharath Kamal, Lijo David Thottan, Alaknanda Ashok and Anjali Bhagwat were present for the ceremony at Garden Pier which is located close to the container-style lodging for the athletes. "We are sorry for the delay.

There is some trouble with a team. We will try to restore in another 15 minutes," read a statement from the local organisers. The ceremony, involving five teams -- Yemen, North Korea, Palestine, India and Timor-Leste -- initially started after a 20-minute delay but was abruptly halted with the organisers offering nothing specific in explanation.

Sharath and Bhagwat had begun making their way to the ceremony dais but they had to head back to the waiting area after the local organisers announced a delay. Flag hoisting ceremonies are the official welcome events for the travelling contingents at multi-sport events and are held a day before the official Games opening.



Friday's disruption adds to the organisational chaos in the mega-event where athletes have complained about delayed and cramped lodging facilities. The organisers have made accommodation arrangements at container-style huts, a docked cruise ship and hotels instead of building a traditional Games village to cut costs.

Japan Learns Cricket as India Claims Gold

Nagoya, September 22: Nisshin mayor Hiroki Kondo was watching the game from the sidelines with Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president PT Usha for company. "We will continue playing cricket here after the Games, he told this daily. "We will have 18 days of cricket here." Quite excited to hear, the question was whether it was for a month? "No, no, in a year," he said, a ready smile on his face. "This is Japan!" Cricket is still an obscure sport. It is considered something similar to baseball and that's how the organisers have sold the game here at the Asian Games. They are not to be blamed.

Naofumi and Chisato are from the neighbourhood and have never watched cricket. This is their first experience. Mimi Hirayama is the official announcer at the venue. She is Japanese who lives in England and knows about cricket. So she is the announcer. But her biggest challenge is engaging the audience, an audience that can barely differentiate between bat and ball or pad and helmet. The volunteers were looking with awe at the flying white projectile whenever Smriti Mandhana was hitting a six without completing a base (a baseball term). After all, India and Sri Lanka were playing the final on a baseball practice ground, which also doubles up as a public park with tennis courts as well as a football ground close by. The pitch was hybrid and the practice wickets were covered with astro turf or artificial grass. But because they could



not practice in the middle, the cricketers were doing their catching practice in the football ground and throw-downs and batting practice on the cricket ground. The only permanent structures here are the toilet and the baseball dugouts. Everything else is all temporary, including the stands on the eastern side. When Hirayama landed the job as an announcer here, she anticipated the challenge. "I started to watch YouTube videos to know more about the game," she said just after finishing the medal ceremony. Hirayama also used to watch a lot of Indian cricket matches. Her job was even more difficult than Harmanpreet Kaur and her gold medal-winning side -- India's first of the Games. She has to announce and interpret the game of cricket and its rules. So how was she doing it? "I was mainly

talking about rules, because the Japanese audience is not familiar with this sport," she said. "But they are very familiar with baseball. So I'll keep giving them my hints to (help them) understand what's going on. For example, when the batter hits a six, it's like a home run. And when the batter hits a four, it's like a three-base hit or something like that."

To help the crowd, the organisers also distributed pamphlets about the game in Japanese. Apart from the pamphlets, they also had Hirayama for company throughout Tuesday. When the sun set and the stadium was bathed in moonlight, the only thing in mind was whether the crowd went back with happy. At this level, would those happy memories ignite their passion for the game? Time, as always, will tell.

Asian Games 2026: Indian TT teams crash out; focus on doubles event



Chennai, September 22: The Indian women's table tennis team was in for a rude shock as it was swept away by the North Korean women's team in the quarterfinals of the 2026 Asian Games on Tuesday. After surviving a scare against Singapore and beating Thailand in the round of 16, the women's team led by Olympian Sreeja Akula was fancied to come out triumph against a North Korean team, which had no player ranked inside the top 100 of the WTT world rankings. Sreeja Akula — No 58 — faced Kim Kung Yong (World rank 159) in the first of five scheduled singles ties and was dealt with a blow in the form of a straight-set defeat (11-7, 11-6, 11-5). Yashaswini Ghorpade, who won the decisive tie in India's 3-2 win over Thailand in the pre-quarterfinals, was expected to bring her team back into the contest but the youngster also faced straight-set defeat against Pyon Song Gyong, who is ranked almost 100 places below the Indian. In a 19-minute game, Ghorpade unfortunately could not find an opening in the three sets. India's hopes then rested on Diya Chitale's shoulders. However, a similar plotline ensued with Chitale, ranked 66th, going down to 169th-ranked Cha So Yong 0-3. A defeat of this sort may dent their confidence ahead of their singles and doubles events in the coming days. Ghorpade and Chitale are expected to play together in the women's doubles event. Chitale and Manush Shah — ranked World No 8 as a mixed doubles pair — will open their campaign on Wednesday against Sri Lanka's Chanul Kulappuwawadu and Swarna Bimandee in round two of the event.

Davis Cup qualifier: India 0-2 vs South Korea after Day 1

Nagoya, September 22: There is no respite for the rowers, who on Monday were shuffled from their pet events to different events two days before the competition. As reported by this newspaper, some of the rowers were not happy with what the federation and the coaches had done because until now they were training in those events for the Asian Games.

Those close to the development said that the rowers on Tuesday preferred to train on their original boats, the ones they had been training in for the last six months for the continental quadrennial event. The sudden change has caught them unawares. Besides, the athletes did not take the explanation the federation had given them for the changes made by it. A federation official on

Monday said that the rowers were shifted to different boats because the competition itself was shortened to just two days from four. They said that the arrangement would benefit rowers as they don't have to compete in more events in a short time.

The rowers reluctantly went for practice after top officials intervened and asked them to go. Even after discussions and much deliberation the players seemingly were not convinced. The developments in the past couple of days have apparently hit rowers' morale as well. It needs to be seen how they perform in the competition starting on Wednesday. The competition in rowing will begin with heats in single sculls, double sculls, men's pair, lightweight single sculls and men's four.

