



## Brief Post

**4 rescued**  
City Correspondent, Guwahati, Jun 2: 4 girl student of Beharbari here were untraced from yesterday after when they came to their school though it was a holiday on account of Thithi of Madhabdev i.e. on 1st of June. They were traced by the Assam Police in a place of West Bengal and rescued by the Assam Police team. Further Police investigations are on, informed by Assam Police.

**Road accident**  
Mizanur Rahman, Correspondent, Gossaigaon, Jun 2: A 22-year-old motorcyclist was killed in a tragic road accident on National Highway 27 at Restekpur under Gossaigaon Sub-Division on Tuesday last. According to the information available, the deceased has been identified as Mansur Ali (22), son of Mazibur Rahman of No. 2 Burichatam village along the Assam-West Bengal border under Gossaigaon subdivision. He was riding his Bajaj Pulsar motorcycle bearing registration number AS-16J-8006 from Gossaigaon town towards his home when a four-wheeler reportedly hit the vehicle at Restekpur on NH-27. The impact of the collision was so severe that the youth died on the spot. The accident occurred at around 4 pm and the news of the untimely death spread rapidly, casting a pall of gloom over the

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## Mobile ICTC van flagged off to strengthen HIV prevention and care services in Cachar

Silchar, Jun 2: In a significant initiative aimed at expanding access to HIV prevention, testing and counselling services across Cachar district, the Mobile Integrated Counselling and Testing Centre (ICTC) Van under the Assam State AIDS Control Society was officially

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## Police Raid Illegal Fuel Warehouses in Sivasagar; Huge Quantity of Petroleum Products Seized, Two Detained

Khairuddin Ahmed, Staff Reporter, Sivasagar, June 2: Sivasagar Police conducted a raid today and seized a large quantity of petrol, diesel, and lubricants (mobil oil) from two illegally operated warehouses located beside the boundary wall of the ONGC Transport Department office along BG Road in Sivasagar town. The fuel products were found stored in around 50 drums inside two makeshift warehouses constructed with bamboo and tin sheets. According to police sources, on the previous night, a six-wheeler driver named Mustaq Khan was instructed by his employer

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# Assam achieves 91.7 percent women's banking inclusion rate: CM

Guwahati, Jun 2: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said that when a woman gains access to banking, an entire family moves forward, highlighting a significant achievement in Assam's journey toward inclusive development and women's empowerment. According to the Chief Minister, 91.7 per cent of women in Assam are now part of the formal banking system, a milestone that reflects the state government's sustained commitment to empowering Nari Shakti and ensuring that the benefits of development reach every household across the state. The achievement marks a major step in strengthening financial inclusion and demonstrates the suc-

## Extension of Services of 2 Special Trains to Accommodate Extra Rush

Maligaon, Jun 2: To clear the additional foot-fall of passengers during the summer rush, services of train no. 05932/05931 (Dibrugarh - Kolkata - Dibrugarh) and 03407/03408 (Bhagalpur - Katihar-Bhagalpur) has been extended for additional eight & three trips respectively in both directions. Also, train no. 05630 (Guwahati-Tirupati) and train no. 05862 (Rangapara North-Vijayawada) has been decided to run for one trip as one way special train.

Train No. 05932 (Dibrugarh - Kolkata) Special has been extended

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## Educational Awareness meeting held in Morigaon

Students must study regularly at home and not depend solely on schools" — DC Anamika Tewari

Achyut KR Nath, Morigaon, Jun 2: An education Block of Morigaon district today to promote educational awareness and encourage the holistic development of students. District Commissioner Anamika Tewari attended the programme as the chief guest.

tional awareness meeting was held at Patuakata High School under the Kapili Edu-

cess of focused policy interventions Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. The



expansion of banking access among women is being viewed not only as a financial accomplishment but also as a social transformation that has enabled women to become active participants in household decision-making, savings, investments, and economic activities. The Assam government has consistently emphasized that financial empowerment is

## MP Darrang - Udalguri Lok Sabha constituency emphasis timely implementation of schemes

Paban Kumar Kalita, Sipajhar, Jun 2: MP, Lok Sabha constituency Dilip Saikia have emphasised timely implementation of schemes, effective inter departmental Co ordination and citizen centric service delivery for the overall development of the Darrang district. He was presided over the meeting of District Development Co-ordination and

Correspondent from Darrang - Udalguri

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## Lok Bhavan Assam celebrates Telangana Statehood Day

Guwahati, Jun 2: As part of the Bhavan Assam commemorated



nationwide initiative to celebrate the Statehood Days of various States and Union Territories, Lok

the Statehood Day of Telangana at the Kanaklal Barua Auditorium, Assam

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# Assam revolutionizes healthcare with AYUSH Integration and Investments

**Guwahati:** Assam has emerged as a key player in India's healthcare transformation, thanks to the National AYUSH Mission (NAM) and the Central Sector Schemes, including AYURGYAN and AYURSWATHYA Yojana. These initiatives have not only promoted the integration of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy) with mainstream healthcare but also led to significant investments in infrastructure, education, and research, providing Assam with over ₹865 crores in the past five years. The funds have allowed the state to upgrade existing AYUSH dispensaries, set up new healthcare facilities, and strengthen its healthcare delivery system to cater to the growing needs of its population. With a population spread across both urban and rural areas, Assam has benefited immensely from the expansion of AYUSH services, which have played a crucial role in enhancing healthcare access, especially in remote and underserved areas. The establishment of AYUSH Health and Wellness Centres, Yoga Wellness Centres, and Ayush Grams has brought preventive and holistic health services to local communities, offering treatments such as yoga, naturopathy, and Ayurveda alongside modern allopathic care. The integration of these services into Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and Community Health Centres (CHCs) has ensured that patients receive a diverse range of treatment options, making healthcare both more accessible and culturally relevant. This approach also addresses the increasing demand for preventive healthcare, focusing on lifestyle management and early intervention, which is essential as the country faces a rise in chronic diseases like diabetes, hypertension, and obesity. A major milestone in the implementation of NAM has been the establishment of integrated AYUSH hospitals in rural areas of Assam. These hospitals, with capacities ranging from 10 to 50 beds, provide comprehensive care based on traditional medicine, offering a sustainable solution to healthcare challenges in regions where allopathic medicine may be limited. By ensuring a steady supply of essential medicines, the government has guaranteed that these hospitals remain operational, enabling continuous care for underserved populations. The state's focus on AYUSH education has also been transformative, with the establishment of numerous institutions that provide specialized training in Ayurveda, Yoga, Homeopathy, and other AYUSH fields. The government's investment in education has been pivotal in addressing the shortage of qualified AYUSH professionals, equipping a new generation of practitioners to meet the growing demand for alternative and traditional therapies. As part of the educational framework, Assam has seen a growth in institutions offering courses in pharmacy, para-medicine, and postgraduate studies, which not only meet the rising demand for AYUSH professionals but also contribute to the overall improvement of healthcare services in the state. The success of these educational initiatives has been instrumental in ensuring that Assam can sustain the growing popularity of AYUSH and meet the increasing demand for practitioners. The research component of the NAM initiative has also had a significant impact, particularly in states like Assam, where research into indigenous herbs and local flora is actively encouraged. The state's rich biodiversity has become a valuable asset in the development of new therapeutic options based on traditional medicine. Under the AYURGYAN and AYURSWATHYA Yojana, several research institutions in Assam have received funding to explore the medicinal properties of local plants, further enhancing the scientific credibility of AYUSH treatments and making them more appealing to mainstream healthcare providers. This research is crucial in validating traditional treatments and ensuring that they are based on scientific evidence, which is key to their acceptance in modern medical practice. The government has also focused on improving digital infrastructure in healthcare, which has been a game-changer for AYUSH practitioners in Assam. With the integration of digital health tools, healthcare facilities have been able to streamline patient management, monitor health trends, and even offer virtual consultations, especially in remote areas where access to healthcare professionals is limited. This has greatly improved the quality of service delivery, making healthcare more efficient and accessible to those who need it most. Additionally, the use of digital tools allows for better management of patient data, enabling healthcare providers to track progress, manage chronic conditions, and offer personalized treatment plans. The government's focus on research and innovation is further reflected in the promotion of Ayushman Arogya Mandirs—community wellness centers that provide preventive healthcare services based on AYUSH principles. These centers have become hubs of knowledge and practice, offering services such as yoga therapy, naturopathy, and Ayurvedic treatments, along with education on lifestyle changes to improve overall well-being. By encouraging people to adopt healthier lifestyles and participate in wellness programs, these centers are helping reduce the incidence of lifestyle-related diseases, such as obesity, stress-related disorders, and chronic illnesses. The success of the National AYUSH Mission in Assam is a testament to the government's commitment to integrating traditional medicine with modern healthcare practices. Minister of State for AYUSH, Shri Prataprao Jadhav, highlighted the importance of collaborative efforts between the central and state governments in implementing NAM, ensuring that resources are allocated based on the unique healthcare needs of each state. In Assam, this decentralized approach has allowed for a tailored allocation of resources that addresses the state's specific healthcare challenges. As the initiative continues to roll out across In-

dia, Assam remains at the forefront of this transformation, benefiting from increasing infrastructure, financial support, and an expanding network of healthcare services. The integration of AYUSH systems with modern medicine offers a promising path for the future of healthcare in Assam and across India, providing a model for how traditional medicine can complement allopathic practices to improve overall public health. The government's continued investment in AYUSH, along with the success of schemes like AYURGYAN and AYURSWATHYA Yojana, has laid the foundation for a more holistic, inclusive, and sustainable healthcare system. With these initiatives, Assam is not only enhancing its healthcare infrastructure but also ensuring that its rich cultural heritage is preserved and integrated into the modern healthcare system. By addressing the healthcare needs of underserved populations, promoting preventive care, and investing in education and research, Assam has become a key player in India's broader healthcare transformation. The success of the National AYUSH Mission in Assam offers valuable lessons for other states and regions, showing how traditional medicine can play a vital role in improving healthcare access, particularly in rural and underserved areas. The integration of AYUSH into mainstream healthcare not only offers more treatment options but also fosters a healthcare system that is more inclusive, diverse, and better equipped to meet the evolving needs of India's population. As the National AYUSH Mission continues to expand, Assam's growing healthcare infrastructure serves as a model for other regions to follow, offering hope for a future where both traditional and modern medicine work hand in hand to provide accessible, affordable, and high-quality healthcare to all. As the government continues to focus on innovation, research, and infrastructure, the future of healthcare in Assam looks promising, with the state positioned to become a leader in the integration of AYUSH and modern medical practices. The transformation of Assam's healthcare system under the National AYUSH Mission reflects the potential for traditional medicine to complement modern healthcare approaches, ensuring a healthier and more sustainable future for all citizens. The expansion of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy) services across India, driven by the National AYUSH Mission (NAM) and Central Sector Schemes like AYURGYAN and AYURSWATHYA Yojana, is reshaping the country's healthcare landscape, with Assam emerging as a key beneficiary of these initiatives. Over the past five years, Assam has received more than ₹865 crores in funding, which has been used to upgrade AYUSH dispensaries, establish new healthcare facilities, and integrate traditional medicine into mainstream healthcare. The state has also benefited from an extensive network of AYUSH dispensaries and sub-health centers co-located with Primary Health Centers (PHCs) and Community Health Centers (CHCs), facilitating the seamless integration of traditional medicine with allopathic treatments. The government's commitment to preventive healthcare is evident through the establishment of Yoga Wellness Centres, Ayush Grams, and AYUSH Health and Wellness Centres, which focus on yoga, naturopathy, and lifestyle management. These initiatives, along with the development of over 3,883 Yoga Wellness Centres and 1,055 Ayush Grams nationwide, contribute to improving the community's health and well-being. The AYURGYAN and AYURSWATHYA Yojana, launched in 2021, have provided critical financial support for research, innovation, and the strengthening of AYUSH practices across India. Unlike traditional funding models, these schemes provide merit-based assistance directly to institutions, allowing for more flexible and targeted resource allocation. Institutions across Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, and other states have received funding to enhance their healthcare capabilities, allowing for the introduction of new AYUSH-based treatment options. Over the past five years, ₹27,652 crores have been distributed under NAM, with substantial resources allocated to states like Assam, Uttar Pradesh, and Kerala, which face specific healthcare challenges or have large populations. This financial support has been instrumental in expanding the reach of AYUSH services in Assam, ensuring the availability of essential medicines in AYUSH hospitals and dispensaries. The establishment of integrated AYUSH hospitals in rural areas, with capacities ranging from 10 to 50 beds, has been particularly impactful, providing healthcare access to underserved populations. The government's focus on recurring support for essential medicines ensures that these hospitals remain well-stocked, enabling continuous care. Additionally, the government's emphasis on AYUSH education is helping to address the shortage of qualified AYUSH professionals in states like Assam. Through NAM, over 76 undergraduate and 36 postgraduate AYUSH institutions have received support for infrastructure upgrades and curriculum expansion, equipping students with specialized training in Ayurveda, Yoga, and Homeopathy. Assam benefits from this educational framework, with several institutions in the state receiving support to enhance their infrastructure and offerings. This investment in AYUSH education is crucial to meeting the increasing demand for traditional medicine practitioners as the sector continues to expand. Research centers dedicated to AYUSH practices are also playing a pivotal role in promoting evidence-based traditional medicine. The government has prioritized research to validate AYUSH treatments, making them more accepted among mainstream medical professionals. Additionally, the integration of digital health tools is transforming healthcare delivery in Assam, where the government is enhancing digital infrastructure in healthcare facili-

ties. These tools enable better management of patient data, monitor public health trends, and facilitate virtual consultations, improving access to healthcare in remote areas. Digital initiatives are particularly significant in Assam, where rural areas often face barriers to accessing healthcare services. The promotion of Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, community wellness centers offering preventive healthcare services based on AYUSH principles, is another example of how the government is fostering greater public participation in health and wellness activities. These centers offer yoga therapy, naturopathy, and Ayurvedic treatments while educating communities on preventive health measures. Minister of State for AYUSH, Shri Prataprao Jadhav, emphasized the importance of collaboration between the central and state governments in implementing NAM. The decentralized approach of the scheme ensures that resources are allocated where they are most needed, addressing each state's unique healthcare challenges. Assam has benefited from this tailored approach, which ensures that the state's healthcare needs are met. As a result, the state's healthcare infrastructure has seen significant improvements, with increasing financial support driving advancements in healthcare delivery. The integration of AYUSH services with mainstream healthcare, alongside a focus on preventive health and wellness, is positioning Assam at the forefront of India's healthcare transformation. The National AYUSH Mission provides a comprehensive solution to the country's growing healthcare challenges, particularly in rural and underserved regions. Assam's experience showcases how traditional medicine, when integrated into modern healthcare systems, can address a wide range of health issues, reduce dependency on allopathic treatments, and offer more inclusive, culturally relevant healthcare options. As the country's population grows and ages, the demand for accessible, affordable, and sustainable healthcare solutions continues to rise. NAM addresses these needs by promoting preventive care and well-being through natural healing systems practiced in India for centuries. Assam's investment in yoga and naturopathy reflects a growing recognition of the importance of mental and physical health, with these practices now integral to mainstream healthcare strategies. The government's emphasis on AYUSH education has created a steady supply of trained professionals in the field, ensuring that Assam can meet the growing demand for qualified practitioners. The upgrading of educational institutions and the establishment of new ones, focused on research and development in AYUSH practices, will play a crucial role in strengthening the evidence base for traditional medicine and promoting its integration into modern healthcare systems. The inclusion of digital health initiatives is another crucial component of the NAM's success. These initiatives are helping streamline patient management, monitor health trends, and improve service delivery, particularly in remote areas where access to healthcare can be limited. The government's push for research and innovation in AYUSH, through schemes like AYURGYAN and AYURSWATHYA Yojana, has accelerated the exploration of new frontiers in traditional medicine. In Assam, research into the therapeutic benefits of local herbs and natural resources is gaining momentum, further integrating the state's rich biodiversity into the broader AYUSH framework. These research efforts could position Assam as a leader in the development of traditional medical practices and the global promotion of its unique natural resources. The establishment of Yoga Wellness Centres and Ayush Health & Wellness Centres has also transformed healthcare delivery by promoting a preventive approach to health. These centers, which offer yoga, meditation, and holistic health practices, are helping reduce the burden of chronic diseases like diabetes, hypertension, and obesity in Assam and other regions. These centers have encouraged greater public participation in health and wellness activities, fostering a culture of health-consciousness that supports long-term well-being. The government's initiatives, such as NAM, reflect a shift in India's approach to healthcare, recognizing the value of holistic, preventive care alongside modern medical treatments. By prioritizing research, education, and infrastructure development, NAM is creating a more inclusive and sustainable healthcare system that meets the diverse needs of India's population. Assam, as a key player in this mission, is poised to benefit from continued investment in AYUSH services, with its healthcare system becoming increasingly integrated and accessible. As the mission progresses, the integration of AYUSH systems with mainstream healthcare will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of India's healthcare system, offering diverse and effective healthcare options that cater to the unique needs of the population. The success of the National AYUSH Mission in Assam is a model for other regions of India and the world, demonstrating the potential of traditional medicine to complement modern medical practices and create a more balanced, sustainable healthcare system. The government's ongoing investment in AYUSH infrastructure, education, and research is laying the foundation for a healthier future, with the promise of continued improvements in healthcare access and outcomes across India. The lessons learned in Assam offer valuable insights for the broader global healthcare movement, where traditional and modern medicine can coexist, creating a holistic approach to well-being. As NAM continues to expand, it is clear that the integration of AYUSH into the mainstream healthcare system will play a key role in shaping a healthier, more sustainable future for India and the world at large.

## Northeast India's Cultural Heritage Takes Center Stage Nationally

**Guwahati:** Union Minister of Communications and Development of the Northeastern Region, Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, chaired the curtain-raiser event for the first-ever Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav, scheduled to take place at Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. The Mahotsav, to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is designed to showcase the vibrant culture, arts, crafts, and economic potential of Northeast India. Minister Scindia emphasized that the Mahotsav would offer an unparalleled platform for promoting the region's dynamic textile sector, tourism opportunities, traditional craftsmanship, and Geographical Indication (GI) tagged products, thus aligning with Prime Minister Modi's vision of making the Northeast an engine of India's growth. He highlighted the symbolism of the eight avatars of Lakshmi—Prosperity, Opulence, Purity, Wealth, Knowledge, Duty, Agriculture, and Animal Husbandry—as reflecting the essence of Northeast India. This event, organized by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) through its Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE), the North Eastern Handicrafts & Handlooms Development Corporation Limited (NEHDC), is expected to be a milestone in fostering greater visibility and economic integration for the region. Dr. Sukanta Majumdar, Minister of State for Education and DoNER, Shri Chanchal Kumar, Secretary of MDoNER, and other senior officials were present at the event. The Mahotsav's mascot, 'Purvi,' a young girl representing all eight states of Northeast India, was introduced, symbolizing the spirit of the region beyond the event's duration. The festival is structured as a three-day cultural extravaganza that aims to promote the region's traditional arts, crafts, and products while offering a platform for business opportunities and partnerships in sectors like handlooms, handicrafts, agriculture, horticulture, tourism, and gems and jewellery. The event will feature exhibitions with over 250 artisans and entrepreneurs from Northeast India, who will present a range of products including GI tagged items, organic agricultural produce, and indigenous fruits. State-specific pavilions will showcase the unique culture and products of each Northeast state, with a special focus on Eri and Muga silk, two iconic textiles of the region. The Mahotsav will also include technical sessions on women's leadership, information technology, energy, healthcare, arts, and sports, with a key session titled "Towards Prosperity: Catalysing North East's Progress Towards a Viksit Bharat" to underscore the strategic role of the Northeast in India's development. An Investors Roundtable will provide a platform for stakeholders to explore business opportunities and strengthen partnerships, while Buyer-Seller Meets will focus on sectors such as handlooms, handi-

crafts, agriculture, and tourism. A Design Conclave and Fashion Show will further highlight the region's rich handloom and handicraft traditions, offering a stage for local artisans to collaborate with national designers. Ashtalakshmi Grameen Haat will recreate the traditional rural markets of Northeast India, featuring over 300 artisans, organic producers, and farmers selling indigenous products. Cultural performances will be a major highlight of the Mahotsav, offering visitors a journey through the region's diverse artistic heritage. On December 6, the festival will commence with the 'Ashtalakshmi Symphony,' followed by a performance by the Shillong Chamber Choir. The second day, December 7, will feature performances by PANGPARI from Mizoram and SOFIYUM from Sikkim, along with a Fashion Show by Prasad Bidapa showcasing collections by Northeast Indian designers. On December 8, the festival will be enriched with performances by BASAV from Manipur, FEATHERHEADS HAOKUI band, and the Tai Khamti Dance, alongside a guitar performance by Immanla Jamir. Through these performances, the Mahotsav will celebrate the vibrant cultural traditions of the Northeast while also fostering a deeper connection between the region's cultural expressions and the broader Indian audience. This landmark event aims to make the Northeast a key player in India's economic growth by promoting its industries, strengthening regional ties, and enhancing cultural understanding. The Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav is poised to become a significant calendar event, continuing to celebrate the diverse cultural wealth of Northeast India and acting as a catalyst for economic progress in the region. The Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav is a reflection of the Indian government's dedication to advancing the Northeast's cultural, social, and economic profile on the national and global stage. By creating an all-encompassing platform that not only celebrates the region's rich history but also focuses on fostering opportunities for modern growth, this festival aims to bridge the gap between tradition and innovation. For the people of Northeast India, the event offers a chance to bring their rich heritage to the forefront, presenting a multitude of locally produced, authentic goods to wider markets. The inclusion of the eight avatars of Lakshmi symbolizes the multifaceted potential of the Northeast, recognizing its contributions to India's agricultural, cultural, economic, and industrial landscape. With its combination of traditional craftsmanship and contemporary business opportunities, the Mahotsav also serves as a critical space for collaboration. The Investor Roundtable and Buyer-Seller Meets are designed to spark long-term partnerships and investment in various sectors that are key to the region's prosperity. These initiatives aim to encourage

innovation, sustainable business practices, and the creation of jobs within the region, enhancing the economic resilience of Northeast India. The technical sessions planned during the Mahotsav, such as discussions on women's leadership, IT, energy, healthcare, and sports, are a part of the broader vision to empower the region's youth and women and to involve them in the region's growth story. These sessions will offer new perspectives on how Northeast India can leverage technology and innovation to propel itself into the future, creating a more vibrant and diversified economy. A noteworthy aspect of the event is the focus on Geographical Indications (GI) tagged products, which are closely tied to the identity of the Northeast. GI products, such as the exquisite Muga silk and the famous Assam tea, have the potential to drive global recognition and tourism to the region, allowing it to carve out a unique niche in the international market. With over 34 GI tagged products on display, the Mahotsav is set to shine a spotlight on these items, celebrating the uniqueness of the region while encouraging fair trade and sustainable growth. The cultural performances scheduled for the Mahotsav are expected to captivate audiences with the diversity and energy of the Northeast's traditional arts. From classical dances to folk music, and from indigenous instruments to modern performances, the event promises a sensory immersion into the soul of the region. Each performance will be a vivid testament to the perseverance and vibrancy of the people of Northeast India, highlighting their resilience and creativity despite the challenges posed by geography and history. Jyotiraditya Scindia's assertion that the Northeast is central to India's future underscores the region's growing importance as a strategic partner in national development. As part of the overarching national development agenda, the Northeast is poised to become a critical contributor to India's economy, culture, and future innovation. The festival aligns perfectly with this vision, as it creates an environment conducive to growth and sustainability, where both the old and the new come together in harmony. Looking beyond the immediate event, the Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav is designed to lay the groundwork for a long-term, sustained development of Northeast India. With a focus on fostering collaborations between local artisans, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and global investors, it aims to establish a model that can be replicated across different regions of India, ensuring that Northeast India continues to play a key role in the country's progress for decades to come. The Mahotsav, through its events and initiatives, is expected to have far-reaching impacts, from stimulating tourism and investment to fostering cultural pride and economic self-sufficiency.

## ALLEN Guwahati scripts history at JEE (ADVANCED) 2026

**Guwahati:** Allen Career Institute, Guwahati, has achieved a landmark milestone in its history with an outstanding performance in the JEE (Ad-



vanced) 2026 results. In a proud moment for the institute and the entire Northeast academic community, Yashraj Singh, a 6-year classroom student of Allen Guwahati, secured All India Rank (AIR) 122 and was declared the Zonal Topper for the IIT Guwahati Zone. This is the highest rank ever achieved by a student from Allen Guwahati in JEE(Advanced) since the centre's inception in 2019, and marks the third time the institute has produced a Zonal Topper

, a testament to its consistent academic excellence and unwavering commitment to student success. Adding to the celebration, Agrima

Singh secured AIR 1857 and was honoured as the Zonal Girls Topper for the IIT Guwahati Zone, further reinforcing Allen Guwahati's standing as a centre of excellence for students across the region. Allen Guwahati has delivered an outstanding performance in JEE (Advanced) 2026, with Yashraj Singh securing All India Rank (AIR) 122 and emerging as the IIT Guwahati Zone Topper, marking the highest rank achieved in Allen Guwahati's history.

Agrima Singh secured AIR 1857 and became the Girls Topper of the IIT Guwahati Zone. The institute also recorded remarkable overall results, with three students securing positions within the Top 1,000 AIR, 13 students ranking among the Top 5,000 AIR, and 26 students achieving ranks within the Top 15,000 AIR, reflecting the institute's strong academic excellence and consistent success in one of the country's most competitive engineering entrance examinations. A striking feature of this year's results is that approximately 40% of Allen Guwahati's top performers have been enrolled with the institute since Class 8, a clear validation of the centre's philosophy that early, structured preparation makes a transformative difference. Allen's proven academic mentoring system, long-term curriculum framework, and continuous performance tracking have enabled students to build deep conceptual foundations that translate into exceptional results. "This is a defining moment for Allen Guwahati," said the VP-Zonal Head, Mr. Brajesh Kumar Yadav, "Yashraj's AIR 122 is not just a number, it is the culmination of six years of dedication, hard work, and trust in a system that we have built with great care. We are equally proud of Agrima and every student who has made us and their families proud today."

## Calling All Adventurers: Royal Enfield announces Himalayan Base Camp - Ladakh Edition

**Guwahati:** Royal Enfield, the global leader in the mid-size motorcycle segment, announces the inaugural Himalayan Base Camp - Ladakh Edition. Transcending the traditional format of festivals or events, this is a convergence of riders, seekers, climbers, overlanders, and those for whom adventure is not a weekend escape but a way of moving through the world. Set at 11,480 feet in Leh, Ladakh, Royal Enfield returns to its spiritual ground to curate something that belongs to this terrain by moving beyond the handlebars, and building a sanctuary for the Adventure mindset. A three-day immersive community confluence, the Himalayan Base Camp is set to host the largest migration of adventure seekers through curated expeditions, skill-based workshops, expert-led sessions and hands-on challenges across adventure travel, adventure sport and adventure lifestyle — participants don't watch. They do. Built around the spirit of accessible adventure, where people will shape the experience: not as an audience, but as active co-creators of what adventure looks like in this place and at this altitude. From motorcycling and overlanding to cycling, kayaking, bouldering and mountaineering and more, there is something unique as well as familiar for every adventure aficionado. Mohit Dhar Jayal, Chief Brand Officer, Royal Enfield, said: "The Hima-

layan Base Camp is a rendezvous point for all adventurers, regardless of whether they are driven by horsepower, willpower or their own two feet. The program combines action, instruction and a variety of expeditions that will take adventurers out of their comfort zone — and bring them back to base with a whole new set of skills and experiences." The Himalayan Base Camp's Ladakh edition is more than just a celebration, it's a calling! Whether you are crawling at 10 km/h over a boulder or flying at 100 km/h across a valley, riding at 500 MASL or ascending to 8,000 — it is a shared space where every aficionado helps shape the action, fuel the subcultures, and defines the very spirit of adventure. The oldest motorcycle brand in continuous production, Royal Enfield has created beautifully crafted motorcycles since 1901. From its British roots, a manufacturing plant was established in Madras in 1955, a foothold from which Royal Enfield spearheaded the growth of India's mid-sized two-wheeler segment. Royal Enfields are engaging, uncomplicated, accessible and fun to ride; a vehicle for exploration and self-expression. It's an approach the brand calls 'Pure Motorcycling'. Royal Enfield's premium line-up includes Bear 650, Classic 650, Bullet 650 and the Guerrilla 450 modern roadster, Hunter 350, Meteor 350, Super Meteor 650, Interceptor 650

and Continental GT 650 twins, the Shotgun 650, the Himalayan 450, the Scram 440 ADV Crossover, the iconic Bullet 350, Classic 350 and Goan Classic 350. The company recently launched its first electric motorcycle, the FF.C6 as part of its city+ electric mobility brand — the Flying Flea — a fresh take on urban mobility, blending authentic design with advanced technology. Riders and a passionate community are fostered with a rich profusion of events at a local, regional and international level. Most notable are Motoverse (previously Rider Mania), an annual gathering of thousands of Royal Enfield enthusiasts in Goa, and Himalayan Odyssey; a yearly pilgrimage over some of the toughest terrain and highest mountain passes. A division of Eicher Motors Limited, Royal Enfield operates through more than 2074 stores across all major cities and towns in India and through nearly 1212 stores in 80+ countries around the globe. Royal Enfield also has two world-class technical centres, in Bruntingthorpe, UK, and in Chennai, India. The company's three state-of-the-art production facilities are located at Cheyyar, Oragadam and Vallam Vadagal, near Chennai. Across the world, Royal Enfield has seven modern CKD assembly facilities in Bangladesh, Nepal, Brazil (2), Thailand, Argentina and Colombia.

## Sony launches BRAVIA 7II with True RGB technology in India

**Guwahati:** Sony India has launched its new BRAVIA 7II television series in the country, introducing its first True RGB LED technology aimed at delivering enhanced colour accuracy, deeper contrast and a more immersive home entertainment experience. The company announced that pre-bookings for select BRAVIA 7II models have commenced from May 28. The new BRAVIA 7II series is powered by Sony's RGB Backlight Master Drive Pro technology, which independently controls red, green and blue LEDs to improve colour precision, brightness and black levels. Combined with the Cognitive Processor XR, the television is designed to reproduce visuals and sound in a way that mirrors human perception. The lineup includes 55-inch,

65-inch, 75-inch, 85-inch and 98-inch models, with larger variants scheduled for release later this year. The television features RGB Triluminos Max, Smooth Colour Gradation, XR Contrast Booster, XR Motion Clarity and XR Clear Image technologies. It also supports Dolby Vision, Dolby Atmos, HDR10, HLG and IMAX Enhanced content. For gaming enthusiasts, the BRAVIA 7II offers 4K 120Hz support, HDMI 2.1, Variable Refresh Rate (VRR), Auto Low Latency Mode (ALLM) and dedicated PlayStation 5 optimisations. In Guwahati, the launch is expected to strengthen Sony's position in the premium television segment as demand for large-screen smart TVs continues to rise among urban consumers. Electronics retailers in the city

have witnessed growing interest in premium home entertainment products, driven by increasing adoption of streaming platforms, gaming consoles and high-end home theatre setups. Industry observers believe Sony's focus on advanced display technology and AI-powered features could attract affluent buyers seeking a cinema-like viewing experience at home. The BRAVIA 7II series will be available through Sony retail stores, the Shopat SC platform, major electronics outlets and leading e-commerce platforms across India. The 55-inch model is priced at Rs 2,21,990 as a best-buy offer, while the 65-inch variant is priced at Rs 2,74,990. Larger screen models are expected to be launched by the end of June and July 2026.

## Oakley launches Players Collection with Kylian Mbappé and Jaylen Brown

**Guwahati:** Eyewear brand Oakley has unveiled the latest chapter of its Players Collection campaign, featuring global sports stars Kylian Mbappé and Jaylen Brown. The collection introduces signature eyewear series co-created with the two athletes, highlighting their personal style, identity and sporting influence. The new release includes the Highland Jaylen Brown Signature Series, featuring an exclusive cocoa brown colour palette, Brown's personal logo and Prizm™ Ruby lenses designed to provide enhanced coverage and sun protection. Inspired

by Brown's off-field fashion choices, the eyewear is built on a lightweight O-Matter™ frame for durability and comfort. Meanwhile, the Kylian Mbappé Signature Series Permian features a bold lens design with Prizm™ Road lenses. The frame carries Mbappé's logo and includes the coordinates of Bondy, his hometown in France, engraved along the temple as a tribute to his roots and journey. "For me, everything is connected: performance, creativity, identity," Brown said. Mbappé added, "Style is a signature. These glasses are more than an

accessory—they carry my roots and reflect my journey." In Guwahati, the launch is expected to strengthen Oakley's presence among young consumers, sports enthusiasts and premium eyewear buyers. With increasing demand for branded performance eyewear in the city, the new collection could attract customers seeking a blend of sport-inspired design and lifestyle fashion. The Players Collection is now available at leading optical stores, Sunglass Hut, Lens Crafters and major e-commerce platforms, with prices starting at Rs 11,690.

## TVS Motor clocks highest-ever monthly sales at 5.67 lakh units in May

**Guwahati:** TVS Motor Company reported its highest-ever monthly sales performance in May 2026, registering total sales of 5,66,585 units, marking a 31 per cent growth compared to 4,31,275 units sold during the same month last year. The company said total two-wheeler sales rose 31 per cent to 5,43,111 units in May 2026 from 4,16,166 units a year ago. Domestic two-wheeler sales also recorded strong growth of 24 per cent, increasing to 3,84,565 units from 3,09,287 units in May 2025. Motorcycle sales grew 30 per cent to 2,73,802 units, while scooter sales rose 32 per cent to 2,20,740 units during the month. TVS Motor's electric vehicle segment continued its strong momentum, with EV sales surging 56 per cent to 43,632 units compared to 27,976 units in May last year, making it the company's highest-ever EV sales performance. International business emerged as another major growth driver, with total over-

seas sales rising 49 per cent to a record 1,75,991 units from 1,18,437 units in May 2025. International two-wheeler sales increased 48 per cent to 1,58,546 units. In Guwahati, rising consumer demand for scooters, motorcycles and electric vehicles has been contributing to stronger sales trends across Assam and the North-

## Renault records ninth consecutive month of wholesale growth

**Guwahati:** Renault India, a wholly owned subsidiary of Renault Group, recorded its ninth consecutive month of wholesale growth in May 2026, extending a strong growth streak that began in September 2025. Between September 2025 and May 2026, Renault India achieved cumulative wholesales of 38,225 units, reflecting

a robust 46% growth compared to the same period last year. In May 2026, Renault was one of only two passenger vehicle manufacturers in India to record positive retail sales growth, according to VAAHAN data. The company also reported a 64% year-on-year increase in wholesales during the month, underscor-

ing the strength of customer demand and Renault's growing presence in the Indian market. The sustained growth momentum reflects Renault India's continued focus on delivering products that resonate with Indian customers while strengthening its position in one of the world's most competitive automotive markets.

## Meesho partners with BSE to accelerate SME IPO readiness for MSMEs in India

**Guwahati:** Meesho, India's largest e-commerce platform by annual transacting users and orders, announced the launch of Project Shikhar in partnership with BSE. The initiative aims to enable MSMEs to transition into publicly listed entities on the BSE SME platform, addressing their access to growth capital. The collaboration, formalised through an MoU, was signed in the presence of Ms Lopamudra Rao, Head of Corporate Affairs, Meesho, and S undararaman Ramamurthy, MD & CEO, BSE. It marks a significant step towards enabling grassroots digital businesses to access institutional capital. Shri Sundararaman Ramamurthy, Managing Director & CEO, BSE, said: "At BSE, we pioneered the SME platform to give India's most dynamic, job-creating businesses a direct route to capital markets. Over the years, the BSE SME platform has enabled hundreds of MSMEs to list, raise growth capital, and strengthen governance standards. This partnership with Meesho extends that ecosystem to

digital-first entrepreneurs, helping e-commerce sellers become public companies." Lopamudra Rao, Head of Corporate Affairs, Meesho, said: "A significant share of our seller ecosystem comprises entre-



preneurial businesses that have scaled rapidly on our platform. Moving from a successful e-commerce brand to an investor-ready entity is complex, and Project Shikhar removes that friction. Through this partnership with BSE, we are not just helping sellers raise public capital; we are building a pipeline of compliant, transparent businesses that will fuel India's formal economy."

## Indian engineers played key role in developing AI features for Samsung Galaxy S26 series

**Gurugram:** Samsung's Research & Development centre in Noida (SRI-Noida) has made significant contribution in the development of AI features for the Galaxy S26 series, Samsung's flagship smartphone launched earlier this year. "We started working on AI around three years ago. For Galaxy S26, we developed the Now Nudge and Now Brief features in close collaboration with the Suwon R&D office in South Korea," said Kyunghyun Roo, Managing Director of SRI-Noida. Now Nudge provides proactive and relevant context-aware suggestions, while Now Brief surfaces timely reminders for important events. Some of the other AI features co-developed by SRI-Noida engineers for the Galaxy S26 series smartphone are Creative Studio, Call Screening and Direct Voicemail. Creative Studio helps users create images, transform photos, design stickers, and make wallpapers on the S26 series, while Call Screening is like a personal assistant — AI can answer, transcribe and filter calls. "The Direct Voicemail feature was developed basis feedback from Indian customers. We developed it for the Galaxy A series first and this year, it de-

veloped on the flagship Galaxy S26 series also," Roo said. Established in 2007, SRI-Noida's key focus areas include AI, technical development and service development related to smartphones, tablets and wearables. Roo said the opinion and feedback of Indian consumers are important and play a meaningful role in the development of new features, such as the Privacy Display that debuted on the Galaxy S26 Ultra and has become immensely popular since then. "In India, many OTPs come, and the traditional film used on top of the display blocks all the things. But our new Privacy Display only enables the notification area so it is quite beneficial for Indian users. I live in India, and so many OTPs come, and the OTPs are filtered well," Roo said. Learning and development is a priority for all SRI-Noida employees, who have been trained in Machine Learning and AI, thanks to a tie-up with top IITs. "We also have an engineer exchange programme with South Korea through which some of our engineers go there and some of the South Korean engineers come here. We collaborate closely as a global one team," Roo added.

## PW celebrates strong performance of students from Guwahati in JEE Advanced 2026

**Guwahati:** Education company PhysicsWallah (PW) has celebrated the strong performance of its students in the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Advanced 2026. Gopesh Garodia (AIR 3710), Sagnikpran Ranjbonshi (AIR 3630) and

ber that this single exam does not define your capabilities or your future success. Education is a long journey, and this is just one step, so keep your chin up and stay resilient because many new opportunities lie ahead for you." PhysicsWallah provides test preparation courses for various competitive examinations, including JEE and NEET, as well as school curriculum support, operating through online platforms, hybrid centres, and offline coaching institutes across India. The offline Vidyapeeth centres in the city offer students structured test preparation, regular academic evaluations, and doubt-resolution support. PhysicsWallah Limited (PW), an education platform, was founded in 2020 by Alakh Pandey and Prateek Maheshwari. Headquartered in Noida, Uttar Pradesh, PW aims to facilitate education through online, offline, and hybrid platforms. Initially launched as a YouTube channel in 2014, PW now offers education to students through its native app, tech-enabled offline and hybrid centers, and YouTube channels. PW's offerings span various educational segments, including test preparation, a skilling vertical, coaching for higher education, and facilitating education abroad, with programs available in multiple vernacular languages. PhysicsWallah Limited was listed on the National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE) and BSE Limited (Bombay Stock Exchange) on November 18, 2025.

## Three days Water India Expo begins in Guwahati

**Guwahati:** The 45th edition of Water India Expo, a major exhibition focused on the water and wastewater industry, has started in Guwahati today, and the event will take place on June 2nd, 3rd and 4th at the Maniram Dewan Trade Centre. The three-day expo is expected to bring together industry stakeholders, technology providers, manufacturers, policymakers, consultants, and entrepreneurs from across the country to showcase innovations and solutions in the water sector. Over 70 exhibitors and more than 5,000 visitors are expected to participate in the

event. The exhibition will feature technologies and products related to water treatment, reverse osmosis, recycling, filtration, desalination, packaged drinking water, UV disinfection, membranes, chemicals, and domestic water purification systems. Live product demonstrations, presentations, and networking sessions will also be organised during the expo. Notably, the expo will provide a significant platform for industry interaction and discussions on sustainable water management and emerging technologies in the sector.



Harsh Barman (AIR 3104) amongst others, were some of the high-performing students of PhysicsWallah in Guwahati. According to the official press release issued by the organising Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), a total of 1,79,694 candidates appeared in both papers 1 and 2 in JEE Advanced 2026, out of which 56,880 candidates qualified. Alakh Pandey, Founder and CEO of PhysicsWallah, said, "I want to congratulate every student who cleared the JEE Advanced 2026 examination through their hard work and determination. For those who did not get the results they hoped for today, please remem-

## Editorial

## Defence Finance Leadership

In a key bureaucratic reshuffle aimed at strengthening financial governance within India's defence establishment, Vishvajit Sahay, a distinguished 1990 batch officer of the Indian Defence Accounts Service, has formally taken charge as Secretary (Defence Finance) in the Ministry of Defence, marking a crucial transition in one of the most strategically significant financial oversight roles in the government, with his appointment coming at a time when India's defence sector is undergoing rapid modernization, increased capital expenditure, and a strong push towards self-reliance under the broader framework of defence reforms and indigenous capability development, and prior to taking on this key responsibility, Sahay served as the Controller General of Defence Accounts, where he was instrumental in strengthening financial accountability, improving transparency in defence expenditure, and streamlining audit and accounting processes across various wings of the armed forces and associated establishments, thereby bringing to his new role a wealth of experience in public financial management, defence budgeting, and institutional governance; his elevation to Secretary (Defence Finance) is widely seen as a natural progression given his extensive background in managing complex financial systems and his deep understanding of the intricacies involved in defence procurement, expenditure monitoring, and fiscal discipline, all of which are critical to ensuring that India's growing defence budget is utilized efficiently and effectively in line with national security priorities, and as Secretary (Defence Finance), Sahay will play a pivotal role in advising the government on financial aspects of defence policy, overseeing budget formulation and implementation, and ensuring that financial prudence is maintained while supporting the operational readiness and modernization needs of the armed forces, a balancing act that requires both strategic foresight and meticulous attention to detail; the position of Secretary (Defence Finance) is integral to the functioning of the Ministry of Defence, as it serves as the principal financial advisor to the ministry and is responsible for vetting proposals related to defence acquisitions, infrastructure development, and other capital-intensive projects, ensuring that they align with budgetary allocations and financial norms, and in this capacity, Sahay's experience as Controller General of Defence Accounts is expected to prove invaluable, particularly in navigating the complexities of large-scale procurement programs, optimizing resource allocation, and enhancing the efficiency of financial processes within the defence establishment, which has been a key focus area for the government in recent years as part of its broader efforts to modernize the armed forces and strengthen national security; his tenure as Controller General of Defence Accounts was marked by several initiatives aimed at improving the robustness of financial systems, including the adoption of digital tools and technologies to enhance transparency and efficiency, the strengthening of internal audit mechanisms to ensure compliance with financial regulations, and the promotion of best practices in financial management across defence organizations, all of which have contributed to building a more resilient and accountable financial framework, and these reforms are expected to continue under his leadership in the Ministry of Defence, where there is an increasing emphasis on leveraging technology and data analytics to improve decision-making and optimize resource utilization; moreover, Sahay's appointment comes at a time when India is placing a strong emphasis on indigenization in defence production, with initiatives aimed at reducing dependence on imports and promoting domestic manufacturing under programs such as "Make in India" and "Atmanirbhar Bharat," and as Secretary (Defence Finance), he will play a crucial role in ensuring that financial policies and frameworks support these objectives by facilitating investments in domestic industry, streamlining funding mechanisms for research and development, and ensuring timely disbursement of funds for critical projects, thereby contributing to the overall goal of building a self-reliant defence ecosystem, while also maintaining fiscal discipline and accountability; the importance of effective financial management in the defence sector cannot be overstated, as it directly impacts the operational capabilities of the armed forces, the timely execution of procurement programs, and the overall efficiency of resource utilization, and in this context, the appointment of an experienced officer like Vishvajit Sahay is seen as a positive step towards strengthening the financial governance of the Ministry of Defence, ensuring that the country's defence expenditure is managed in a transparent, efficient, and accountable manner, while also supporting the strategic objectives of modernization, indigenization, and operational readiness; furthermore, his role will involve close coordination with various stakeholders, including the armed forces, defence public sector undertakings, private industry, and other government departments, to ensure that financial considerations are effectively integrated into policy decisions and operational planning, thereby fostering a holistic approach to defence management that balances strategic, operational, and financial imperatives, and as India continues to navigate a complex and evolving security environment, characterized by emerging threats and technological advancements, the role of the Secretary (Defence Finance) becomes even more critical in ensuring that the country's defence resources are allocated and utilized in a manner that maximizes their impact and supports long-term national security objectives; in addition to his professional expertise, Sahay is also known for his commitment to public service and his ability to drive institutional reforms, qualities that are expected to serve him well in his new role, where he will be tasked with addressing a range of challenges.

# The Fading Horizon: Dignity, Care, and Community in the Shadow of Dementia



By Bristi Borgohain

Memory is the invisible thread that weaves our identity, connecting our yesterday with our today. When that thread begins to fray, the world does not merely lose its clarity; an individual loses their anchor. Dementia is often misunderstood as the inevitable, harmless forgetfulness of old age. In reality, it is a progressive neurological crisis that quietly dismantles an individual's memory, language, BEHAVIOUR, and capacity to navigate daily life.

The scale of this silent epidemic is staggering. Data from the World Health Organization (WHO) reveals that over 55 million people globally are currently living with dementia, with 10 million new cases diagnosed each year. By 2050, that figure is projected to skyrocket past 139 million. This crisis hits closest to home in developing regions: over 60% of people with dementia currently live in low- and middle-income countries, a number expected to rise to 71% over the next few decades.

Closer to home, local epidemiological data from the Dibrugarh district in Assam highlights a deeply concerning rise in geriatric depression and health insecurities among older adults, particularly within our rural, urban, and tea-garden communities. With a global economic toll exceeding 1.3 trillion US dollars, dementia is no longer just a medical diagnosis—it is a profound societal challenge.

Unpacking the Illness: The Many Faces of Cognitive Decline- Dementia is an umbrella term for the damage or destruction of brain cells, which disrupts the vital communication pathways between the mind and the external world. To build a supportive society, we must first understand its varied forms:

- **Alzheimer's Disease (The Primary Catalyst):** Accounting for 50–80% of all cases, it is driven by the abnormal accumulation of amyloid plaques and tau tangles in the brain. These protein deposits gradually destroy neurons, eroding memory and reasoning.

- **Vascular Dementia (The Interrupted Flow):** Triggered when the brain's oxygen supply is choked by strokes or vascular injuries. Unlike the smooth, downward slope of Alzheimer's, its progression is often "step-like"—worsening suddenly after a mini-stroke and then stabilizing temporarily.

- **Dementia with Lewy Bodies (The Fluctuation):** Caused by abnormal protein deposits inside nerve cells. It presents a unique challenge for caregivers as a patient's alertness and BEHAVIOUR can fluctuate dramatically day to day, often accompanied by slow movements, muscle stiffness, and vivid visual hallucinations.

- **Frontotemporal Dementia (The Altered Self):** This form targets the frontal and temporal lobes. In its early stages, memory remains strangely intact, but the individual undergoes striking personality changes, often appearing socially inappropriate, emotionally detached, or self-centered.

- **Posterior Cortical Atrophy (PCA - The Blurred Lens):** Rooted in the visual cortex at the back of the brain, PCA disrupts how a person interprets visual information long before it

touches their memory, creating severe reading difficulties and a high risk of falls. · **Rare Variants:** A person's risk is also heightened by underlying conditions such as Parkinson's Disease, Huntington's Disease, Korsakoff Syndrome, Binswanger's Disease, and Motor Neuron Disease.

**The Long Journey: Mapping the Progression**  
Dementia is a slowly unfolding journey, and while no two paths are identical, the disease generally transitions through distinct phases. For families and caregivers, recognizing these stages is crucial for providing timely care.

1. **The Early Stage: The Subtle Drift**  
The inception of dementia is quiet and frequently misread as normal aging.

- Difficulty following conversations involving multiple speakers.

- A persistent struggle to find everyday words.

- Forgetting recent events, like what they ate for lunch yesterday.

- Mismanaging numbers, bills, and daily schedules.

- Subtle shifts in mood, including irritability, emotional instability, or a loss of motivation for beloved hobbies.

2. **The Middle Stage: The Deepening Fog**  
As the condition takes root, independence begins to slip away, and the need for daily assistance becomes undeniable.

- Forgetting the names of familiar people and recent milestones.

- Inability to safely cook, clean, or manage a household alone.

- The emergence of wandering BEHAVIOUR, where individuals get lost in their own neighborhoods.

- Experiencing hallucinations—seeing or hearing things that do not exist.

3. **The Late Stage: The Fragile State** -At this juncture, continuous, round-the-clock supervision is essential to ensure safety and survival.

- Severe memory loss and failure to recognize close family members.

- Loss of bladder and bowel control.

- Marked difficulty understanding surroundings or moving within the home.

- Inappropriate BEHAVIOURs born of confusion, such as shouting or sudden aggression.

4. **The End Stage: The Quiet Fade-In** In the final phase of life, the world shrinks down to the immediate bedside.

- Very limited or complete loss of spoken language.

- Severe mobility impairment, leaving the individual bedridden.

- Spending the vast majority of the day asleep.

- Difficulty swallowing food and liquids, requiring total dependence on caregivers.

**A Note for the Heart:** Even in the deepest fog of the late stages, individuals living with dementia can experience sudden, beautiful moments of clarity and normal BEHAVIOUR. The disease may obscure the persona, but it does not erase the human being.

**Seeking Answers: The Power of Diagnosis and Therapy** While science has not yet birthed a definitive cure, a timely and accurate diagnosis is a powerful tool. It allows medical professionals to rule out or treat secondary conditions that mimic dementia—such as thyroid disorders, vitamin deficiencies, severe constipation, urinary tract infections (UTIs), or depression. For Alzheimer's, certain medications can temporarily slow cognitive decline. Beyond the pharmacy, holistic interventions breathe life into daily routines. Creative approaches like Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST), regular physical exercise, yoga, mental puzzles, and structured social engagement programs have shown immense success in elevating a patient's emotional regulation and keeping them connected to the world around them.

**Home-Based Management: Creating a Sanctuary of Care** :Caring for a loved one with demen-

tia is an act of profound love, but it is also an exhausting physical and emotional marathon. To make home management effective, caregivers can adopt structured, empathetic strategies:

- **Anchor the Day with Routine:** A predictable daily schedule minimizes the anxiety of decision-making and reduces confusion for the patient.

- **Nurture Independence:** Allow them to perform tasks no matter how slowly for as long as they can. This preserves their self-esteem and lightens the long-term caregiving burden.

- **Choose Peace Over Arguments:** Arguments cause immense, counterproductive stress. When a mistake happens, stay calm and redirect the conversation. Always remember: the disease is responsible for the BEHAVIOUR, not the person.
- **Simplify the World:** Break down complex activities (like bathing or dressing) into tiny, manageable steps.

- **Guard Their Safety:** As balance and orientation decline, modify the home environment by covering sharp corners, securing electrical wires, keeping dangerous objects out of reach, and strictly monitoring gas stoves and hot water.

- **Prioritize Nutrition and Dental Care:** People with dementia often forget to eat or lose the ability to recognize hunger, making malnutrition a common threat. Diligent meal tracking and oral hygiene are essential.
- **A Call to Action: Strengthening Our Caregivers and Communities** We cannot leave families to fight this battle in isolation. True management requires a robust web of community and institutional support:

- **Professional Family Counselling:** As highlighted by researcher Siok-Tak Cheng (2019), psychoeducational counselling significantly diminishes depression, stress, and anxiety among families navigating this transition.

- **Alleviating the Caregiver's Burden:** Research by Shubair et al. (2025) underscores the invisible toll of caregiving, revealing that emotional strain impacts 71% of caregivers, while an astounding 98% experience financial strain. Pioneering work by Zhijun Yin on online peer support networks proves that sharing experiences with fellow informal caregivers dramatically reduces loneliness and spreads effective care strategies.

- **Bridging Policy and Welfare:** Mental health social workers must step forward to dispel public misconceptions through scientific education, while actively linking low-income families with government welfare schemes and financial aid.

- **Comprehensive Rehabilitation:** Community centers should offer structured programs combining occupational therapy, memory support strategies, and collective cognitive exercises to foster a sense of social belonging.

**Conclusion: Restoring Dignity to the Sunset Years** Dementia is far more than a neurological checklist of memory deficits. It is an earthquake that shakes the psychological, social, familial, and spiritual foundations of a human life. Our aging citizens especially those facing the double burden of depression and functional disability in our vulnerable rural and tea-garden communities—deserve more than our clinical pity. They deserve our reverence. They must not be viewed merely as patients occupying a bed, but as dignified individuals who have contributed their lifetimes to our society. Through patience, love, systemic support, and absolute social inclusion, we can restore a sense of security and peace to their sunset years. Let us ground our collective efforts in the timeless philosophy of the ancient Sanskrit verse: Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah,

Sarve Santu Niramayah,  
Sarve Bhadrani Pashyantu,  
Ma Kashchid Duhkha Bhag Bhavet. "May all be happy, may all be free from illness, may all see auspiciousness, and may no one suffer."

By changing how we perceive, talk about, and care for those with dementia, we live up to this ideal, ensuring that no one is left to fade away in the dark.

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## The mirage of Pax Sinica and Pax Americana: How India's strategic autonomy paves the way for a multipolar world

The strategic rivalry between the United States and China is often framed as a contest between Pax Americana and a potential Pax Sinica. Yet, both concepts are misleading. Despite accretion in China's economic and geopolitical influence, China is as yet neither capable nor willing to underwrite a global order of the type sustained until recently by the United States (US) post World War II. The US today retains the capacity but has lost its commitment to shoulder the burden of leadership in the global order that it once curated.

**Myth of Pax Sinica**

Pax Sinica is a chimera. Beijing is still a rising power, not quite the equal of the US. But it has enough power to deny the US the satisfaction of creating a unipolar world. China is a global economic power now but still far from being a global military power. Its military power is concentrated on its periphery, where it seeks to deter or limit the extent of US presence and power. China frames its national vision in the terminology of the global developmental agenda, including the UN SDGs and even the UN Charter, to burnish its claims to equality and peaceful co-existence. Yet, it is not willing to take on the enormous economic and military burden that goes with a leadership role. China seeks selective leadership without universal obli-

gations. China is not an evangelical power. It prioritises its national interests over wider principles.

China attempts to run with the hare and hunt with the hound. China is both a status quo power as well as an anti-status quo power. It is status quo to the extent that it has no desire to genuinely reform the UN Security Council, of which it is a privileged veto-wielding member. It is anti-status quo to the extent that it resents the agenda setting by the Anglo-Saxon powers. It, therefore, endeavours to create parallel global structures and institutions that are more in tune with China-centric objectives.

**Limits of Pax Americana**

The US has contributed to the weakening of several multilateral institutions. China is simply filling the vacuum. This kind of opportunism is to be expected from a rising hegemon. All rising hegemons are opportunistic in accordance with the theory of structural realism. Established powers like the US are also opportunistic and seek exceptionalism. In fact, the stronger the power, the less the resistance to its opportunist actions outside the four corners of the normative rules-based international order (RBIO).

Political contradictions in the West, between

the liberals and conservatives, between the leftists and rightists, between the internationalists and isolationists and between governments and NGOs, all these have provided Beijing with new space to advance its interests. These have allowed China to claim the mantle of championing free trade, climate action, connectivity and infrastructure.

China's narrative of responsible stewardship finds resonance in the Global South because it speaks the language of the masses even as it pursues its own distinctly national interests. It uses economic and soft power alongside military coercion when necessary to elicit appropriate responses from others, including on maintaining the "One China" policy.

The US has never learnt this art of couching its national objectives in acceptable language. If it did, the world could genuinely benefit more from a democratic America than from a communist China. Right now, this is not a popular view.

Beijing generally approaches policy with long-term strategic planning. It has a political design—that of making China and its way of development and governance the symbol of a rules-based international order. The US is giving China plenty of opportunities to succeed.

## CM emphasizes balanced approach to Welfare Programs

**New Delhi:** The Government of Assam has announced a temporary suspension of the subsidized “Affordable Supply” scheme that provides 1 kg each of masur dal, sugar, and salt to National Food Security Act (NFSA) ration card holders from June, describing the move as a procedural and budget-linked adjustment arising directly from the Vote-on-Account interim budget for FY 2026-27. The government has clarified that the scheme will be reinstated from August after the approval of the full Budget by the newly constituted government, ensuring that beneficiaries continue to receive support under a structured and financially sustainable framework. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma stated that the decision reflects the government's responsible approach to public finances while safeguarding its core welfare commitments, emphasizing that public welfare remains at the center of every policy decision undertaken by the BJP-led NDA administration. Even as the subsidized distribution of masur dal, sugar, and salt remains temporarily paused, the state government has assured citizens that the distribution of free rice will continue uninterrupted every month for all eligible beneficiaries. This continuation of free rice supply under the National Food Security Act ensures that the most critical component of food security remains fully operational without any disruption, benefiting millions of families across Assam who rely on the public distribution system for essential food support. Officials have highlighted that maintaining uninterrupted rice distribution demonstrates the government's unwavering commitment to protecting vulnerable households and ensuring that no family is deprived of its basic food security needs during the interim budgetary period. The temporary adjustment in the “Affordable Supply” scheme has been presented as a prudent and forward-looking administrative measure that allows the government to align additional subsidized commodities with the comprehensive financial framework that will be outlined in the full state budget. According to the administration, such fiscal discipline is essential for maintaining the state's financial health and ensuring that welfare initiatives remain sustainable over the long term. Government representatives have stressed that the pause is brief, pro-

cedural in nature, and intended to facilitate stronger implementation once the full budget receives legislative approval. The administration has reassured beneficiaries that the scheme's suspension should not be viewed as a withdrawal of support but rather as a temporary step designed to ensure proper budgetary alignment and accountability in public expenditure. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has consistently emphasized the importance of balancing welfare commitments with responsible fiscal management, and the current decision reflects that governance philosophy. The “Affordable Supply” initiative itself has been widely regarded as a significant welfare intervention, enabling NFSA beneficiaries to access masur dal, sugar, and salt at highly subsidized rates and thereby reducing the burden of household expenses for economically vulnerable families. The government has reiterated its commitment to reviving and strengthening the scheme from August with full budgetary backing, ensuring that beneficiaries once again receive the intended support under a more comprehensive financial framework. Over the past several years, the Assam government has undertaken extensive reforms within the public distribution system aimed at enhancing efficiency, transparency, and accountability. Initiatives ranging from streamlining ration card verification processes to improving beneficiary identification and ensuring timely delivery of entitlements have contributed to reducing leakages and strengthening service delivery. These reforms have helped build a more responsive welfare infrastructure capable of serving lakhs of households across the state. Free rice distribution, which remains one of the cornerstones of Assam's food security architecture, continues to reach eligible families every month and serves as a critical safeguard against food insecurity. The uninterrupted continuation of this program during the temporary suspension of the subsidized commodity scheme reflects the government's effort to prioritize essential welfare services while managing budgetary transitions responsibly. Policy observers and administrative experts have noted that the government's approach reflects adherence to sound financial management principles.

## India's semiconductor sector at a turning point: From vision to execution

India's semiconductor journey has long been framed as a strategic imperative in the global technology race. For years, policymakers and industry leaders have heralded India's potential to become a major player in chip design and manufacturing. However, 2025 marked a watershed moment: it was less about bold proclamations and more about confronting the gritty realities of execution. The year's narrative captured in a recent Economic Times Manufacturing analysis reveals a country transitioning from ambition-driven signalling to practical, execution-aware strategy. At the heart of this shift is a simple but profound recognition: chip ecosystems are not built on intentions alone. India will cross an estimated \$45-50 billion in semiconductor consumption in 2025, driven by demand from smartphones, automotive electronics, industrial systems, and data infrastructure. Yet domestic manufacturing still represents only a tiny fraction of that demand, underscoring the enormous gap between what India consumes and what it produces. For too long, India's semiconductor discourse was dominated by a single idea: build fabs (fabrication plants) and the ecosystem will follow. But the global semiconductor value chain is far more complex. Advanced semiconductor fabs require \$8-10 billion each, ultra-stable utilities, specialised supply chains, and years if not decades to bring online. In 2025, stakeholders began acknowledging that fabs are necessary but not sufficient. India's strategy wisely expanded to include backend activities such as Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (Osat) and ATMP (Assembly, Testing, Marking, and Packaging). These sectors require dramatically lower upfront capital and can be operationalised much faster, making them practical early entry points for deeper ecosystem participation. Packaging, testing, substrates, speciality chemicals and equipment servicing are now seen not as afterthoughts but as strategic building blocks. This recalibration signals maturity in thinking: India is not chasing headlines with fab announcements alone. It is cultivating multiple value-chain entry points, anchoring itself in global supply networks that value practical contributions over aspirational press releases. Policy Intent Meets Ground Realities

India's policy thrust on semiconductors is unmistakably strong. The government has committed around ₹62,900 crore (97% of the ₹65,000 crore fund) earmarked for incentivising semiconductor production, reflecting decisive political will. Yet, as the year unfolded, policymakers and industry leaders alike con-

ceded that funding, while essential, cannot solve core execution bottlenecks. Land acquisition delays, water quality issues, erratic power supply, and disjointed logistics infrastructure emerged as persistent challenges. These are not minor administrative hiccups; they are structural constraints that have slowed project timelines and highlighted the intricate coordination required to build semiconductor ecosys-

Design Strength: A Double-Edged Sword One unmistakable strength India continues to hold is in chip design and engineering. India accounts for over 20 per cent of the global semiconductor design engineering workforce, supporting cutting-edge work across automotive, embedded systems, connectivity, and architecture domains. However, design prowess alone is not enough. India's recent shift has high-



tems. Indeed, the industry's response was not idealistic optimism but execution-aware realism, a shift that presages a more robust and sustainable approach in the long run.

Electronics Manufacturing: India's Stabilising Engine

While semiconductors often steal the spotlight, India's electronics manufacturing sector quietly delivered substantive results in 2025. Output crossed an estimated \$115-120 billion, fuelled by automotive electronics, industrial automation, power systems and other tech-intensive segments. This progress is crucial. Semiconductor ecosystems flourish in environments where local demand and manufacturing depth exist. Strong electronics manufacturing creates a consistent internal pull for chips and components, reducing reliance on policy push alone and attracting investors who see visible market growth rather than speculative potential.

In other words, India's electronics manufacturing base is not just a supporting actor but a critical foundation for sustainable semiconductor development. By reinforcing this base, India is building a resilient ecosystem in which chips are not just made for export but also for domestic demand, creating virtuous loops of innovation and industrial growth.

lighted a poignant truth: without manufacturing and packaging integration, design capabilities risk remaining upstream in the value chain, where real economic value is limited. The next phase of India's semiconductor strategy must therefore focus on coupling design with robust local manufacturing and backend processes.

The Road Ahead: Execution, Not Promise Despite notable progress, significant gaps remain. India is still heavily dependent on imported equipment, speciality materials, and chemicals. Domestic demand aggregation across sectors remains fragmented, and the gestation periods for semiconductor facilities, often spanning years, continue to test investor patience. Nevertheless, 2025's decisive shift from rhetoric to execution sets the stage for a more substantive phase in 2026 and beyond. As industry veterans assert, this may well be India's “now or never moment” in semiconductors, where execution matters more than intent. In this context, India's semiconductor strategy should be applauded not for its ambition alone, but for its evolving realism, a realism that blends policy focus, industrial pragmatism, ecosystem depth, and relentless execution. The journey ahead will be long, but 2025 proved that India now understands the terrain better than ever before.

Prosenjit Nath

## Beyond regime change: Is Iran rewriting its civilisational story?

Those who view the ongoing unrest in Iran as a routine geopolitical regime-change attempt should think again. Unlike Bangladesh, Venezuela et al, Iran is an ancient civilisation, likely passing through painful phases of de-Islamisation. It may even return to its roots in Zoroastrianism, the way Spain and Portugal did during the 15th-century Reconquista (Reconquest), leading to the de-Islamisation of the Iberian Peninsula and its re-Christianisation. The Reconquista inspired Europe to recolonise and Christianise the world, discover America—and Donald Trump!

Officially, Shia Iran and Israel may be “enemies”, but they are civilisational allies; the first two Muslim countries to recognise modern Israel were Turkey (1949) and Iran (1950). They share a long memory. In the sixth century BC, Iran's Zoroastrian emperor Cyrus the Great liberated the Jews from Babylonian Captivity (597-538 BC), a fact the grateful Jews recorded multiple times in the Old Testament. Now it may be payback time for Israel. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has directly addressed the Iranian masses at least five times since 2013, reminding them of historical ties. In 2013, he sought rapprochement with Tehran; in September 2024, he told Iranians that the fall of their rulers was nigh; in November 2024, he said that the “tyrants of Tehran” fear their own people more than they fear Israel; in June 2025, after a major military strike, he addressed the “proud people of Iran”, saying their leaders had lost a “12-day war” and urged them to “take to the streets”; and in August 2025, he highlighted the internal collapse of Iran's infrastructure and criticised the regime for funding terrorist groups at the expense of Iranians' welfare. Israel—and by extension America and Europe—see the la affaire Iran differently from other countries. It is an internal clash of civilisation—between Iran and Persia, and between Islam and modernity.

### Iran to Persia

How did Iran become Persia?

The Greek and Roman empires (490 BC-476 AD) named the land Persia, after Fars Province in today's south-west Iran, known for its rich culture and history. After the advent of Islam (620-632), the Arabs vanquished Persia by exploiting the Sassanid Empire's exhaustion after decades of war with the Christian Byzantines (now in Türkiye). This broke the Persian army and led to the empire's collapse (633-651). Gradually, it resulted in the Islamisation of a majority of Persians. Islamised Arabs copied dynasticism and the women's purdah from Iran. After a millennium of Zoroastrianism, however, Iran witnessed a second golden age as an Islamic empire. The Arabs were great warriors, but lacked civilisational heft. Iran provided this imperial, cultural, and civilisational muscle to Islam, profoundly transforming Islamic civilisation. Eventually, Shia Islam became Iran's state religion under the Safavids in the 16th century, creating the foundation for modern Iranian identity. Persian administrative systems and culture were integrated by early Caliphates, while Persian language and scholarship flourished across vast regions. That was when post-Crusade Europe re-entered the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), recolonised it, and began challenging the Ottoman Caliphate, whose after-effects of the First World War (1914-18) buried it in 1924. With the collapse of the Caliphate, which had Islamised Persia, Iran began to reassert its ancient identity, and its slow de-Islamisation began.

### Persia to Iran

The ancient name Iran was derived from the word “Aryan”—the Land of the Aryans. It was used by Iranians for millennia, who traced its roots back to Zoroaster (c. 1000 BC) or even earlier. It appears in the Zoroastrians' holy book, the Zend Avesta, as ‘Airyanem Vaejah’ (Land of the Aryans) or ‘Airyoshayana’ (Iranian lands). In 1935, its new monarch, Reza Shah Pahlavi, a former military officer, renamed his country Iran to reflect this deep historical identity. The Pahlavi dynasty he founded lasted only 54 years. Reza Shah (1925-41) and his son Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (1941-79), despite being

Shia Muslims, actively promoted a strong Iranian national identity rooted in pre-Islamic Zoroastrian history, secularised the nation, and modernised it; but they also created tension with the theocratic Shia establishment. Reza Shah established the Trans-Iranian Railway and invited industries. During the Second World War (1939-45), he was forced to abdicate by Allied forces in 1941 due to his perceived ties with Nazi Germany. His son Mohammad Reza, the last Shah, launched the White Revolution (1963), a series of rapid socio-economic reforms, including land redistribution and women's enfranchisement, which alienated the clergy and feudal landowners. His increasingly autocratic rule and its infamous secret police, SAVAK, fuelled widespread public discontent. In 1965, Mohammad Reza took the title Aryamehr or Aryamihir (Sun of the Aryans) to underline his Zoroastrian ancestry, idealised pre-Islamic history, and emphasised the nation's Aryan heritage. The title was intended to foster a strong, anti-clerical Iranian nationalism that looked back to the ancient Achaemenid and Sassanian empires as a golden era, and connect a modern, prosperous Iran to the world during this “Age of the Aryamehr”. Prominent national landmarks and institutions were named after his title, such as Aryamehr University of Technology (now Sharif University of Technology) and Aryamehr Stadium (now Azadi Stadium). In October 1971, Iran celebrated 2,500 years of the Zoroastrian Empire, honouring Cyrus the Great and showcasing modern Iran under Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. During his rule, the UK- and US-backed coup (1953) overthrew Prime



Minister Mohammad Mossadegh after he nationalised the oil industry and reinstated the Shah's absolute authority. The West continued to play its power games for decades. Amid mounting and widespread discontent, exiled Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (whose grandfather had migrated to Iran from Kintoor, Uttar Pradesh, in the 1830s) returned from France to launch the Islamic Revolution in 1979. He forced the Shah into exile in January 1979, ending the Pahlavi monarchy. After the Shah's death in 1980, his eldest son, Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, heads the House of Pahlavi, living in exile in the United States. Today, he is leading Iranian dissidents and calling for a secular democracy.

### A New Iran

The 2022 death of Mahsa Amini, an Iranian-Kurdish woman, in police custody for “improperly” covering herself triggered a widespread women's movement against the theocratic regime, leading to the killing of over 600 women. But their slogan—Woman, Life, Freedom—endured. The latest season of this ‘Iranian Spring’ began on 28 December 2025, when highly influential merchants of Tehran's Grand Bazaar—who once opposed the Pahlavis and supported the Ayatollahs—revolted against the Iranian rial's crash, hy-

perinflation, and a proposed 2026 budget featuring a 62 per cent tax hike. Unlike other countries, Iran's bazaars are far more than marketplaces; they are historical engines, pushing Iran in one direction or another. The ongoing anti-Ayatollah movements, aided by angry students—who played a central role in the Islamic Revolution of 1979—and Gen Z, as elsewhere, converged with the markets as force multipliers in the current nationwide unrest. On 1 January 2026, Reza Pahlavi called for the “birth of a New Iran” and an end to 46 years of “terror and chaos” under the Islamic Republic. “The current regime has reached the end of the road... The growing protests show this year will be the definitive moment for change,” he wrote on X. Protesters are recalling the Pahlavi dynasty's “golden period” and urging Reza to return. Their slogan is Javid Shah (Long Live the Shah)! It is a sign that anger has moved beyond dissatisfaction with economic policies or personalities and towards a likely rejection of the Islamic Republic itself. Irate crowds are chanting: “This is the final battle! Pahlavi will return,” and “The Shah will return to the homeland, and Zahhak (despot) will be overthrown,” invoking the mythological tyrant of Persian lore. “Death to the Dictator” (Ayatollah Syed Ali Khamenei) and “Mullahs Must Return” are the flavour of this protest season. This is unprecedented: the Ayatollah is Imam—the top spiritual leader of the Shias, their own “Caliph”. The West-led build-up against the Islamic regime accelerated after the Gaza war. In June 2025, Reza called for regime change, condemned the Ayatollahs, and—crucially—laid out core principles for a post-Islamic Republic Iran: territorial integrity, equality of all citizens, individual liberties, and the separation of religion and state. He described the build-up as Iran's “Berlin Wall moment”, signalling a psychological break from the past rather than an imminent seizure of power—something more than mere regime change: de-Islamisation? He also declared that he would not accept the Peacock Throne unless chosen through a democratic vote.

### De-Islamisation?

The eminent Sufi poet and mystic Ahmad-e-Jam famously wrote:

Kushtagan-e-khanjar-e-taslim raa,

Har zaman az ghaib jaan-e-digar ast.

(For those struck by the dagger of submission, a new soul comes from the unseen every moment.)

It reads like the Hindu doctrine of rebirth. Across centuries, this couplet inspired Iranians and turned them into hardened war machines. In recent years, they fought through the Iraq-Iran War (1980-88), lost over a million people, yet continued to develop nuclear capabilities. In June 2025, Israel and the US bombed Iranian nuclear installations, but carefully avoided targeting civilian populations, subtly turning them against the Ayatollah regime.

So where can Iran possibly go from here?

Like the Iberian Peninsula, Iran may look back to Zoroastrianism. Already, there is growing cultural and nationalistic interest in Iran's pre-Islamic Zoroastrian heritage; some are even converting to this ancient faith privately, often as a form of cultural identity or resistance to the current government. Many Iranians view the pre-Islamic “golden era” with pride, considering it their original, ‘authentic’ culture. Ancient festivals such as Nowruz (New Year) and Yalda, both of Zoroastrian origin, are widely celebrated as national holidays. Many shops and establishments across Iran have been renamed after Zoroastrian heroes or events. Recent online surveys, according to media reports, suggest a notable percentage of Iranians identifying as Zoroastrians (one 2020 survey reported 7.7 per cent), although this is more indicative of nationalistic or cultural realignment than strict religious adherence. Zoroastrianism remains a recognised minority faith in the Iranian Constitution, alongside Christianity and Judaism, and has a dedicated seat in parliament. However, the community faces discrimination, and official population numbers remain low (around 23,000, according to a 2018 census).

## Prez approves appointment of Five New Supreme Court Judges

**New Delhi:** In a significant development for the Indian judiciary, President Droupadi Murmu has approved the appointment of five new judges to the Supreme Court of India, strengthening the strength of the country's apex judicial institution. In exercise of the powers conferred by Clause (2) of Article 124 of the Constitution, President Droupadi Murmu, vide a notification dated 01.06.2026, appointed four Chief Justices of High Courts and one Senior Advocate as Judges of the Supreme Court. The appointments include Shri Justice Sheel Nagu, Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court; Shri Justice Shri Chandrasekhar, Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court; Shri Justice Sanjiv Sachdeva, Chief Justice of the Madhya Pradesh High Court; Shri Justice Arun Pally, Chief Justice of the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court; and Senior Advocate Smt. Venkita Subramani Mohana. According to the notification issued by the Government of India, their appointment will be effective from the date of assumption of office. The elevation of these distinguished legal professionals to the Supreme Court represents an important moment in the continuing evolution of India's judicial system and reflects the constitutional process through which experienced judges and eminent members of the legal fraternity are entrusted with responsibilities at the highest level of the judiciary. The Supreme Court, as the guardian of the Constitution and the final court of appeal in the country, plays a pivotal role in interpreting laws, protecting fundamental rights, resolving disputes between states and the Union, and ensuring that the rule of law remains firmly established across the nation. The appointment of new judges is therefore closely watched by the legal community, policymakers, and citizens alike, as it contributes to the institution's ability to handle a wide range of constitutional, civil, criminal, commercial, and public interest matters. Shri Justice Sheel Nagu brings with him extensive judicial experience gained through years of service in the higher judiciary, including his tenure as Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court. Similarly, Shri Justice Shri Chandrasekhar has served as Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court, one of the

country's most prominent High Courts, dealing with a vast number of significant legal and constitutional issues. Shri Justice Sanjiv Sachdeva, who has been serving as Chief Justice of the Madhya Pradesh High Court, has also earned recognition for his judicial work and contribution to the administration of justice. Shri Justice Arun Pally, Chief Justice of the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court, joins the Supreme Court after a distinguished judicial career marked by experience in handling complex legal matters arising from diverse jurisdictions. The appointment of Senior Advocate Smt. Venkita Subramani Mohana is particularly noteworthy, as it reflects the constitutional provision that allows distinguished members of the Bar with exceptional legal standing and professional accomplishment to be elevated directly to the Supreme Court. Her inclusion among the newly appointed judges highlights the important role played by senior advocates in shaping legal discourse and contributing to the development of jurisprudence in the country. The appointments come at a time when the Supreme Court continues to deal with a substantial caseload involving issues of national significance, ranging from constitutional interpretation and governance matters to commercial disputes, criminal appeals, environmental concerns, and questions relating to citizens' rights. Strengthening the court through the appointment of experienced judges is expected to support the institution's efforts to ensure timely delivery of justice and maintain judicial efficiency. The constitutional framework governing appointments to the Supreme Court is designed to ensure that individuals possessing the highest standards of legal knowledge, integrity, competence, and judicial temperament are entrusted with responsibilities at the apex level. The elevation of serving Chief Justices from various High Courts also reflects the importance of judicial experience gained across different regions and legal systems within the country. High Courts serve as crucial pillars of India's judicial structure, and judges who rise through their ranks often bring valuable perspectives shaped by years of adjudication in diverse matters affecting

citizens, governments, businesses, and institutions. The addition of these five judges is expected to enhance the Supreme Court's collective expertise and strengthen its capacity to address increasingly complex legal questions arising in a rapidly evolving social, economic, and technological landscape. Legal observers note that appointments to the Supreme Court not only influence the court's functioning in the immediate future but also contribute to the long-term development of Indian jurisprudence through landmark judgments and constitutional interpretation. As the highest judicial authority in the country, the Supreme Court's decisions have far-reaching implications for governance, public policy, economic activity, civil liberties, and the administration of justice. The newly appointed judges will therefore assume responsibilities that extend beyond individual cases and contribute to shaping legal principles that guide courts and institutions across India. The notification issued by the President under Clause (2) of Article 124 of the Constitution underscores the constitutional significance of the appointments and reaffirms the established process through which appointments to the apex court are formalized. With the appointments becoming effective from the date of assumption of office, the newly appointed judges are expected to take their place on the Supreme Court Bench and participate in the court's judicial work, including hearing and deciding cases of national importance. The development has been welcomed across legal circles as an important step in reinforcing the strength and effectiveness of the Supreme Court. The appointments also highlight the depth of talent and experience available within India's judiciary and legal profession, demonstrating the continued commitment of constitutional institutions to maintaining a robust and independent judicial system. The official notification announcing the appointments was issued by Jagannath Srinivasan, Joint Secretary, Government of India, bringing formal confirmation to a decision that will have a lasting impact on the composition and functioning of the Supreme Court.

**New Delhi:** The Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India, held a regional review meeting with the southern States and Union Territories including Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and Telangana to review implementation of reforms introduced under the Legal Metrology Act, 2009 through the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2026, with the Centre strongly emphasising the need for faster implementation of regulatory reforms aimed at simplifying compliance, improving Ease of Doing Business and strengthening consumer safeguards across the country. The meeting, which was conducted along with recommendations of the High-Level Committee and the de-regulation cell of the Cabinet Secretariat on regulatory reforms, focused on several major areas including implementation of the new registration-based framework, decriminalisation of minor procedural offences, introduction of the "Improvement Notice" mechanism, expansion of Government Approved Test Centres (GATCs), digitisation of Legal Metrology services and capacity building measures for enforcement officials. During the discussions, the Department urged States and Union Territories to ensure that the shift from the earlier "licensing" regime to a modern "registration"-based framework truly reflects a trust-based and facilitative regulatory ecosystem where honest businesses and traders can operate with reduced compliance burdens and faster access to services. Officials emphasised that registrations should be granted automatically on submission of prescribed documents without unnecessary delays, prior inspections or procedural bottlenecks that could discourage ease of business operations. The Centre reiterated that the purpose behind the Jan Vishwas reforms is to reduce unnecessary regulatory burden while simultaneously ensuring that consumer protection mechanisms remain effective and robust under the Legal Metrology framework. A significant portion

of the meeting focused on the implementation of the newly introduced "Improvement Notice" mechanism, which forms a major component of the Jan Vishwas reforms. Under this provision, first-time procedural violations under specified sections of the Legal Metrology Act would attract an "Improvement Notice" before any penal action is initiated. The Department explained that the mechanism has been introduced with the objective of encouraging voluntary compliance, reducing avoidable litigation, minimising harassment for procedural lapses and improving the overall Ease of Doing Business environment without compromising consumer interests. Officials highlighted that the reform seeks to establish a more balanced regulatory structure where corrective opportunities are provided for minor procedural errors while maintaining strict action against deliberate fraud, tampering and violations affecting consumers. The review meeting also placed considerable emphasis on the expansion of Government Approved Test Centres across States and Union Territories in order to strengthen verification infrastructure and improve service delivery. Participating States informed the Department that amendments to their Enforcement Rules and GATC Rules in line with the amended Legal Metrology framework are already in advanced stages of drafting and approval and are expected to be notified shortly. The Department urged States and Union Territories to expedite the notification of revised GATC Rules and expand the scope of instruments covered under the Government Approved Test Centre mechanism so that industries, traders and consumers can benefit from quicker and more efficient verification services. Officials observed that expansion of the GATC network would help improve the availability of verifiers, reduce delays in testing and certification and create a more responsive verification ecosystem capable of handling growing industrial and commercial requirements.

## Reform Push

## CM Sarma meets VP Radhakrishnan, highlights Assam growth story

**New Delhi:** Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma called on the Vice President of India, C.P. Radhakrishnan, in New Delhi and presented a comprehensive overview of Assam's remarkable growth story, highlighting the transformative changes that have reshaped the state in recent years. The meeting reflected the strong engagement between national leadership and the Government of Assam as the state continues its journey towards becoming a major driver of economic growth and development in the Northeast. During the cordial interaction, Chief Minister Sarma briefed the Vice President on the extensive progress achieved across various sectors, emphasizing how Assam has steadily emerged as one of the fastest-transforming states in the country through a combination of visionary leadership, focused governance, infrastructure expansion, investment promotion, and people-centric welfare initiatives. The Chief Minister described the Vice President as an embodiment of humility, dedication, and hard work in public life and remarked that every interaction with Shri Radhakrishnan offers valuable lessons in public service, administration, and nation-building. He expressed gratitude for the Vice President's guidance and support, noting that such interactions provide important insights that help strengthen the state's development agenda and contribute to the realization of the vision of a Viksit Assam. During the meeting, Chief Minister Sarma presented detailed updates on Assam's economic progress and highlighted several development initiatives that have significantly improved the state's growth trajectory. He informed the Vice President about the major achievements recorded in infrastructure development, industrial expansion, connectivity enhancement, social welfare, investment attraction, and governance reforms. These achievements, he explained, are helping position Assam as a leading growth engine in the Northeast while contributing to the larger national objective of building a Viksit Bharat. The Chief Minister outlined how Assam has witnessed substantial improvements in road, rail, air, and inland waterway connectivity, creating new opportunities for commerce, trade, tourism, and industrial development. Massive investments in transportation infrastructure have strengthened links between urban and rural areas, ensuring that development reaches every corner of the state. The expansion of highways, construction of bridges, modernization of railway stations, and enhancement of logistics networks have together improved mobility and increased economic activity. These efforts have also played a crucial role in reducing geographical barriers and integrating Assam more closely with regional and national markets. Highlighting the state's growing attractiveness as an investment destination, Chief Minister Sarma informed the Vice President that Assam has successfully cultivated a business-friendly environment supported by transparent governance, streamlined approvals, and investor-focused policies. These measures have significantly boosted investor confidence and attracted interest from companies across diverse sectors. The Chief Minister explained that investment proposals announced during major summits are steadily translating into projects on the ground, creating employment opportunities and stimulating economic growth. He emphasized that strong governance mechanisms, political stability, and a commitment to ease of doing business have made Assam an increasingly preferred destination for industrial investment. The Chief Minister also discussed the state's progress in promoting industrialization and manufacturing, sectors that are expected to play a pivotal role in driving future growth. He noted that the government is actively working to strengthen industrial infrastructure, encourage entrepreneurship, and facilitate the establishment of new manufacturing units. These efforts are aimed at creating sustainable employment opportunities, enhancing productivity, and supporting the broader objective of economic transformation. According to the Chief Minister, Assam's industrial growth strategy is closely aligned with the vision of developing the state into a major production and investment hub in eastern India. A significant portion of the discussion focused on the government's commitment to empowering farmers, youth, and women through targeted development initiatives. Chief Minister Sarma highlighted several programs designed to improve livelihoods, expand economic opportunities, and strengthen social inclusion. He explained that the government has prioritized skill development initiatives that equip young people with industry-relevant capabilities and enhance their employability. Such programs are helping prepare Assam's workforce for emerging opportunities in manufacturing, services, technology, and entrepreneurship. The Chief Minister also elaborated on financial assistance schemes aimed at empowering women and promoting their participation in economic activities. These initiatives

are designed to strengthen financial independence, encourage entrepreneurship, and improve living standards across communities. The meeting further highlighted Assam's success in maintaining peace, stability, and social harmony, factors that have created a conducive environment for development and investment. Chief Minister Sarma informed the Vice President that sustained efforts to strengthen law and order, promote social cohesion, and address long-standing challenges have contributed significantly to the state's progress. Peace and stability, he noted, have enabled the successful implementation of development projects and encouraged greater private sector participation in economic activities. The Chief Minister emphasized that inclusive governance and community engagement remain central to



the state's approach toward ensuring sustainable growth. The discussion also covered the government's ambitious plans to strengthen human resource development through expanded educational infrastructure. Chief Minister Sarma informed the Vice President about proposals and initiatives aimed at establishing medical colleges, universities, engineering colleges, and other higher educational institutions across districts. These efforts are intended to improve access to quality education, develop skilled human capital, and create opportunities for young people within the state. By investing in education and healthcare infrastructure, the government seeks to build a strong foundation for long-term development and ensure that future generations are equipped to contribute to Assam's economic and social advancement. The Chief Minister also emphasized Assam's growing importance within India's Act East Policy framework. Owing to its strategic location and improving connectivity, Assam is increasingly emerging as a gateway to Southeast Asia and neighboring countries. He informed the Vice President about ongoing efforts to strengthen cross-border trade links, improve logistics infrastructure, and enhance transportation networks that connect Assam with regional and international markets. These initiatives are expected to generate significant economic benefits while positioning the state as a key hub for trade, tourism, and investment. Assam's strategic role in advancing India's engagement with the broader eastern region was highlighted as an important component of the state's development vision. In addition to trade and connectivity, Chief Minister Sarma discussed opportunities in sectors such as agriculture, horticulture, tourism, petroleum, renewable energy, and defence manufacturing. He noted that Assam possesses substantial natural and human resources that can support diversified economic growth. The government is working to unlock this potential through sector-specific policies, infrastructure investments, and partnerships with industry stakeholders. The

Chief Minister stressed that these efforts are expected to create jobs, attract investment, and generate sustainable economic opportunities across both urban and rural areas. The meeting also served as an opportunity to reinforce the strong coordination between the Centre and the State Government. Chief Minister Sarma expressed gratitude for the continued support provided by the Union Government in advancing development projects across Assam. He noted that central assistance and policy support have played a crucial role in accelerating infrastructure expansion, improving public services, and facilitating economic growth. The Chief Minister emphasized that the collaborative approach adopted by both governments has helped ensure effective implementation of key initiatives and strengthened the overall development ecosystem in the state. During the interaction, Chief Minister Sarma extended an invitation to the Vice President to visit Assam and witness firsthand the transformative changes taking place across the state. He expressed confidence that a visit would provide an opportunity to observe the impact of various welfare schemes, infrastructure projects, and development initiatives that are improving the lives of people throughout Assam. The invitation reflected the government's commitment to transparency and its desire to showcase the progress achieved through collective efforts. Symbolic gestures added warmth to the meeting, with Chief Minister Sarma presenting a floral basket and a traditional silver rhino memento to the Vice President. The rhino, one of Assam's most recognizable symbols, represents the state's rich biodiversity, cultural heritage, and commitment to balanced development. The presentation of the memento reflected Assam's pride in its unique identity while underscoring the state's aspiration to achieve growth that is both inclusive and environmentally sustainable. The meeting demonstrated the proactive governance approach adopted by the Assam Government, which places significant emphasis on engaging with national leaders, sharing development achievements, and seeking guidance on future priorities. By maintaining regular dialogue with key constitutional authorities and policymakers, the state leadership is ensuring that Assam remains closely aligned with national objectives while advancing its own ambitious development agenda. Such engagements also provide opportunities to showcase Assam's achievements and strengthen support for initiatives that can further accelerate progress. Chief Minister Sarma reiterated that the vision of a Viksit Assam is being pursued through concrete actions, transparent administration, and inclusive policies aimed at benefiting every section of society. He emphasized that development is not merely measured through infrastructure projects and economic indicators but also through improvements in the quality of life experienced by ordinary citizens. Accordingly, the government's efforts continue to focus on expanding access to education, healthcare, employment opportunities, financial inclusion, and social welfare programs. The Chief Minister highlighted that the state's development journey is guided by the principle that no citizen should be left behind. The discussion also reflected confidence in Assam's future prospects as the state continues to build upon recent achievements. Strong governance, enhanced connectivity, industrial growth, social stability, and strategic investments have together created a foundation for sustained progress. The Chief Minister noted that Assam is increasingly being recognized as a model of transformation within the Northeast and that continued collaboration with national leadership will help unlock even greater opportunities in the years ahead. As the meeting concluded, it reinforced the shared commitment of both the national and state leadership toward promoting development, strengthening institutions, and improving the lives of citizens. The interaction highlighted Assam's remarkable progress across multiple sectors and underscored the state's determination to continue moving forward on the path of growth and prosperity. With strong leadership, effective governance, and continued support from the Centre, Assam is steadily advancing toward its vision of becoming a developed, inclusive, and economically vibrant state. The briefing presented to Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan served not only as an update on the state's achievements but also as a reaffirmation of Assam's aspirations to contribute meaningfully to India's development story. As the state continues implementing transformative initiatives and expanding opportunities for its people, the dream of a Viksit Assam is steadily becoming a reality, offering renewed hope, confidence, and prosperity for millions while strengthening India's journey toward becoming a leading global power.

## Things to do in Nice, France: Where to eat, shop and wander beyond the beach

In the shadow of its flashier Cote D'Azur neighbours like Cannes and Monaco – and the more scenic Menton – Nice often ends up as a cursory stop on road trips in southern France. But the laidback charm of France's fifth largest

300g wagyu steak.

### LOCAL CONNECTIONS

Much more memorable were the city tours that can be booked through the hotel. Sprightly 70-year-old Monique Amey was our guide on one



city is something that draws you in slowly but surely. Here, small restaurants take pride in local produce, people are friendly and traditional craftsmanship evolve with time to stay fresh and relevant.

### INTERNATIONAL SHINE

This is the tourism appeal that luxury hospitality brands are banking on. The Anantara Plaza Nice Hotel opened in December 2022, taking over the renovated 1848 Belle Epoque building that had housed Hotel de France, a favourite of high-society vacationers from Europe. The interiors blend neoclassical architectural elements with gold accents and textures in the common spaces, while neutral hues, marine aesthetics and marble-clad bathrooms make cosy havens out of the 151 elegant rooms and suites. Shop and swim to your heart's content: its location is next to luxury boutiques along Avenue de Verdun and a mere five-minute walk to the Promenade des Anglais' pebbly beach (slippers are highly advised). Then get the relaxing Absolute Calm treatment at Anantara Spa and spend the afternoon in blissful slumber. The hotel's sixth-floor, rooftop restaurant Seen offers gorgeous sunset and plane-spotting views (Nice Cote d'Azur Airport is only 15 minutes away by car). But prepare to pay a pretty penny: dishes start from •14 (US\$17; S\$21) for a plate of steamed edamame in truffle oil and goes up to •26 for two pieces of toro sushi and •64 for a

of them. She used to head Nice's Convention Bureau for 25 years and has called the city home for the past four decades. "Nice is a city of contrasts: You've the shade and the sun, you've tradition and modernity and you feel it," said Amey philosophically, as my cousin and I tottered about town with her. It was fascinating to see how Nice's craftsmen have held their own over time. Perfume maker Molinard has been run by five generations and now offers classes, gift sets, scented candles and tote bags. Maison Nicolas Alziari, which had been milling olives the traditional way since 1868, had many flavourful samples in its Old Town store, which was like a wonderland of olives and olive oils. Many of the products carry the "appellation d'origine protegee" (Protected Designation of Origin) label for the house's production methods and primary use of local Cailletier olives. We also took touristy but gorgeously panoramic shots at the #ILoveNice sign on Quai Rauba Capeu and bought chocolates and candied fruit at the 105-year-old Confiserie Florian – a favourite of Amey's and an institution well-known for its fruit and flower-flecked confections. The open-air Cours Saleya market in the Old Town was a smorgasbord of scents and sounds as we browsed stalls selling everything from fruits and flowers to spices and vintage thrift finds. And of course, we had to try the famous Nicoise street snack socca, a thin,

crispy chickpea pancake that was first introduced to the city by Italian dockworkers in the late 1700s. Anantara also works with La Cavaleta, which offers city tours on the electric pedi-cabs. Its owner Christophe Leon started this service in 2012 to provide eco-friendly tours, especially to the Old Town where cabs cannot access easily. During our one-hour tour with Christophe, we trundled down the city's main street Promenade des Anglais, a lovely warm sea breeze in our faces, and wove through the Old Town's narrow streets.

### FARMER'S MARKETS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD BISTROS

At Hotel du Couvent, rustic rhythms rule. The restored 17th century convent opened in June 2024 with 88 rooms, exuding monastic chic in its pared down accommodation that looked like they had leapt off the pages of Kinfolk magazine. Among terraced gardens are vegetable and herb plots, an open-air bistro and a 20m lap pool that entailed walking through gravel and sand paths. One Saturday a month, a farmers' market of local harvest, fresh bakes and local ceramics materialises in the lemon tree-lined central square. A bistro-bar on the ground floor opens to the side streets, the merry chatter, clinking of wine glasses and clatter of cutlery making it feel like a neighbourhood hangout. Our dinner at the main restaurant consisted of dory fish filleted tableside, fried dumplings and an intriguingly refreshing dessert of peach skin soup. Every morning, the warm aroma of croissants, pain au chocolat and breads waft out of the bakery, which continues the convent's tradition of milling its own flour using ancient wheat varieties from the region. We learnt to knead and fold multigrain dough from the very patient head baker Geoffrey Marx, and brought back loaves of our own, each carefully wrapped to last the 17-hour journey to Singapore. The hotel was just steps away from the Old Town, so we had plenty of time to explore all the small streets we had passed by days earlier with Amey and Leon. Hearty dishes were never far away. One fabulous find was Le Panier (from •45 for a four-course lunch), which had no menu, only a list of ingredients. Out came the likes of local trout with trout eggs and raspberry dressing, Lebanese cheese infused with basil and white Mediterranean fish with mussels, sweet corn and marinere sauce. Our favourite was Le Petit Lascaris, where we sat elbow-to-elbow with the table beside us along a small cobbled lane. Over two meals, including our last dinner in Nice, we covered almost everything on the menu, including a hilariously named but juicy "roasted quail stuffed a\*\*hole with clove of garlic, aioli sauce" and a tiramisu that brought sighs of contentment. My fondest memories of Nice are now of laughing with strangers over good food, great wine and warm service on a balmy summer night.

## Do energy drinks offer benefits beyond caffeine? What you need to know

A growing number of Americans, especially younger ones, are reaching for energy drinks in order to stay up late or level up their workout. About two-thirds of teens report drinking them at least occasionally, and most who drink one a day are under 35. These beverages can have 100mg to 300mg of caffeine per serving, usually more than a cup of black coffee. There's no question that high doses of caffeine can boost your energy. But energy drinks often include other health-sounding ingredients, such as B vitamins and plant extracts, which brands claim can boost focus and stamina or reduce fatigue. "I generally greet that with a healthy dose of skepticism," said Joe Zagorski, a toxicologist and assistant professor at Michigan State University. He added that there was very little scientific evidence showing any health benefit from the additives and vitamins in energy drinks. Most likely, Dr Zagorski said, "the vast majority of the effects you'll get from an energy drink are because of the caffeine."

### WHAT'S IN ENERGY DRINKS?

It can be difficult to know for sure. That's because some products are marketed as beverages, while others are marketed as supplements, meaning they are regulated differently. Beverages are generally required to list ingredients, though not the exact amounts, Dr Zagorski said. But those marketed as supplements may not be required to list individual ingredients at all. Some use vague terms, like "focus blend" or "energy blend" to describe their ingredients. Exactly what's in an energy drink varies by brand, but here are a few common ingredients.

### PLANT-DERIVED CHEMICALS

Energy drinks typically contain plant-based ingredients or extracts, including guarana, yerba mate and green tea, said Dr John Higgins, a cardiologist at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston who researches energy drinks. Some of these botanicals act like stimulants, but others simply contain additional caffeine, which isn't always included in the amount listed on the label. This means regular drinkers may exceed 400mg of caffeine a day, the safe upper limit for most people, Dr Higgins said. Energy drinks can also contain ginseng and ginkgo biloba, which are not technically stimulants but can increase blood flow. Combined with caffeine, some such ingredients can lead to adverse effects, like heart palpitations or increased blood pressure, said Dr Anna Svatikova, a cardiologist at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, who's done research on energy drinks and heart health.

### B VITAMINS

B vitamins are essential for helping your body convert food into energy, and they're commonly found in energy drinks, said Richard Bloomer, a professor and director of the Center for Nutraceutical and Dietary Supplement Research at the University of Memphis. But some of the beverages contain amounts of Vitamin B2 (riboflavin), B3 (niacin), B6 (pyridoxine) and B12 (cobalamin) that exceed the recommended daily value, Dr Higgins said. Long-term, high doses of B vitamins could lead to low blood pressure, liver damage and neuropathy in some instances. Most people get all the Vitamin B they need from a balanced diet, Dr Bloomer said, and they'll excrete the excess in their urine. There's a lack of clinical evidence that consuming more than you need will increase your energy or focus, Dr Svatikova added. Vitamin B deficiency is more common in older adults, people with gastrointestinal issues and vegans or those on other restricted diets. A blood test is needed to determine if you're Vitamin B deficient, but if you are, you're better off taking a supplement than consuming an energy drink, Dr Bloomer said.

### AMINO ACIDS

Energy drinks often include small amounts of amino acids like taurine, which is found in protein-rich foods, like meat and fish; and your body produces it naturally, Dr Svatikova said. There is some limited evidence that taurine combined with caffeine can enhance performance and exercise capacity, she said. Taurine can have side effects, though. It may interact with antidepressants and other medications. Research in animals has shown a connection between caffeine, taurine and heart arrhythmias. Some energy drinks also contain L-theanine, an amino acid found in tea leaves. Older, small studies have shown that when paired with caffeine, it may improve mood, cognition, focus and alertness. But larger, longer-term studies are needed to confirm this, Dr Svatikova said. More research is also needed to better understand the long-term health impact of consuming taurine and L-theanine individually or together, Dr Svatikova said.

### ADDED SUGAR

Energy drinks can contain significant amounts of added sugar, sometimes up to 60g per serving, said Dr Bloomer, who called the beverages "a can of sugar water with added caffeine." The US Department of Agriculture now recommends limiting added sugars to no more than 10g per meal and suggests avoiding "sugar-sweetened beverages," including energy drinks.

## How landscape architect Cathy Hang is shaping Singapore's most loved public spaces

It was probably not the best idea to take a walk in a Singapore park at 11am in January, but when landscape architect Cathy Hang reassured me that the weather would cooperate, it felt safe to go along. Hang is no ordinary designer. At the end of 2025, she was recognised as Young Landscape Architect of the Year by the Singapore Institute of Landscape Architects (SILA). A lead designer and team head at Henning Larsen, she has practised in the city-state since 2015, after moving from Hong Kong. "It was very encouraging to receive the award. But my deepest reaction is that I am who I am because I've met many people who put a lot of 'fertiliser' into me. So, of course I'm happy, but I also regard the award as a collective one," said Hang, who turns 34 this year. Her aversion to taking all the glory was a consistent refrain. With a humility that would make Confucius proud, she repeatedly credited mentors – especially Ryan Shubin and Melle van Dijk, whom she met early in her career – and spoke about her work with a sense of wonder and gratitude.

### BACK TO HER ROOTS

While she has worked on the National Orchard Garden and Rifle Range Nature Park, her pet project is Jurong Lake Gardens – the setting for our late-morning walk and interview. True to her prediction of "rain most likely in the afternoon", a short, intense downpour quickly gave way to sunshine. "Jurong Lake Gardens was the first development that I followed through from the early stages to completion. Because I saw how things have changed, it's very close to my heart," she explained, strolling along with an umbrella in hand. Originally a neighbourhood park with a golf club, it was redeveloped into Singapore's third national garden, including the restoration of a freshwater swamp that once existed here. Hang's contributions included working with colleagues on planting designs across different habitats, protecting mature trees on site, designing several landscape structures and features, and coordinating construction for the entire 53-hectare development. "We were not just thinking about the plants, but how people would perceive the space. It was about marrying everything, like the ground, the surfaces and how we positioned all the different elements. I was super fortunate that I could start and complete this – because you don't really get to do the same scale or type of project all the time," she mused. Conversation came to a halt as she neared the Grasslands, a section in the southern end of the Gardens that is her favourite. It was easy to see why. A runway-straight gravel path cuts through it, flanked by undulating hills planted with Chinese fountain grass and mission grass, beneath a wide expanse of open sky. Mimicking a savanna, it has since attracted flocks of munias, storks and eagles, among other wildlife. At the centre stands what looks like a tree devoid of leaves. It turns out to be a sculpture meant to anchor the three-hectare expanse. Made from rebars repurposed from the site – including the demolished car park and pathways – it is knotted and twisted in ways that resemble bark and branches. While it looks like a commissioned artwork, Hang revealed that it was crafted by contractor supervisor Lao Gao. "He had the ability, eye and hands to create what we envisioned, even though he had no previous experience doing something like that," she said. "In being close to nature, he was able to be inspired by it." Features aside, it is the Grasslands' significance to the community that has become precious to Hang. On her visits, she has seen students taking graduation photos. Many a marriage proposal has happened here, and it is a hot spot for wedding shoots. "What is surprising is

it actually became more than what we thought – a moment for people as well. It is crazy to think that what I did has become the physical space that something important happens."

### SEEDED BY CREATIVITY

No surprise then that Hang has remained committed to landscape architecture for the past decade, bucking the trend of job-hopping that is common among those of her "zillennial" generation. Her decision to study it at the University of Hong Kong was fuelled by a desire to do something more open-ended and creative – work that allowed for freedom of expression, with "no absolute answers". This was coupled with a love for nature – one she spent plenty of time in while growing up in Hong Kong. "My parents brought my brother and me to the beach every weekend, and I used to walk a lot. If I need to choose between indoor and outdoor, my preference is to get out. That was probably the unconscious link to landscape architecture," she explained. After graduating, a university professor introduced Hang to a job opportunity at Atelier Dreiseitl in Singapore. Without giving it much thought, she went through the interview process and landed the position. Since then, she has stayed with the firm, through its integration



with Henning Larsen in 2022. Along the way, exposure to different mentors, passionate teammates and varied projects has kept her in situ. "They gave me the energy to think about what I can do – not just what I can contribute, but what I can absorb as a human being. Each one opened up different inspirations and reflections, so I felt I could try something new and still explore. Just like this, time passed." Naturally, her appreciation of landscape architecture has deepened, too. Through her practice, she has come to see the necessity of different disciplines working together – architects, engineers, wildlife specialists and gardeners among them. "My understanding has definitely become more complex," she added. "I am always thinking about the impact that we make, and how we can make people's daily life a better experience, while maintaining a balance with the environment."

### MAINTAINING A STASIS

This idea of balance sits at the core of her approach to landscape architecture. Pausing at a lookout point in Jurong Lake Gardens, she gestured towards Alstonia Island on the edge of a freshwater swamp off-limits to visitors – even as a monitor lizard swam serenely by and a baby heron flitted among the foliage. The spot is something of a secret, stumbled upon by joggers or those looking for an isolated corner to meditate. This land-water interface is designed to let people and wildlife share the same place, while keeping them apart. "I think the nice thing is you can't reach the actual island, yet you can watch the animals walking or nesting around the shore or trees, so there is a closeness," she explained. The swamp too was planned such that it has a self-sustaining ecological cycle, while also educating visitors about the Gardens. Its introduction was a reinstatement of the area's natural heritage, before Jurong was industrialised. To ensure authenticity, native trees – including Alstonia – were sourced and acclimatised before being planted on site. "We needed to train them to remember that they are a wet-tolerant species, probably because they were not cultivated in that environment. This was done by gradually increasing the depth of the water they were growing in. It's a cute process of trying to remind them of their own heritage." In other projects, Hang has grappled with which parts of the land should have built structures and which should be kept wild. She has encountered this many times, such as when a tree is beloved by a community, because they enjoy picnicking beneath it, and appeal against cutting it down. In the Gardens, a stream was diverted in a particular way to avoid the removal of a mango tree that produced the sweeter fruit. "Balance is really about the relationships between things. For me, it's a stable state where different parts can keep thriving together – the built and nature, people and wildlife, and even our relationships with each other."

### IN FULL BLOOM

The year began with the wrapping up of work on the North-South Corridor (NSC). Henning Larsen is the master plan consultant, after winning the tender in 2024 with a proposal for a people-centred, inclusive approach that prioritises walking, cycling and public transport. She explained: "Traditionally, infrastructure is about moving cars as efficiently as possible. With the NSC, we're trying to treat the surface not just as a road, but as continuous movement and a green corridor – returning some of that space to people and to nature, while still keeping the city moving." From Bugis and Novena to Bishan, Ang Mo Kio and Woodlands, the team is studying how to introduce shade, planting and sidewalks so that walking and cycling feel intuitive and comfortable in the heat. Given the diversity of land uses along the NSC – from residential to commercial and industrial – Hang and the multidisciplinary team are looking for ways to shape the corridor into something more human-scale. Also on her plate is raising awareness of landscape architecture, especially among the young. When possible, she accepts invitations to speak in schools and lead tours of projects she has worked on – such as Jurong Lake Gardens. Her message centres on building on Singapore's "city in a garden" vision, and fostering knowledge-sharing between disciplines and collaborators. Hang's win at the SILA awards has put her in a prime position to amplify her message. "I don't know what made me win, but perhaps the judges thought I had the potential to influence the young and share the everyday magic of nature with them."

## Astronomers discover exoplanets with magnetic fields

**Washington:** Based on the behaviour of winds on seven large and hot gas exoplanets, astronomers have obtained the strongest evidence to date that planets beyond our solar system possess magnetic fields, like Earth and five other planets in our solar system. The finding, based on observations by telescopes in Chile and Hawaii, deepens the understanding of exoplanets by showing that at least some share an important characteristic present in all but two of the solar system's eight planets. A magnetic field is an invisible force field generated by the movement of electrically conducting material deep inside a planet - a molten metal core - combined with the planet's rotation. While none of the gaseous exoplanets in this study are candidates for hosting life, a magnetic field could be one of the factors that helps make a rocky planet like Earth habitable. These exoplanets each orbit very close to a large and hot star, with one side permanently facing the star and the other side perpetually facing away, as the moon does with Earth. This type of planet is called a "hot Jupiter" because of a comparable size and composition to our solar system's largest planet, though with a much higher temperature. The seven planets ranged in mass from roughly the same as Jupiter to more than three times as massive. Strong winds blow from the hot "dayside" to the cold "nightside" on these planets. The orbital proximity of the planets to their host stars leaves them with scorching atmospheric temperatures on the dayside. All are closer to their host star than the solar system's innermost planet, Mercury, is to the sun. "What you would expect is that the planets with hotter temperatures would have stronger winds. The more energy you put into the system, the more violent the winds become. But we see the opposite," said astronomer Julia Seidel of the Observatoire

de la Côte d'Azur's Lagrange Laboratory in Nice, France, lead author of the study published on Tuesday in the journal *Nature Astronomy*. "It's the hottest planets that have the least strong winds mixing the atmosphere. And that's really strange from what we know of how atmospheres behave," Seidel said. "That means all that energy that the star puts into the planet's atmosphere has to be dissipated in a different way. And the only possibility to brake the atmosphere that much that fast is via the magnetic field and its interaction with the moving charged particles of the atmosphere." Wind speeds on the seven exoplanets ranged up to 25,000kmh, stronger than on Jupiter. Considering that most of our solar system's planets have magnetic fields, the researchers said it is not surprising that exoplanets do too. But they said that scientists until now had struggled to come up with convincing evidence. "We do not look at a singular exoplanet, but we look at a population of them and see a trend emerge," Seidel said. Jupiter's magnetic field is the largest and most powerful one in our solar system. The seven exoplanets generated magnetic fields smaller than that of Jupiter but comparable to solar system planets in general. Mercury, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune join Earth and Jupiter as the solar system's planets generating a global magnetic field. Venus and Mars are the two planets lacking a magnetic field, though Ganymede, a large moon of Jupiter, generates its own magnetic field. Earth's moon long ago also generated its own magnetic field. A magnetic field is one of the factors behind whether a planet is able to maintain its atmosphere over long periods of time. For instance, Mars once had a magnetic field, but lost it billions of years ago after its interior cooled, and now has only a tenuous atmosphere and an inhospitable landscape.

## Israel says US backs striking Beirut suburbs if Hezbollah attacks

**Beirut:** Israel warned on Tuesday (Jun 2) that its US ally would not restrain it from striking Hezbollah's bastions in Beirut's suburbs if the Iran-backed group continues to target northern Israeli towns. US President Donald Trump had announced an agreement to halt attacks, but neither side has publicly accepted it, and Israel's defence minister said the Lebanese capital's southern suburbs remain potential targets. The warning came hours after Israel's air defences intercepted two projectiles that crossed from Lebanon. According to Lebanon's National News Agency, Israel also conducted fresh air strikes on south Lebanon on Tuesday. Recent days have seen a dramatic escalation in fighting and bombardment as Israeli troops stage their deepest incursion into Lebanon in two decades. "If Israeli towns continue to be attacked, we will evacuate and strike the Shiite Dahiyeh quarter in Beirut, Hezbollah's stronghold," Defence Minister Israel Katz told a conference. "The US endorsed this principle and conveyed it to the Lebanese government and all relevant actors." According to Lebanese authorities, Hezbollah would no longer fire into Israel under the agreement revealed by Trump, while the Israeli military would spare Beirut's southern suburbs, a group of Shia-majority districts where the militants have long held sway. An adviser to Lebanese parliament speaker Nabih Berri, a Hezbollah ally, told AFP that he would guarantee that Hezbollah would respect a "global ceasefire", if one was agreed. The aide, Ali Hamdan, said a "global ceasefire means a halt to Israeli strikes by air, land or sea, and that it will not carry out detonations or demolitions" in the south, where Israel is accused of razing entire villages. "FORETERNITY!" Hezbollah drew Lebanon into the Middle East war on Mar 2 by firing rockets at Israel in retaliation for the killing of Iran's supreme leader, and Tehran has insisted that Lebanon be included in any peace deal with Washington. As the violence threatened to scupper a ceasefire in the wider Middle East war between the US and Iran, Leila Shahab, 35, a resident of Beirut's southern suburbs, told AFP that she and her

family had fled the area after the Israeli threats "because of the kids". "But now we've come back. We found the situation has calmed down a bit," she said. "Israel's strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs will cease, and in exchange Hezbollah will not attack Israel. And we will work to ensure the ceasefire expands to include all of

tations between Israel and Lebanon was due to take place later Tuesday and on Wednesday. Military delegations held security talks last week. A truce to halt the fighting in Lebanon began on Apr 17, but has never been observed. Both Israel and Hezbollah accuse each other daily of violat-



Lebanon's territory," the Lebanese presidency said, echoing Trump. "There will be no troops going to Beirut, and any troops that are on their way have already been turned back," Trump said, after what he described as a "very productive" call with Netanyahu, later adding in a social media post that he hoped Israel and Hezbollah would stop fighting "for eternity!" According to Axios, however, Trump called Netanyahu "fucking crazy" and accused him of putting Iran peace talks at risk. "Likewise, through highly placed representatives, I had a very good call with Hezbollah, and they agreed that all shooting will stop - that Israel will not attack them, and they will not attack Israel," Trump said. According to Iran's Tasnim news agency, Tehran is no longer engaging in talks with Washington due to Israel's offensive. TRADING BLOWS The fourth round of US-hosted direct nego-

ing the ceasefire, justifying their attacks by blaming the other for breaches. According to Lebanon's health ministry, Israeli attacks since Mar 2 have killed at least 3,433 people. Lebanon's civil defence agency said six people had been killed in an Israeli strike on the south Lebanon village of Marwanieh, two of them children. Lebanon's public university postponed some examinations on Tuesday, after two students and their father were killed while returning to south Lebanon after sitting exams a day earlier. Israel's military said two of its soldiers had been killed in southern Lebanon, bringing to 27 the number of Israeli military deaths since early March. On Sunday, Israeli troops seized Beaufort Castle, which commands sweeping views of south Lebanon. Israeli forces used the castle, also known as Qalaat al-Chakif, as a base during their previous two-decade occupation of southern Lebanon that ended in 2000.

## Lebanon says Hezbollah accepted US proposal to stop attacks

**Washington:** Lebanon said on Monday (Jun 1) Hezbollah had accepted a US proposal to stop attacking Israel in exchange for Israel halting attacks on south Beirut, after President Donald Trump reported having a "very good call" with the Iran-backed group. Under the arrangement, which Hezbollah has accepted, according to a statement from the Lebanese embassy in Washington shared by the Lebanese presidency, "Israeli strikes on Dahiyeh" - Beirut's southern suburbs - "would cease in exchange for Hezbollah refraining from launching attacks against Israel". Israel had threatened to strike the southern suburbs of the Lebanese capital again on Monday. Israel's growing offensive in Lebanon, including heavy bombardment and its deepest ground invasion in two decades, has threatened to scupper the ceasefire between the United States and Iran in the wider Middle East war. Hezbollah drew Lebanon into the conflict on Mar 2 by firing rockets at Israel in retaliation for the US-

Israeli killing of Iran's supreme leader. Trump said he had persuaded Israel and Hezbollah to de-escalate. "There will be no Troops going to Beirut, and any Troops that are on their way, have already been turned back," Trump said on his Truth Social network after a "very productive" call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "Likewise, through highly placed Representatives, I had a very good call with Hezbollah, and they agreed that all shooting will stop - That Israel will not attack them, and they will not attack Israel," he added. Netanyahu later said he had told Trump "that if Hezbollah does not cease attacking our towns and our citizens, Israel will strike terrorist targets in Beirut". But Trump doubled down on his ceasefire push, posting on Truth Social that "hopefully" Israel and Hezbollah would stop fighting "for ETERNITY!"

"COMPREHENSIVE CEASEFIRE" The announcements came on the eve of a fourth round of US-hosted direct negotiations between Israel and Lebanon on Tuesday and Wednesday. Military delegations held security talks last week. Hezbollah lawmaker Hassan Fadlallah said his group's position was "clear and stipulates a comprehensive ceasefire across all Lebanese territory", Hezbollah's Al-Manar television channel reported. But Hezbollah claimed multiple attacks on Israeli targets, mainly in southern Lebanon, including after Trump's announcement. Earlier on Monday, Tehran said a Lebanon ceasefire remained a key condition for any deal with Washington, as Iran's Revolutionary Guards threatened to open "new fronts" in the war over Israel's offensive in Lebanon. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) reported Israeli airstrikes on dozens of locations in the country's south, including one that damaged a hospital in the city of Tyre. An AFP correspon-

dent saw heavy damage in the area and first responders putting out a blaze at the Jabal Amel hospital's car park, which had been hit. The health ministry shared videos showing damage inside a hospital ward, with rubble and debris on the ground, blown-out ceilings, blood on the floor and shattered glass. Near the border, Father Antonios Farah, a priest for the village Qlayaa, where some residents are still holding out despite Israeli evacuation orders, told AFP a strike on a car had killed a man, his son

"to respect the cessation of hostilities". The UN Security Council was holding an emergency meeting on the war in Lebanon on Monday. In a report to the Security Council seen by AFP, Guterres said it would be necessary to maintain peacekeepers in Lebanon after the mandate of the current mission expires at year-end. Earlier, Netanyahu and his Defence Minister Israel Katz said they had ordered strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs in light of Hezbollah's "repeated violations of the ceasefire ... and the attacks on our cities and citizens". Israel's military later urged residents of the area, a Hezbollah stronghold mostly spared heavy attacks since April, to evacuate. Katz said there would be "no calm in Beirut" if Hezbollah attacks continued, vowing to establish a military-controlled zone in the area of southern Lebanon's Litani River. AFP journalists saw families fleeing the densely populated southern suburbs. South Beirut resident Hadi, 24, said he had hoped for some stability during the truce, but "that feeling did not last long". "Our fears intensified this morning" after the Israeli announcement, which "caused widespread panic, and we immediately left the area", he told AFP by telephone. A truce to halt the fighting in Lebanon began on April 17, but has never been observed. Both Israel and Hezbollah accuse each other daily of violating the ceasefire, justifying their attacks by blaming the other's alleged breaches.



and his daughter, who were students, as he drove them back from university exams in Beirut. Lebanon's health ministry said Israeli attacks since Mar 2 have killed at least 3,433 people. Israel's military said two of its soldiers had been killed in southern Lebanon, bringing to 27 the number of Israeli military deaths since early March. "FEARS INTENSIFIED" Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, urged all sides

land or sea, and that it will not carry out detonations or demolitions" in the south, where Israel is accused of razing entire villages. "FORETERNITY!" Hezbollah drew Lebanon into the Middle East war on Mar 2 by firing rockets at Israel in retaliation for the killing of Iran's supreme leader, and Tehran has insisted that Lebanon be included in any peace deal with Washington. As the violence threatened to scupper a ceasefire in the wider Middle East war between the US and Iran, Leila Shahab, 35, a resident of Beirut's southern suburbs, told AFP that she and her family had fled the area after the Israeli threats "because of the kids". "But now we've come back. We found the situation has calmed down a bit," she said. "Israel's strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs will cease, and in exchange Hezbollah will not attack Israel. And we will work to ensure the ceasefire expands to include all of Lebanon's territory," the Lebanese presidency said, echoing Trump. "There will be no troops going to Beirut, and any troops that are on their way have already been turned back," Trump said, after what he described as a "very productive" call with Netanyahu, later adding in a social media post that he hoped Israel and Hezbollah would stop fighting "for eternity!" According to Axios, however, Trump called Netanyahu "fucking crazy" and accused him of putting Iran peace talks at risk. "Likewise, through highly placed representatives, I had a very good call with Hezbollah, and they agreed that

## Philippines' UN Security Council bid could amplify ASEAN voice on global issues

**New york:** The United Nations General Assembly will vote on Wednesday (Jun 3) to elect new non-permanent members to the UN Security Council for two-year terms beginning in 2027. The Philippines and Kyrgyzstan are vying to fill the vacant Asia-Pacific seat. Manila has mounted a high-profile campaign for the position, with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr travelling to the UN's New York headquarters in March to personally advocate for the Philippines' candidacy. "The Philippines has regularly proven itself to be an independent, trusted partner, an innovative pathfinder, and committed peacemaker," he told the UNGA during a special address. Analysts say a successful Philippine bid could provide an opportunity to elevate Southeast Asian concerns within the UN's most powerful body. "Elected members ... represent not only their national interests, but also those of their neighbours", said Daniel Forti, head of UN affairs at the International Crisis Group. "(We) could certainly expect to see a lot more thinking and influence of ASEAN in how the Philippines would explain its positions and advocate for certain priorities on the UN Security Council."

### ASEAN PRIORITIES ON A GLOBAL STAGE

The 15-member body tasked with maintaining international peace and security has five permanent members: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the US. Ten non-permanent members are elected for staggered two-year terms, with five members replaced each year. They vote on resolutions and help shape the

council's agenda, particularly during the month in which they hold the rotating presidency. The Philippines has centred its campaign on regional security, climate change and the upholding of international law, rather than the contentious issue of territorial disputes in the South China Sea. Forti said this suggests Manila, if elected, would be keen to avoid turning the council into a battleground over a single issue. "Inevitably, the Philippines will have to deal with China as the major player on the security council and in its neighbourhood," he told CNA. "Manila will have to very carefully balance the positions it takes, not only on its own region, but also other issues of world affairs where the US and China are on opposing sides."

**SPOTLIGHT ON MYANMAR INSTEAD?** Christopher Ankersen, a clinical professor of global affairs at New York University, said a Philippine term on the council could instead draw renewed international attention to Myanmar, which continues to face significant humanitarian and political challenges following years of instability. "We could probably see some broad support for a resolution talking about the need for forward progress, convening some kind of discussion about the situation in Myanmar," said Ankersen, a former senior UN official in Southeast Asia. "I think that's something that the Philippines could and should bring to the table." Meanwhile, experts say the ongoing tensions between Thailand and Cambodia may not feature prominently on Manila's security council agenda.

## Israel says US backs striking Beirut suburbs if Hezbollah attacks

**Beirut:** Israel warned on Tuesday (Jun 2) that its US ally would not restrain it from striking Hezbollah's bastions in Beirut's suburbs if the Iran-backed group continues to target northern Israeli towns. US President Donald Trump had announced an agreement to halt attacks, but neither side has publicly accepted it, and Israel's defence minister said the Lebanese capital's southern suburbs remain potential targets. The warning came hours after Israel's air defences intercepted two projectiles that crossed from Lebanon. According to Lebanon's National News Agency, Israel also conducted fresh air strikes on south Lebanon on Tuesday. Recent days have seen a dramatic escalation in fighting and bombardment as Israeli troops stage their deepest incursion into Lebanon in two decades. "If Israeli towns continue to be attacked, we will evacuate and strike the Shiite Dahiyeh quarter in Beirut, Hezbollah's stronghold," Defence Minister Israel Katz told a conference. "The US endorsed this principle and conveyed it to the Lebanese government and all relevant actors." According to Lebanese authorities, Hezbollah would no longer fire into Israel under the agreement revealed by Trump, while the Israeli military would spare Beirut's southern suburbs, a group of Shia-majority districts where the militants have long held sway. An adviser to Lebanese parliament speaker Nabih Berri, a Hezbollah ally, told AFP that he would guarantee that Hezbollah would respect a "global ceasefire", if one was agreed. The aide, Ali Hamdan, said a "global ceasefire means a halt to Israeli strikes by air,

land or sea, and that it will not carry out detonations or demolitions" in the south, where Israel is accused of razing entire villages.

"FORETERNITY!" Hezbollah drew Lebanon into the Middle East war on Mar 2 by firing rockets at Israel in retaliation for the killing of Iran's supreme leader, and Tehran has insisted that Lebanon be included in any peace deal with Washington. As the violence threatened to scupper a ceasefire in the wider Middle East war between the US and Iran, Leila Shahab, 35, a resident of Beirut's southern suburbs, told AFP that she and her family had fled the area after the Israeli threats "because of the kids". "But now we've come back. We found the situation has calmed down a bit," she said. "Israel's strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs will cease, and in exchange Hezbollah will not attack Israel. And we will work to ensure the ceasefire expands to include all of Lebanon's territory," the Lebanese presidency said, echoing Trump. "There will be no troops going to Beirut, and any troops that are on their way have already been turned back," Trump said, after what he described as a "very productive" call with Netanyahu, later adding in a social media post that he hoped Israel and Hezbollah would stop fighting "for eternity!" According to Axios, however, Trump called Netanyahu "fucking crazy" and accused him of putting Iran peace talks at risk. "Likewise, through highly placed representatives, I had a very good call with Hezbollah, and they agreed that

all shooting will stop - that Israel will not attack them, and they will not attack Israel," Trump said. According to Iran's Tasnim news agency, Tehran is no longer engaging in talks with Washington due to Israel's offensive.

### TRADING BLOWS

The fourth round of US-hosted direct negotiations between Israel and Lebanon was due to take place later Tuesday and on Wednesday. Military delegations held security talks last week. A truce to halt the fighting in Lebanon began on Apr 17, but has never been observed. Both Israel and Hezbollah accuse each other daily of violating the ceasefire, justifying their attacks by blaming the other for breaches. According to Lebanon's health ministry, Israeli attacks since Mar 2 have killed at least 3,433 people. Lebanon's civil defence agency said six people had been killed in an Israeli strike on the south Lebanon village of Marwanieh, two of them children. Lebanon's public university postponed some examinations on Tuesday, after two students and their father were killed while returning to south Lebanon after sitting exams a day earlier. Israel's military said two of its soldiers had been killed in southern Lebanon, bringing to 27 the number of Israeli military deaths since early March. On Sunday, Israeli troops seized Beaufort Castle, which commands sweeping views of south Lebanon. Israeli forces used the castle, also known as Qalaat al-Chakif, as a base during their previous two-decade occupation of southern Lebanon that ended in 2000.

## Kakali Moina Parijat meeting held

**Guwahati:** The meeting of Guwahati Kakali Moina Parijat was held on Sunday at 2 PM and was presided over by



President Raj Ray Medhi, while Executive President Piyush Kalita graced the occasion as the distinguished guest. Chief Coordinator Dilip Baruah ex-

plained the objectives of the meeting, and Secretary Kabita Bordoloi spoke about the activities and aims of Kakali Moina Parijat. A large number of children attended the 97th meeting and contributed to its success through various cultural performances, including songs, poetry recitations, and dances. Bhavesh Chandra Doi recited poetry, while songs were presented by Parnashee Dutta and Pranavee Dutta. Poetry was also recited by Geetu Moni Medhi, Trishnagi Medhi, Yasmin Rahman, Mugikshi Adhikari, and Sonotora Rajbongshi. Darshana Kalita conducted a special programme segment during the event. Raj Ray Medhi addressed the gathering, and the meeting concluded with the singing of the National Anthem, followed by a vote of thanks delivered by Secretary Kabita Bordoloi.

## Prothomesta Neuro care launches exclusive Neurology OPD in association with Chikitsa Clinic

**Guwahati:** Prothomesta Neuro care, New Delhi, announced the launch of their exclusive Neurology OPD services in partnership with Chikitsa Clinic, Guwahati. The OPD Services were launched in the presence of Dr Biplab Das, Director - Neurology & Interventional Neuroradiology, Prothomesta Neuro care and Batra Hospital, New Delhi. Dr Biplab Das will be available on 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month from 11:00 AM to :00 PM at Chikitsa Clinic, Guwahati, for primary consultations and follow-up, eliminating the need for travel to metro cities. Patients in and around Guwahati can now consult for super specialist opinions pertaining to various neurological disorders and management including stroke management, and epilepsy surgery. Dr Biplab Das, Director - Neurology & Interventional Neuroradiology, Prothomesta Neuro care and Batra Hospital, New Delhi, said "People often come to us with conditions such as headache, migraines, sudden or acute onset of dizziness or unconsciousness, trouble walking, loss of balance, sensa-

tion or coordination, trouble seeing with one or both eyes, speech problems, difficulty swallowing, etc. Through the launch of this OPD service, the people from Guwahati will get access to the best-in-class services and we will raise awareness about Neurological disorders." Dr Biplab further added "Strokes are medical emergencies demanding immediate attention, with the "golden hour" being crucial for effective intervention, particularly for ischemic strokes. Quick action, such as clot-dissolving medication or clot removal procedures, can minimize brain damage. Medical management involves Thrombolytic Therapy, anticoagulants, antiplatelet medications, and blood pressure control. Similarly, other movement disorders need to be identified early and with advancements in medications and surgical interventions available, the condition can be effectively managed." With state-of-the-art technology, a specialized clinical approach and best-in-class diagnostic abilities and with multi-disciplinary team Prothomesta Neuro care, New Delhi is a 24\*7 Stroke Emergency Ready Centre.

## Sightsavers opens applications for 2026 Fellowship Program for ophthalmologists

**Guwahati:** Sightsavers India has announced that applications are now open for the 2026 cohort of its India Fellowship Program. It is a distinctive 18-month fellowship program designed to equip early-career ophthalmologists with advanced clinical, surgical and leadership skills while preparing them to deliver quality eye care in areas of high need. India continues to make progress in expanding access to eye health services, yet strengthening the skills of ophthalmologists remains essential to ensuring quality eye care reaches the communities. The Sightsavers India Fellowship Program reflects the organisation's long-standing vision, since 1970, of a world where no one is blind from avoidable causes. Having screened over 100 million people across multiple states in India, Sightsavers India recognises the importance of supporting young professionals at a critical stage of their careers and helping bridge the transition from postgraduate education to independent practice through immersive learning and real-world experience. The Fellowship offers a rigorous and hands-on learning experience. Over 18 months, fellows go through a carefully structured journey starting with four months of intensive surgical training at leading institutions. This is followed by a 14-month posting at a partner hospital in one of eight states- Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, or Rajasthan. Through these placements, the Fellowship contributes to strengthening the availability of skilled ophthalmologists in rural areas where access to specialised eye care can be limited. It also provides fellows valuable experience of working in high-volume settings, managing diverse clinical cases and understanding the realities of delivering eye care in resource-constrained settings. Fellows receive one-on-one mentorship, progressive clinical and surgical exposure, opportunities to strengthen leadership and management capabilities and experience across both hospital and community eye care settings. The program is designed to develop confident, independent practitioners who are not only equipped to perform quality clinical care but are also prepared to contribute to strengthening India's broader eye health ecosystem. Applications are open to Indian nationals holding an MS, DNB or DO degree in Ophthalmology. The programme seeks candidates with a strong learning orientation, adaptability to diverse environments, professional ethics and a demonstrated commitment to serving high-need communities. Speaking on the announcement, RN

Mohanty, CEO, Sightsavers India, said: "There is a moment in every young doctor's career when training meets real responsibility and how

with partners to reduce avoidable blindness and promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities. Sightsavers India collaborates with



that transition is supported makes all the difference. The Sightsavers India Fellowship is built around that moment. It equips passionate ophthalmologists with surgical excellence, confidence and grounding to deliver quality eye care where it is needed most. We look forward to welcoming the 2026 cohort and supporting them every step of the way." Selected fellows will receive a monthly stipend along with benefits including completion incentives, mediclaim, accident insurance and professional indemnity insurance. Sightsavers India also known as Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, is a development organisation working with partners to reduce avoidable blindness and promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities. Sightsavers India collaborates with various departments of the respective state governments to scale up operations for Social Inclusion, Eye Health and Inclusive Education—our three core areas of work. We work in a sustainable way to promote lasting change by strengthening existing health systems, seeking to engage with the governments and demonstrating best practices. Sightsavers India also known as Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, is a development organisation working

various departments of the respective state governments to scale up operations for Social Inclusion, Eye Health and Inclusive Education—our three core areas of work. We work in a sustainable way to promote lasting change by strengthening existing health systems, seeking to engage with the governments and demonstrating best practices. Sightsavers India Fellowship is an opportunity for promising and passionate young ophthalmologists to get trained at some of the leading eye health institutes in India. Alongside, the fellows will get a chance to apply these skills and knowledge in a real-world scenario while being placed under Sightsavers India Eye Health Programme. The program identifies promising young ophthalmologists from India and groups them through an innovative 18-month course to enhance their perspectives on rural eye health. After a rapid 4-month training in Cataract, the fellows are placed in the peripheral centres of one of the 8 states- Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Odisha. The process involves skill upgradation components and personal interactions with eminent leaders in the eye care and development sector.

## Gen Z travellers ditch annual holidays for spontaneous getaways: Airbnb

**Guwahati:** A new Airbnb report finds that India's Gen Z has quietly retired the annual holiday -and replaced it with a more frequent, more personal, and more spontaneous approach to travel. Never the Same: The New Rules of Gen Z Travel in India reveals a generation for whom travel is no longer about seeing the most, but about feeling the most like themselves. "Travel for Gen Z is as much an act of self-expression as it is exploration and that makes them the most intentional, most engaged travellers we've seen. The defining thing about this generation isn't how often they travel. It's why - to feel most like themselves. What we're seeing at Airbnb is a generation for whom travel has become the most personal decision they make - where they go, who they bring, and crucially, where they choose to stay. Every choice is a statement about who they are. At Airbnb, that's exactly the shift we're built for, and it opens up a new chapter for how India gets to be discovered." said Amanpreet Bajaj, Airbnb's Country Head, India and Southeast Asia. For decades, the Indian holiday meant one big trip: planned months ahead, tightly scheduled, and saved for. Gen Z has broken that rhythm entirely. 7 in 10 Gen Z travellers would rather take three short trips than one long annual holiday. 87% prefer trips that last under a week. Airbnb data reflects this growing shift in travel behaviour among young Indians. Searches by Indian Gen Z for the summer period were up over 0% year-on-year<sup>2</sup>, with shorter getaways of 2-6 nights emerging as the fastest-growing trip format - rising nearly 80% for domestic travel. Travel, for this generation, is less a planned event and more a reflexive response - to stress, to an open weekend, to a friend who simply said let's go. 66% book within days or weeks of travel. 67% say no two trips they've taken have ever looked the same. The annual escape hasn't disappeared - it has multiplied, diversified, and become something much more alive. For Gen Z in India, travel has become one of the primary ways they express who they are. 87% agree that the way they travel reflects who they are as a person, and 92% say it matters that their destination or stay reflects their personal taste - not just a popular option. 95% say it matters that their trip feels personal and unique rather than typical or pre-planned. The algorithm is not their travel guide: 90% say they are likely to seek out places that haven't been widely recommended online or gone viral. This conviction shapes how they spend time once they arrive. 80% say small moments on a trip matter more to them than famous attrac-

tions. They are more likely to be found in a local market or a neighbourhood grocery store than at the nearest landmark. The most significant shift the report identifies is in the role of accommodation itself. 6% of Gen Z travellers have chosen a destination specifically because of a stay they discovered - not because of the destination itself. 82% say accommodation is very or extremely important when planning a trip, and 78% spend at least half their total trip time at their stay. More than half say where they stay either shapes the whole experience or is often the highlight of the trip entirely. What they look for is not a hotel checklist but a home wishlist - a terrace for slow mornings, enough space for everyone to have their own corner, a living room to return to at the end of the day. Airbnb data reflects this: The most memorable moments from their recent trips were not the places they visited: they were a conversation that lasted hours, a slow morning that became the highlight, a meal cooked together at the stay. Travel for Gen Z is fundamentally about connection. The destination matters, but the company matters more. In 4 agree that who they travel with matters more than where they go - and when planning a trip, companion comes first, destination second, and experience third. Friends are the most common travel companions, followed by family. More than half prefer one shared home over separate hotel rooms when

travelling in groups, because the shared kitchen, the common living room, the terrace everyone returns to - these are where the actual trip happens. It shows up in how they book too - group trips by Indian Gen Z on Airbnb have grown by almost 55% domestically year-on-year, the fastest growing trip type by far. Among those who travel in groups, uninterrupted time together without the distractions of daily life is the top priority, followed closely by making memories they will still be talking about years later. For Gen Z travellers, the absence of a rigid plan is often the plan itself. Travel is shifting away from packed schedules toward slower, more open-ended experiences with space for spontaneity and rest. 95% say it's important their trips feel personal, and 64% deliberately leave parts of their itinerary unplanned to explore. 2 in Gen Z also travel just to do nothing - to rest, slow down or stay in. When it comes to what they actually want to do, the preference is clear - nature and slow travel tops the list, followed by food and culinary exploration, then adventure. 90% actively seek out places that haven't gone viral or been widely recommended online. The algorithm is not their travel guide. When asked what a good trip actually gives them, the answers are simple: memories they'll carry for a long time, and a feeling of complete freedom.

## TVS Motor clocks highest-ever monthly sales at 5.67 lakh units in May

**Guwahati:** TVS Motor Company reported its highest-ever monthly sales performance in May 2026, registering total sales of 5,66,585 units, marking a 31 per cent growth compared to 4,31,275 units sold during the same month last year. The company said total two-wheeler sales rose 31 per cent to 5,43,111 units in May 2026 from 4,16,166 units a year ago. Domestic two-wheeler sales also recorded strong growth of 24 per cent, increasing to 3,84,565 units from 3,09,287 units in May 2025. Motorcycle sales grew 30 per

cent to 2,73,802 units, while scooter sales rose 32 per cent to 2,20,740 units during the month. TVS Motor's electric vehicle segment continued its strong momentum, with EV sales surging 56 per cent to 43,632 units compared to 27,976 units in May last year, making it the company's highest-ever EV sales performance. International business emerged as another major growth driver, with total overseas sales rising 49 per cent to a record 1,75,991 units from 1,18,437 units in May 2025. International

two-wheeler sales increased 48 per cent to 1,58,546 units. In Guwahati, rising consumer demand for scooters, motorcycles and electric vehicles has been contributing to stronger sales trends across Assam and the Northeast. Growing interest in personal mobility and expanding EV adoption are expected to support further demand for TVS products in the region. The company's three-wheeler segment also posted robust growth of 55 per cent, with sales increasing to 23,474 units from 15,109 units a year earlier.

## Infinity Learn's hybrid advantage drives strong performance in JEE Advanced 2026

**Guwahati/ Delhi:** Infinity Learn by Sri Chaitanya, India's leading hybrid learning platform, today announced its continued streak of success with remarkable student outcomes in the JEE Advanced 2026 examinations. Excelling across both online and offline learning formats, Infinity Learn has once again showcased the strength of its hybrid learning model in JEE Advanced, one of India's most competitive and sought-after entrance examinations for admission to premier engineering institutions such as the IITs and IIITs. Among the top achievers, Infinity Learn's online student Jai Somani secured an impressive All India Rank (AIR) 77. Adding to the institutional glory, Sri Chaitanya Academy Varanasi offline student Shashank Maurya sealed AIR 500, and Sri Chaitanya Academy Bengaluru student Nishank Vyas secured AIR 769. These consistent rankings reflect the strength of a proven ecosystem that combines Sri Chaitanya's four decades of academic excellence with Infinity Learn's technology-driven hybrid learning model, seamlessly integrating online and offline learning experiences. Commenting on the steady growth trajectory, Sushma Boppana, CEO & Director, Sri Chaitanya Educational Institutions & Founder, Infinity Learn, said: "We are immensely proud to see Infinity Learn emerge as a trusted name in education, delivering consistent results and creating meaningful student success stories year after year across both digital and classroom learning environments. The exceptional performance of our learners reflects their deep dedication and the unwavering commitment of our faculty. As a premier educational institution, we remain deeply invested in democratising education, elevating talent to its fullest potential, and strengthening the trust parents place in us. Congratulations to all our students and their families." Expanding on this vision of multi-channel educational delivery, Ujjwal Singh, Founding CEO of Infinity Learn by

Sri Chaitanya, added: "At Infinity Learn, outcomes define our ultimate purpose. I am incredibly happy that year after year we continue to strengthen our performance across both our online platform and offline centres, enabling students nationwide to secure opportunities at premier engineering institutions and fulfil their aspirations. Our hybrid model enables students in Tier 2 and Tier cities to access the same high-quality, outcome-driven education as those in major metros, proving that excellence is not defined by geography. Our core promise will always remain: Baccha Sekha ki nahi. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to our students and their families for their outstanding success, and to our faculty for their exceptional dedication and commitment to student outcomes." As Infinity Learn continues to scale its hybrid infrastructure, these results cement its position as one of India's most reliable platforms for admission in top-tier engineering institutes across India. Infinity Learn is one of India's leading digital learning platforms supporting students across K-12 and competitive exam preparation, including JEE and NEET. Built around how students learn, the platform focuses on conceptual clarity, personalised guidance, and continuous support beyond classrooms. Infinity Learn is an initiative by Sri Chaitanya Educational Institutions, one of India's most respected educational institutions with four decades of legacy in nurturing top-performing students. This strong academic foundation, combined with technology-driven learning, enables Infinity Learn to serve over a million paid subscribers across India. The platform is committed to helping students learn smarter, think deeper, and build confidence, preparing them not just for exams, but for life. Sri Chaitanya Academy, is a comprehensive test preparation center focusing on preparing students for IIT-JEE and NEET entrance exams, school/board exams, Olympiads, and other foundation-level assessments.

## Ambitious Jordan out to make their mark on World Cup debut

**June 2 :** Jordan are enjoying a golden age in their football fortunes after runs to the 2023 Asian Cup and 2025 Arab Cup finals and have no intention of just making up the numbers at their first World Cup. The Al-Nashama, or the "noble ones", have developed into a significant force in the Arab footballing world since Moroccan Jamal Sellami took over as coach in June 2024 and built on the work of his predecessor, compatriot Hussein Ammouta. Sellami believes the team he has built can deliver a shock similar to Algeria beating Germany in 1982, Cameroon stunning reigning champions Argentina in 1990 and Senegal repeating the feat against holders France in 2002. "These results open horizons of hope and ambition for the fans, so they can dream," Sellami, who played for Morocco at the 1998 World Cup, told Arabic sports channel TFK. "And we too have the right to dream and to strive to be a strong team and present ourselves well. "Right now, people are asking: 'Who are Al-Nashama? Where are they from?' So this is a chance for them to show their capabilities, to stand out in a big way." The 55-year-old former midfielder has built a well-structured, disciplined team that utilises their wealth of creative forward talent to hit opponents on the break with a lightning-quick transition. They will be without Yazan Al-Naimat at the tournament,

however, after the dynamic forward, who scored eight goals in qualification, suffered an ACL injury in the Arab Cup quarter-finals last December. "Yazan is a player who cannot be replaced," conceded Sellami. "But we will find a combination for the team that can still be dangerous to the opponent, and that also gives us balance in our defensive performance." Al-Naimat's likely replacement, Ali Olwan, has recovered from an Achilles injury sufficiently to take his place in Sellami's extended squad, and skipper Musa Al-Taamari will be around to torment defenders on the right wing. The Jordanians have been handed a tough group and will take on Austria and Algeria in San Francisco before moving on to Dallas to face reigning champions Argentina. While familiar with the style played by Algeria, a friendly against Switzerland in late May will prepare Jordan for Austria and they will finish their warm-up schedule against Colombia in early June to get a feel for South American opposition. Sellami believes the Austria match will be crucial to the success of Jordan's campaign - "it sets your path" - and is hoping to have garnered something from the first two games before facing Argentina. "We hope that by then we will already have earned points, and that this match will be a step toward continuing in the World Cup," he said.

## Guwahati Open PWR 200 concludes with record participation and high-quality competition

**Guwahati:** The Guwahati Open PWR 200, organized by the Assam Pickleball Association (APA) under the aegis of the Indian Pickleball Association (IPA), concluded successfully on Sunday at Pickle Pals, VIP Road, Pathar Quarry, Narengi, Guwahati. The two-day tournament witnessed enthusiastic participation from players across the country and marked another significant milestone in the growth of pickleball in Northeast India. A total of 130 players competed across 22 events, playing 210 matches over the course of the championship. As an officially sanctioned National Ranking and Pickleball World Rankings (PWR) event, the tournament provided players with an opportunity to earn valuable ranking points at both the national and international levels. The championship attracted leading players from Nagaland, West Bengal, Delhi, and various districts of Assam, resulting in a highly competitive field across junior, open, and masters categories. Events were conducted for boys, girls, men, women, and senior age-group players, reflecting the broad appeal and inclusive nature of the sport. A total prize purse of ₹80,000 was awarded across the Men's Open Singles and Doubles, as well as the 30+ and 40+ Men's Singles, Doubles, and Mixed Doubles categories, adding to the prestige and competitiveness of the tournament. The tournament showcased an impressive standard of play and highlighted the rapid growth of pickleball in Assam and the

Northeast. The strong participation from both established and emerging players underscored the increasing popularity of the sport and the expanding competitive ecosys-

The Association extended its sincere gratitude to all participating players, referees, technical officials, volunteers, sponsors, supporters, and the venue partner Pickle Pals



tem being developed in the region. Speaking on the occasion, officials of the Assam Pickleball Association expressed satisfaction with the successful conduct of the tournament and the encouraging response from players, coaches, and supporters. They noted that such events play a crucial role in talent identification and development while positioning Assam as an emerging destination for national-level pickleball competitions.

for their contributions in making the Guwahati Open PWR 200 a grand success. With record participation, quality competition, national ranking significance, and international ranking opportunities, the Guwahati Open PWR 200 has further strengthened Assam's reputation as one of India's fastest-growing hubs for pickleball and reaffirmed the state's commitment to the development of the sport.

## Italian trio poised for semi-final charge at Roland Garros

**Paris :** French Open quarter-final action continues on Wednesday with world number one Aryna Sabalenka looking to reach the last four for the third time while three Italians feature in the men's draw.

**TOP MEN'S MATCH: MATTEO BERRETTINI V MATTEO ARNALDI**

Three Italians have reached the quarter-finals at a Grand Slam for the first time in the Open Era but nobody expected top seed Jannik Sinner to be the one to miss out when he was expected to lead the charge before his shock second-round exit. While Flavio Cobolli faces Felix Auger-Aliassime in one quarter-final, the main attraction on Court Philippe Chatrier will be an all-Italian showdown between two Matteos - the old warhorse Berrettini and the rising star Arnaldi. For Berrettini, reaching his first Roland Garros quarter-final since 2021 represents a sweet return after missing the last four editions due to injury setbacks that threatened to derail his career. "It does make it sweeter, because I actually remember now how sad I was ... I'm not surprised, but I just proved to myself, once again, that I could do it, that even in the toughest moment I just found the energy," Berrettini said. On the other side of the net is his compatriot Arnaldi, who has epitomised resilience by spending a jaw-dropping 17 hours and 42 minutes on court across four rounds while repeatedly clawing his way back from the brink of defeat. The

25-year-old's marathon run included a grueling five hours and 26 minutes victory over Frances Tiafoe in the fourth round, where he battled back from two breaks down in the fourth set in what he described as "the best match I ever played." "Everybody's playing unbelievable tennis. So it's just good for the sport. It's just good for Italian tennis," Berrettini added.

"We're going to be sure that one Italian is going to be in the semis."

**TOP WOMEN'S MATCH: ANNA KALINSKAYA V MAJA CHWALINSKA**

that victory was not the highlight of her experience. "I'm really grateful for this opportunity, it's such a beautiful court. I took a picture during the warm-up of Rafa's plaque," she said with a smile, referring to the white plaque that honours 14-times winner Rafa Nadal. As the only unseeded player remaining in the women's draw, Chwalinska heads into her quarter-final against Russia's Kalinskaya with the freedom that comes from having absolutely nothing to lose. "For me, whoever I'm playing, I'm lower in the rankings, so it doesn't matter for me if it (the draw) is open or not ... Everyone here is higher in the ranking than me. So they are the favourites to win," she added. "I'm like an underdog. No one really knows me."

**SABALENKA STAYS COOL AS UPSETS ROCK BOTH DRAWS**

Sabalenka is keeping her nerve as she prepares to face Russian 25th seed Diana Shnaider in the quarter finals. Shocks and upsets continue to tear through the men's and women's draws at Roland Garros but the Belarusian has learned to separate herself from the tournament's unpredictable nature. "I'm not really focusing on that and I'm not really over-thinking. I was able to separate myself from what's going on this year at Roland Garros," she said. "I have been around, anything can happen. That's tennis, that's sport. I'm just trying to be focused on myself ... I'm doing everything I can to get this trophy."



Poland's last hope at the tournament is not four-times champion Iga Swiatek but qualifier Maja Chwalinska, who has quietly picked her way through stronger opponents to reach a first Grand Slam quarter-final while dropping one set. The 24-year-old has made a remarkable journey from the outer courts to the prestigious Court Philippe Chatrier, where she knocked out France's last hope Diane Parry in the fourth round, though

Belarusian has learned to separate herself from the tournament's unpredictable nature. "I'm not really focusing on that and I'm not really over-thinking. I was able to separate myself from what's going on this year at Roland Garros," she said. "I have been around, anything can happen. That's tennis, that's sport. I'm just trying to be focused on myself ... I'm doing everything I can to get this trophy."

## Destiny's child Andreeva rides belief into Roland Garros semi-finals

**Paris :** Mirra Andreeva said she believed destiny was guiding her French Open run as the Russian teenager charged into the semi-finals on Tuesday 12 months since her tearful implosion after being targeted by the Roland Garros crowd. Under the roof on Court Philippe Chatrier, the 19-year-old reminded fans of her title credentials with a 6-0 6-3 win over Romanian veteran Sorana Cirstea in 56 minutes, and left the court to warm applause.

It was a different story in last year's quarter-finals when she earned a warning for ball abuse after launching one into the stands in frustration during her defeat by local favourite Lois Boisson, but Andreeva said everything happened for a reason. "We have faith that it was

already made before we started living this life," Andreeva told reporters, crediting a belief instilled by her parents. "I think that's why I believe that it's sometimes easier to think this way, when something doesn't go your way. You're like, 'well, this happened for a reason'. It's also easier to think like that."

**FAMILIAR CONDITIONS**

Andreeva had every reason to worry that familiar conditions might stir unwelcome memories, as she prepared to play her frequent practice partner Cirstea. "I was actually joking a little bit this morning, because it was raining, and I knew that we would play with a closed roof. I was saying that I have flashbacks to last year," Andreeva said.

## Switzerland forward Embolo not travelling to US as travel authorisation under review - Swiss federation

**Paris :** Switzerland forward Brel Embolo did not travel with the World Cup squad to the U.S. on Tuesday after his ESTA authorisation was placed under review, the Swiss federation said. Embolo's issue comes after a Swiss court ruling linked to a 2018 altercation in Basel became final nine months ago. The Stade Rennais striker was convicted in 2023 of making multiple threats and handed a suspended fine, a verdict upheld on appeal after judges rejected his account of the incident. Swiss media reported in April that Embolo had decided not to take the case to the Federal Court, making the judgement final. "Unfortunately, Brel Embolo is currently unable to travel to the United States with the

team," the Swiss federation said in a statement. "His ESTA authorisation had been approved until this morning. However, at 10:30 a.m., we were informed that his ESTA application had been placed under further review. "We are currently in contact with the relevant authorities and expect that Brel will either join the team later today or travel tomorrow and join the squad then." A spokesperson for the team, who were boarding their plane to Los Angeles, told Reuters Switzerland had previously travelled to the U.S. to play Mexico and the U.S. in June 2025 and that Embolo had been allowed into the country. Switzerland are in World Cup Group B with co-hosts Canada, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Qatar.

## Austria back from exile and aiming for World Cup knockout success under Rangnick

**June 2 :** After 28 years in the World Cup wilderness, Austria return to the global stage with a golden generation shaped by Ralf Rangnick's tactical overhaul and intent on building upon an impressive showing at the last Euros. In Germany two years ago, Austria entertained with their fluid, attacking style, and surprisingly topped their group ahead of France and the Netherlands before bowing out to Turkey in a frenetic, thrilling tie. That loss left Austria still without a knockout match win at a major tournament since 1954. Now, Rangnick's men are aiming to put that record right, and prove their Euros performance was no flash in the pan. They face a

challenging group at the finals but few opponents will relish meeting a side built on intensity and cohesion. Austria will want to open strongly against debutants Jordan before taking on defending champions Argentina, and their final Group J match is against Algeria. Rangnick, a pioneer of gegenpressing, transformed Austria into a high-octane side, deploying aggressive, attacking counter-pressing football and intent on getting the ball forward with speed and precision.

**LAST CALL FOR AUSTRIA'S CORE**

Rangnick had one of the youngest squads at the Euros but for many of the Austrian players, this may well

be their only World Cup chance. Marko Arnautovic, Austria's all-time top scorer and most capped player, may be in the twilight of his career but the 37-year-old striker brings experience and presence in attack, where his main competition comes from 32-year-old Michael Gregoritsch. David Alaba will relish this opportunity even more having missed the Euros through injury. The 33-year-old Real Madrid defender typified Austria's team spirit by joining the squad in Germany as a non-playing captain. Rangnick's two youngest players are both recently naturalised midfielders, 20-year-old Paul Wanner and 22-year-old Carney Chukwuemeka.

## South Africa assistant coach Mkhalele cleared to travel to Mexico

**Johannesburg :** South Africa assistant coach Helman Mkhalele has received his U.S. visa and will leave for the team's World Cup base in Pachuca, Mexico on Tuesday after players and the technical team left for the tournament without him on Monday. South Africa's departure for the global finals, their first since they were hosts in 2010, has been mired in chaos after it emerged an administrative bungle meant most players and technical staff did not have the required visas on the day of their intended travel via charter flight on Sunday. They face co-hosts Mexico in the World Cup opener in Mexico City on June 11 and have missed at least one day of preparation and acclimatisation to the altitude of Pachuca. Mkhalele's initial visa application was denied by the U.S. Consulate General in

Johannesburg for unspecified reasons, along with that of the team's head of security, Mdu Mbatha, but both have now been successfully processed. "I can confirm that Helman and Mbatha have got their visas, and they will be leaving to join the team. Tomorrow (Wednesday), all of them will be together," South African Football Association President Danny Jordaan told the South African Broadcasting Corporation on Tuesday. "I want to extend my gratitude and my thanks to all the staff at the American Embassy." South Africa are due to play a final warm-up friendly against Jamaica on Friday. They are in Group A at the World Cup and after Mexico face the Czech Republic in Atlanta on June 18 and South Korea back in Mexico in Monterrey six days later.

## Uzbekistan reach first World Cup as government investment pays off

**June 2 :** Uzbekistan's qualification for their first World Cup marks the high point to date of a steady climb to the upper reaches of the global game in the 35 years since gaining independence from the former Soviet Union. Since January last



year, Manchester City's Abdulkodir Khusanov has become the internationally recognised face of the nation following his move to the Premier League, boosting the profile of one of Asia's growing powers. The 22-year-old central defender embodies the impact a series of government-backed initiatives have had on the sport in the country, yielding a growing crop of talented players ready to perform on the biggest stage. "Uzbekistan's qualification for the FIFA World Cup is a defining moment not just for football, but for sport and national identity across our country," Otabek Umarov, the first vice president of Uzbekistan's Olympic committee, told Reuters. "As the first Central Asian nation to reach the World Cup, this achievement unites 38 million people in shared pride and joy."

Khusanov and his Uzbekistan team mates have benefited significantly from government investment in footballing infrastructure, with mini pitches constructed across the nation and around 15,000 school grounds undergoing renovation. A network of dedicated football schools has also been established that supports the development of more than 65,000 young players while plans are in place for a new 55,000-capacity stadium, the largest in the country. "Every Uzbekistani som spent has been part of a coherent, long-term strategy, and the results speak for themselves," said Umarov. "From World Cup qualification and a Premier League player in Abdulkodir Khusanov, to a 13th-place finish at the Paris 2024 Olympics." Coached by World Cup winner Fabio Cannavaro, Uzbekistan will begin their maiden campaign against Colombia before facing DR Congo and Portugal with Umarov confident qualification will provide further momentum for the sport's growth. "Playing in the World Cup will inspire millions of young people, not only in Uzbekistan, but across Central Asia and in Uzbek communities around the world," he said. "This celebration of sport will inspire future generations to get active, live healthily and ultimately improve lifestyles in our country for years to come." "We have one of the youngest and fastest-growing populations on the planet, which means that we will not only benefit from new generations of young athletes, but also from young men and women who want to be involved off the pitch. "This will help our entire sporting ecosystem to thrive for years to come."

**Contd. From Page 1****Extension of Services of 2...**

to run from 6<sup>th</sup> of June till 25<sup>th</sup> of July, 2026. While in return direction, train no. 05931 (Kolkata - Dibrugarh) special has been extended to run from 8<sup>th</sup> of June till 27<sup>th</sup> of July, 2026. The trains will operate with the existing schedule of service, timings, composition and stoppages for eight additional trips.

Train No. 03407 (Bhagalpur - Katihar) Special has been extended to run till 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2026 while in return direction, train no. 03408 (Katihar-Bhagalpur) special has been also extended to run till 4<sup>th</sup> of June, 2026. The trains will operate with the existing schedule of service, timings, composition and stoppages for three additional trips.

Additionally, it has been decided to run two-way Special trains for one trip on 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2026. Both the trains, i.e. Train no. 05630 (Guwahati-Tirupati) and train no. 05862 (Rangapara North-Vijayawada) will run on Thursday.

Overall, these special train services will improve connectivity, facilitate smoother passenger movement and ensure a more comfortable travel experience during the summer rush period. The details of stoppages and timings of these trains are available at IRCTC website and social media platforms of NFR. Passengers are requested to verify the details before undertaking their journey, informed by CPRO of NFR Kapinjal Kishore Sharma.

**MP Darrang - Udalguri Lok...**

Monitoring Committee (DISHA) held at the conference hall of the office of the District Commissioner, Darrang. The meeting was attended by MLA, Sipajhar Legislative Assembly Constituency, MLA, Mangaldai Legislative Assembly Constituency, MLA, Dalgaoon Legislative Assembly Constituency, District Commissioner, Darrang, Additional District Commissioners, President, Darrang Zila parishad, Chief Executive Officer, Darrang Zila parishad, District Development Commissioner, Co-District Commissioners, Circle Officers, Executive Officer of Urban and Local bodies and officers from various departments. A detailed review of the progress of developmental schemes and programmes across sectors such as Panchayat and Rural Development, Public Health Engineering, Public Works, Water Resources, Health, Urban Development and Power was undertaken. The MP directed the Public Health Engineering Department to expedite the completion of pending Jal Jeevan Schemes advised the Municipal Boards to accelerate on going sewerage and sanitation infrastructure works. The Panchayat and Rural Development was instructed to identify stalled projects and ensure optimum utilisation of resources for timely completion of works.

**Assam achieves 91.7 percent...**

and expanding access to banking services among women. As a result, Assam has emerged as one of the leading states in promoting women's bank account ownership and encouraging greater participation in the formal economy. Officials note that the significance of this achievement extends far beyond the number itself, as it represents enhanced financial security, improved access to government benefits, and increased opportunities for economic advancement among women. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has repeatedly underlined the importance of empowering women through financial access, maintaining that stronger financial participation by women contributes directly to the welfare and development of entire families. Under his leadership, several flagship welfare initiatives have been designed and implemented with a focus on strengthening women's financial independence. Among them, the Orunodoi scheme has emerged as one of the most impactful social welfare programmes in the state. Through direct financial assistance transferred to eligible women beneficiaries, the scheme has enabled thousands of households to receive regular support while simultaneously encouraging women to open and actively operate bank accounts. The direct benefit transfer mechanism has helped women become familiar with banking processes, digital transactions, savings practices, and financial planning. Beneficiaries have increasingly gained confidence in managing household finances and participating in economic decisions, thereby enhancing their role within families and communities. Government officials have pointed out that the success of such schemes demonstrates how financial inclusion can serve as a catalyst for broader social empowerment. The Assam government has also invested considerable effort in ensuring that women living in remote and rural regions are not left behind. Through grassroots outreach programmes, awareness drives, and collaboration with self-help groups, banking services have been brought closer to communities that previously faced challenges in accessing formal financial institutions. Banking correspondents have been deployed across villages, bank branch networks have been expanded, and account-opening procedures have been simplified to remove barriers that traditionally limited participation. These measures have helped create an environment in which women can confidently engage with the financial system and benefit from a range of services that were once beyond their reach. Community-based approaches involving self-help groups have played a particularly important role in spreading awareness and encouraging women to take advantage of banking facilities. By working closely with local organizations and community leaders, the government has been able to strengthen trust in formal financial institutions and promote greater financial literacy among women. The increasing integration of women into the banking system has contributed to a broader culture of savings and financial planning, helping families become more resilient and better prepared to manage economic challenges. The achievement also aligns closely with the national vision of women-led development, which emphasizes the importance of placing women at the center of economic and social progress. Assam's efforts have complemented broader national initiatives by creating opportunities for women to access financial services, government benefits, and economic opportunities in a more efficient and transparent manner. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's administration has actively leveraged technology and innovation to further expand access to banking. Digital literacy programmes tailored specifically for women have been introduced to improve understanding of online transactions, mobile banking, and digital payment systems. Mobile banking vans and technology-enabled services have helped bridge geographical barriers and make banking more accessible, particularly in remote areas. These initiatives have enabled women to conduct financial transactions securely and conveniently, reducing the need for long-distance travel and increasing participation in the digital economy. Officials believe that technology-driven financial inclusion has the potential to significantly enhance economic opportunities for women while improving efficiency and transparency in service delivery. The impact of increased financial inclusion among women is already visible across multiple sectors and aspects of daily life. Studies and field observations have indicated that families in which women have access to banking services often experience better outcomes in areas such as health, education, nutrition, and household financial management. Women who are connected to the formal banking system are more likely to save regularly, invest in the future of their children, and access government welfare benefits without intermediaries. Increased access to financial services has also encouraged entrepreneurship among women, enabling many to establish small businesses, participate in income-generating activities, and contribute more actively to local economies. Access to credit and financial products has opened new opportunities for women seeking to expand enterprises, acquire skills, or invest in productive assets. These developments have created a positive cycle in which greater financial participation leads to increased economic confidence, improved household stability, and stronger community development. The Assam government has maintained that women's financial empowerment remains central to its broader development strategy and that efforts will continue to ensure even greater levels of inclusion in the coming years. New initiatives are being planned to combine financial support with skill development programmes, creating pathways through which women can transform access to banking into sustainable economic opportunities. Partnerships with microfinance institutions, self-help groups, women's cooperatives, and financial organizations are being strengthened to expand outreach and improve access to financial products designed specifically for women. The government has also expressed its intention to move toward near-universal financial inclusion among women while introducing advanced financial services that meet diverse economic needs. Policymakers believe that continued innovation and targeted interventions will help sustain the momentum achieved so far and ensure that women remain at the forefront of Assam's development journey. The achievement of bringing 91.7 per cent of women into the formal banking system underscores the state government's commitment to ensuring that no section of society is excluded from the benefits of development. By placing women at the center of policy planning and implementation, the Assam government has sought to build a more equitable, inclusive, and prosperous society. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's emphasis on Nari Shakti reflects a governance approach that recognizes the transformative role women play in driving social and economic progress. Government officials have noted that the state's experience provides valuable lessons for other regions seeking to improve financial inclusion and strengthen women's empowerment. The combination of targeted welfare schemes, grassroots outreach, technological innovation, and institutional support has created a model that demonstrates how coordinated policy action can generate meaningful and measurable outcomes. As Assam continues to advance on its path of development, the integration of a large majority of women into the formal banking system stands as a powerful symbol of progress and empowerment. The achievement highlights the potential of inclusive governance to transform lives, strengthen families, and contribute to long-term economic growth. It also reinforces the belief that empowering women through financial access is one of the most effective ways to achieve broader social development goals. With continued focus on expanding opportunities, strengthening financial literacy, and enhancing access to banking and digital services, the Assam government aims to build upon this success and ensure that every woman has the tools and resources needed to participate fully in the state's growth story. The milestone serves as a reminder that when women are empowered financially, the benefits extend far beyond individuals and contribute to stronger households, more resilient communities, and a more prosperous future for the entire state. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam's efforts in financial inclusion have gained national attention for their scale, effectiveness, and impact. The government's continued commitment to empowering women through access to banking and financial services is expected to remain a key pillar of its development agenda, ensuring that progress reaches every household and that the vision of inclusive growth becomes a reality for all.

**DC Nagaon Participates in Nature...**

The camp aimed to promote awareness on environmental conservation, biodiversity, sustainable lifestyles, and the importance of protecting nature for future generations. On May 31, District Commissioner of Nagaon, Devasish Sharma, interacted with the participants and emphasized the need for environmental stewardship, community participation, and responsible action to ensure a greener future.

Students from various schools across the district, along with environmental enthusiasts, took part in the programme, which sought to encourage collective efforts towards nature conservation.

**Lok Bhavan Assam celebrates...**

State Museum here today.

The celebration reflected the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat and highlighted India's enduring strength in unity amidst diversity. The programme brought together people from different walks of life to honour the rich cultural heritage, historical legacy, and remarkable developmental journey of Telangana.

Minister for Transformation and Development, Labour Welfare, and Tea Tribes and Adivasi Welfare, Shri Rameswar Teli, attended the function. Extending his greetings on the occasion, he said that Telangana Statehood Day is an occasion to acknowledge the sacrifices and collective efforts that culminated in the creation of Telangana on June 2, 2014.

He paid tribute to all those who contributed to the Statehood movement and highlighted Telangana's rich cultural and historical legacy, including the glorious Kakatiya heritage, the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Ramappa Temple, the iconic Charminar, and the vibrant traditions of the Telugu language, literature, folk arts and festivals. He also noted Telangana's impressive progress in sectors such as information technology, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals and innovation, which have made the state one of the country's leading growth centres.

Referring to the strong cultural and emotional bonds between Assam and Telangana, Shri Teli said that both States, while preserving their unique identities, are contributing significantly to the nation's development.

Additional Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam Cultural Affairs Department, Shri B. Kalyan Chakravarthy, speaking on the occasion, said that India's diversity remains its greatest strength and the celebration of Statehood Days provides an excellent platform for fostering mutual understanding and national integration. He observed that programmes of this nature help strengthen cultural ties between different regions of the country and bring people closer.

Highlighting the deep people-to-people connections between the two states, Shri Chakravarthy noted that residents of Telangana living in Assam, as well as Assamese people residing in Telangana, are making valuable contributions to the growth and development of their respective states.

Joint Secretary to the Governor, Shri Arindam Barua, delivered the welcome address.

The programme also showcased captivating cultural performances highlighting the rich artistic traditions and folk heritage of Telangana. The celebration witnessed enthusiastic participation from members of the Telugu community, government officials, students and citizens, making the occasion a vibrant expression of national unity and cultural harmony.

**Educational Awareness meeting...**

community to ensure that every child, particularly girls, remains connected to education, she called for the creation of a supportive and encouraging learning environment.

The DC also highlighted the need to protect children from negative influences such as excessive mobile phone use, reckless motorcycle riding and drug abuse. She urged parents and teachers to remain vigilant and guide students towards positive values and responsible behaviour.

Stressing the importance of character-building, she said that children learn from the society around them and should be nurtured with values of honesty, morality and social responsibility from an early age. She encouraged students to set clear goals in life and work towards them with determination and confidence.

Additional District Commissioner Anusuya Sharma spoke on the importance of strong parent-teacher coordination in promoting education, while Inspector of Schools Dr. Apurba Thakuria briefed the gathering on various initiatives undertaken by the Education Department to strengthen the learning environment.

The programme was attended by Joint Director of Health Services Dr. Sailendra Bardhan Bora, village heads, Gram Panchayat representatives, teachers, parents, students and other prominent citizens.

**Road accident**

area. On receiving information about the incident, personnel from the Shimultapu Police Outpost rushed to the spot and recovered the body. The police have initiated the process of sending the body to Kokrajhar for post-mortem examination and are investigating the circumstances leading to the accident.

**Mobile ICTC van flagged off...**

launched and flagged off on Tuesday by District Commissioner of Cachar, Aayush Garg, IAS.

The flag-off ceremony was held in the presence of Dr. Sumona Naiding, Joint Director of Health Services, Cachar, along with officials of the Health Department and other stakeholders associated with HIV prevention and awareness programmes.

The Mobile ICTC Van has been introduced to take essential HIV-related services directly to communities, particularly in vulnerable and high-risk hotspot areas of the district. Equipped to provide HIV testing, counselling and outreach services, the mobile unit is expected to play a crucial role in improving access to healthcare among key populations, high-risk groups and other vulnerable sections of society.

Speaking on the occasion, officials highlighted that the initiative reflects the continued commitment of the district administration and the health department towards strengthening community-based healthcare interventions and ensuring that critical services reach people who may otherwise face barriers in accessing them.

The deployment of the Mobile ICTC Van is expected to enhance awareness, encourage early detection and facilitate timely counselling and support services, thereby contributing to ongoing efforts to prevent and control HIV/AIDS in the district.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks, marking another important step in strengthening public health outreach and promoting greater awareness about HIV prevention and care in Cachar.

This is stated in a press release issued by Regional office of Information & Public Relations Barak valley Zone Silchar Assam.

**Police Raid Illegal Fuel...**

Ishfakul Ahmed to collect diesel from Nemchand & Manik Chand Depot near Station Chariali in Sivasagar. Mustaq Khan allegedly filled four drums with approximately 720 litres of diesel and fled without making payment.

Following a complaint lodged by the fuel depot authorities at Sivasagar Sadar Police Station, a police team led by Additional Superintendent of Police Maidul Islam, Officer-in-Charge Babul Kumar Medhi, and Town Inspector Debashish Sharma launched an investigation during the night.

After tracing and seizing the vehicle used to transport the fuel, police uncovered the illegal warehouses. Based on statements made by Mustaq Khan and vehicle owner Ishfakul Ahmed alias Babar, the warehouses on BG Road were identified and the stored fuel was seized.

Police have detained Mustaq Khan and Ishfakul Ahmed for further investigation.

Although the exact quantity of diesel and lubricants stored in the warehouses has not yet been confirmed, authorities suspect that thousands of litres of fuel products were being stockpiled.

Investigators are yet to determine whether the operation involved stolen fuel or whether the fuel had been illegally stored for future sale at higher prices amid frequent fuel price hikes.

At the time of reporting, Sivasagar Police were continuing their search for the principal owner of the warehouse.

According to allegations received by police, a man identified as Subhash Das is suspected of being involved in the illegal fuel trade. Das, who reportedly occupied a rented premises in front of the warehouse, has allegedly been involved in the illicit trade of petroleum products and crude oil for a long time. He had previously faced accusations related to the smuggling of stolen oil.

Police have seized the fuel products under relevant provisions of the Explosives Act and also conducted a search operation at the residence of Subhash Das as part of the ongoing investigation.

# Nagaon Launches Census Training Programme DC Stresses Accuracy in Data Collection

Staff Reporter, Nagaon, June 2: In preparation for the upcoming na-

progress. Every piece of information collected during the Census contrib-

conducted on June 3 and June 8. Highlighting a significant techno-



logical advancement, officials informed that the upcoming Census will be conducted using fully digital tools and online platforms for the first time in the country, ensuring faster, more efficient, and highly accurate data collection.

As per the proposed schedule, the Self-Enumeration facility for citizens will begin on August 2, while the official House Listing operation will commence on August 17. The main Population Enumeration phase is expected to start in February 2027.

Appealing to the public for active participation, Deputy Commissioner Devashish Sharma urged residents of the district to extend full cooperation to census enumerators visiting households and to provide complete and accurate information without hesitation.

The district administration expressed confidence that with collective public support and well-trained field personnel, Nagaon will successfully conduct a transparent, comprehensive, and error-free Census exercise, contributing significantly to the nation's developmental planning and governance framework.

tional Census, a district-level training programme for census personnel commenced today at the conference hall of the Nagaon Zila Parishad office. The programme was inaugurated by Nagaon District Commissioner Devashish Sharma, who emphasized the crucial role of accurate data collection in shaping the nation's future development.

Addressing the participants, the District Commissioner stated that reliable census data serves as the backbone of effective governance and policy-making. He noted that the information gathered through the Census will play a vital role in formulating economic, social, and political strategies, making precision and dedication essential for all officials involved in the exercise.

"Accurate enumeration is fundamental to accelerating the country's

utes to informed decision-making and inclusive development," Sharma remarked, urging census personnel to carry out their responsibilities with utmost sincerity and professionalism.

The inaugural session was attended by Additional District Commissioner Kamaljit Sharma, Assistant Commissioner Anjali Kumari, Circle Officers, Block Development Officers, and other district officials.

The training programme, focused on the first phase of House Listing and Housing Census operations, covered key aspects such as data collection methodologies, digital enumeration techniques, and coordination mechanisms required for smooth implementation. According to District Information and Public Relations Officer Bikash Sharma, similar training sessions will also be

# Training Begins in Dibrugarh for the First Phase of the 2027 Census

M Hashim Ali correspondent, Dibrugarh, June 2:

As part of the preparations for the first phase of India's upcoming 2027 National Census, a three-day district-level training programme on the "House Listing and Housing Census" has been formally launched at the Dibrugarh District Training Hall. The important training programme, scheduled to be held from June 1 to June 3, is being attended by Sub-Divisional Commissioners, Additional Deputy Commissioners, Revenue Circle Officers, the Municipal Commissioner, Block Development Officers, and other officials associated with the census process across the district. The primary objective of the programme is to equip administrative officials with the necessary technical knowledge and

ment, manpower deployment, and public awareness campaigns. Detailed explanations were also provided regarding various concepts of house listing and the census questionnaire. One of the key highlights of the training programme is the practical demonstration of the "Census Management and Monitoring System" (CMMS) model. Through this demonstration, officials are being familiarized with digital procedures and user registration processes, enabling smoother and faster execution of field-level activities. Considering the national importance of the census exercise, arrangements have also been made at the training venue to display the official Census mascot and various awareness exhibits aimed at



skills required for the accurate and efficient implementation of census operations at the field level.

During the inaugural session, senior census officials welcomed the participants and presented a comprehensive overview of the 2027 Census. Discussions covered the roles and responsibilities of census personnel, legal provisions, financial manage-

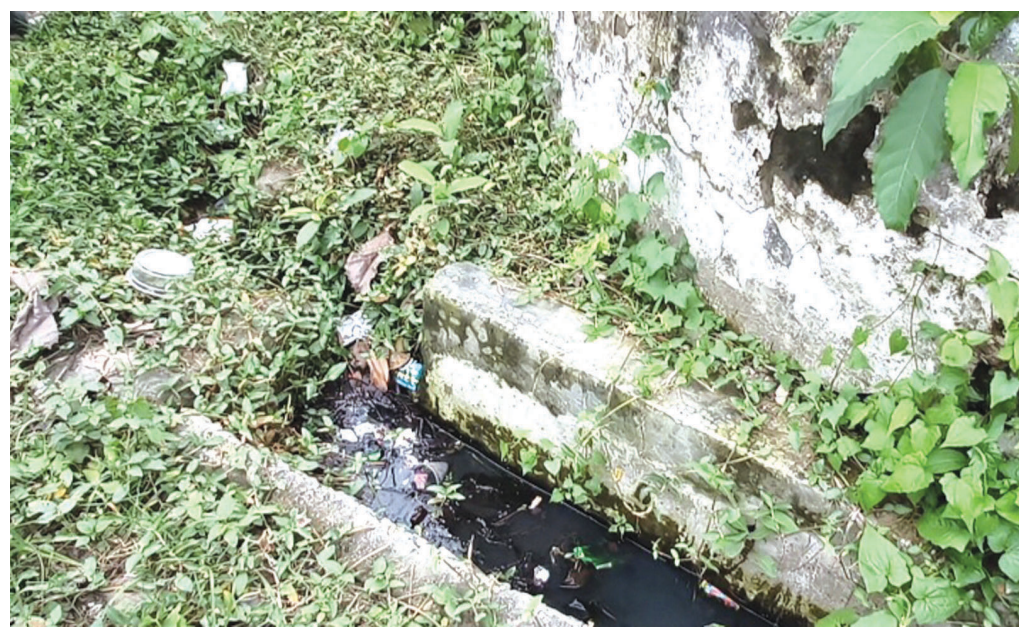
ment, and participation in the process. The programme, which will continue until June 3, is expected to enhance coordination among the district's administrative personnel and lay a strong foundation for the successful and effective implementation of the 2027 Census throughout Dibrugarh district as well as across Assam.

# Fear of Artificial Flooding Even Before Monsoon Due to Clogged Drains Near Thana Chariali ROB in Dibrugarh: Residents Urge Authorities to Take Immediate Action

Correspondent, Dibrugarh, June 2: With the approaching monsoon

months, yet the concerned authorities have not undertaken any significant mea-

road have been facing considerable inconvenience. With the rainy season fast approaching, residents fear that even moderate rainfall could lead to severe waterlogging and artificial flooding in the area. This could disrupt vehicular movement and create difficulties for local residents as well as business establishments.



season, concern is growing among residents living in the vicinity of the Thana Chariali Road Over Bridge (ROB) on Mankata Road in Dibrugarh. The drains running along both sides of the bridge have remained neglected for a long time, resulting in their extremely poor condition. The roadside drains on both sides of the ROB, stretching from the railway track to Mankata Road, have become completely dysfunctional. Accumulated soil, mud, and dense vegetation have clogged the drains entirely, preventing the natural flow of water. As a result, fears of artificial flooding and flood-like conditions have increased even before the onset of the monsoon. According to local residents, the problem has persisted for several

ures to clean or maintain the drains. The accumulation of sand, silt, and overgrown vegetation has severely hampered the natural drainage system, while also creating an unhealthy environment in the area. In particular, pedestrians and commuters who regularly use this busy stretch of

Therefore, local people have appealed to the Dibrugarh Municipal Corporation and the concerned authorities to treat the matter with urgency and take immediate steps to remove the accumulated silt and debris and clean the drains before the monsoon sets in fully.



# Reunion of Former Classmates of Bezbaruah Higher Secondary School, Sivasagar

Khairuddin Ahmed, Staff Reporter Sivasagar, June 2: A

a one-minute silence in memory of the school's de-

flowers, and certificates of appreciation. As per a reso-



reunion of former students who studied in Class X in 1976 at the prestigious Bezbaruah Higher Secondary School in Sivasagar was held with a day-long programme. The event began with participants lighting lamps in front of a portrait of the late renowned artist and singer Zubeen Garg. As part of the programme, a sapling of a Nahor tree, one of Zubeen Garg's favourite trees, was planted on the school campus. The gathering also observed

parted teachers and former classmates. The meeting was conducted by former Abhayapuri College professor Jayanta Baruah and was attended by more than 60 former students. During the event, former student and advocate Diganta Mangal Neog and Amulya Baruah shared memories of their student life, moving those present with their recollections. All former students were felicitated with traditional Assamese gamosas,

lution adopted at the meeting, a 15-member Alumni Committee was formed to carry forward future activities, with Advocate Diganta Mangal Neog elected as President and Anil Gogoi as Secretary.

The reunion concluded successfully after adopting several important resolutions, including preserving the memories of deceased classmates and contributing to the development and welfare of the school.

# Samaj Jyoti award to Sayeeda Wahida Taj Begum

Guwahati, June 2: Rt. teacher, eminent writer & social worker Sayeeda Wahida Taj Begum in Sivasagar Assam awarded with Samaj jyoti award by Divine Hand Welfare Organisation at Jyoti ChitraBan Kahilipara Guwahati on the occasion of mother's Day 10<sup>th</sup> May 2026. In the service period Mrs Begum always try to develop in various fields like library, culture and sports etc. In the social sector Mrs Begum received National and international award. Hon'able guest are Ideal mother Mrinalini Devi and social worker Dayananda Sah writer and social worker Dr Daisy Rani Devi, writer Sabita Devi and other famous person were present in the meeting.