

## ‘Backbone of rising India’: PM Modi highlights growing strength of steel sector

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday highlighted the growing strength of India’s steel industry that is playing a key role in propelling the country’s infrastructure, defence, electric mobility and clean energy sectors. Referring to Steel Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy’s post on X about how India’s policy push and innovation are shaping the country’s journey to becoming a global steel leader, the Prime Minister, in a post on X, wrote: “From infrastructure and defence to

electric mobility and clean energy, steel is the backbone of a rising India. Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy outlines how policy push and innovation are shaping India’s journey to becoming a global steel leader”.

Kumaraswamy said: “A revitalised steel sector is shaping the rise of a New India. From highways to high-speed rail, metro networks to renewable parks, EVs to defence, Indian steel is at the heart of our infrastructure revolution”. The minister further stated



that under Prime Minister Modi’s leadership, India has emerged as the world’s 2nd largest steel producer. Steel

production has nearly doubled since 2014, and we are fast moving towards our 2030 target of 300 MTPA, he said.

“Through visionary reforms like the domestically manufactured iron & steel products policy and Production Linked Incentives scheme, we have boosted capacity, selfreliance, and green steel innovation,” he observed. “Today, India exports quality steel, builds with its own strength, and empowers MSMEs and core industries. This is Atmanirbhar Bharat in action. Steel is not just metal. It is the backbone of a rising, resilient India,” Kumaraswamy added.

### Tata Motors’ sales decline 8.5 pc in Q1 FY26, Mahindra reports 18 pc SUV growth

**Mumbai:** Tata Motors on Tuesday reported an 8.47 per cent decline in total sales as the carmaker sold 2,10,415 units in the April-June quarter of FY26, compared to 2,29,891 units sold during the same period previous year (Q1 FY25). Both commercial and passenger vehicle segments saw a drop in numbers. Commercial vehicle sales stood at 85,606 units, down 6 per cent year-on-year (YoY), while passenger vehicle sales dropped 10 per cent to 1,24,809 units.

Domestic sales for Tata Motors in June 2025 also fell 12 per cent compared to June 2024. However, the company saw some bright spots. International business in the commercial vehicle segment grew strongly, with a 68 per cent increase in sales. Tata Motors Executive



Director Girish Wagh said that the first quarter began slowly for the commercial vehicle industry, especially in the heavy and small commercial vehicle segments.

“But there was some sequential improvement in June, and the company remains optimistic due to a favourable monsoon forecast, expected rate cuts, and growing infrastructure development,” he added. Tata Motors MD Shailesh Chandra said the company expects to build momentum with its new launches and expanding EV portfolio, despite the overall subdued industry outlook.

### Maruti Suzuki India’s exports hit record high in June

**New Delhi:** Maruti Suzuki India on Tuesday posted its highest-ever monthly export numbers in June as the company exported 37,842 units during the month, setting a new record and underlining its growing global presence. Overall, Maruti Suzuki India sold 167,993 units in June, which includes 118,906 domestic passenger vehicles -- lower than the 137,160 units sold in June 2024.

Including sales to other original equipment manufacturer (OEMs) and light commercial vehicles (LCVs), the company’s total domestic sales stood at 130,151 units, down from 148,195 units previous year. Despite this year-on-year (YoY) dip in the domestic market, Maruti Suzuki’s cumulative exports for April to June in FY26 rose sharply to 96,972 units, up from 70,560 in the same period previous year.

In terms of segments, the mini and compact category, which includes models like Alto, S-Presso, Swift, WagonR, and Baleno, recorded sales of 60,591 units in June. Utility vehicles such as Brezza, Ertiga, Fronx, and Grand Vitara contributed 47,947 units to domestic sales.

### SBI storms into 70th year with balance sheet soaring to Rs 66 lakh crore

**Mumbai:** The State Bank of India (SBI), the nation’s largest financial institution, is celebrating its 70th year of operations with a balance sheet that has soared to Rs 66 lakh crore and the number of its customers surging past a staggering 52 crore. Since its inception in 1955, SBI has evolved from supporting India’s early development goals into a driving force of its digital and green economy. In order to play a lead role in India’s renewable energy transition, SBI’s Solar Rooftop Programme aims to solarise four million homes by FY2027, advancing India’s Net Zero 2070 goals, according to an SBI statement.

SBI also announced that as part of its continued focus on customer excellence, it is modernising its Trade Finance operations through digital-

isation, standardisation, and centralisation. A new centre in Kolkata will serve branches across India, ensuring faster and efficient service. Globally, with 244 overseas offices in 55 countries, SBI has been ranked the 4th Most Trustworthy Bank Globally by Newsweek (2024) and Best Bank in India 2024 by Global Finance Magazine.

A cornerstone of SBI’s long-term vision is the expansion of its Project Finance & Structuring Strategic Business Unit (PF&S SBU), which plays a vital role in funding large-scale infrastructure and emerging sectors like renewable energy, e-mobility, data centres, semi-conductors, green hydrogen, decarbonisation and smart infrastructure. Towards this end, SBI is setting up a Centre of Excellence which will serve as a guiding force on new age



sectors and become an “asset of national importance”, the SBI statement said.

SBI drives financial inclusion through 151 million+ Jan Dhan accounts and an extensive correspondent network. The bank’s agricultural lending exceeded Rs 3.5 lakh crore in FY25 -- the highest in the country -- supporting farm infrastructure, according to the statement. In FY2025, the Bank reinforced its social impact footprint by investing Rs 610.8 crore in CSR initiatives, reaching 94 Aspirational Districts. Its efforts spanned healthcare, education, rural development, and environmental sustainability.

### Lauritz Knudsen unveils biggest-ever product line to power India’s industrial growth

**Guwahati:** Lauritz Knudsen Electrical & Automation, a leading name in India’s electrical and automation sector, has unveiled its most ambitious product portfolio to date, aimed at powering the nation’s key industrial clusters. As part of this major push, the company has launched a 30-city ‘Technology Tour’ to showcase over 10 advanced, future-ready solutions including a comprehensive EV charging ecosystem, digital power distribution systems, and end-to-end industrial automation tools.

The initiative is designed to enhance technology access, adoption, and innovation tailored to region-specific industrial needs,

aligning with the government’s Viksit Bharat 2047 vision. The new offerings include air and molded case circuit breakers, smart numerical protection relays, and IoT-powered automation systems, supporting sectors from clean energy to manufacturing.

Guwahati, a key stop on the tour, reflects the brand’s focus on emerging industrial hubs. With Northeast India’s growing emphasis on agro-processing, logistics, and clean energy, Lauritz Knudsen’s solutions are expected to drive smart automation and efficient power management in the Guwahati market, fostering regional economic resilience.

### RBI imposes penalties on two co-operative banks for regulatory violations



**Mumbai:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday imposed monetary penalties on two co-operative banks for failing to comply with its regulatory directions. In an order dated June 26, the RBI imposed a penalty of Rs 14.30 lakh on Shree Kadi Nagarik Sahakari Bank Limited, based in Mehsana district of Gujarat.

The action was taken for violations of RBI’s guidelines on donations to trusts and institutions where directors or their relatives have an interest, as well as on the management of advances by urban cooperative banks (UCBs). According to the RBI, a statutory inspection of the bank was carried out based on its financial position as of March 31, 2024.

### Sensex, Nifty end with slight gains as investors remain cautious

**Mumbai:** The Indian stock markets ended on a flat note with a slight positive bias on Tuesday, as investors remained cautious ahead of the US reciprocal tariff deadline on July 8. The focus remained on trade negotiations between India and the United States, amid the possibility of a trade deal likely this week.

After touching an intra-day high of 83,874.29, the Sensex finally closed at 83,697.29, gaining 90.83 points or 0.11 per cent. Similarly, the Nifty added 24.75 points or 0.1 per cent to settle at 25,541.8.

Among the 30-share index, the top gainer was BEL, which closed the intraday trading session 2.51 per cent higher. Other notable gainers included Asian Paints, Kotak Mahindra Bank, HDFC Bank, Infosys, Titan, and Bharti Airtel.

## Medanta concludes 3-day mega medical camp in Kohima, over 400 beneficiaries attend

**Guwahati:** The Medicity, ranked India's Best Private Hospital by Newsweek for six years running, wrapped up a three-day multi-speciality medical camp in Kohima on June 27, 2025. Organized in collaboration with the Government of Nagaland, the initiative provided free health check-ups to more than 400 individuals, aiming to improve healthcare access in the underserved northeastern state.

The camp was held at three venues: the IDAN Capital Convention Center, the Directorate of Industries and Commerce Office, and the Nagaland Police Headquarters. Key dignitaries included Nagaland Assembly Speaker Sharingain Longkumer, Industries Director P. Tokugha Sema, and DGP Rupin Sharma.



The initiative follows a MoU signed between Medanta and the Nagaland government under the Chief Minister's Health Insurance Scheme (CMHIS). Addressing healthcare gaps—especially high cancer rates due to tobacco use—Medanta Chairman Dr. Naresh Trehan emphasized that “quality healthcare should be a right, not

a privilege.”

Guwahati, as a major healthcare hub in Northeast India, has often served as the nearest centre for specialized treatment for Nagaland residents. The success of this camp is expected to reduce medical travel burdens on patients frequently referred to Guwahati hospitals for advanced diagnosis and care.

## ICICI Prudential taps youth segment with smart insurance plan plus at Rs 1,000 monthly premium

**Imphal:** ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has launched a new market-linked product — ICICI Pru Smart Insurance Plan Plus — aimed at India's youth demographic, offering an affordable entry point of just ₹1,000 per month. The product is designed to provide both long-term wealth creation and life cover, making it a cost-effective, tax-efficient solution for first-time investors.

The plan allows policyholders to choose from 25 funds and four portfolio strategies, with the flexibility of free fund switches and zero tax implications. A key feature is the Waiver of Premium add-



on, which ensures uninterrupted savings in the absence of the policyholder. The fully digital onboarding process further aligns with the digital-first preferences of today's younger population.

Amit Palta, Chief Product and Distribution Officer, emphasized that the initiative targets India's youth, who make up 65% of the population, and aims to empower them to invest early and build financial

resilience.

In Imphal, the plan is expected to gain traction among emerging professionals and tech-savvy investors seeking low-cost investment avenues. Market watchers note growing interest in ULIPs in the region, particularly among the younger population looking for digitally accessible and flexible financial planning tools.

The product is now available for purchase online.

## Reise Moto powers Indian Supercross Racing League's fan parks for Season 2

**Guwahati:** The Indian Supercross Racing League (ISRL) is set to revolutionize motorsport culture in India with the launch of the ISRL Fan Park, presented by Reise Moto, during Season 2 from October to December 2025. Aimed at turning races into full-fledged family festivals, the Fan Parks will debut two days ahead of every Sunday race, transforming race weekends into dynamic celebrations of speed, entertainment, and innovation.

Reise Moto, known for its performance-driven products and community-first approach, is expanding its presence in the league as both the presenting partner of the Fan Park and Associate Sponsor of ISRL. The parks will feature pitlane access, rider meet-and-greets, VR/AR racing games, pro simulators, bike workshops, demo rides, electric bike zones for kids, and live music—setting a new benchmark in motorsport fan engagement.

In Guwahati, a key race city, the Fan Park is expected to attract thousands, especially young bike enthusiasts and families exploring the evolving motorsport scene. Local dealerships and auto accessory vendors are anticipating a boost in footfall, with increased interest in performance gear and two-wheeler upgrades driven by this high-octane festival.

## Vi Business study shows surge in MSME digital adoption, 76% eye cybersecurity investment



**Guwahati:** On the occasion of World MSME Day, Vi Business—enterprise arm of Vodafone Idea—released its Ready for Next MSME Growth Insights Study 2025, revealing a notable rise in India's Digital Maturity Index (DMI) from 56.6 in 2023 to 58.0 in 2025. The study highlights a growing digital commitment among India's small businesses, with 76% planning to ramp up investments in cybersecurity and 72% in cloud technologies.

The third edition of the study, covering over two lakh MSMEs across 15,000 pin codes, identifies Telangana (DMI: 71.2) as the digital frontrunner, followed by Kerala (63.7) and Maharashtra (59.2). Sector-wise, Financial Services lead in digital matu-

riety, followed by Transportation and Retail. However, only 12% of MSMEs have achieved full digital adoption, revealing persistent gaps in execution.

In Guwahati, MSMEs are increasingly recognizing digital transformation as vital to market competitiveness. While investment remains conservative among micro businesses, digital tools for logistics, customer engagement, and cloud-based operations are gaining momentum, especially in retail and services.

Vi Business's “Ready for Next” platform, certified by Cyber Media Research (CMR), continues to empower small businesses, driving India's digital economy from grassroots to global markets.

## Minister Jayant Chaudhary unveils key report to reshape India's workforce skills landscape

**Guwahati:** Union Minister of State (I/C) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and MoS for Education, Jayant Chaudhary, on Wednesday unveiled the report “Skills for the Future: Transforming India's Workforce Landscape” in New Delhi. Prepared by the Institute for Competitiveness (IFC), the independent study analyzes India's workforce using



data from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2023–24, revealing that 88% of the workforce is still engaged in low-competency occupations.

The report identifies five key sectors—IT & ITeS, Textile & Apparel, Electronics, Healthcare & Life Sciences, and Beauty & Wellness—as accounting for over 66% of vocational training. It also highlights the need for a standardized data system to track skill demands and calls for industry accountability in promoting certified talent through market-aligned training.

Minister Chaudhary emphasized that skilling must shift from being supply-driven to demand-led, market-aligned, and outcome-oriented. He also advocated for a robust employability index and deeper integration of education, vocational training, and industry.

In Guwahati, which is witnessing rapid growth in retail, healthcare, and electronics sectors, industry leaders welcomed the report's push for localized, skill-based hiring. Experts noted the need for targeted training modules in the Northeast to unlock regional employment potential aligned with national goals.

## Vi launches Rs 871 Max Family Plan with Netflix, eyes growth in tier-II markets

**Guwahati:** Telecom major Vi has announced the launch of its new Vi Max Family Postpaid Plan at ₹871, featuring the industry's highest data quota of 120GB and bundled access to Netflix and up to 18 other OTT platforms. The plan includes two connections—70GB for the primary, 40GB for the secondary, and an additional 10GB shared data—offering substantial value for digital-first families.

The plan also includes unlimited night data (12 am–6 am), 400GB data rollover (200GB per user), and unlimited 5G data for eligible users in cities like Mumbai, Delhi-NCR, Patna, Chandigarh, and Bengaluru. Netflix Basic comes as a recurring benefit, offering access to global

hits like Squid Game and Indian blockbusters such as Pushpa 2 and Jawan.

Vi's ‘Choice’ feature lets users customize their benefits across entertainment (Amazon Prime, SonyLIV, JioHotstar, etc.) and security/travel perks like Norton Mobile Security or EaseMyTrip discounts.

In Guwahati, where digital adoption is surging and family streaming habits are on the rise, Vi's new offering is poised to gain traction. With a young, tech-savvy demographic, Guwahati presents strong potential for bundled postpaid plans that combine data, entertainment, and flexibility.

Vi aims full 5G rollout in 17 circles by August 2025.



## Sunfeast Marie Light brings cool relief to Rath Yatra devotees with Surjya Bardaan caps



**Guwahati:** During the grand Rath Yatra 2025, Sunfeast Marie Light introduced the innovative 'Surjya Bardaan' cooling caps to thousands of devotees braving the summer heat. Designed with sandalwood and a menthol-activated layer, the caps provided much-needed comfort as pilgrims followed Lord Jagannath's sacred chariot procession.

Crafted to activate under sunlight, the Surjya Bardaan caps release a cooling menthol effect accompanied by a soothing sandalwood aroma turning the intense sun into a source of comfort. The initiative, supported by popular Odia actress Archita Sahu, saw mass distribution of caps from on-ground

experience zones in Puri.

Ali Harris Shere, COO of Biscuits & Cakes Cluster, ITC Ltd., said, "The sun symbolizes energy and life. Through these caps, we bring our brand's warmth and care to the devotees walking this divine path."

Meanwhile, Guwahati is welcoming the campaign as a meaningful convergence of tradition and innovation. Retailers noted increased consumer interest in brands aligned with cultural sentiments, and Sunfeast's visibility in Assam received a boost through digital promotions and local engagement, especially among faith-driven consumers.

## Tetley launches Green Tea Slim Care

**Guwahati:** Tetley, a trusted name in green tea under Tata Consumer Products, has introduced its latest innovation—Tetley Green Tea Slim Care. This unique blend is crafted for the modern Indian woman, combining the antioxidant benefits of premium green tea with added L-Carnitine, a natural nutrient proven to burn body fat. Tetley Green Tea Slim Care is available in refreshing Lemon & Honey and Ginger Mint Lemon flavors, making it a delicious and convenient addition to your daily wellness routine.

Available SKUs & Pricing: Lemon & Honey: 25



tea bags (MRP ₹185), 10 tea bags (MRP ₹80); Ginger Mint Lemon: 25 tea bags (MRP ₹185), 10 tea bags (MRP ₹80). Availability: Now available across major retail stores and leading e-commerce platforms, including Amazon. Choose Tetley Green Tea Slim Care with added L-Carnitine for a tasty way to support your wellness journey every day.

## Sony India launches BRAVIA 5 TVs, promises cinematic experience at home

**Guwahati:** Sony India has unveiled its latest flagship television, the BRAVIA 5, marking a major leap in home entertainment with enhanced picture, sound, and smart features powered by the advanced AI Processor XR. The BRAVIA 5 is designed to deliver lifelike visuals through technologies such as XR Backlight Master Drive, Dolby Vision, and XR Triluminos Pro, alongside immersive surround sound with Dolby Atmos and Acoustic Multi-Audio.

With sizes ranging from 55 to 85 inches, the BRAVIA 5 also features Studio Calibrated Mode, Sony Pictures Core access, and next-gen gaming support with HDMI 2.1, 4K@120Hz, and PS5 optimization, setting a new benchmark in cinematic and interactive experiences at



home.

In the Guwahati market, major retailers have already reported heightened customer interest in premium entertainment solutions. Electronics stores in Paltan Bazaar and GS Road are expecting strong demand, especially for mid-range models like the 65-inch and 55-inch variants, as consumers seek smarter, visually richer upgrades.

Prices start at ₹1,37,740,

with availability at Sony Centers, e-stores, and major retail outlets across India. The BRAVIA 5 comes with a two-year warranty, reinforcing Sony's commitment to quality and customer satisfaction.

These models will be available across all Sony Centers, major electronic stores, and e-commerce portals in India. Sony is also offering a comprehensive one-year warranty on the Bravia 5.

## Terra Motors continues to attract strong dealership interest across India

**Cachar/ Nagaon:** Terra Motors, the Japanese EV OEM, continues to attract strong dealership interest across India with its newest L5 offering and synergetic dealer growth model. In a significant development, a former sub-dealer associated with one of the top EV three-wheeler brands has partnered with Terra Motors as an authorised main dealer, citing dissatisfaction with profit margins and a lack of long-term growth opportunities in their previous brand.

Mr Rakesh Sharma, Proprietor of Jyoti Enterprises (newly appointed dealer) said "After closely observing the EV market and working at the sub-dealer level for the past few years, I realized that the scope for scale and earnings was quite restricted under the previous brand's margin structure. What excited me about Terra was not only the brand's growing popularity and Japanese brand association but also the openness and clarity in dealer partnerships."

This transition marks a broader industry shift, with dealers gravitating toward brands that offer stronger margins and collaborative business models over established OEM names.

"We welcome experienced market players



into the Terra ecosystem. Our goal is to build a sustainable dealer network where our partners grow alongside us," said Mr. Go Suzuki, Managing Director of Terra Motors.

## Vi rolls out the Vi Guarantee Programme for its 2G handset customers



**Guwahati:** India's leading telecom operator Vi, has rolled out the Vi Guarantee Programme for its 2G Handset customers. Under this programme, the benefit of 24 Days Extra validity will be credited over a 12-month period wherein 2 Days Extra Validity will be credited with every Unlimited voice recharge pack of Rs. 199 and above. The Vi Guarantee programme aims to address a long-standing challenge faced by voice-only or low data usage prepaid customers, which is the need to recharge again within the same month. With traditional 28-day packs, customers often recharge twice in a single calendar month or sometimes continue with interrupted service. With the introduction of Vi Guarantee, customers will now get 30 days of service validity instead of the usual 28 days, enabling one recharge per month.

The Vi Guarantee benefit is applicable for prepaid customers who are using 2G handsets and are on Unlimited voice recharge packs of Rs 199 and above. The Vi Guarantee programme for 4G and 5G customers, launched last year, continues to be available offering a total of 130GB guaranteed extra data over one year, with 10GB being credited automatically every 28 days for 13 consecutive cycles. To avail this, customers will need to be on daily data unlimited plans of Rs 299 and above. Customers can opt in for the Vi Guarantee – Extra validity benefit via USSD \*999# or call on 1212. The Vi Guarantee- Extra Data offer can be availed on the Vi app.

## Medanta unveils Doctor's Day film 'Honouring the Oath'

**Guwahati:** To mark National Doctor's Day 2025, Medanta – The Medicity, one of India's leading super-specialty hospitals and consistently ranked the Best Private Hospital in India by Newsweek for six consecutive years, has unveiled a stirring new film titled 'Honouring the Oath'. The film is a tribute to

the sacred promise that every doctor takes—and lives—every single day. It celebrates the unwavering commitment of doctors who uphold the medical oath not just as a formality, but as a guiding force in every act of care. Through this film, Medanta invokes the legendary Bharat Ratna Dr. B.C. Roy—the visionary leader

who founded IMA and MCI whose birth anniversary is celebrated as National Doctors' Day – to spotlight the values that form the foundation of the medical profession.

Dr. Naresh Trehan, Chairman and Managing Director, Medanta said: "This film captures the soul of Medanta — where healing is not

just a profession, but a purpose." In an evocative narrative, the film brings to life the Indian Medical Council's Code of Ethics through its solemn narration — the same lines spoken by every doctor at the beginning of their journey. With each frame, the film reinforces that the oath is not confined to words

spoken once — it is honoured through consistent, quiet acts of dedication. The film closes with a powerful message: At Medanta, the oath isn't just remembered—it's lived, every single day. 'Honouring the Oath' is a salute to those who serve humanity, not just with hands that heal, but hearts that care.

## On World Skin Health Day, nourish your skin with healthy California almonds



**Guwahati:** This year, on World Skin Health Day, the theme “No Health Without Skin Health” emphasizes the role of skin in overall wellness. Skin health now goes far beyond external skincare routines—it begins from within, with daily dietary choices. Including skin-friendly foods like California almonds, rich in vitamin E and healthy fats, support skin health and help you look and feel your best. California almonds are a powerhouse of 15 essential nutrients, many of which help with improved skin texture and tone. In addition to modern nutritional science, traditional systems such as Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani have long recognized almonds for their skin benefits. Moreover, regular almond consumption may help protect against UVB rays, which is highly beneficial in intense Indian summers. Vitamin E and healthy fats have shown to impart anti-aging properties and contribute to skin health.

Commenting on World Skin Health Day and the importance of caring for skin, Skin Expert

and Cosmetologist Dr. Geetika Mittal Gupta said, “One of my top recommendations is to include a handful of almonds as part of your daily diet—either as a snack or incorporated into meals.” Popular Bollywood actress Soha Ali Khan said, “Almonds are not only nutritious but also rich in vitamin E, which supports skin health.” Ritika Samaddar, Regional Head of Dietetics at Max Healthcare – New Delhi, said, “Just a handful of almonds a day, along with plenty of greens, seasonal fruits, and a balanced diet, can make a real difference.” Ayurveda expert Madhumitha Krishnan said, “A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and nuts like almonds supports overall skin health.” Fitness Master Pilates Instructor Yasmin Karachiwala said, “Healthy skin comes down to two essentials—eating right and staying active.” Popular South Indian actor Shriya Saran said, “Almonds are my go-to snack—they’re packed with antioxidants, fiber, and protein that help me stay full, energized, and support overall skin health.”

## Ather Energy accelerates NE expansion, launches Mizo warp club in Aizawl

**Aizawl:** Ather Energy Ltd., one of India’s leading electric two-wheeler manufacturers, is intensifying its focus on the North East with the launch of five new outlets across the region and the introduction of the Mizo Warp Club in Aizawl. This new initiative aims to recognize early EV adopters in Mizoram and foster a growing community of electric vehicle enthusiasts.

With Mizoram at the forefront of EV adoption in the region, Ather sees vast potential in the state’s scooter-centric market. “Mizoram is the flagbearer of EV adoption in the North East,” said Saurabh Sharma, Head of Marketing at Ather Energy. “Our scooters, like the 450 series and Rizta, meet the evolving mobility needs here.”

Aizawl, known for its affinity for performance scooters, is witnessing a rising interest in EVs, especially family-friendly models like the Rizta. Priced from ₹1.10 lakh (ex-showroom), these scooters are gaining traction among young professionals and families seeking cost-effective and eco-friendly alternatives.

Ather’s aggressive plans include installing 60 fast chargers across the NE and offering benefits like an 8-year battery warranty and FlexiPay financing options, making the EV transition smoother and more accessible for customers across Mizoram.

## Operation Sindhu: India safely evacuates over 4,400 citizens from conflict zones in West Asia

**Guwahati:** The Indian government has successfully evacuated 4,415 Indian nationals stranded in conflict-hit Iran and Israel under Operation Sindhu. Launched on June 18 amid escalating tensions between Israel and Iran, the operation utilized 19 special flights, including three Indian Air Force C-17 aircraft.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) reported that the evacuations from Iran were conducted between June 18 and 26, with 3,597 citizens flown out via Yerevan, Ashgabat, and Mashhad. The evacuees included students, workers, profes-

sionals, pilgrims, and fishermen from over 15 Indian states. The Israeli leg of the operation began on June 23, resulting in the evacuation of 818 Indians through Amman and Sharm El Sheikh.

Demonstrating regional solidarity, India also facilitated the evacuation of 14 OCI cardholders, 9 Nepali nationals, 4 Sri Lankans, and an Iranian spouse of an Indian citizen.

In Guwahati, the successful operation has brought immense relief to families of those stranded abroad, many of whom were daily-wage earners or students. Local travel agencies noted a



sharp rise in inquiries about overseas safety and insurance, reflecting increased awareness among residents about crisis preparedness.

India thanked governments of the region for their support and reaffirmed its commitment to the safety of its citizens worldwide.

## Sony India launches new BRAVIA Theatre System 6 and Bar 6 soundbars

**Guwahati:** Sony India has expanded its BRAVIA Theatre portfolio with the launch of two new immersive soundbars; the BRAVIA Theatre Bar 6 (3.1.2ch soundbar with a wireless subwoofer) and the BRAVIA Theatre System 6 (5.1ch home theatre system with Wireless Rear speakers). Engineered to bring cinematic audio home, these soundbars deliver powerful surround sound, seamless BRAVIA TV integration and intelligent sound technologies designed to elevate every movie night, game and concert experience. Sunil Nayyar, Managing Director, Sony India said, “With the BRAVIA Theatre System 6 and Bar 6, we are delivering a truly cinematic experience right into the heart of Indian homes.” Nezu Daisuke, Global Head of Home Product Business Div., Home Entertainment Business Unit, Sony Corporation said, “By bringing our home theatre products under the BRAVIA brand—renowned for its visual excellence—we are creating a truly integrated entertainment ecosystem.” Tomoya Kato, Senior Acoustic Engineer, Sony Corporation, said, “The idea behind BRAVIA Theatre System 6 was clear — to bring the true cinematic experience into the home.” BRAVIA Theatre System 6 is an all-in-one 5.1ch 1000W powerful sound system with a subwoofer, delivering a deep-

er, richer, and well-balanced sound. BRAVIA Theatre Bar 6 is a 3.1.2ch soundbar offering immersive surround sound and clear dialogue.

Compatible with Dolby Atmos, DTS:X, and more, both the System 6 and Bar 6 bring depth, clarity and dimension to movies, music, and games—transforming your living room into a cinematic soundscape. The BRAVIA Theatre System 6 and BRAVIA Theatre Bar 6 are equipped with Sony’s Voice Zoom 3™ technology. Both System 6 and Bar 6 include Night and Voice modes for a consistently clear and comfortable audio experience. With the BRAVIA Connect app, you can adjust volume and settings and even check your set up without using the remote or on-screen menu. BRAVIA Theatre home audio products are reducing the amount of plastic packaging. The fabric used in the BRAVIA Theatre home audio products is recycled from PET bottles. BRAVIA Theatre System 6 and Bar 6 will be available across Sony retail stores (Sony Center and Sony Exclusive stores) and major electronic stores, www.ShopatSC.com, and other e-commerce portals in India from 1st July 2025 onwards. The price of the BRAVIA Theatre System 6 (5.1ch) is 49,990/- and the price of the BRAVIA Theatre Bar 6 (3.1.2ch) is 39,990/-.

## Škoda Auto India Posts Record H1 Sales, Climbs to Top 7 Automakers



**Guwahati:** Škoda Auto India has achieved its highest-ever half-yearly sales, delivering 36,194 units between January and June 2025, marking a 134% increase over H1 2024. This surge, driven by strong demand for the new Kylaq sub-4m SUV and the Slavia sedan, has elevated Škoda to the top seven automotive brands in India, up four spots from last year. The company’s expanding portfolio and network - now over 295 touchpoints - along with customer-focused offerings like a complimentary first-year maintenance package, have contributed to this milestone

## Mansion house brandy retains no. 1 spot in India, ranks 2nd globally in 2024

**Guwahati:** Tilaknagar Industries Ltd. (TI), one of India’s leading IMFL manufacturers, has announced that its flagship product, Mansion House Brandy, has once again emerged as the top-selling brandy in India and the second highest-selling globally by volume in 2024. The recognition comes from the prestigious ‘The

Millionaires’ Club’ report by Drinks International, released in June 2025.

With a remarkable sale of 7.8 million cases, Mansion House now ranks 29th among the world’s top alcohol brands. Meanwhile, TI’s Courier Napoleon Brandy posted a stellar 25% year-on-year growth with 2.0 million cases sold, earning it the

title of the world’s third fastest-growing brandy and the 13th fastest-growing spirit brand overall.

Guwahati, a significant consumer hub in the North-East, has shown strong demand for both Mansion House and Courier Napoleon, driven by a growing preference for premium yet affordable spirits. Retailers

report that flavoured and reserve variants have especially gained traction among young urban consumers.

TI’s Chairman and MD, Amit Dahanukar, credited the success to deep consumer trust and innovation, including the launch of new variants like Mansion House Reserve and Monarch Legacy Edition.

## Deepshikha Nagpal says Shefali Jariwala and Parag Tyagi were madly in love

**Mumbai:** The sudden passing away of actress Shefali Jariwala at 42 has left the entire industry in shock. Popular television actress Dipshikha Nagpal, who worked with Shefali in the dance reality show “Nach Baliye” recalled some fond memories with the late actress.

She shared, “Yes, Shefali... I knew her. I can't say we were the best of friends, but we were together on Nach Baliye. After that, every Ganpati celebration, she would invite us - it was always so thoughtful of her. We also have a lot of common friends. I recently met her at several parties, and she was truly one of the most beautiful souls - warm, kind, and full of life.”

Dipshikha stated that Shefali and her husband Parag



Tyagi were madly in love with each other. Expressing her grief, she said, “It's extremely shocking. I got the news this morning and I was just like... what? A heart attack? Why? What was troubling her? What happened? I have

so many questions myself. I knew Parag and Shefali as a couple who always walked together in life. I know them both very well. They were an amazing couple - two beautiful human beings. Honestly, I don't know what's happen-

ing in the world... why we keep losing such pure souls. It's deeply, deeply sad. All I can say is - may God bless her family, especially Parag. They were so madly in love. People always looked up to them as that ideal couple. I don't know how he's going to cope with this. May God give him all the strength he needs. And may Shefali's soul rest in peace.”

Many others from the fraternity such as Mika Singh, Rashami Desai, and Divyanka Tripathi also mourned the loss of the ‘Bigg Boss 13’ contestant. If the reports are to be believed, Shefali passed away after suffering a cardiac arrest on Friday night. Her husband reportedly rushed her to a hospital, but she was declared dead on arrival.

## Ananya Panday shares a glimpse of her childhood days with Rekha, reflects on their evolving bond



**Mumbai:** Ananya Panday, on Monday, took a walk down memory lane as she shared a nostalgic glimpse from her childhood featuring the legendary actress, Rekha. Taking to her Instagram, the ‘Student Of the Year 2’ actress shared a series of her photos with the veteran star. Reflecting on how their relationship has evolved over the years, Ananya expressed deep admiration and affection for Rekha. Sharing their photos, Ananya wrote, “For Reaunty swipe to see how nothing has changed Umrao Jaan in theatres.”

The post featured a mix of present-day and childhood moments, including a recent photo from the “Umrao Jaan” re-release event where Ananya is seen with Rekha, as well as precious throwback images from her early years. In one photo, little Ananya poses beside a portrait of Rekha, while another touching image shows the veteran star lovingly holding toddler Ananya in her arms. The post also features a series of stylish pictures of Ananya Panday dressed in an elegant white outfit, perfectly complementing the grace of the Umrao Jaan re-release event.

A few days ago, Alia Bhatt shared a sweet post for Rekha, saying, “There never was, is, or will ever be another like you.” The ‘Raazi’ star, who attended the re-release event of “Umrao Jaan,” wrote, “An ode to a living legend... there never, was, is or will ever be another like you, ReMaa.”

Alia shared a series of photos and videos from the event. In one heartwarming moment, she was seen posing with the iconic Rekha, who affectionately leaned on her as they smiled for the camera. On June 2, filmmaker Muzaffar Ali announced that his iconic film “Umrao Jaan” has been meticulously restored in stunning 4K resolution. The national award-winning film returned to cinemas on June 27, 2025.

## ‘Masti 4’ actress Ruhii Singh says Milap Zaveri knows the pulse of the franchise

**Mumbai:** Actress Ruhii Singh, who will be soon seen as one of the leads in the upcoming film ‘Masti 4’, has heaped praise on the film's director Milap Zaveri. The actress recently spoke with IANS, and shared that Milap, who has been associated with the franchise since its inception, has a keen eye for what works with the mass audience.

The actress told IANS, “He has been a part of ‘Masti’ since the beginning and understands the essence of the ‘Masti’ franchise, its mass appeal, and now he's taking over as the director. I'm excited and looking forward to his take on the brand as the director. He understands the audience and caters to that sensibility. No holds barred”. When asked what followed after she was offered the big ticket entertainer, the actress said, “When ‘Masti 4’ was offered to me, I grabbed it. Masti is a big-ticket franchise brand with a legacy, and I was thrilled to be part of it. It's a film with a great cast, a director who understands the brand and his audience, humour as its mainstay, and sounds super fun. All in all, a great opportunity”.

She also recollected her experience of watching the franchise, as she said, “I remember watching the second installment, ‘Grand Masti’, with my friends and laughing my heart out”.

## Avika Gor shares her story of dreams and struggles as she completes 20 years in the industry

**Mumbai:** Actress Avika Gor, who rose to fame with her portrayal of Anandi in “Balika Vadhu,” took to social media to celebrate 20 years in the industry. Taking to Instagram, she posted a heartwarming video compiling memorable moments from her journey including scenes from her shows and films, stage performances, and highlights from her career over the years. Alongside it, she penned a note expressing pride in how far she has come. Gor shared that she began her journey as a little girl with dreams in her eyes and has now grown into a woman who

truly believes in herself.

The ‘Sasural Simar Ka’ actress wrote, “Sometimes we forget to pause. To breathe, to reflect, to just take it all in. We keep moving, chasing, growing...Until one quiet moment makes us look back. What felt like a few steps has become a journey. Filled with days, years, memories, and growth. Today, I pause to say thank you. To the stars in my sky, you all.”

“From a little girl with dreams in her eyes to a woman who now believes in herself. I'm proud of how far I've come. And I'll keep making you proud and never ever take



any of this for granted #avika-gor #grateful.”

## Bhumi Pednekar applauds UNDP India's efforts to empower youth in driving sustainable development goals

**Mumbai:** Actress Bhumi Pednekar has praised UNDP India for its efforts to empower young people in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She called the initiative a significant step towards building a more inclusive and sustainable future. Pednekar, UNDP India National Advocate for the SDGs, shared, “This initiative is a gamechanging moment. Today's youth are informed, passionate, and committed to building a better world.

Through this partnership, we are creating a platform where their vision and energy can drive sustainable action and impact at scale.”

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India has teamed up with Collective Artists Network India Pvt. Ltd. to boost youth involvement in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The partnership aims to spark meaningful conversations on important global issues like climate change,

gender equality, poverty, and inclusive development. Talking about the partnership, Dr. Angela Lusigi, Resident Representative, UNDP India, stated, “This partnership is a step forward in empowering young people to become active changemakers. Across India, youth are not only raising their voices for change - they are leading it. Whether it's championing climate action, advocating for gender equity, or creating inclusive opportunities, their work is shaping the future.



With Collective Artists Network, we can amplify these efforts, ensuring that stories of youth leadership resonate from urban centres to rural communities.”

## Finally Got There: Smriti Mandhana Celebrates Long-Awaited Maiden T20I Century in Dominant Win Over England



**Nottingham:** Smriti Mandhana finally broke through the century barrier in T20 Internationals, smashing a brilliant 112 off just 62 balls as India thrashed England by 97 runs in the opening match of the five-match series. The left-handed opener, who also captained the side in Harmanpreet Kaur's absence, admitted after the match that the milestone had been a long time coming. "Took a long time coming," Mandhana said with a smile during the post-match presentation. "I had this habit of getting out before reaching a hundred. We were joking before the tour that it's high time I get a T20I century."

Mandhana's century, laced with 15 boundaries and 3 sixes, propelled India to a massive total and gave the bowlers plenty to defend. She was well-supported by Harleen Deol, who scored a fluent 43 and shared a vital 94-run partnership with her for the second wicket. "The way Harleen batted after Shafali got out gave us great momentum," Mandhana added. "We had good preparation coming into the series. These English pitches are great to bat on — we just had to be smart and use the wind, time the ball."

India's bowling unit backed up the batters with a clinical performance. The team adapted well to the windy conditions,

with the bowlers adjusting their pace and executing their plans to perfection. "We spoke at the break about bowling slower into the wind when needed," Mandhana explained. "The execution was outstanding — and it all started with Richa's brilliant catch. We've got four more games, so the goal now is to maintain this momentum and keep building good habits."

On the other side, England captain Nat Sciver-Brunt admitted her team was outplayed in every department. "They challenged us greatly today," she said. "We didn't bowl as well as we wanted to, and dropped catches hurt us. You'd want to take every one of them, but sometimes things just don't go your way." Chasing a steep target of nearly 200, England lost early wickets and never recovered. "When you're going after 200, you need a fast start. Losing early wickets set us back. I tried to rotate strike and push for twos to keep us in the game," Sciver-Brunt said. Despite the heavy defeat, she found positives to take forward.

"We had moments where we executed well with the ball. There's definitely momentum to build on, especially in the powerplay with the bat. It's a five-match series, and we're looking forward to turning things around at Bristol."

## Khaleel Ahmed Signs with Essex for County Championship and One-Day Cup Stint

**New Delhi:** India pacer Khaleel Ahmed has taken his talents to English soil, signing a contract with Essex to feature in the remainder of the County Championship season and the full One-Day Cup campaign. The 27-year-old left-arm fast bowler will be available for selection in Essex's upcoming County fixture against Yorkshire. The deal will see Khaleel play six first-class matches and eight List A games for the county. Having represented India in 11 ODIs and 18 T20Is, the pacer is keen to make an impression in redball and white-ball formats during his stint in England.

"I am thrilled to sign for Essex," Khaleel said in a statement shared by the club. "I've heard a lot about the club's rich history and I'm excited to be part of it. I'll be aiming



to make an immediate impact. I'm also looking forward to playing at Chelmsford, meeting the loyal Essex members and fans, and delivering performances they can be proud of." Khaleel's recent form for India A against the England Lions likely played a key role in his signing. He claimed four wickets in the first innings of that match, removing James Rew, George Hill, Chris Woakes, and Jordan Cox, showcasing both control

and sharpness over a 19-over spell.

Chris Silverwood, Essex's Director of Cricket and a former England coach, praised the signing and highlighted what Khaleel brings to the squad. "We are really pleased to be bringing Khaleel into the club. His performance for India A impressed us, and we believe he will add quality to our already strong seam attack," said Silverwood. "As a left-arm seamer, he provides

a different angle and brings variety, which will be valuable in both the One Day Cup and County Championship." Essex currently sit eighth in Division One of the County Championship, with just one win from eight matches. The addition of Khaleel is seen as a move to bolster their campaign as they seek a stronger finish in the remaining games.

With Khaleel's arrival, he joins a growing list of Indian cricketers in the English domestic scene this summer, including Ishan Kishan (Nottinghamshire), Tilak Varma (Hampshire), Ruturaj Gaikwad (Yorkshire), and Yuzvendra Chahal (Northamptonshire). The influx reflects a growing trend of Indian players using the County circuit to gain valuable overseas experience and exposure to different conditions.

## 'We're in contact with govt, don't think Pakistan will be allowed to compete in Men's Asia Cup': Hockey India official



**New Delhi:** As Pakistan's participation in the Hockey Men's Asia Cup in India is uncertain due to growing calls for their exclusion following the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor, a Hockey India official said that talks with the government are in progress in the matter, and the final decision will be taken after that. Ra-

ajgir, a historic city in Bihar, will host the Men's Asia Cup 2025 from August 29 to September 9 at the Rajgir Hockey Stadium. Following the deadly terror attack in Pahalgam that claimed 26 lives, Pakistan men's hockey team participation in the continental tournament is in jeopardy. With less than two months left for the tournament,

the Hockey India is still awaiting government clearance for Pakistan men's hockey team's arrival in the country. "We are in contact with the government, and we will follow whatever instructions it provides. As for the current situation, I don't think the Pakistan team will be allowed to participate," a Hockey India official told IANS when asked about the strife-torn nation's participation in the Asia Cup, in August.

The Men's Asia Cup 2025, will serve as a qualifying event for the 2026 FIH Men's Hockey World Cup, set to be hosted by Belgium and the Netherlands. The winner of the tournament will earn a coveted spot in the World Cup.

## Jasprit Bumrah available for 2nd Test, confirms assistant coach



**Birmingham:** India received a significant boost ahead of the second Test against England, with assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate confirming that premier fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah is available for selection. However, the team management is yet to make a final call on his participation in the Edgbaston Test, which begins on 2 July.

"He's available for the game, obviously. We know from the start he's only going to play three out of the five. He's obviously had eight days to recover from the last Test. But given conditions, workload, and how we think we can best manage for the next four games, we haven't made a call on that," said ten Doeschate. "We're going to see what the other guys are with their workload as well. So technically, yes, he's available," he added.

## Chennai Bulls Dominate Delhi Redz 41-0 to Claim First-Ever Rugby Premier League Title

**Mumbai:** The Chennai Bulls delivered a stunning performance to clinch the inaugural Rugby Premier League title, routing Delhi Redz 41-0 in a one-sided final on Sunday. The emphatic win — the largest margin recorded in the competition this season — capped off a dominant campaign by the Bulls. Chennai picked up where they left off in the semi-finals, applying relentless pressure from the start. Vaafauese Maliko opened the scoring with a try, converted by Filipe Sauturaga, before Joseva Talacolo

finished a sweeping move to extend the lead.

Terry Kennedy added two more tries before halftime, with Gaurav Kumar converting both to give the Bulls a commanding 24-0 advantage at the break. After halftime, Chennai continued their stranglehold on the game. Shanawaz Ahmed crossed the line off a Kennedy assist, with Sauturaga adding two more points. Mohammed Ashique then sealed the victory with two late tries, as the Bulls celebrated an unbeaten run to the title.



Earlier in the day, Hyderabad Heroes secured third place with a gritty 17-12 win over Bengaluru Brave-

hearts. Trailing early to tries from Tone Shiu and Philip Wokorach — plus a conversion by Akuila Rokolisoa — Hyderabad responded with tries from Joji Nasova, Kevin Wekesa, and Bhupinder Singh. Manuel Moreno added a crucial conversion to help the Heroes rally to victory.

The inaugural season of the Rugby Premier League wrapped up in front of a buzzing crowd, with Chennai Bulls firmly establishing themselves as the team to beat in Indian rugby's new era.