

## NEWS CAPSULE

### Election rally

GUWAHATI, April 8:  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address an election rally at Kendukona in Kamrup district on April 11, official sources said today.

— Staff Reporter

### IAF assertion

NEW DELHI, April 8:  
The Indian Air Force today reiterated that it shot down an F-16 jet of Pakistan Air Force during the February 27 aerial combat and showed radar images of the engagement to assert that it has "irrefutable evidence" of downing the enemy jet. — PTI

■ Also see page 12

### Mallya appeal

LONDON, April 8:  
A UK high court has rejected Vijay Mallya's application to appeal against his extradition, a move that brings India closer in getting back the embattled liquor tycoon wanted in alleged fraud and money laundering charges amounting to Rs 9,000 crore. — PTI

### Quota pleas

NEW DELHI, April 8:  
The Supreme Court on Monday said it will hear on May 2 the pleas challenging the Centre's decision to grant 10 per cent reservation in jobs and admission for candidates of economically weaker sections across all classes. — PTI

### Artillery guns

JABALPUR, April 8:  
The Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) today handed over six Dhanush artillery guns to the Army in a ceremony held at the Gun Carriage Factory here. The OFB received a bulk production clearance from the Army and the Defence Ministry for 114 such guns. — PTI

■ Also see page 3

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## Parties violating model code of conduct

### Poll campaigning in State

#### R DUTTA CHOWDHURY

GUWAHATI, April 8: With campaigning for the general elections gathering momentum, almost all the major political parties are violating the model code of conduct issued by the Election Commission (EC) as instead of criticizing the policies and programmes of the parties, the political leaders have started launching personal attacks against their opponents.

There have been instances where the political leaders made scathing comments on names and ages of opponents in public meetings in violation of the model code of conduct. Interestingly, the major parties, Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have levelled personal attacks on the candidates.

The model code of conduct issued by the EC clearly states, "Criticism of political parties must be limited to their policies and programmes, past record and work. Activities such as using caste and communal feelings to secure votes, criticizing candidates on the basis of unverified reports, bribing or intimidation of voters, and organizing demonstrations or picketing outside houses of persons to protest against their opinions, are prohibited." But unfortunately, all these points are blatantly violated by parties in the election meetings.

(See page 4)

### JOCOSERIOUS



Election campaign or  
Bihu shopping?

## SC orders 5 checks in every Assembly segment VVPAT slips

NEW DELHI, April 8: The Supreme Court directed the EC on Monday to increase random matching of VVPAT slips with EVMs to five polling booths per assembly segment, from one at present, in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls saying it will bring more "credibility" and "integrity" to the electoral process.

The apex court however did not agree to the demand of 21 Opposition leaders, led by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, for counting of at least 50 percent of the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips with Electronic Voting Machines per assembly segment.

The Election Commission currently follows a system of random counting of VVPAT slips in one polling booth per assembly segment of a Parliamentary or Assembly constituency.

"It is our considered view and having regard to the totality of the facts, it would generate greater satisfaction and will foolproof the electoral process if number of VVPAT machines is increased to five per assembly segment of each Parliamentary constituency," a bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi said.

The bench, also comprising Justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna, made it clear (See page 4)

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## Army gets 'desi' Bofors in home-made Dhanush howitzer

NEW DELHI, April 8: The Indian Army got a 'desi' Bofors when home-made Dhanush howitzer was inducted on Monday. The much-awaited Dhanush 155/45 calibre towed Gun System, also known as 'desi' Bofors, will significantly enhance the Army's firepower. The Dhanush gun system is based on Bofors acquired in the 1980s and whose purchase was mired in controversy because of alleged corruption.

Artillery inductions have received a boost under the Modi government after a hiatus as Dhanush joins the Army after K-9 Vajra, a tracked self-propelled South Korean howitzer, and the M-777 ultra-light howitzers acquired from the US, ending the gun drought.

Dhanush has been designed and developed by the Ordnance Factory Board at the Gun Carriage Factory at Jabalpur based on the Bofors drawings. The Army has actively supported the indigenous gun production project and has placed orders for over 110 Dhanush systems.

The induction is being hailed as a key milestone as this is the first long range piece of artillery to be produced in India.

The Swedish Bofors proved its worth during the Kargil war when the gun performed exceedingly well in high altitude warfare and was considered to be a key contributor in the success of the Indian Army.

The handing over ceremony of Dhanush artillery gun was held on Monday with the rollout of six gun systems at the Gun Carriage Factory. - IANS

## Why are govt officials managing religious places: SC

NEW DELHI, April 8: The Supreme Court on Monday asked as to why should government officials manage religious places and temples in the country while taking note of the fact that several devotees visiting the Jagannath temple in Puri were being harassed.

A bench of Justices SA Bobde and SA Nazeer observed this while hearing a plea which has highlighted difficulties faced by the devotees at Jagannath temple and their alleged harassment and exploitation by the 'sevaks' (staff).

"It is a matter of perspective. I do not know why government officials should manage temples?" Justice Bobde observed during the hearing. "In Tamil Nadu, there is theft of idols. These idols, apart from the religious sentiments, are

priceless," the bench said.

Attorney General KK Venugopal told the apex court that Kerala's Sabarimala temple was being run by the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) while board appointed by governments were managing several other temples in the country. "How far the government, in a secular state, can control or manage a temple," Venugopal said.

At the outset, senior advocate Ranjit Kumar, assisting the apex court as an amicus curiae in the case, said he has already filed the detailed report after his visit to the shrine.

To this, the bench observed, "People (visiting the temple) are harassed due to several reasons. Priests restrict them. Lot of them do not have voice.

They are poor and uneducated."

The counsel appearing for the petitioner told the bench that Jagannath temple administration should apprise the court as to what steps they have taken pursuant to the report filed by the Puri's District Judge in the matter. The bench said the matter would be heard next month.

During the hearing, one of the lawyers, who has filed an intervention application in the matter, said the petition was not maintainable.

When the counsel raised his pitch, Justice Bobde said, "It is enough. You are behaving in the most undignified manner in the court. We do not want to be shouted out. We do not want somebody to speak out of turn. You will not use the tone in which you are addressing the court." - PTI

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# China denies CPEC intensified Pakistan's economic risks



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Only less than 20 per cent of the current CPEC projects are using Chinese loans and more than 80 per cent of them are directly invested by China or using Chinese grants.

— Lu Kang  
Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman

BEIJING, April 8: China on Monday refuted the criticism that the USD 60 billion CPEC has intensified Pakistan's economic risks, saying that less than 20 per cent of the current projects under the initiative are using Chinese loans.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which connects Gwadar Port in Balochistan with China's Xinjiang province, is the flagship

project of Chinese President Xi Jinping's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

As China pressed ahead with the BRI, it drew strong criticism that Chinese projects are being built with heavy interest rates and without due diligence studies about their viability, leaving the smaller countries in heavy debt.

The US, India, Japan and several other countries

have aired such criticism about India also protested to China over the CPEC as it traverses through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang told the media here on Monday that the CPEC is a symbol of China-Pakistan cooperation in the new era and also an important pilot programme of the BRI.

Defending the massive

infusion of Chinese money into Pakistan, which is a close ally of Beijing, Lu said carrying out major projects with international financing is a global practice.

It is also an effective approach for developing countries to handle the financial bottlenecks and foster growth, he said.

"Only less than 20 per cent of the current CPEC projects are using Chinese loans and more than 80 per

cent of them are directly invested by China or using Chinese grants," he said.

"So, these CPEC projects didn't further increase Pakistan's burden. On the contrary, it is strengthening Pakistan's economy," he said.

"It has greatly improved Pakistan's infrastructure and power supply and of course it is welcomed by Pakistan government and its people," he said. — PTI

## US to tag Iranian Guards a terror group

WASHINGTON, April 8: The Trump administration is preparing to designate Iran's Revolutionary Guard a "foreign terrorist organisation," an unprecedented move against a national armed force that could have widespread implications for US personnel and policy in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Officials informed of the step said an announcement could come as early as Monday, after a month-long escalation in the administration's rhetoric against Iran, its support for militia groups in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen, as well as anti-Israel groups in the region and beyond.

It would be the first such designation by any American administration of an entire foreign government entity, although portions of the Guard, notably its elite Quds Force, have been targeted previously by the United States.

Two US officials and a congressional aide confirmed the planned move. They were not authorised to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The designation, planning for which was first reported by the *Wall Street Journal*, comes with sanctions, including freezes on assets the Guard may have in US jurisdictions and a ban on Americans doing business with it or providing material support.

for its activities.

Although the Guard has broad control and influence over the Iranian economy, such penalties from the US may have limited impact. The designation, however, could significantly complicate US military and diplomatic work, notably in Iraq, where many Shiite militias and Iraqi political parties have close ties to the Guard.

In Lebanon, the designation could further restrict with whom US officials can interact. The Guard has close ties to Hezbollah, which is part of the Lebanese government.

Hezbollah is already designated a foreign terrorist organisation by the US. Its presence in Lebanon's Parliament and executive branch have forced the US to avoid any contact with Hezbollah members even as the US continues to provide assistance to and works with the Lebanese army.

Without exclusions or waivers to the designation, US troops and diplomats could be barred from contact with Iraqi or Lebanese authorities who interact with Guard officials or surrogates.

The Pentagon and US intelligence agencies have raised concerns about the impact of the designation if the move does not allow contact with foreign officials who may have met with or communicated with Guard personnel.

Those concerns have in



The designation, however, could significantly complicate US military and diplomatic work, notably in Iraq, where many Shiite militias and Iraqi political parties have close ties to the Guard.

## Netanyahu, Gantz make final pitches before Israeli vote

JERUSALEM, April 8: Is-

raeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sought to energise supporters on the eve of Tuesday's elections with warnings and controversial promises, while his centrist challenger urged voters to tell the Premier the country has had enough.

The general election in which Netanyahu is seeking to extend his already 13 years in office despite corruption allegations against him is expected to be close, with ex-military chief Benny Gantz posing a serious threat.

If polling trends hold, Netanyahu would be best placed to do so thanks to smaller right-wing parties al-

lied to him.

There have however been repeated warnings of the unreliability of polls in the past and the fact that many voters say they remain undecided.

Netanyahu's claims that Likud may lose were widely seen as a way to ensure his base of supporters turn out to vote. Netanyahu has made last-minute appeals to the right, issuing a deeply controversial pledge to annex settlements in the occupied West Bank.

If done on a large-scale, applying Israeli sovereignty there could end any remaining hopes for a two-state solution with the Palestinians. — AFP

## 2nd group of Rohingya arrives in Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR, April 8:

Forty-one Rohingya were found on a Malaysian beach on Monday, police said, the second group of the Muslim minority to arrive in the country within weeks, stoking fears of a looming exodus.

Many Rohingya have been seeking in recent weeks to leave by sea from Bangladesh, where they live in squalid refugee camps after fleeing their mostly Buddhist homeland Myanmar, before the monsoon season starts in earnest.

Security forces have prevented hundreds from departing for Malaysia with people smugglers on fishing boats. But last month 34 Rohingya arrived in the

northern Malaysian state of Perlis, the first group believed to have landed in the country in almost year.

The latest batch, which consisted entirely of men, were found on Monday on the same beach as the previous boatload, local police chief Noor Mushar Mohamad told AFP.

"This is definitely the work of human smuggling syndicates working with local syndicates," he said.

"I fear there could be more Rohingya arrivals unless maritime enforcement agencies step up patrols urgently."

Noor Mushar said initial investigations indicated they could have travelled in a large boat before being transferred to smaller craft by local crimi-

nal gangs and ferried ashore. They have been handed over to immigration authorities, he said.

It was not clear whether they had departed from Bangladesh or Myanmar, or when they had arrived.

About 740,000 Rohingya fled Myanmar for Bangladesh following a brutal military clampdown in their home country in August 2017, joining hundreds of thousands already living in crowded camps.

Meanwhile, talking to newsmen, All Assam Students Union adviser Samujjal Bhattacharya said that they will not accept the Bill, because it is a threat to the existence, culture and language of the indigenous people.

"We will set up new 'Entrepreneurial Northeast' scheme to provide financial support to the micro, small and medium industries and for employment generation in the northeastern states," it said.

The BJP said that the Northeast, which earlier made headlines for blockage and neglect, is now witnessing unprecedented development. The Northeast is now closer to the national mainstream in more ways than one," the party claimed.

The entire Northeast will again protest. It is because of their opposition the Centre could not muster support to introduce the CAB in Rajya Sabha. But despite that their (the BJP) national president announced in Assam that they will bring the Bill," he said.

"Nobody has the right to play with the future of indigenous people of the region and we strongly warn that they should not try this in the Northeast," Bhattacharya said.

About the NRC exercise, Bhattacharya said it is only because of the Supreme Court's initiative that the NRC process is continuing. "The Congress party had filed an affidavit stating that the cut-off date should be 2014. The Supreme Court has expressed its displeasure at the functioning of the Central government and Assam government. The entire credit goes to the Supreme Court," he added.



Rwandans and others sitting in the stands hold candles as part of a candlelit vigil during a memorial service held at Amahoro stadium in the capital Kigali, Rwanda on Sunday. Rwanda is commemorating the 25th anniversary of an orgy of violence that descended on the country in which some 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were massacred by the majority Hutu population over a 100-day period in what was the worst genocide in recent history. — AP/PTI

## China to use AI to stop 'uncivilised visitors' from entering public parks

BEIJING, April 8: China is planning to introduce artificial intelligence systems in parks in Beijing to ban "uncivilised visitors" from entering the public areas in the city.

The Beijing park management authorities are mulling to have a list of unruly visitors identified through artificial intelligence and facial recognition technology.

The list will allow the authorities to curb bad tourist behaviour during events such as the three-day holidays around Tomb Sweeping Day, also known as the Qingming Festival.

On the second day of the

**“**

'Facial recognition' and other technologies will be used to detect uncivilised behaviour.

— Mi Shapno, an official at the centre

There were also people who fished near the lake and sold things privately in the park.

Mi Shapno, an official at the centre, said "facial recognition" and other technologies will be used to detect uncivilised behaviour.

In 2017, six facial scanners were installed in the male and female sections of the busiest toilets in the Temple of Heaven, after reports of an increasing number of local residents raiding the park's toilets to steal toilet paper.

The China National Tourism Administration implemented tighter rules for tourists in 2016, and placed 20 people who failed to observe public order and scenic regulations on the blacklist.

The blacklisted travellers' bad behaviour included quarrelling, fighting, disturbing the peace, climbing on statues and stealing scenic assets. — PTI

## SC orders ...

(Contd from page 1) that the existing mechanism of random process to select EVMs for VVPAT slips matching as being done by the poll panel would continue to apply.

"We are of the view that if the number of EVMs in respect to VVPAT is subjected to physical scrutiny be increased from one to five per assembly segment... There will be greater satisfaction not only to the political parties but also to the voters," the bench said.

It emphasised that increasing the number of EVMs for VVPAT slips matching per assembly segment would neither require additional manpower and infrastructure nor delay the declaration of results. — PTI

## Parties violating ...

(Contd from page 1) voters to decide on the issue. He also alleged that filing a complaint before the EC on the issue would not yield any desired result.

On the other hand, the BJP also accused the Congress of violating the model code of conduct during campaigning. State BJP spokesman Rupam Goswami alleged that it was the Congress, which started personal attacks on political leaders with the slogan *chowkidar chor hai* to launch a personal attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He said, "the Congress has no issues against the BJP as the Government at the Centre headed by Narendra Modi checked corruption and brought the administrative system back in place for the all round development of the nation. That is why, the Congress was forced to launch personal attacks against Modi and other senior leaders of the BJP."

## 145 in fray ...

(Contd from page 1) A total of 62 candidates had filed their nominations from the four seats of third phase. The nominations of three candidates who had filed papers for the Kokrajhar constituency had been found invalid and rejected during scrutiny on April 5.

Now, altogether 54 candidates remain in fray for the four constituencies which will go to the polls in the third phase on April 23, including 17 candidates from Guwahati, 15 from Dhubri, 13 from Barpeta, and nine from Kokrajhar.



**MESSAGE FOR TODAY**

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**The Assam Tribune****Retaining focus**

There can be little doubt that the most significant of the developments currently going on for the future of the indigenous communities of the Northeast is the updating process of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam. The Lok Sabha elections will come and go and the fortunes of political parties might take a zigzag course. But the NRC will emerge as a permanent and perhaps the most important document for this region in its post-independent history till date, considering that it is a vital step in unearthing the scale of the illegal influx from Bangladesh. Unfortunately, even as the process is going on, the nationalist organizations backing it have been somewhat distracted by at least two developments – the mooting of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 by the BJP and holding of the Lok Sabha elections. In fact, there had even been attempts by the Government to extend the deadline of 31st July for completion of the NRC exercise on the pretext that the Lok Sabha elections were due. The plea before the Supreme Court had been that the Central Armed Police Forces placed on NRC duties in Assam, as well as government officers now engaged in NRC preparations, would be needed for poll-related work. Fortunately, the apex court, which is monitoring the updating process, would have none of it, thereby ensuring that preparation of the NRC carries on.

In such a context it is heartening to learn that, despite being somewhat out of public and media focus for quite a while, the NRC exercise is going on smoothly. No doubt the updating would be suspended for a fortnight because of the Lok Sabha polls, but the officials responsible are reportedly confident that the July 31 deadline for publishing the final NRC would be met. Around 40 lakh individuals did not figure in the first draft and were given opportunity to raise claims and objections to get their names in the final draft. Remarkably, around 36.2 lakh claims were filed as were only two lakh objections. As reported, 40% of the hearings for claims and objections have been completed and the remaining 60% is expected to be completed by middle of June. With the interim period being devoted to quality screening and printing, the final NRC will be published by the July 31 deadline. This is a crucial period for there is a chance that the poll distraction might be taken by some individuals as a window of opportunity to sneak into the NRC! It is incumbent that nationalist watchdogs retain focus on the exercise so that the election hullabaloo does not provide such an opportunity. This is one final chance for the indigenous communities to have the record straightened and nothing must be allowed to come in the way of preparation of a correct NRC.

**Waste menace**

With China deciding to stop import of millions of tonnes of discarded plastic and other trash from across the globe, a major crisis over waste disposal is gripping many countries. This should be evident from the fact that China used to import as much as 45% of the world's plastic refuse since 1992, allowing many other countries to excuse the issue of waste disposal. But the recent ban by the Chinese Government on importing non-industrial plastic waste, as well as stricter standards for the type of paper waste that is accepted, has created a situation where nations are scratching their heads to find a solution. At the same time, the developments go to show how China is effecting major policy changes keeping in mind long-term environmental concerns and goals. The rest of the world should treat this as a wake-up call and go about devising ways and means for recycling and managing the huge amount of trash. As for India, it produces a whopping 26,000 tonnes of waste daily – many of those single-use plastic products. Shockingly, 40% of this is never collected, let alone recycled. The result has been the growing damage being caused to the environment as the wastes are ending up in landfills and contaminating water-bodies.

The issue of scientific waste disposal has been a problematic one for the State as well. Forget about recycling plastic waste, different types of wastes are never segregated at source in State capital Guwahati, multiplying the environmental hazard manifold as all sorts of garbage, including toxic waste simply find their way into water-bodies and fertile land. Clogged drains because of accumulation of plastic waste remain a perennial problem for the city. Indeed, the prevailing garbage disposal system of dumping has led to pollution of surface water, groundwater, soil and air, as confirmed by periodical testing of MSW samples from the dumping sites by the Pollution Control Board, Assam (PCBA). The tests had detected the presence of highly toxic heavy metals like chromium, cadmium, nickel, lead, zinc, copper, etc., in the untreated garbage to an alarming extent. A lot has been said about plans to replace this hazardous solid waste management with a scientific mechanism involving door-to-door collection of segregated waste, transportation and proper disposal, including recycling, but in reality nothing of the sort has happened. As plastics constitute a major chunk of the city's day-to-day waste, putting in place a mechanism for recycling of plastic waste or putting it to other productive use is a must. While plastic-to-fuel conversion plants can be the answer, plastic waste can also be used for road construction. Advanced countries have adopted different waste-to-resources models successfully to minimize the plastic-induced hazards, and we need to think on similar lines. Along with adoption of scientific measures, enforcement of civic norms, too, is another urgent necessity.

# Job-seekers vs job givers

**Luit Pathak**

**J**obs may win you an election or vice-versa. The general election 2019 is being fought on the burning issue of job creation. While the Opposition tore into the ruling dispensation for the lack of jobs, the Government has claimed otherwise. It is a tricky political debate though, much harder to fathom for the masses with average wit. What we can understand is that the creation of jobs, if possible continuously, is more than essential for growth and stability. The Northeast or Jammu and Kashmir can be cited as glaring examples of how a community can be thrown into a cauldron of unrest if the goal of continuous job creation is compromised.

Now, there is another argument regarding the nature of jobs. For most of the middle or lower middle-class people, job means government jobs. The question is how much jobs can a government create regularly? Is job creation in various departments under it is the sole objective of a democratically-elected government? This undoubtedly may pose a serious yardstick for a government's survival or election/re-election of a party or coalition to rule the nation and States, but what percentiles of the total populace are government employees? Why would, of all institutions, the government work only as job creator?

Here comes the private sector, you love it or hate it. A liberalized economy like India has already accorded a huge role to the private sector in it. Barring a handful cynics and naysayers, the role of the pri-

vate sector in job creation is more or less appreciated by the public of India. We, the Indians, have woken up to the reality that the balance and cooperation between the private and public sector is essential for the forward march of this great nation. Being in a tough competition always, the private sector always attempts to be ultra-ready for any unforeseen future challenges. They want to hire the best available human resources in the market. But what is the quality of the resources available in the present market? Are supplies matching demands? If not, why? The answers is, the demand for quality human resources still outnumbers supply and the reason is our educated lot is mostly unemployable.

We are not mocking the ability of our young generation. These gorgeous young men and women are bursting at the seams with enthusiasm and energy. They are ready to take the plunge in the vast and unknown world of job market but lack the quality to be absorbed into it. The reason lies in our education system – the system that reeks of stoicism of thought and action. The system we inherited from the British rulers to produce mere clerks has not seen substantial changes over the ages, leaving our vast young populace unequipped to compete in a fast-changing job market. According to the latest data available, though contentious, unemployment in India has

risen to an alarming 6.1% of the total population, meaning almost 31 million Indians of working age are without jobs, which is alarming. If it is to be believed, this is the highest level unemployment has reached in our country in the last 45 years.

A 133.92 crore population economy, India has the highest young population in the world. To be precise, half the population is in the 20-59 age group. The advantage is likely

waiting, this can largely address the issue of joblessness prevailed among the youth of Assam. Same can be said about the crafts like electrician, plumber, masonry, motor mechanic, mobile repairing, IT-related training, etc. Introduction of these courses at the secondary or school level would boost the employability of our human resource and pre-equip them to swim in the fiercely competitive job market. There are of course ITIs to see that this aspiration is served but their scope is limited. The need of the hour is to broaden it at any cost. Introduction of selective vocational courses at the secondary level can serve the cause in a great way. The ITIs can aid the mission playing a supporting role.

Noted economist Pranab Bardhan recently underlined the need to put more stress on vocational education at the secondary level. NITI Aayog too is sounding in that line of late. A barren graduation may seem much inconsequential/staid in comparison to a trained, secondary-educated plumber or electrician at the job market. And there is the drift. Can we shun our 'degree obsession' (we are not averse to university education though) for some reality check?

The issue, in the Indian context, is purely psychological and not political or otherwise. We respect and then lament highly-educated people for being jobless. This has to be changed. The need of the hour is drastic reform of our education system, especially at the secondary level.

to be better in the next two decades. But for the serious lacunae of our education system, it could have played the role of the labour hub for the world economy at large. Instead, our workforce is handicapped by the lack of proper know-how to be grabbed by the big companies within the country or abroad. Lack of employability has become the nemesis of many of our job-seekers. So, what can or should we do to change the scenario?

First, we must admit the fact that the government alone cannot func-

tion and earn more.

Meanwhile, the United States' trade fight with China and the fact that Chinese wages have steadily risen may give the US multinational companies second thought about shifting more production abroad. Here are the top trading partners of the US in January 2019 – Mexico has topped the list, followed by China and their percentages of total trade with the US are 14.8% and 14.6% respectively. Canada and Japan have ranked third and fourth in this list. In the European Union, most of the trade is done with Germany (fifth) and the United Kingdom (seventh). India's trade relation with the US is 2.3% of the US' total trade, so India ranks as the eighth largest trading partner of the US.

And the important point is NYAY doesn't ensure social welfare. Increase in monetary income doesn't necessarily translate into social welfare. If with the increase in income results in more spending on alcohol, gambling, conspicuous consumption, unproductive expenditures like ceremonial expenditures, the morale of NYAY will be squeezed.

Any scheme without any guidelines to spend will confuse the poor, mould them into a liability rather than turning them into an asset because once such a scheme is introduced, it would be impossible to withdraw. India needs job opportunities, not free money, to lead an independent respectful living and to build a healthy society. Any party willing to come into power in the next general election 2019 ought to promise us to generate work opportunities for all, and not to distribute lollipops.

## NYAY: Will it actually benefit the poor?

**Madhusmita Saikia**

**D**on't be wrong in the race to be different or better. The Congress president, Rahul Gandhi, has promised to provide Rs 6,000 per month to 50 million families under the mega scheme Nyuntam Aay Yojana (NYAY), if the party comes to power. The targeted beneficiaries of the proposed NYAY will be 250 million individuals, i.e., 20% of the poorest households in the country. The proposed scheme is far apart from the party's earlier plan of topping up the gap in a poor household's income to bring it to Rs 12,000. But the new proposal is a flat allowance of Rs 72,000 a year if a family's income is below Rs 12,000 per month.

The major challenge while implementing the scheme is identifying the actual poorest ones. As the proposal promises free monthly income, there will be huge rush to get a place in the below poverty group. This leaves sufficient scope for manipulation and corruption. India being unable to create adequate amount of work opportunities to meet its growing population, this kind of scheme will handicap the youth and the Indian economy.

Now the core problem of the scheme – Is poverty really that quick-fix problem? When the root cause of poverty is lack of work op-

portunity, how beneficial NYAY will be for the poor?

Though this scheme sounds like any other schemes running in the economy, it is actually different. Some government schemes are designed with an intention to provide those facilities which are basic requirements for living. Some other schemes are to encourage work, to take business initiative, to increase efficiency level, to help us take a step forward, extra assistance from government to bring the marginal ones to the competitive level. Though the success rate of each such scheme is different, it always comes with a direction where it has to spend.

What could be the possible consequences of the free monthly income? It will damage the work culture in India like the rural loan waiver trend that had done widespread damage to the Indian credit system. Free monthly income will turn people lazy and dependent; there will be no willingness to work; they will spend more time in leisure. It will affect mobility of labour and reduce the availability of labour where the number of unemployed would increase.

Eventually, the scheme will slice out a bigger portion from the tax-payers in the form of higher tax, indirectly discouraging them to work

**Letters to the EDITOR**

Sir, — Dr Monprativ Barooah deserves kudos for his very valuable article under the caption, 'Improving healthcare in government sector' (AT, March 30). As per the annual budget, a good amount of money is kept for healthcare through which better healthcare can be provided in the government health institutions like hospitals, dispensaries, sub-health centres, etc. Many government doctors are reluctant to serve in rural areas. The healthcare delivery in places like Chennai, Patna, etc., has become famous only because the doctors and nurses play their roles in a systematic manner. All medical equipment are run by expert technicians. The private hospitals in those metro cities are kept clean and hygienic all the time. All this will also be possible if our doctors and health workers perform their assigned services properly. Health service has now become health business. Dr Barooah has made a noble effort to motivate us to visit our government health institutions. Healthcare in the government

sector must be improved. It is our fundamental right and we should be aware of this. We were taught that health is wealth, but that does not mean wealth is meant for only health. Yours etc., MUKIBUR REHMAN, Church Road, Nagaon.

**Fake news**

Sir, — It is really unfortunate that some miscreants posted a fake news in social media wherein a clip of this esteemed newspaper carrying one old photo of a meeting between the veteran Congress leader and former Chief Minister of Assam Tarun Gogoi with Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the headline claiming that Gogoi has joined BJP was used. In our view this is a very serious matter and such fake news circulated through social media should be stopped henceforth. The DGP, Assam should take it seriously and initiate a high-level inquiry without loss of time to locate the source as well as to book the culprit immediately. Meanwhile, it is understood that *The Assam Tribune* management has already lodged formal complaints with the Chandmari PS. Such misuse of social media will harm the society as a whole. Every conscious citizen should keep a

strict vigil against such fake news and comments. Any such objectionable messages forwarded through social media in future should be brought to the notice of the DGP, Assam. Yours etc., PRADIP KAKATI, Nabagraha Path, Guwahati.

**Nation first**

Sir, — It has been a great relief for thousands, when the nonagenarian founder of the Bharatiya Janata Party and the then *Louha Purush* (Iron Man) Lal Krishna Advani started speaking again, through a blog titled, 'Nation First, Party Next, Self Last'. But it took him almost five years to vent out his *Mann ki Baat*; his last write-up was published on April 24, 2014, just like he uttered only 360-odd words and spent three minutes speaking in Parliament despite 92% attendance. Advani had not spoken in the Lok Sabha since December 19, 2014. One has to agree how shrewd Narendra Modi is who made '*Bhajpa ke teen dharohar*, Atal, Advani aur Murli Manohar' part of the Margdarshak Mandal, a club whose supposed aim was to enlighten the BJP's path. It was nothing but to show the door for them.

In his blog Advani has given importance to the fact that the BJP never regarded its critics as 'enemies' or 'anti-nationals'. He has urged the party to 'look back, look ahead and look within', and stressed 'democracy and democratic traditions' within the party. The sad thing is that this may not impact the BJP's electoral prospects much, because political morality and political nobility are not known to have helped political parties at present in the country.

Yours etc., BIDYUT KUMAR CHATTERJEE, Faridabad.

**UPSC result**

Sir, — The recently-declared UPSC result has brought a new hope for the Assamese youth who have been preparing for this examination since long. In future the number of successful candidates will definitely increase. Our political system must undertake some initiatives to inspire the Assamese youth for engaging themselves in this prestigious field. The Assamese students are capable, what they need is proper guidance. From the college level, necessary initiatives like career orientation programmes should be taken up so that they can tread

along the path of success in this field. Everything is possible if one has the desire. Congratulations to all those who have cleared the examination this time. Yours etc., CHONITA BORAH, Pilibor Bhatemora, Jorhat.

**Secular credentials**

Sir, — AIUDF chief Badruddin Ajmal seems to be a political illiterate. He is rather a highly successful businessman. He hardly subscribe to any political ideology. No wonder he is hobnobbing with the turncoats of all hues and running from pillar to post for support and marriage of convenience. Parochialism is not a political ideology. Sentiments and emotions have no place in democratic politics nor have caste, creed and community. In the ultimate analysis, democracy proclaims triumph of civilization. Secularism is integral to democracy like law, liberty and equality. The people of Assam should go for candidates with proven secular credentials. Yours etc., DHARMANANDA SARMA, Silpukhuri, Guwahati.

Articles (within 1000-1100 words) and Letters to the Editor for publication in the editorial page may be sent to the email ID: [editor@assamtribune.com](mailto:editor@assamtribune.com).

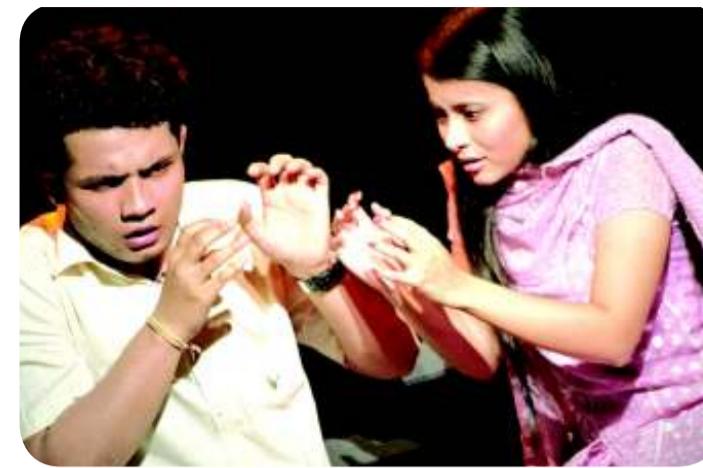






Terry Pratchett, the English writer, once said, "No matter how fast light travels, it finds the darkness has always got there first, and is waiting for it..." a philosophy that defies the very theory of optics in science. White, as science proves, is the combination of all colours, while black is the absence of any colour or rather, it absorbs all colours. One who can absorb all is glorified as a saint who has an exceptional degree of holiness or closeness to God, who can tolerate hardship and insult without any thought of personal gain, who can do supreme sacrifice. They close their eyes to see the universe through the blackness. The colour black bears much more significance than we ever think.

*Anupam Andhar* (*Dark is Beautiful*), an Arun Sarma play, designed and directed by Manik Roy, performed by the Guwahati Sishu Natya Vidyalaya (GSNV), one of the country's leading children's theatre houses, once again glorified the power of black, just like Terry Pratchett did. Staged on March 27, at the Vivekananda Kendra, Guwahati, on the occasion of the second death anniversary of Arun Sarma, this play is a classic creation of a writer who has won the Padma Shri, a Sahitya Akademi and a Sangeet Natak Akademi award. Two blind teenagers happen to meet each other at a railway platform, waiting for the same train. They share the same bench, but are unaware of each other's blindness, even though they get talking and continue to do so for quite a long time. The young boy Suman, played by Bishal Pritam Chaliha, and the girl Anita, played by Sristi Sarma, unaware of each other's shortcoming, quickly



develop an emotional intimacy as they talk about various common topics of interest.

They soon seem to be attracted to each other and the writer continues to build the suspense over their ignorance of each other's reality. It continues for more than an hour during which several things happen – the boy tries to help the girl as she gets bitten by an insect; he offers her his hanky, but finds it difficult to reach her. He also tries to shoot away the insect by using a body spray. This particular incident is a turning point of the play, as the writer finally builds a bridge over the sea of darkness that connects the couple.

Manik Roy, a nationally-acclaimed director

of children's theatre, has improvised the play by keeping only the two main protagonists on stage, while hiding the other minor characters of the original script, thus presenting the psychology of darkness experienced by

**Mrinmoy Bhuyan**

work on perceptual and cognitive aspects of blindness has been outstanding in keeping the presentation compact and entertaining inside the small hall with the audience sitting on three sides, increasing the intimacy with the actors.

The way Arun Sharma, one of Assam's



contemporary playwrights, has described the beauty of darkness, is absolutely incredible. The writer creates an entire episode to finally reveal the truth about Anita by disclosing the fact that she studies with the help of Braille only. Her subtle feelings of insecurity disappear as the boy sitting in front of her expresses his shock as also his happiness to know the reality. He, too, was impatient to make her aware of his situation, and they realise that they are actually quite similar rather than being different. They were hundreds of miles apart at the beginning when they took the opposite edges of

the bench, but as they discovered their ultimate similarity, it took them through the bridge of darkness and brought them together.

Saurav Baishya and Chayan Das did a splendid job in composing the music, fitting enough to give the required effect. It's not very often that we see any experiment on 'Intimate Theatre' in Assam, but in *Anupam Andhar*, GSNV has done it yet again with elemental customisation in a cosy ambience for a handful of encouraging audience members, who not only shared the same space with the performers but connected with the pulse of the play. With such limited scope on a low proscenium stage, the lighting was sensitively controlled by the director himself.

The flawless course was suddenly disturbed as the sound of the train came like unexpected thunder, signalling the end of a chapter. Soon, Suman and Anita, who were living in the emotional world created by their darkness, would be separated, perhaps forever. Would they be meeting again? Who knows? The inevitable separation moves the audience; but Suman calls Anita, one last time, and asks her to meet him there once again, over the invisible bridge, which they themselves created. Perhaps, the words left unsaid are similar to what we find in the book *The Beauty of Darkness* by Mary E Pearson, the American writer famous for young adult fiction, "It doesn't matter how many universes come and go, I will always remember who we were together."

## A game of grace

**A**claimed film director Roopa Barua's newest creation – *Daughters of the Polo God* – is a well-documented short film that highlights the unexplored treasures of the North-East, and brings a century-old sport into the world arena. It was screened at the prestigious auditorium of the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) on March 25, 2019. The simplicity, soothing background music, splendid cinematography, sound, story, screenplay and the message were the USP of the film.

Modern polo began to be played in Manipur way back in 1629 AD during the coronation of the king at Kangla Fort, where this game was played. Tea planters, soldiers and members of the East India Company brought this amazing sport out of Manipur to Kolkata, Jaipur and then to all British colonies, including Argentina, England, Kenya, Malaysia, etc.

Roopa Barua's film depicts the entry of women polo players into this male-dominated sport and their collaboration with international players. She also focusses on the annual international women's polo tournament that is a perfect occasion for an exchange of culture and sports, making Manipur – the birthplace of modern polo, a pilgrimage for all international polo players and creating a new sports-tourist destination in India.



to connect the culture of Manipur with the world and in the process, wiping out the negativity with the help of sports is a tremendous job and the director has skilfully highlighted this. Sports is an integral part of Manipur, and women are not behind in this field. The soil of Manipur has created world class champions like Mary Kom, Kunjanari Devi, Mirabai Chanu, Sarita Devi, Sanjita Chanu, etc. And this tale of women polo players is another highpoint in the sporting history of this small Northeastern State.



### Octave Festival, 2019

Eminent Kathak artiste of Assam, Hemanta Kalita and his group presented the dance production *Ullas* at the Octave Festival, 2019, held at the CCRT Lawns, Dwarka, New Delhi, on March 26-29. *Ullas* was a combination of *dhruvpad*, *thumri*, *kaajri*, and *tarana* with technicalities of the Kathak tradition which depicted the desire of *Nayika* to meet her *Nayak* in the *Varsha Ritu*. Organised jointly by the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT) and the North Central Zone Cultural Centre (NCZCC), Prayagraj, the festi-



### Mime Festival held at Morigaon

The Mukha Cultural Centre of Assam organised the first National Mime Festival at the District Library Auditorium of Morigaon, recently. The festival was inaugurated by Sangeet Natak Akademi award-winning mime artiste Moinul Haque. Popular mime artistes coming from Kolkata, Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri like Saswata Biswas, Swagat Paul, Priyanka Mandal, Chandrakanta Sirali and a few others performed there. Besides mime artistes from the Mime Academy, Guwahati, and the Mukha Cultural Centre also exhibited their talents during the festival.

### Brahmaputra Dance Festival held at Kolkata

The Manjary Dance Academy of Guwahati conducted the Brahmaputra Dance Festival at the Dr Triguna Sen Auditorium of Jadavpur University, Kolkata, on March 30. Organised with the sole aim to promote, popularise and preserve the Sattriya dance form of Assam, the festival presented the dance recitals of artistes like Dr Mallika Kandali, Gargi Bordoloi, Seujpriya Borthakur Goswami, Jollymoni Saika, and a few others. Students of the Manjary Dance Academy performed the dance drama titled *Eso he Barsha* in the Sattriya style, based on Rabindranath Tagore's song.

Dr Nita Vidyarthi, Tarun Bose, Dr Mridul Bose, Jaya Seal Ghosh, Mousumi Sen, Ruma Samajder and many other distinguished personalities were present as guests at the event.



### Art workshop held

The Kala Academy Foundation, in collaboration with the North Central Zone Cultural Centre (NCZCC), Government of India, organised a ten-day national painting workshop on visual arts at the Arundhati Art Gallery, Guwahati, recently. Artists like Krishna Rai, Arak, Manas Gogoi, Anup Sarma, Paudam Nongbey, Dimpy Das and a few others participated in the workshop.

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Paudam Nongbey, Dimpy Das and a few others participated in the workshop.

tival also featured eminent dancers of Assam like Meghranjani Medhi, Ranjumoni Saikia and Bipul Das, along with their respective groups. While Meghranjani Medhi and her group 'Sur Sangam' performed *Nriyata Sangam* in Kathak and Sattriya, Bipul Das and his group presented *Ardhang* in Kathak, and Ranjumoni Saikia performed *Shri Krishnaya Namaha* and *Shantakaran Bhujaga Shayanang* in Sattriya. Classical and folk dances from Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Nagaland, Mizoram and Sikkim also performed there.

**Joykanta Sarma**

**T**he North-East Centre of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, in collaboration with the Luit Konwar Rudra Barua State Music College, organised a unique festival of night *ragas* named 'Nisa Ragini' at their college auditorium the other day by presenting three celebrated classical musicians of Assam – *sarod* player Tarun Kalita, vocalist Jiten Basumatari, and sitarist Hema Hazarika. In fact, the function showcased Indian aesthetics consisting of instrumental and vocal music. The audience could enjoy a complete aesthetic experience as all the segments complemented each other.

The function was inaugurated by eminent stage and cinema personality Pranjal Saikia by lighting the ceremonial lamp. Thereafter, Bidyut Mishra, Principal of the music college, while welcoming the audience and guests, said how most of the *ragas* get their special implications in the last *prahars* of the night. It is a maiden effort on their part to involve the audience in the *raga* recital programmes.

The night opened with senior *sarod* player Tarun Kalita, who started with *Raga Bhupali*, resorting to *aalaap* and *jhor*. Kalita, the pioneer of *sarod*-playing in the North-East region and a disciple of maestro Buddhadev Dasgupta from Kolkata, then played a *bandish* set to *Raga Jinjyoti* and *tin taal*. He concluded with a *dhun* in *Raga Palashkathi* set to *Addha tal*. His musical thoughts were superbly interpreted by Devasish Bhattacharyya, an outstanding accompanist on the *tabla*. Once the rhythm-crusted melody arrived, the *tabla* offered beautifully anticipated *saath-sangat*. The *taans* received an aesthetically pleasing *bayan*-based reply from Devasish.

The opening recital of a *Borgeet* – *Re... mana... he... bahu...*, composed by Mahapurush Madhabdev, presented

## Festival of nocturnal ragas



by a group of students from the Rudra Barua State Music College, was also lauded. It was directed by Khairuddin Ahmed, a teacher of the college and ably supported by Atul Bhuyan.

Accomplished vocalist Jiten Basumatari began his *khayal* with *Raga Malkauns* set to *vilambit ektai* in the composition *Mandar baje jhanjh mridang*. Next, he came to *madhyalaya khayal* set to *tin taal*, in the composition *Har har Mahadeva Devapati*. Thereafter, he switched over to a *drut taal bandish* set to *tin taal* in the composition *Bawari bhaye dayee un biin*. He concluded with a Suradas *bhajan* – *Re mana dhiraj tu na dhare*. A student of Damodar Bora and Binoy Das, and later maestro Dipak Chatterjee of Delhi, Basumatari's recital stood out for its vocalised techniques in the elaborate, melody-dipped meliluous *aalaap* in the *raga*. He was ably assisted by his school-going son Devangabhusan. With the *tabla* by Dibyajyoti Changmai, they together

created a thrilling crescendo, replete with spiralling *taans*.

The grand finale of the late-night soiree came with the *sitar* duo recital of Assam's senior-most *sitar* performer Hema Hazarika and his young son Subhankar. Hazarika, a septuagenarian, is a disciple of maestro Manilal Nag from Kolkata. Subhankar, too, apart from training under his father, has been taking *talim* under the same maestro for the last several years. The father-son duo very lovingly and reverently weaved their *Raga Bageshri* by displaying *aalaap* and *jhor*; then *jhor*'s *vilambit*, *Madhya* and *drut*, *jhor-jhala*. Next, they came to *vilambit tin taal*, *sthayi vistar* and *antara vistar* with *dol*, *gamak*, *laikari*, etc. Thereafter, they played *drut laya* set to *tin taal*, *taan* and *tura* and at the end, *jhala*. Towards the later part, Subhankar was almost seen presiding over the entire recital. Supported by Dibyajyoti Changmai on the *tabla*, the recital impressed the audience till the end.

### Irrfan Khan to kickstart shooting for Hindi Medium 2

Irrfan Khan is all set to kickstart the shooting for *Hindi Medium 2* with Radhika Madan, in Rajasthan. According to *Mumbai Mirror*, Irrfan, who is presently in Rajasthan for a personal commitment, is all set to start rolling for *Hindi Medium 2*. Radhika will be seen playing his daughter and we cannot wait for them to be seen in the same frame. A source told the publication, "Irrfan and Radhika started prep a while ago and are looking forward to kicking off the first schedule in Rajasthan. It's an important portion after which they will take off for the international schedule. The overseas schedule will be shot in the UK and not the US.

Reportedly, Kareena Kapoor Khan will be seen opposite the talented actor and she will join the cast after wrapping up Raj Mehta's directorial debut, *Good News* with Akshay Kumar. Earlier, reports also suggested that though the sequel is addressed as *Hindi Medium 2*, the movie is expected to be titled *English Medium*. The movie will be directed by Homi Adajania, of *Cocktail*, *Being Cyrus* and *Finding Fanny* fame.



**movie MAGIC**

### Salman to make a horror flick

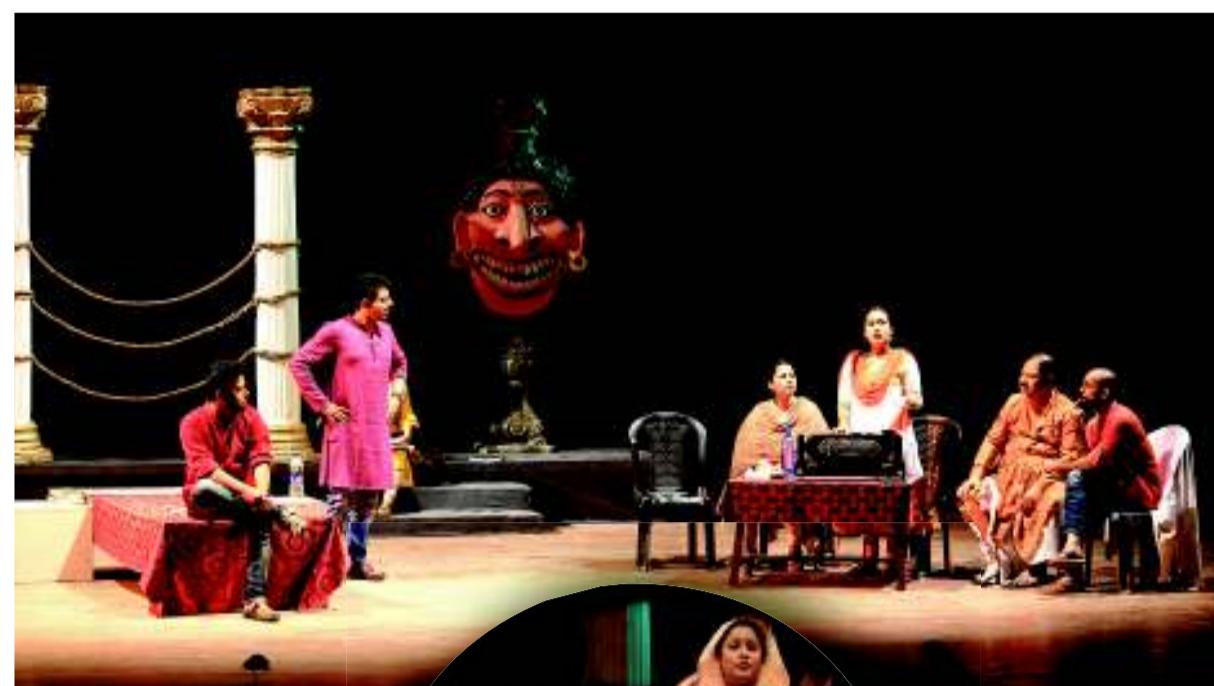
Salman Khan, who is currently busy shooting for Arbaaz Khan's *Dabangg 3*, has his hands full with a lot of commitments but that does not stop him from taking up more work. As per latest reports, Salman has registered a new title for the film he is set to produce and it is going to be in the genre which was never attempted by the actor/producer before – horror. The title registered with the Indian Motion Pictures Producers Association (IMPPA) is *Adamkhor*, and sources from Salman Khan's production house claim that the actor wants to make a film in a horror genre with this title.

On the work front, he is now shooting for *Dabangg 3* with Sonakshi Sinha, in Indore. The unit will then move to Wai to complete the rest of the shoot. As he wraps up the movie, he will join Sanjay Leela Bhansali on the sets of *Inshallah*. He is paired opposite Alia Bhatt for this one. Salman's next film includes a remake of the Korean film *Veteran*, which will be produced by Atul Agnihotri. His next release is *Bharat*, starring Katrina Kaif.

# Taking the stage

The Assam Cultural Trust has been staging a drama in March annually for the last several years at the ITA Cultural Complex Auditorium in Guwahati, to commemorate one of its founder trustees, late Girish Choudhury – who was a legendary figure in the field of amateur theatre, dramatics and films. It will be pertinent to mention here that the trust was instrumental in setting up this Pragjyoti Centre for Performing Arts, with assistance from the Indian Tea Association. This year, on March 24, there was a presentation from the house of the Surya Group, in association with Melody Patgiri Productions. *Kareng Ligiri-Annya Path* — an off-the-track exercise in the backdrop of the original script is an effort made by Sapunjyoti Thakur, who conceived and developed the idea alongside Nayan Prasad, who handled the direction — both familiar names in the amateur drama circuit of contemporary time.

The plot, totally unconventional, is that of a play rehearsal being carried out on the floors for staging *Kareng Ligiri* with all the casting crew and technicians. It's a play within a play. Meanwhile, at the rehearsal, a female artiste named Porimita, who is to perform the role of Rajmou, does not turn up at the venue as her family has fixed her marriage against her wishes. This agitates the director, who is also playing the role of Sunder Konwar, the central character of the proposed play. The other artistes work on their own acts, while constantly trying to convince their director-cum-co-artiste to cool down and to understand the mental condition of the absentee. This episode has been probably crafted



**Dibyendu Goswami**

to draw a comparison with that of Kanchanmati, the character in the original epic drama. Kanchanmati had to sacrifice her personal choice, though ultimately she was united. Incidentally, Porimita here actually bears a soft corner for the director which, however, he hardly realises.

The entire presentation of just an hour has been well-crafted, creating a fresh ambience of experimentation and realism in designing the total situation, as well as in setting out the characters corresponding to the original script as *Rupkonwar*. Jyotiprasad had sketched it. Moreover, the casual deliberations amongst the actors during the rehearsal, the *chaiwalla* who is serving tea at the venue, and the fun-filled ambience



have all contributed to the overall temperament — that of the preparations for staging a great play. Though all the lead artistes like Dr Chinmoy Chakravorty, who plays the role of the director, as also Sunder Konwar, Dr Jayanta Das and Melody Patgiri, etc., are regular performers of these kind of amateur dramas, yet they

have done exceedingly well with support from the rest of the crew. The set design by none other than Nuruddin Ahmed deserve kudos and so do the background-staff on all fronts. The play was staged earlier too in Guwahati itself and was well received by the critics.

It may be added here that the amateur drama movement, to a great extent, has been engaged constantly over new experimentation and on putting new wine in old bottles, i.e., dealing with conventional thematic plots from newer perspectives. The various drama fests are also providing frequent spaces to the performing groups to display their productions, much to the applause of theatre lovers.

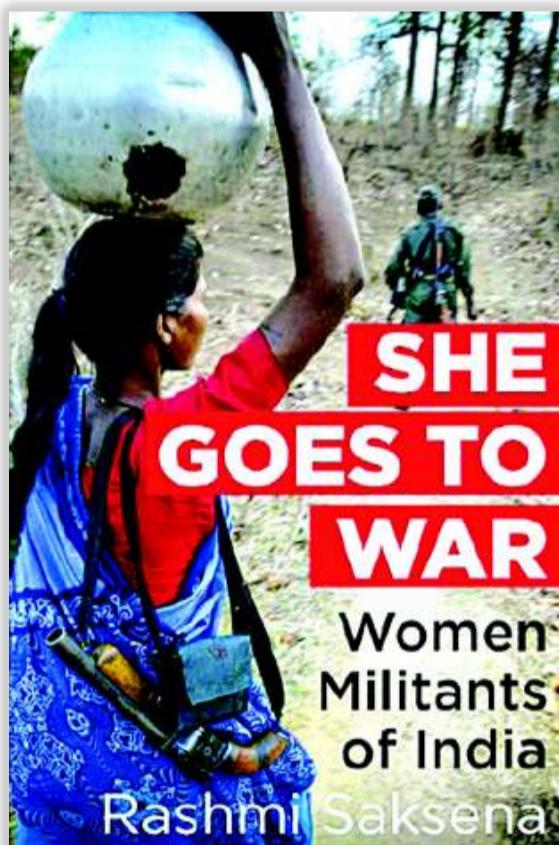
dibyendugoswami21@gmail.com

# Women at war

Like the child soldiers, the participation and role of women in militant outfits has been conspicuous from an early period. However, their roles have remained hidden from the prying eyes of the journalists and researchers for a variety of reasons. Very often, access to women and children in a rebel organisation is difficult. It is only after the organisation is disbanded or decimated that some among them have narrated their experiences — which have been published in dailies, journals and magazines. There is more material on the Maoist movement in central India than the other conflict zones in the North-East and Jammu and Kashmir.

**Uddipan Dutta**  
*She Goes To War: Women Militants of India* by Rashmi Saksena gives a fascinating portrayal of the lives of women who have taken to the gun as members of underground militant groups in the different conflict zones. A wide canvas of women militants has been illustrated in different banned organisations in Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, Chhattisgarh, and Jammu and Kashmir. The similarities between these women, as well as the difference amongst them have been woven in lovely tales that make the book an interesting read.

The 16 women profiled in the book, from amongst the 100-odd that the author has met, portray the reasons why they picked up the gun and opted for the harsh and perilous life in the jungles, why they undertook the long marches to destinations far away from their homes, their covert, subversive assignments and finally, their homecoming. All these vividly bring out



the diverse roles that women have performed in the rebel outfits which could come as a surprise for the general reader. In the very introduction, the author writes, "Women have become an integral part of insurgencies across the world, playing a crucial role in both covert and overt operations."

The stories of Pranati and Santana of ULFA

establish how women played a role in keeping the movement alive during the government crack-down on the outfit through Operation Bajrang and Operation Rhino. The book introduces the reader to Purnima, a faith healer in Imphal, Manipur; Ribini, a nurse in a hospital in Assam, unlikely occupations for women who once lived life on the run: the former as the fearless Nalini, a member of the rebel Kanglapak Communist Party (KCP), a crack shot much in demand as an assassin and extortionist, and the latter as Lance Corporal Raisumai of the Bodo Security Force (BdSF), a banned militant separatist organisation in Assam.

In faraway Kashmir, Khalida was just another school girl till January 21, 2007, the day she was found with a bullet through her head — gunned down by the Baramulla police who believed she was going to meet her comrades in the dreaded militant organisation, the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). Or by the militants, who suspected her of double-crossing them? No one will ever know who killed Khalida, but her's is a fate often met by the women of this embattled State.

The book suffers some factual errors. For instance, it was in 1991 that the first camp was set up in Bhutan by ULFA and not 1990 as the book mentions. Then, ULFA chief of staff Pares Baruah never went into hiding along the Indo-Myanmar border in 2012 after the outfit was split following the decision by a faction led by president Arabinda Rajkhowa to begin talks with the government. Also, the chapter on Manipur was brief compared to the others, but it is a well-known fact that the engagement of women with rebel groups in the border State had been much more than either Assam, Nagaland, or Jammu and Kashmir.

## prelude

All musical instruments are tuned. Musical instruments produce sound by vibration — a string, a membrane or a column of air. A good musical tone is produced when the vibrations have the right frequency (pitch) and right amplitude (loudness). When a musical instrument is out of tune, it is tuned by making some adjustment. In stringed instruments, the strings (wires) are returned by tightening or loosening them so that they vibrate with the right frequency when plucked. Similarly, in case of percussion instruments, like the *tabla*, the tension or tautness of the membrane can be adjusted to produce the right sound when struck by hand. E-mail your questions with answers to: colosseum@assamtribune.com .

## harmonisers

From Sangeeta Roy, Dispur College —

- 2) A special song is sung during Bohag Bihu by the Bodos. What is it called?
- 3) When and where was the first Bihu song and dance described?
- 4) The word 'Bihu' has originated from the Sanskrit word *Bisuvan*. What does the word actually mean?

- 5) What is *Jum Bihu*?

## unities

From Adish Agarwalla —

- 6) *Kundun* is a 1997 epic biographical film written by Melissa Mathison and directed by Martin Scorsese about a person who is addressed as *Kundun*, which means 'presence'. Who is he?
- 7) The name of this dance is derived from a word which means 'beauty'. Originally, it was used as a form of entertainment and as a morale booster for tired soldiers. *Nirguni* and *Shringari* are the two types. Name this dance that we can see in the song *Pinga* in the movie *Bajirao Mastani*.
- 8) The year 2015 was the 150th year of publication of this children's classic work of fiction. In 2010, Tim Burton directed a film based on this work, starring Johnny Depp. Identify the work.
- 9) Which 1965 Best Actress Oscar winner was born at the Singlijan Tea Estate, Chabua, Assam, in British India, where her father ran a tea plantation for several

## the colosseum

### ■ Neelotpal Deka

#### side screen

- 1) Picture Clue: Identify this musical instrument. (Adish Agarwalla, Morahat)



years? (Shajid Khan, University Law College)

- 10) *Batman Vs Superman: Dawn of Justice* brought together two of the biggest superheroes for the first time in a live action movie. Which comic book is it based on? (Rinkumoni Boruah, Lakhimpur)

- 11) Which famous American danseuse was called the Picasso of Dance; she published her autobiography — *Blood Memory*, and continued her compositions till the age of 96? (Mridul Sharma, Guwahati)

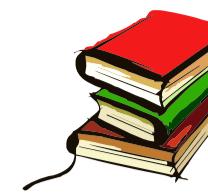
- 12) On July 6, 1944, in a speech broadcast by the Azad Hind Radio from Singapore, Subhas Chandra Bose addressed Mahatma Gandhi and gave him an appellation and asked for his blessings and good wishes for the war he was fighting. This was the first time that

- 13) Of which famous 19th century novel is this opening line — "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife."? (Dilip K. Deka, Guwahati)

- 14) In Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, the mariner shoots which seabird with a crossbow and later wears it around his neck as punishment? (Pankaj Kalita, Guwahati)

## crescendo

- 15) How do we know this God of Human Love or Desire, whose other names are Atanu, Ragavinta, Kandarpa, Manmatha, Manasija and Madana? (Shajid Khan)



## BOOKSHELF

### Humour in real life

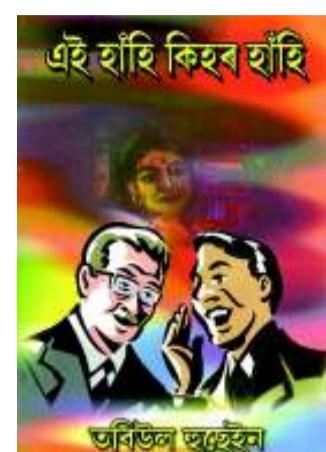
**Dr Tapati Baruah Kashyap**

**H**umour, it is said, is one of the best medicines on earth. Owing to the demands of modern day, life often becomes stressful. Thus, when one finds something humorous, or something that evokes laughter, one not only gets relief from stress, but also experiences a certain amount of joy. When such humour emanates from real-life situations, it becomes even more enjoyable.

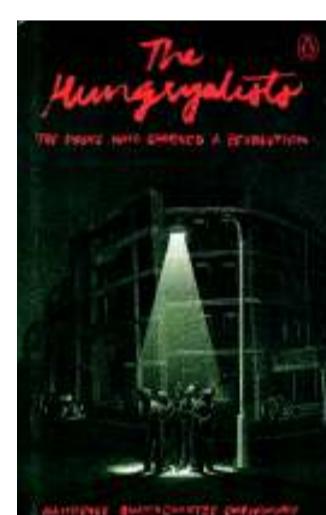
Tabiul Hussain is an Assamese author whose writings are always replete with humour, providing a lot of comic relief. What is more important is that Hussain not only knows how to laugh at himself, but also shares those various incidents and episodes of life with others. This new book, like his earlier collections of essays, once again reveals his comic bent of mind, and thus, going through his essays is an enjoyable experience. A former bureaucrat, who had served in various capacities including as the deputy commissioner of Morigaon district, Hussain picks up various incidents from his own life, looks at the lighter side of those incidents, and presents them in an appealing and interesting way.

The present book is a collection of 13 such essays — mostly personal essays — which are about various incidents of his life. If one essay is on meeting a person who marries the girl whose parents had sent him her proposal long ago, another one is about the funny superstitions related to various personal items going missing. In yet another essay, he takes the readers along with him on the ordeal he underwent when a dentist removed one of his teeth, and then reveals how he later discovered that the dentist had removed the wrong tooth.

But behind his humour and laughter, there is some strong underlying message. Reality is always bitter, yet Hussain's treatment of the subject makes reality not only easy to approach, but also lightens one's emotional burden. Thus, his writings not only make one laugh at life and reality, but also reveals some lesser-known facts. As Prof Hirendra Nath Dutta had remarked, Hussain's writings are reflections of the day-to-day happenings or the dramatisation of reality with wit and fun.



Ei Hanhi Kihin Hanhi  
Tabiul Hussain  
Purbanchal Prakash  
Price: Rs 100/-



**THE HUNGRYALISTS:**  
The poets who sparked a revolution  
Maitreyee Bhattacharjee Chowdhury  
Penguin Random House  
Price: Rs 599/-

### Rebels with a cause

**Saikh Md Sabah Al-Ahmed**

**H**istory is replete with a plethora of instances when potent works of philosophers, authors, poets, *et al*, have had a profound influence on the entire course of a revolution. The French Revolution of 1789, for instance, witnessed a germination of ideas put forward by philosophers like Locke, Rousseau and Montesquieu envisaging a society based on freedom, equal laws and opportunities. And who could forget the duo of Mirabeau and Abbe Sieyes whose writings stirred the minds of the common man against the French monarchy, clergy and the nobility. Mirabeau had brought out a journal and delivered powerful speeches to the crowds assembled at Versailles, while Abbe Sieyes wrote an influential pamphlet called *What is the Third Estate?*

Some 170-odd years later, there emerged a posse of firebrand poets, writers and artists in the (then) volatile socio-political fabric of 1960s Bengal. With pent-up feelings and a fire in the belly, they were hell bent on 'change'. *The Hungryalists: The poets who sparked a revolution* is a remarkable book by author and poet Maitreyee Bhattacharjee Chowdhury that chronicles a unique generation of robust and firebrand poets who had formed a 'poets' syndicate' of sorts that made up the nucleus of the Hungry Generation Movement in Bangla literature and painting, also known as Hungryalism, Hungrealism, Hungry *Andolon*, etc. The Hungry Generation revolved around brothers Malay Roy Choudhury and Samir Roy Choudhury, part of the movement's founding quartet (the other two being Shakti Chatterjee and the Dalit poet Haradhan Dhara aka Debi Roy).

If one carefully browses through the entire 178 pages spread over 11 enriching chapters, one can clearly read between the lines as to the amount of labourious research that has gone into the writing of the book. While writing a genre as realistic as non-fiction, one always has to tread the thin line between 'misrepresentation' and 'over-representation' of facts. And as one finishes reading the last chapter and finally the Epilogue that starts with a comparative analysis between the Beat Generation in the United States and the Hungry Generation in India (Bengal), the true essence of the book comes out like a whiff of fresh air.

The book also brings to the fore the literary or poetic intercourse between the two movements — an amalgam of sorts that pirouettes among multiple binaries, which the author so beautifully sums up, "These poets/writers rejected standards of literature, introduced new societal norms, shunned mercenaries of culture and even spawned a new drug subculture." Though Bengal was their epicentre, the Hungryalists were part of a worldwide movement of recusant poetry, so reminiscent of the Beat Generation of poets that flourished in the United States in the 1950s. The book is a never-before-told true story, incorporating in-depth details about the bumpy ride that the Hungryalists had to undertake under the 'regime' and how poetry could act as an ignition for social overhaul.

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### ANSWERS

- 1) *Xutuli* 2) *Boisaguni Gidu* 3) In the novel *Miri Jiyori*, written by Rajanikanta Bordoloi in 1895 4) According to *Atharva Veda*, it is the name of a day of worship and offerings 5) It is celebrated mainly in Jamguri area, during Bohag Bihu, with no *dhol*, only with two singers and two dancers 6) Dalai Lama 7) *Lavani* 8) *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* 9) Julie Christie 10) Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns* 11) Martha Graham 12) Father of the Nation 13) *Pride and Prejudice* 14) An albatross 15) Kamdeva

## NATIONAL

# BJP manifesto promises Ram temple; PM says nationalism 'our inspiration'

NEW DELHI, April 8: Eyeing to retain power, the BJP made a plethora of poll promises on Monday, including expedited construction of Ram temple, firmly dealing with terrorism, doubling farmers' income in the next three years, making India the third-largest economy globally by 2030, and scrapping Article 370 of the Constitution that gave a special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the 45-page manifesto titled "Sankalpit Bharat, Sashakt Bharat" in the presence of BJP chief Amit Shah and other top leaders of the party, including Rajnath Singh, Sushma Swaraj and Arun Jaitley, three days ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.

In the manifesto, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) also resolved to annul Article 35A of the Constitution, which says no outsider can own property in Jammu and Kashmir.

On the economic front, the party said it aspired to make India the third-largest econo-

my of the world by 2030, adding, "This implies that we commit to make India a \$5 trillion economy by 2025 and \$10 trillion economy by 2032."

The prime minister said the BJP manifesto was a "multi-layered and multi-dimensional" document that addressed the expectations and aspirations of all sections of the society.

It said the purchase of defence equipment would be fast-tracked to strengthen the armed forces, adding that if voted to power, the government led by the party would continue with its approach of zero tolerance towards terrorism. The security forces would continue to get a free hand in dealing with terrorism, the saffron party said.

Asserting that nationalism was his party's inspiration and inclusion and good governance its mantra, Modi said the BJP manifesto aimed to make India a developed nation by 2047, 100 years after Independence.

The "Sankalp Patra" (document of resolve) of the BJP had 75 definitive, time-bound tar-

gets for the country, he said, adding, "We want people to hold us accountable. Hence, we have set out 75 goals to be achieved by 2022."

In his write-up in the manifesto, Shah said: "In its tenure of five years, the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been able to take many decisions which are historic and has ushered in a comprehensive and fundamental transformation."

He also referred to various schemes and decisions of the government, including the Swachh Bharat Mission, the Ujjwala Yojana, the Saubhagya Yojana, demonetisation, GST, surgical strikes and airstrikes.

About Jammu and Kashmir, it said, "We reiterate our position since the time of the Jan Sangh to the abrogation of Article 370. We are committed to annulling Article 35A of the Constitution of India as the provision is discriminatory against the non-permanent residents and women of Jammu and Kashmir."

"Let us work towards building a strong and inclusive India, whose citizens are assured of dignity, prosperity, security and opportunity," Modi wrote in the preface of the manifesto.

The IAF held a media briefing at the Defence Ministry where several slides of graphic captures from Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) were shown to the media.

"The IAF has irrefutable evidence of not only the fact that F-16 was used by Pakistan Air Force on February 27, but also that an IAF MiG 21 Bison shot down a Pakistan Air Force F-16," Air Vice Marshal RG Kapoor said in a statement.

He added that Modi provided a decisive government in the last five years and dared to order surgical strikes and airstrikes on the foundation of terror.

The Modi government had sent out a strong message that India could not be taken lightly, the BJP chief said. — PTI

# We shot down Pak F-16 jet during Feb 27 aerial combat, asserts IAF

NEW DELHI, April 8: The Indian Air Force on Monday reiterated that it shot down an F-16 jet of the Pakistan Air Force during the February 27 aerial combat and showed radar images of the engagement to assert that it has "irrefutable evidence" of downing the enemy jet.

The IAF has more credible information and evidence that is clearly indicative of the fact that the PAF has lost one F-16 in the air action on February 27. "However, due to security and confidentiality concerns, we are restricting the information being shared in public domain."

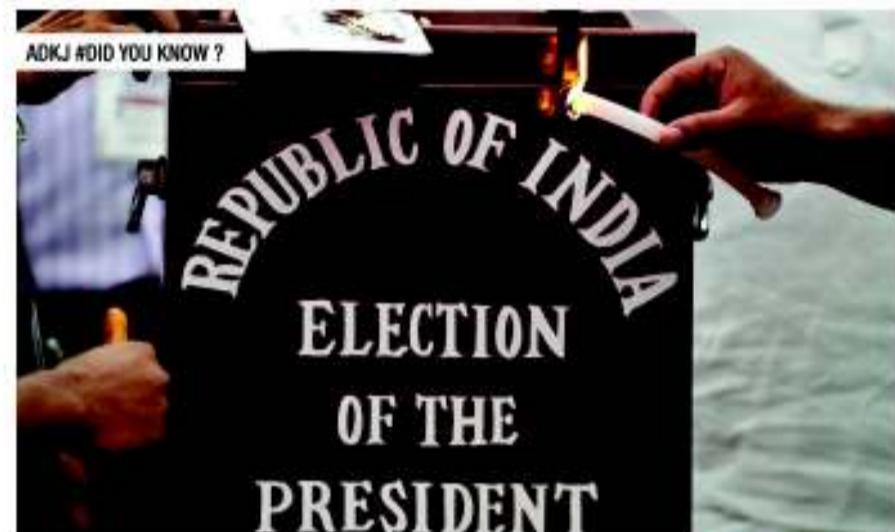
Last week, American magazine *Foreign Policy* reported

that a US count of the F-16s with Pakistan has found that none of them are missing, contradicting India's claim that one of its fighter jets shot down a Pakistani F-16 during the aerial dogfight on February 27.

In the report, the magazine said two senior US defence officials with direct knowledge of the situation told it that American personnel recently counted Islamabad's F-16s and found none of the planes missing. The report contradicted the claim made by New Delhi that the IAF shot down an F-16 jet of Pakistan.

The government has been maintaining that IAF pilot Abhinandan Varthaman had engaged with a Pakistani F-16 and shot it down before his MiG-21 Bison was downed. Varthaman was captured by Pakistan and was released after spending nearly 60 hours in Pakistani custody.

The IAF on February 28 displayed pieces of an AMRAAM missile, fired by a Pakistani F-16, as evidence to "conclusively" prove that Pakistan deployed the US-manufactured fighter jets during an aerial raid targeting Indian military installations in Kashmir. — PTI



## BOOKED VOTES

The Ballot boxes that is used in presidential polls of India are flown to Delhi and is given a seat in the business class under the name 'Mr Ballot Box'.

[apnedeshkojano.com](http://apnedeshkojano.com) | contribution@apnedeshkojano.com  
Powered by: Priya Communications

## Mirwaiz appears before NIA in terror funding case

NEW DELHI, April 8: After avoiding the first two summonses, moderate separatist leader and Hurriyat Conference chairman Mirwaiz Umer Farooq on Monday appeared before the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in connection with a case related to terror funding, officials said.

The Mirwaiz, who was provided security upon his arrival at the Indira Gandhi airport, was accompanied by other separatist leaders, including Abdul Gani Bhat, Bilal Lone and Maulana Abbas Ansari.

The Mirwaiz was asked to appear before the NIA on March 11 and March 18 but expressed his inability to join the investigation in the national capital, saying he feared for his security in view of "conditions of hostility". In its third summons, issued last week, the NIA promised him security.

The NIA probe seeks to identify the chain of players behind the financing of terrorist activities, pelting of stones on security forces, burning down of schools and damaging of government establishments.

The case names Hafiz Saeed, the Pakistan-based chief of Jamaatud-Dawah (JuD), the front for the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba, as an accused. It also names organisations such as the Hurriyat Conference factions led by Syed Ali Shah Geelani and the Mirwaiz, the Hizbul Mujahideen and the Dukhtaran-e-Millat. — PTI



অসম চৰকাৰৰ সাংস্কৃতিক সঞ্চালকালয়ৰ উদ্যোগত

## ৰঙালীৰ ৰং



১২ এপ্রিল, ২০১৯

দিনৰ ১১-০০ বজাৰ পৰা  
সাংস্কৃতিক সঞ্চালকালয় প্রাঙ্গণ,  
আমৰবাৰী, গুৱাহাটী-১

(ক) শাখা- প্ৰথম ত্ৰেণীৰ পৰা চতুৰ্থ ত্ৰেণীলৈ  
(খ) শাখা- পঞ্চম ত্ৰেণীৰ পৰা অষ্টম ত্ৰেণীলৈ  
(গ) শাখা- নবম ত্ৰেণীৰ পৰা দ্বাদশ ত্ৰেণীলৈ

ইচছুক্ত প্রতিযোগী সকলক ১১ এপ্রিল, ২০১৯ ৰ ভিতৰত  
সাংস্কৃতিক সঞ্চালকালয়, আমৰবাৰী, গুৱাহাটী-১  
(দেৰভাব নং: ০৩৬১-২৫৪৭৭৩১, মোবাইল নং: ৯৮৩৫৯-০৩৩১৫)  
এই ঠিকনাত ঘোষণাবোধ কৰিবলৈ অনুৰোধ কৰা হৈল।

Janasanyog/D/49/19

ভোটাৰ পৰিচয় পত্ৰ (EPIC)নাথকিলে আপুনি কি কৰিব?  
নিম্নলিখিত পৰিচয় পত্ৰসমূহৰ যিকোনো এখন ব্যৱহাৰ কৰি আপুনি  
ভোটাধিকাৰ সাব্যস্ত কৰিব পাৰে।

ভোটাৰ পৰিচয় পত্ৰ (EPIC)নাথকিলে আপুনি কি কৰিব?

নিম্নলিখিত পৰিচয় পত্ৰসমূহৰ যিকোনো এখন ব্যৱহাৰ কৰি আপুনি

ভোটাধিকাৰ সাব্যস্ত কৰিব পাৰে।



- ১ পাচপট
- ২ ড্রাইভিং লাইচেন্স
- ৩ কেন্দ্ৰীয়/ৰাজ্য চৰকাৰ, ৰাজহৰা খণ্ডৰ প্রতিষ্ঠান/ পাইকি  
লিমিটেড কোম্পানীয়ে কৰ্মচাৰীক প্ৰদান কৰা ফটো সম্বলিত  
সেৱা পৰিচয় পত্ৰ
- ৪ বেংক, ডাকঘৰে প্ৰদান কৰা ফটো সম্বলিত পাছবুক
- ৫ পান কাৰ্ড
- ৬ ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় জনসংখ্যা পঞ্জীয়নৰ অধীনত ভাৰতৰ মহাপঞ্জীয়কে  
প্ৰদান কৰা স্মার্ট কাৰ্ড
- ৭ এম জি এনৰেগা জব কাৰ্ড
- ৮ শ্ৰম মন্ত্ৰালয়ৰ আঁচনিৰ অধীনত প্ৰদান কৰা স্বাস্থ্য বীমা স্মার্ট কাৰ্ড
- ৯ ফটো সম্বলিত পেন্সন নথি
- ১০ সাংসদ/ বিধায়ক / বিধান পৰিষদৰ সদস্যসকলক প্ৰদান কৰা
- ১১ চৰকাৰী পৰিচয় পত্ৰ
- ১২ আধাৰ কাৰ্ড



মুখ্য নির্বাচনী বিষয়া, অসমৰ দ্বাৰা প্ৰচাৰিত



**CAPSULE****IndiGo services**

MUMBAI, April 8: Budget carrier IndiGo today announced expansion of its international network from the city, besides launching additional flights to domestic destinations to cater to the demand following the withdrawal of several routes by the struggling carrier Jet Airways. The three new overseas services include daily non-stop flights to Jeddah and Damman and Abu Dhabi while the domestic services will be launched to cities such as Indore, Kochi and Patna, among others, IndiGo said in a release. – PTI

**M&M pick-up vehicles**

MUMBAI, April 8: Auto major Mahindra & Mahindra today said its pick-up vehicles' sales crossed 1.5 lakh units in domestic market during the fiscal ended March this year. The pick-up range has sold 1,62,000 vehicles in FY-2019, compared to 1,49,121 vehicles in FY-2018, logging a 9 per cent growth, thereby posting the highest-ever annual sales growth in the segment since the launch, the company said in a release. – PTI

**Voltas pact**

MUMBAI, April 8: Tata Group firm Voltas today said it has entered into a distribution agreement for sales and marketing of Japanese textile machines manufacturer Shima Seiki's products in India. – PTI

## Draft e-commerce policy 'inimical' to \$1-trn digital economy goal: IAMAI

NEW DELHI, April 8: Industry body Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) today said the draft e-commerce policy may be "inimical" to the government's efforts of building a trillion-dollar digital economy by 2022, and is likely to "severely bring down FDI flows" in the sector.

The association was also of the view that "the process of making the policy itself was less than inclusive and open" as compared to recent national-level policies like the National Digital Communications Policy 2018.

In a statement, the IAMAI said "it is of the view that the draft National E-commerce Policy may be inimical to the government's efforts of building a trillion-dollar digital economy by 2022".

The government had sought comments from stakeholders on the draft national e-commerce policy in areas such as data, infrastructure development, online marketplaces, regulatory challenges, stimulating domestic digital economy and export promotion through e-commerce. The last date for submission was

# BUSINESS & ECONOMY

## Lenders invite EoI for Jet Airways, offer stake up to 75%

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI,

April 8: Lenders of the debt-ridden Jet Airways today invited "expression of interest" for stake sale in the airline to recover their dues.

The document issued by the State Bank of India (SBI), the lead lender in the consortium, offered stake up to 75 per cent of the company on a fully diluted basis.

However, it was not known whether former Chairman Naresh Goyal or major equity owner Etihad Airways would be selling their stake

on a pro-rata basis.

Sources said that TPG Capital, private equity firm KKR, Blackstone, Lufthansa, Singapore Airlines and Delta-Air France-KLM are among the companies approached by the lenders. When contacted, a Tata Group spokesperson, said: "We don't comment on market speculation."

"The lenders, pursuant to the guidelines issued by the Reserve Bank of India, are in the process of formulating a resolution plan for resolving stress in the company, inter alia,

involving change in control and management of the company," the EoI document said.

The purpose of the EoI is to provide information about the company to enable interested parties to make assessment about the proposal prior to the submission of their bids.

The time period for submission of EoI is till 6 pm on April 10. Today's development comes after lenders last week said they intend to pursue the bank-led resolution plan for the airline under the present legal and

regulatory framework.

The development assumes significance following the Supreme Court's decision to annul a February 12, 2018 Reserve Bank of India (RBI) circular on bad debts. The judgement was seen as a major setback for the resolution process.

In a statement, the consortium said: "The lenders intend to pursue the bank-led resolution plan for sale of stake in the company in a time-bound manner under the present legal and regulatory framework and intend to invite ex-

pressions of interest."

As per the lenders' statement, all efforts will be made for the stake sale and other options may be considered by them should these efforts not result in an acceptable outcome. The lenders did not divulge any information about the present funding needs of the airline.

Jet Airway's former Chairman Naresh Goyal has said he has cooperated fully and facilitated the bank-led resolution programme for the company. – IANS

### BSE, HDFC Bank tie up to boost start-up platform

MUMBAI, April 8: The Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) today announced a tie-up with largest private sector lender HDFC Bank to spread awareness about the stock bourse's special platform for start-ups.

Apart from informing start-ups clients, it also seeks to offer banking and lending solutions to eligible start-ups already listed or due-to-list on BSE Start-up platform, an official statement said.

BSE had launched the Start-up platform on December 22 last year to encourage entrepreneurs to get listed and raise equity capital for their growth and expansion. – PTI

### Honda starts CB300R deliveries

NEW DELHI, April 8: Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India (HMSI) today said it has commenced deliveries of its bike CB300R.

First lot of keys were delivered in Chandigarh, Jaipur, Delhi and Gurugram, while deliveries in other cities will follow soon, HMSI said in a statement.

"Overwhelmed by the response since its launch in February, we have revised our production plan to meet the additional demand," HMSI Senior Vice-President (Sales and Marketing) Yadvinder Singh Guleria said.

The Honda CB300R is priced at Rs 2.41 lakh (ex-showroom). – PTI

## Taxmen to scrutinise mismatch between ITR, service tax returns

age which cannot be ignored," Das said, asking the tax officers to quickly verify the data and report it to the CBIC.

The mismatch in ITR and service tax returns has come to notice in respect of permanent account numbers (PANs) that are either not at all registered under service tax or PANs which are registered but did not file the service tax returns.

In some cases, there is a value mismatch between the turnover declared in ITR or TDS and the service tax returns.

Service tax was subsumed into the goods and services tax (GST) with effect from July 1, 2017, and the period under scrutiny is the last two financial years before the new indirect tax regime was rolled out.

Mismatches were also noticed for the financial year 2016-17, for which data is being shared with the field offices.

...

The sheer magnitude of the mismatch is a pointer to the possibility of revenue leak-

### Setting up of currency chests RBI issues guidelines for banks

MUMBAI, April 8: The Reserve Bank of India today came out with guidelines for banks to set up new currency chests, which include minimum area of 1,500 square feet for strong room.

"Area of the strong room/vault of at least 1,500 sq ft. For those situated in hilly/inaccessible places, the strong room/vault area of at least 600 sq ft," the RBI said while specifying minimum standards for setting up new currency chests.

Besides, the new chests should have a processing capacity of 6.6 lakh pieces of bank notes per day.

For those situated in the hilly/inaccessible places, the capacity should be 2.1 lakh pieces of bank notes per day.

Earlier, an RBI appointed committee had recommended that the apex bank should encourage banks to open large currency chests with modern facilities and Chest Balance Limit (CBL) of at least Rs 1,000 crore.

The central bank further said the currency chests should have CBL of Rs 1,000 crore, subject to ground realities and reasonable restrictions, at the discretion of the Reserve Bank.

As per the RBI's annual report of 2017-18, the currency management infrastructure consists of a network of 19 issue offices of the Reserve Bank, 3,975 currency chests and 3,654 small coin depots of commercial, cooperative and regional rural banks spread across the country. – PTI

## Airtel gets SEBI nod for Rs 25,000-cr rights issue

NEW DELHI, April 8: Telecom operator Bharti Airtel has received market regulator SEBI's approval to raise up to Rs 25,000 crore through rights issue, according to sources.

...

The board of the company had approved the rights issue proposal in February. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has given the green signal to the rights issue of Airtel, the sources said.

When contacted, a Bharti Airtel spokesperson said, "The company is in process of obtaining requisite approvals and shall make necessary announcements at an appropriate time".

The board has earlier approved the rights issue to raise up to Rs 25,000 crore through issuance of fully paid-up shares at a price of Rs 220 per share, and an additional Rs 7,000 crore via foreign currency perpetual bond issue.

The company had said the capital infusion will help it continue investments in future roll-outs to build large

network capacity and create content and technology partnerships to ensure strong customer experience.

Last month, Airtel received commitment from its single-largest shareholder SingTel, promoters, and GIC Singapore to participate in the Rs 32,000-crore capital raising programme.

Singapore telecom major SingTel said it will infuse Rs 3,750 crore in Bharti Airtel by subscribing to the proposed Rs 25,000-crore rights issue of the company, while GIC Private Ltd, on behalf of Singapore government and Monetary Authority of Singapore, has made a commitment of Rs 5,000 crore in the proposed programme.

Indian telecom players, including Airtel and Vodafone Idea Ltd, have outlined mega fund raising programmes to arm themselves with fire-power to take on market competition intensified by Reliance Jio as well as to pare debt. – PTI



(L-R) RT Wasan, Vice-President - Marketing and Sales, Commercial Vehicle Business Unit (CVBU), Tata Motors and Girish Wagh, President - CVBU at the launch of 'Samarth', a programme for commercial vehicle drivers, in New Delhi on Monday.

## Toyota launches upgraded Innova Crysta, Fortuner

NEW DELHI, April 8: Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) today launched improved versions of its popular multi-purpose vehicle Innova Crysta and SUV Fortuner priced in the range of Rs 14.93-Rs 33.60 lakh (ex-showroom).

The new Innova Crysta will now have features such as heat rejection glass, perforated leather seats, option of new ivory leather upholstery and USB fast charging port, TKM said in a statement.

The new Innova Crysta will be available in the price range of Rs 14.93-Rs 22.43 lakh, while the Innova Touring Sport is tagged between Rs 18.92 lakh and Rs 23.47 lakh (all prices ex-showroom), the company added.

The new Fortuner will also have features like heat rejection glass and seat perforation and is priced between Rs 27.83 lakh and Rs 33.60 lakh (ex-showroom).

"In line with the feedback from customers we are happy to incorporate our customer preferences in select grades of the Innova Crysta and the Fortuner in terms of interiors and comfort," TKM Deputy Managing Director N Raja said.

With changing lifestyles people are spending more family time on road trips during weekends and thus car interiors and comfort features are emerging to be important parameters among car buyers, he added. – PTI

## Passenger vehicle sales hit slow lane in 2018-19, grow at 2.7%

NEW DELHI, April 8: Passenger vehicle sales in India rose just 2.7 per cent in 2018-19 as weak customer sentiment led by liquidity crunch, high vehicle prices and uncertainty revolving forthcoming elections put brakes on the sales growth in the segment.

According to data released by the Society of Indian Auto-

mobile Manufacturers (SIAM) today, domestic passenger vehicles (PV) sales were at 33,77,436 units in 2018-19 beating the previous record of 32,88,581 units in 2017-18.

"If we look at the positive side then we have continued to grow, though not in high single digit or double digits, but low single digit. Also, it is the highest-ever sales and production in a financial year," SIAM President Rajan Wadhwa told reporters here.

Domestic car sales in 2018-19 were at 22,18,549 units as against 21,74,024 units in 2017-18, displaying a growth of 2.05 per cent.

Utility vehicles (UV) sales were at 9,41,461 units last fiscal as against 9,22,322 units in 2017-18, a growth of 2.08 per cent.

However, exports of PVs were down 9.64 per cent at 6,76,193 units in 2018-19 as against 7,48,366 units in 2017-18.

"In the year gone by, we faced many challenges. The biggest being high commodity prices during the year

which prompted companies to hike vehicle prices which impacted demand. Further, issues like compulsory insurance, liquidity crunch at funding companies impacted the sales," Wadhwa said.

With the current fiscal lined up with many challenges, including general elections in the first quarter and transition to BS VI-compliant products later during the fiscal, SIAM said it expected PV sales to grow in the range of 3-5 per cent during the current financial year.

"We expect some pre-buying to happen before the tran-

sition to BS VI emission norms. Hope it leads to some growth. We firmly believe in India's growth story," Wadhwa said.

During 2018-19, market leader Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) sold 17,29,826 units of PVs at a growth of 5.25 per cent. Rival Hyundai Motor India clocked 5,45,243 units, up 1.68 per cent.

Home-grown auto major Mahindra & Mahindra's PV sales were at 2,45,351 units posting a growth of 2.21 units, according to SIAM data.

The industry said it expects two-wheeler sales to grow by 5.7 per cent, com-



## BP Gupta U-13 cricket from April 10

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

SILCHAR, April 8: In a bid to enthuse budding cricketers of the district, District Sports Association Silchar will host the under-13 inter school cricket tournament from April 10-14.

Subimal Dhar, secretary of DSA Silchar informed that the tournament will have six teams. The tournament will be organised in memory of Bishnu Pada Gupta, who had great love for sports. The winners will get Bishnu Pada Gupta memorial trophy and cash award of Rs 8000 while runner-up team will have trophy and cash award of Rs 5000 as well. Also, there are man of the match awards for each match, Dhar said.

Arijit Gupta and Biswadeep Gupta, son and grandson respectively of Bishnu Pada Gupta said "we are happy to support the initiative to promote budding cricketers. We hope to get good response from the players and continue to extend our association in the coming days."

Babul Hore, president of DSA said that over 200 students are getting coaching in the DSA cricket academy. "We are eyeing to give the players match temperament through such tournaments," Hore added. Niranjan Das, cricket secretary of the association informed that the matches will be played in the T20 format and on 19-yard pitch at the SM Dev Stadium.

## CSK will look to contain Russell as they gear up to clash with KKR

CHENNAI, April 8: Defending champions Chennai Super Kings will be focussing on containing the big-hitting batsman Andre Russell when they take on Kolkata Knight Riders in an IPL match here on Tuesday.

In a clash between two teams with a battery of quality spinners, a batsman of Russell's calibre may just prove to be the difference between the two sides.

Both the teams have four wins each and have been in pretty impressive form. Both will be eyeing victory to go at the top of the points table.

Mahendra Singh Dhoni-led CSK, which beat Kings XI Punjab here on Saturday rather convincingly, will be wary of the Dinesh

Karthik's KKR.

The Knight Riders are also coming off an all-round clinical win over Rajasthan Royals on Sunday night.



With two teams having an array of top-notch spinners, the onus would be on the batsmen to counter them, given the nature of the pitch at MA Chidambaram stadium.

While Harbhajan Singh, Imran Tahir and Ravindra Jadeja stifled the Kings XI batsmen to set up the win, Kuldeep Yadav, Sunil Narine and Piyush Chawla didn't allow the attacking Jos Buttler to get going on a slowish Jaipur track, thus restricting the Royals to a below par total of 139/3 in 20 overs.

That the tweakers in both teams will be keen to have a bowl at Chepauk would be an understatement. It will be fascinating to see which of the bowling units shines.

All eyes will be on the batting line-ups and how they go about neutralising the spin threat. How the Super Kings handle the in-form Russell threat will be watched with keen interest. - PTI

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## Happy with all-round effort but need to improve certain aspects: Karthik

JAIPUR, April 8: Kolkata Knight Riders captain Dinesh Karthik has praised his players for their all-round clinical effort in his side's eight-wicket win over Rajasthan Royals in an IPL match but said they need to improve in certain aspects.

"It was a pretty clinical effort, the bowlers bowled well and the batsmen backed it up well too," Karthik said after the win here on Sunday night.

"In India, you get to play on a lot of slow surfaces and you need to adapt to them. We need to improve in a few situations, but that's always the case," he added.

Asked about his side's deb-

utant pacer Harry Gurney, who took two wickets for 25 runs, Karthik said, "Well Harry (Gurney) is a true professional, he's played in leagues all over the world."

Gurney, on his part, said, "It was a pitch that suited my cutter options, so a nice one to make my debut on. I work hard on my variations and on my yorker and it is nice to have them in tough situations, although I didn't use it much tonight."

"I am working on a knuckle ball but I don't think it will be ready during the IPL, maybe somewhere in the English summer."

KKR opener Chris Lynn,

who scored 50, said, "I rode my luck again. But we knew we had to go hard in the powerplay. It slowed up as the innings progressed. It was a nice powerplay and we were in cruise control after that."

On the ball which he insidiously edged but did not dislodge the bail after hitting the leg stump, he said, "I nicked it, so I thought I was gone one way or the other. It happens in T20 cricket."

Chasing 140 for a win, Sunil Narine (47) and Lynn (50) shared 91 runs for the opening stand in 8.3 overs to take the game away from Rajasthan Royals as KKR reached the target with 6.1 overs to spare. - PTI

## Assam veteran wins ITF crown

GUWAHATI, April 8: Col Mridul Barkakoty of Assam lifted the singles title in the men's above 60 years category of the ITF Seniors Tennis Tournament which concluded on April 5 at Phuket, Thailand.

In the final he defeated his opponent Jonathan Rodriguez from USA in straight sets 6-0, 6-2. In the above 55 years men's doubles Col Barkakoty, partnering with Hebert Jacobs of Germany became the runners-up. This is for the first time a player from Assam has won the singles title in the above 60 years age group in an ITF event. Stated in a AATA press release.



## City CCC tourney begins

GUWAHATI, April 8: City Cricket Coaching (Blue) thrashed their Red team by a massive 280 runs in the opening match of the All Guwahati Inter Coaching Centre Limited Over Prize-money (U-14) Cricket Tournament at the Janata Bhawan Playground today. Batting first the Blue team, rode on 99-ball 182 by Aniket Medhi, amassed 384 for seven in 35 overs. The Red team were all out for 104 in 26.3 overs.

The tournament is being organized by the City Cricket Coaching Centre in memory of Dr Padma Kr Saikia and Sandhan Saikia.

Brief scores: CCC (Blue) 384/7 (Aniket Medhi 182, Raihan Zaman 48, Raj Debnath 24, Siddhanth Mishra, 2/56, Prince Agarwal 2/79). CCC (Red) 104 (Dhrutiman Katoni 19, Aniket Medhi 3/22).

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## Mohun Bagan misplaced Gostha Pal's Padma Shri award, claims son

KOLKATA, April 8: Legendary Indian footballer Gostha Pal's son, Nirangshu on Monday claimed that Mohun Bagan has 'misplaced' as many as eight awards of his father, including the prestigious Padma Shri. On the 43rd death anniversary of his father, the 78-year-old Nirangshu and his family members Monday visited the club and as a mark of protest returned the Mohun Bagan Ratna that was awarded posthumously to Gostha Pal in 2004.

Nirangshu said his family members have been running from pillar to post since 1996, the 100th birth anniversary of Gostha Pal, to recover the awards but to no avail.

It was only last year that Nirangshu was called by a club official to "collect the items" of his father but to his horror he found most of the things were "destroyed in a bagful of cockroaches and lizards".

Terming it 'sheer negligence', Nirangshu said his family then decided to lodge a general diary at the Maidan Police Station regarding the misplaced items. - PTI

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