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NEWS CAPSULE

Quakes hit NE

GUWAHATI, July 2: Two earthquakes of magnitude 3.1 and 4.0 intensity struck Assam and neighbouring states today, but there was no report of any damage. The first one (magnitude 3.1) at 10:14 am had its epicentre at Kokrajhar, while the second (4.0) was felt at 10:57 am along the Indo-Myanmar border. – PTI

Mishap claims 3

JAGIROAD, July 2: Three youths from Bhuragpur were killed near Nellie around 5:30 pm today when their motorbike rammed into the railings of a bridge on the NH-37. The deceased are Subhasish Ranghang, Rakum Bordoloi and Siba Bordoloi. – Correspondent

1 washed away

NAGAON, July 2: One Mahendra Dekaraja, a resident of Jorabari near Lanks in Hojai district, was washed away by floodwaters today. His body is yet to be recovered. – Correspondent

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Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and other dignitaries during the inauguration of the 8th India-Bangladesh Friendship Dialogue, in Guwahati on Sunday. – UB Photos

State to seek Bangla support for dredging: CM

Brahmaputra, Barak rivers

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, July 2: Stating that Assam and Bangladesh share an intrinsic relationship, Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal today said that the State government will seek the support and cooperation of the neighbouring country with regard to dredging of the Brahmaputra and Barak rivers.

Speaking during the inaugural session of the 8th India-

Bangladesh Friendship Dialogue which began here today, Sonowal said that dredging of the Brahmaputra and Barak will not only help to deal with the problem of flood, which affects both Assam and Bangladesh, but also improve the navigation facilities in the rivers, which can strengthen trade and commerce between India and its neighbour through the riverine routes.

"We need the support of Banga-

ladesh in this regard," he said, adding that he will also ask the neighbouring country to undertake dredging parts of the rivers located across the borders.

Terming Assam and the North East as a land of "potentials and possibilities", the Chief Minister said that the Assistant High Commission of Bangladesh, which was opened recently in Guwahati, will help double in five years time.

"People will not have to pay more. Leaks will be stopped. Industrialization will get a push as manufacturers will not confine themselves to particular states due to the uniformity in tax and will try to set up units across the country to cut down transportation costs. I feel the tax collection in Assam, which is around Rs 6,000 crore will double and go up to Rs 12,000 crore in five years," Sonowal said, speaking at an interactive session with youth and traders on the new taxation system.

However, in the initial couple of years, the collection might drop, but the loss in-

(See page 7)

Corruption caused heavy loss to ASTC

RITURAJ BORTHAKUR

GUWAHATI, July 2: From irregular allocation of rooms and spaces to giving undue benefit to contractors, from not following tendering procedures in different ways to illegal appointment of staff – there has been major irregularities in the Assam State Transport Corporation (ASTC) in the last several years leading to "irreparable financial losses" to the

shops and spares of the corporation were allotted to private individuals without proper assessment and any proper tendering procedure, causing severe financial losses to the

not possess any valid licence was engaged to protect the properties of the corporation and to maintain discipline and law and order. The agency was engaged without following any proper tendering procedure.

Shops and spares of the cor-

poration were allotted to pri-

ate individuals without pro-

perty assessment and any pro-

per tendering procedure, caus-

ing severe financial losses to the

(See page 7)

SC makes all preparations to go paperless

NEW DELHI, July 2: In a bid to make the Supreme Court paperless, the apex court has made preparations to implement an ambitious project.

According to the apex court registry, the project would be implemented gradually and at the first instance, only fresh matters listed in first five courts would be accessed by the judges digitally on a interactive display device. It said that all the high courts in the country had been provided with log-in IDs to upload digitised records in the prescribed format.

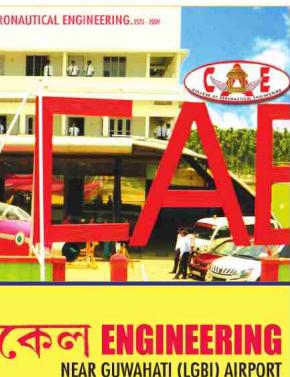
"The Supreme Court has made all the preparations to make the court paperless. As the concept of paperless court involves various technical and functional issues, it is proposed to implement the project gradually, as it would be a new method of working for the advocates and judges," the apex court registry said. – PTI

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The State power sector is getting tired. It too deserves a summer vacation.

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India increases troops in disputed Doka La

NEW DELHI, July 2: India has pumped in more troops in a "non-combat mode" to strengthen its position in an area near Sikkim, where its soldiers have been locked in a standoff with Chinese troops for almost a month now in what has been the longest such impasse between the two armies since 1962.

India brought in more troops after the destruction of two of its bunkers and "aggressive tactics" adopted by the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), sources said. In a "non-combat mode", the nozzle of a gun is placed downwards.

Giving details for the first time about the events that preceded the face-off between the two armies, the sources said the PLA on June 1 asked the Indian Army to remove the two bunkers set up in 2012

China issues map of Indian 'incursion'

at Lalten in Doka La, which falls in the vicinity of Chumbi Valley at the corner of India-Bhutan-Tibet tri-junction.

The Indian Army, which had been patrolling this area for many years, decided in 2012 that two bunkers would be positioned there as a backup option, besides providing security to the Bhutan-China border.

The Indian Army forward positions informed Sikkim-based 33 Corps headquarters in North Bengal about the Chinese warnings on the bunkers, the sources said. However, during the night of June 2, two Chinese bulldozers destroyed the bunkers, claiming that the area belonged

to China and that India or Bhutan had no right over it, the sources added.

Indian troops on the ground prevented the Chinese men and machines from doing any further damage or transgressing into the area, they said.

Additional forces from nearby brigade headquarters, located 20 km from the face-off point, were moved in on June 8 during which a scuffle led to soldiers on both sides suffering minor injuries. PLA troops were rushed in from its 141 division located in the area, prompting the Indian Army to also strengthen its position.

This is the longest stand-off between the two armies since 1962. The last one, which carried on for 21 days, occurred at Daulat Beg Oldie in the Ladakh division of Jammu and Kashmir in 2013, when (See page 7)

Tax collection to double in five years, says Himanta

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, July 2: Insisting that the consumer states in the country would benefit at the cost of the manufacturing states following implementation of the GST, State Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma today said that under the new tax regime, the tax collection in Assam would double in five years time.

Seeking to allay concerns over possible "inspector raj" under the new tax regime, Sarma said the system is IT-based and there is no scope for human interface.

(See page 7)

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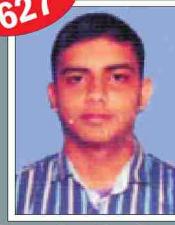
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Trump defends Twitter use after attacking media



WASHINGTON, July 2: President Donald Trump defended his aggressive use of Twitter just hours after firing off his latest volley in his escalating feud with US media.

Following an early morning Twitter tirade at CNN, NBC and a morning show host he taunted as "dumb as a rock" yesterday, the president went on the defensive, touting his electoral accomplishments as justification for his increasingly hostile rhetoric.

"The FAKE & FRAUDULENT NEWS MEDIA is working hard to convince Republicans and others I should not use social media - but remember, I won the 2016 election with interviews, speeches and social media," Trump said on Twitter.

"I had to beat #FakeNews, and did. We will continue to WIN!" he posted, before ending the day at a rally in Washington that included a similar anti-media barrage.

In recent days, the US leader has railed against major news organisations as "fake news," and launched a crude personal attack on Mika Brzezinski and Joe Scarborough, who headline the "Morning Joe" program on the left-leaning MSNBC cable network.

"Crazy Joe Scarborough and dumb as a rock Mika are not bad people, but their low rated show is dominated by their NBC bosses. Too bad!" he wrote Saturday, seemingly trying to get to the final word in his clash with the journalists.

Apparently stung by critical coverage on the show, Trump on Thursday had tweeted: "I heard poorly rated @Morning_Joe speaks badly of me (don't watch anymore)."

"Then how come low I.Q. Crazy Mika, along with Psycho Joe came to Mar-a-Lago 3 nights in a row around New Year's Eve, and insisted on joining me. She was

bleeding badly from a face-lift, I said no!"

The comments sparked a major backlash, as well as condemnation from within Trump's own Republican Party.

The TV hosts responded on Friday with an opinion piece in The Washington Post titled "Donald Trump is not well," questioning his "unmoored behavior" and fitness to serve. Trump also targeted CNN, a frequent punching bag of the president.

"I am extremely pleased to see that @CNN has finally been exposed as #FakeNews and garbage journalism. It's about time!" he tweeted, referring to an article that the cable news channel retracted, that claimed Congress was investigating links between Trump's administration and a Russian investment fund.

Three CNN journalists resigned over the article, which was posted on the network's website

on June 22 before being yanked the next day.

"I am thinking about changing the name #FakeNews CNN to #FraudNewsCNN!" Trump posted.

He also suggested in a tweet that veteran ex-Fox journalist Gretta Van Susteren, who left MSNBC this week, "was let go by her out of control bosses at @NBC & @Comcast because she refused to go along w/ 'Trump hate!'"

"My use of social media is not Presidential - it's MODERN DAY PRESIDENTIAL." Trump posted on Twitter before adding his classic tagline "Make America Great Again!" - AFP

'US Congress broadly positive towards Indo-US ties'



WASHINGTON, July 2: The US Congress is "broadly positive" towards India-US strategic and commercial partnership despite areas of "serious discord", according to a congressional report that was prepared ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to Washington.

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) report prepared for American lawmakers reviews major facets of the US-India relations. A copy of the 43-page report was made public on July 2, days after Modi's US visit on June 26-27.

In recognition of India's increasingly central role to influence world affairs and with a widely-held assumption that a stronger and prosperous democratic India is good for the US, the Congress and two successive US administrations have acted both to broaden and deepen engagement with New Delhi, the report said.

"Despite many areas of sometimes serious discord, the US Congress has remained broadly positive in its posture towards the US-India strategic and commercial partnership," the bipartisan and independent CRS said in its latest report.

"Such engagement is unprecedented after decades of cold war-era estrangement and today takes place across the spectrum of human endeavour for a better world", as described in a 2015 US-India Declaration of Friendship.

"Washington and New Delhi launched a 'strategic partnership' in 2005, along with a framework for long-term defence cooperation that now includes large-scale joint military exercises and significant defence trade," it said.

Bilateral trade and investment have increased while a relatively wealthy Indian-American community is exercising "new-found domestic political influence", and Indian nationals account for a large proportion of foreign workers on American college campuses and foreign workers in the information technology sector, it said.

Yet more engagement has meant more areas of friction in the partnership, many of which attract congressional attention, said the report authored by Alan Kronstadt and Shayerah Iliaq Akhtar.

"India's economy, while slowly reforming, continues to be a relatively closed one, with barriers to trade and investment deterring foreign business interests," it said.

According to the CRS, differences over US immigration law, especially in the area of non-immigrant work visas, remain unresolved; New Delhi views these as trade disputes. - PTI

Israel's ex-PM Ehud Olmert released from prison

JERUSALEM, July 2: Ehud Olmert, Israel's former prime minister, was released from prison today days after a parole board granted him early release from his 27-month corruption sentence, a Prison Service official said. Spokesman Assaf Librati said Olmert, 71, was whisked away by Israel's security service after his release and driven home.

He said that under the terms of his early release, Olmert for the next few months has to do volunteer work, such as helping before police twice a month and cannot give interviews to the media or leave the country.

He added that President Reuven Rivlin could relieve him of his parole restrictions.

Olmert was convicted in 2014 in a wide-ranging case that accused him of accepting bribes to promote a real-estate project years in Jerusalem and obstructing justice. The charges pertained to a period when he was mayor of Jerusalem and trade minister before he became premier in 2006.

His imprisonment ended the last major Israeli-Palestinian peace effort ushered in by the era of Benjamin Netanyahu in 2009.

Olmert was a longtime fixture in Israel's hawkish right wing when he began taking a dramatically more conciliatory line toward the Palestinians more than a decade ago.

He played a leading role in the Gaza withdrawal in 2005 and became prime minister in January 2006 after then-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon suffered a debilitating stroke. He resigned amid a corruption scandal that clouded his administration. He was later charged, convicted and imprisoned.

He led his government to the Annapolis peace conference in November 2007 launching more than a year of ambitious, but ultimately unsuccessful US-brokered peace talks. - AP



The Long March-5 Y2 rocket takes off from Wenchang Satellite Launch Center in Wenchang, Hainan province, China on Sunday. - UNI

Thousands rally against Mali referendum

BAMAKO, July 2: About 2,000 people rallied today in conflict-torn Mali against a constitutional referendum over concerns the proposed changes hand the President too much power.

During the demonstration in the capital Bamako, which organisers attracted 10,000 people, protesters held signs reading "Dont touch my Constitution", "No, means no" and "No to the referendum".

The protest, which authorities said was not authorised under the state of emergency, took place on the eve of the so-called "G5 Sahel" summit aimed at consolidating Western backing for a regional anti-jihadist force.

French President Emmanuel Macron is due to fly in Sunday for the summit, joining leaders from the "G5 Sahel" countries just south of the Sahara - Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.

Wearing red caps and t-shirts, many protesters also held up red cards as a symbol of their opposition.

"We came once again to call for the withdrawal of the referendum," former minister Sy Kadiatu Sow, known as the "Iron Lady" of Malian politics, told AFP.

Sow is part of the "Don't touch my constitution" group, which wants to see the referendum retracted and a national consultation held to rewrite it.

"It is more urgent to liberate the



Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita (L) welcomes French President Emmanuel Macron before a meeting in Bamako, Mali on Sunday. - UNI

High-ranking opposition figures, including former prime ministers Modibo Sidibé and Soumana Sacko, and local unions also took part in the peaceful demonstration, which happened without incident or the presence of police forces. - AFP

country than to organise a referendum," he said.

The referendum, which was due to be held on July 9 but has since been delayed because of fierce opposition, would enshrine elements of a 2015 peace deal in the charter and establish a senate in parliament.

Tuareg-led rebels led an uprising in 2012 that was hijacked by jihadists, throwing Mali into chaos and triggering a UN-French military intervention the following year.

The rebels later signed the peace deal but the jihadists did not - and are still causing havoc.

The referendum is opposed by those who say it gives President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita excessive powers and claim that a vote cannot be held safely in the troubled north, which remains wracked by jihadist violence and a near absence of state authority.

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"It is more urgent to liberate the

SC rejects Zia's plea to re-investigate graft case

DHAKA, July 2: In a setback to former Bangladesh prime minister Khaleda Zia, the Supreme Court today upheld a High Court judgement rejecting her plea for a re-investigation into a graft case against her.

With the apex court's order, all the obstacles have been removed to continue a trial in a lower court against Zia.

71, the chairperson of the Opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which does not have representation in Parliament after boycotting the 2014 general elections.

Chief Justice Sarendra Kumar Sinha-led four-member bench of the Divisional Bench upheld the High Court's order rejecting the petition filed by the two-time former prime minister, The Daily Star reported.

Zia, through her lawyer AJ Mohammad Ali - a former attorney general - had sought the Supreme Court's order for a re-investigation into a portion of the Zia Orphanage graft case against her, the report said.

Now, there is no legal bar for the lower court to continue the trial proceedings of the graft case against Zia

graft case against her. Anti-Corruption Commission's lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan said.

The orphanage case is under trial at the Dhaka Special Judges Court.

In March, the High Court had rejected Zia's petition seeking its order for a fresh probe into a portion of the Zia Orphanage corruption case against her.

In the petition, which focused on the source of the money in the orphanage fund, she requested the High Court to stay the trial proceedings of the case and to issue a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain why the lower court's rejection order should not be declared illegal.

Zia claimed that the charge sheet said the money in the trust came from Saudi Arabia, insisting in her plea that it actually came from Kuwait.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) had filed the case in 2008 accusing Zia, her older son Tarique Rahman and four others for misappropriating over 2.10 crore taka (USD 248,154) that was received as grants for orphans of the Zia Orphanage Trust via a foreign bank. - PTI

Nearly 100 Indian sailors stranded in UAE waters: report

DUBAI, July 2: About 100 Indian sailors aboard 22 ships have been stranded in UAE waters and have sought the help of the Indian Consulate General in Dubai, according to a media report. Citing the Indian Consulate General of Dubai, Vipul, the Gulf News said that the number of distress calls from Indian sailors stranded in UAE waters had hit this peak summer.

"We are currently dealing with cases of 22 ships. There are 97 Indians abroad these vessels," the diplomat said.

Though the exact number of crew members belonging to other nationalities is not available with the Indian Consulate, the mission said there are sailors from Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Myanmar and Pakistan also on these ships.

"Outstanding salary, non-availability of food, fresh water, fuel, harsh living conditions and no sign-off after the contract period are the major concerns voiced by the sailors," the mission said in reply to questions by the paper.

Majority of the sailors have complained about not being paid by their employers for several months. They have also sought to sign off and fly home after receiving payment of their pending dues, the paper said.

The consulate said it had been contacting the owners and agents for settlement of the dues, provision of food, water and fuel, request for sign off, it added. - PTI



Too many pictures hinder kid's word learning

LONDON, July 2: Having more than one illustration per page in children's books hinders vocabulary learning among toddlers, a study has found.

While publishers look to produce ever more colourful and exciting texts to entice buyers, University of Sussex in UK have shown that too many illustrations on a page results in poorer word learning among preschoolers.

The findings present a simple solution to parents and nursery teachers for some of the challenges of preschool education and could

help in the development of learning materials for young children.

"Luckily, children like hearing stories and adults like reading them to children. But children who are too young to read themselves don't know where to look because they are not following the text. This has a dramatic impact on how well they learn new words from stories," said Zoë Flack, doctoral researcher at University of Sussex.

The researchers read storybooks to three-year-olds with one illustration at a time or with two illustrations at a time, with illustrations introducing the child to new objects that were named on the page.

They found that children who were read stories with only one illustration at a time learned twice as many words as children who were read stories with

two or more illustrations.

In a follow-up experiment, researchers added a simple hand swipe gesture to guide the children to look at the correct illustration before the page was read to them. They found this gesture was effective in helping children to learn words when they saw two illustrations across the page.

"This suggests that simply guiding children's attention to the correct page helps them focus on the right illustrations, and this in turn might help them concentrate on the new words," Flack said.

"Our findings fit well with Cognitive Load Theory, which suggests that learning rates are affected by how complicated a task is," she said.

"In this case, by giving children less information at once, or guiding them to the correct information, we can help children learn more words," she added.

"Other studies have shown that

adding 'bells and whistles' to storybooks like flaps to lift and anthropomorphic animals decreases learning," said Jessica Horst, from the University of Sussex.

"But this is the first study to examine how decreasing the number of illustrations increases children's word learning from storybooks," said Horst.

"This study also has important implications for the e-Book industry. Studies on the usefulness of teaching vocabulary from e-Books are mixed, but our study suggests one explanation is that many studies with e-Books are only presenting one illustration at a time," she added.

The research was published in the journal *Infant and Child Development*.

- PTI

MESSAGE FOR TODAY

Thoughts lead on to purposes; purposes go forth in action; actions form habits; habits decide character; and character fixes our destiny.

— TYRON EDWARDS

The Assam Tribune

Uncalled-for move

The vernacular vs English debate that has been there for quite a while with middle-class families increasingly opting for English-medium education for their wards has taken a new twist with the State Government apparently taking a biased stand on the matter. While it is foolhardy to ignore the importance of English in today's world, any uncalled-for infatuation with English to the extent of undermining or marginalizing the mother tongue cannot be acceptable. This will be even more unfortunate and disturbing when the State Government which is mandated with the onerous responsibility of patronizing and promoting vernacular school education takes a stand that educationists believe will harm the cause of mother tongue education. At the centre of the controversy is the proposed setting up of the Adarsha Vidyalayas (Model Schools) – initially a Central Government project but now delinked from Central support and transferred to States/UTs. There is nothing objectionable per se about Central Government-run English-medium school education, as we have been having Central schools and Navodaya Vidyalayas in all the States of the country. Things, however, look out of place when the State Government, instead of treating the pressing concern of the constant downward slide of the schools run by it goes overboard to accommodate the new model schools.

What has caused even a bigger consternation is the criteria laid down for recruitment of teachers for these schools that mandate the candidates to be from an English-medium background. Across English-medium schools in the State there are many competent and qualified teachers hailing from vernacular background, testifying to the fact that medium is never a hindrance when it comes to teaching provided one has the attributes that go into the making of an ideal teacher. Therefore, even if there are Central guidelines about recruitment procedures for such schools, the State Government would have done well to oppose that with reason rather than blindly toeing its lines in a bid to placate the Central leadership – a habit perfected by our spineless politicians who lack the guts to uphold a cause intrinsically linked to the State's welfare for the fear of displeasing their so-called high command. Given that the State Government is under an obligation to improve the condition of government schools and enable them to compete with their English-medium counterparts on equal terms, the unwarranted obsession with English model schools raises legitimate concerns about its sincerity in bailing out the neglected government schools. Indeed, this should be the area of the Government's single-minded focus. It would also do well to take a leaf out of the functioning of government schools in Delhi where the Government has done a splendid job. The need for the Government is to address the lacunae – attributable to its own apathy and the corruption-ridden recruitment process for almost three decades – plaguing its schools.

EC concerns

If India has attained credibility as a democracy amongst the international community, much of the credit must be given to that important institution, the Election Commission. Though there had been attempts in the past by political entities to power to try and restructure the Commission to their advantage, they have not succeeded and the EC has retained its impartial character. This is why observations made by the Commission must be taken with utmost earnestness both by the Centre and State governments, as also by political parties and the people of India. One such observation has been the absolute rejection by the Commission of suggestions mooted by certain quarters to make voting compulsory. Such an asinine suggestion ignores the reality that democracy, which involves individual choice, and compulsion imposed by the State, contradict each other. Moreover, the Chief Election Commissioner Nasim Zaidi has rightly pointed out, in a highly populated country like India it is not feasible to enforce compulsory voting. In the 2014 general elections, for instance, of the 850 million people eligible to vote, only 550 million had voted. If a law mandating compulsory voting was to be implemented, action would have to be taken against 300 million people, which is clearly impossible! He too has rightly asserted that the best manner of increasing voting is to educate the people and increase awareness among voters.

It may be noted that the Commission had introduced measures such as Systematic Voter Education Electoral Participation Programme as well as provision for 'none of the above' option, the positive outcomes of which have been reflected in the gradual increase of voter participation in elections. Another aspect touched upon by the EC is its request to the Centre to enact laws arming it with powers to initiate contempt proceedings against political parties which level allegations against it without offering proof. Without such powers the sole recourse of the EC is to approach the Judiciary with charges of defamation against the accusers, which is a slow process that takes years to secure a verdict. The EC does not want to move the courts as a complainant and can come down swiftly on recalcitrant political parties if they falsely accuse it of bias. There have been numerous cases when losing political parties blare out to the media about 'electoral malpractices', thereby casting aspersions on a helpless Election Commission without offering proof. The recent allegations regarding the manipulation of Electronic Voting Machines can be cited as an example. Though this charge of tampering was adroitly rebutted by the Commission through the issue of a 'challenge', thereby rubbing the faces of the Opposition parties in the mud, there are other instances when defamers got away with it. Empowerment of the EC as requested would in future make political parties think twice before levelling baseless charges.

Is US-India bonhomie in the making?

■ Sazzad Hussain

The recent visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the US is interpreted as a very successful one and has given the impression that the bilateral relations has never been so close and warm. The hugs between Modi and President Donald Trump at the White House reflected a chemistry between the two elected leaders of world's two most strong democracies – a tinge characteristic of Indo-US relations since the beginning. In the realm of international politics, the change of guard in the highest offices of one nation rarely makes significant changes. Prime Minister Narendra Modi made visit to US four times earlier before this one – even a bilateral one meeting President Obama at the White House in 2014 and three more for multilateral engagements. This time the visit has been termed a highly successful one with a joint statement which is hailed as beyond expected. However, this apparent bonhomie between the two great nations deserves careful scrutiny as the world is experiencing a very crucial phase of relationships amidst unprecedented regional quagmire and instability.

The chemistry that appeared between Modi and Trump was also seen between Nehru and Kennedy (1963) in the Rose Garden of White House and between Indira Gandhi and Ronald Reagan (1983) and Rajeev Gandhi and Reagan (1985). Particularly, Indira and Rajeev's interactions with Reagan should be taken into account as the world at that time was in the height of the Cold War and India taking a firm stand in support of anti-apartheid South Af-

rica, liberation for Palestine and Namibia and for Communist Afghanistan, Cuba and Nicaragua – all detested by Washington. It was a time when there was no Jihad in Kashmir but Khalistan terror for a stopover in Islamabad from India despite his strong opposition to the coup led by the former in late 1999. Even George W Bush, the only Republican President to visit India after Richard Nixon (1969) and President Obama stopped in Islamabad after visiting India in 2006 and 2010

ministration, albeit condemned the incident, declined to accept New Delhi's accusation that it was a Pak-sponsored strike. Clinton even went ahead to meet Gen Musharraf for a stopover in Islamabad from India despite his strong opposition to the coup led by the former in late 1999. Even George W Bush, the only Republican President to visit India after Richard Nixon (1969) and President Obama stopped in Islamabad after visiting India in 2006 and 2010

Now the apprehension is that whether India has to buy the US idea on Islamist terror in response to the Salahuddin affair. America, over the years, has shown duplicity concerning Islamist terror. For them Hezbollah and Hamas, fighting Israel in Lebanon and in Gaza are same as the al-Qaeda and ISIL.

Now the apprehension is that whether India has to buy the US idea on Islamist terror in response to the Salahuddin affair. America, over the years, has shown duplicity concerning Islamist terror. For them Hezbollah and Hamas, fighting Israel in Lebanon and in Gaza are same as the al-Qaeda and ISIL.

respectively. This is what the cardinal position of America on Pakistan despite the concerns of India. Thus the Indo-US relations *vis-a-vis* Pakistan are a complicated one and the designation of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen supreme Sayed Salaluddin by the State Department must be looked from this spectrum. People remember Salaluddin endorsing the 9/11 attacks on camera when television channels asked for his reaction. But America has taken more than a decade to declare him a global terrorist.

interesting to see how India would align itself after this American move as the joint declaration by Modi and Trump has called for wiping out of radical Islamist forces. America sees only Shiite Iran and Hezbollah and their Sunni partner Hamas as elements of radical Islam and is selective in doing the same on the Sunni side led by oil rich Gulf monarchies. For New Delhi, there has been a balancing policy for the Middle-east with historical ties with Iran, solidarity with the Palestinian struggle and a support for secular regimes in the South Asia.

Incompetent approach of education system

■ Jasbir Dhillon

There is a misconception about graduation that a degree automatically entitles a student to a six-figure salary, with full benefits, a one-month paid vacation to a company retreat, 20 floating holidays, a corner office, and a parking spot in front of the doors with his name on it. Now the reality check: the days when all we needed was a college degree to get a job are long gone, and deep down inside, we know it's true. We were all told the same lie in the secondary school. "Get into a good university; get a degree, and your magic high-paying job will fall squarely into your lap." Now, the employer of the multinational organizations, pointing fingers at the large number of graduates of Indian origin, rarely feel prepared to think entrepreneurial or otherwise. These graduates from Indian universities struggle in the postgraduate courses because of the complete disconnect between their theoretical undergraduate education and its application to practice. When we go back and try to trace the history of Indian education, we find that in most of cases, the gov-

erning influence of the schools and colleges was the medium of instruction. English has a status of an ascertained language here. As we go back to the history of imparting knowledge to students, we see that fostering Vedic and Gurukul system to impart education got over with the time and a new policy in education was sought by the experts. Raja Ram Mohan Roy endeavoured hard to promote English language instruction in India. Roy called for establishing a college devoted to European learning, whereas the Sanskrit college in Calcutta in 1823 gave a pure form of 'Indianized' education. Gokhale, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Gandhi, among others, were the exponent of it. Many Education Commissions were formed to cater to the demands of the new era, but they all failed. They said, if one has to learn English language, he or she would have to do it from the Standard I only and that is too from the English language teachers only.

A partial learning and tutoring system gave birth to the billion-dollar flourishing industry called 'private tuition' in India. It has been found that some even for years.

Thus it is quite important for the people to get a digital pension disbursement system with efficient, easily accessible procedures for all the State Government employees. Proper usage of the online system would bail out the cases without delay. If required, the employees should be given formal training for the purpose, which would ensure an easy-to-use online system and safe as well as speedy disbursement after retirement. Yours etc., BIBHASH DEVA NATH, Gauhati University.

Farmers' income

Sir – Apropos the editorial 'Farmers' income' (AT, June 29), the adoption of a pragmatic approach is necessary by both the State and the Central governments to raise the farmers' income through boosting agriculture and its allied sectors like veterinary, fisheries, etc. It is a bold step on the part of the State Government to take up the project 'Samagra Gramya Umanay Yojna' which aims at doubling the agricultural production within the next five years. Of course this is not an easy

task. In this regard, the most vital approach is to ensure an effective direct communication between the agricultural field functionary and the general farmers in a time-bound schedule. Here, one may refer to the scenario of agriculture around the 70s and 80s when the World Bank-financed training and visit programme, popularly known as the Benor programme, was implemented maintaining a strict schedule in Assam; it is unfortunate that the programme failed due to some reasons. The Government may again give a second thought to revive and implement the same after removing the previous lacuna which led to the failure of the programme. Yours etc., BHUPEN DUTTA, Bidyapur, Narbari.

Fair conduct of exams

Sir – The recent development in probing the irregularities and the cash-for-job scam of the APSC has given a ray of hope for the aspirants of the civil services in the State. Everyone is looking ahead for fair conduct of various examinations and recruitment thereafter under the APSC. However, there are some issues

which need special attention. It has been observed that the invigilators engaged in the examination hall usually do not maintain a fair environment which hampers some of the candidates. For example, discussion among the candidates should not be allowed in any form inside the examination hall. There should be strict surveillance mechanism such as CCTV in the examination centres, depots a strict schedule in Assam; it is unfortunate that the programme failed due to some reasons. The Government may again give a second thought to revive and implement the same after removing the previous lacuna which led to the failure of the programme. Yours etc., SOME ASPIRANTS, Dhemaji.

Tree plantation

Sir – The proposed action plan of tree plantation on both sides of the four-lane National Highways is a welcome move. In converting the old two-lane roads to four-lane ones, we have already lost a huge

cover of very valuable trees all along the sides of the highways. Since it takes several years for a tree sapling planted to attain its full grown stage, it is very important for the plantation agencies to select the tree species beforehand for the purpose. While implementing the action plan, there is a need to make people aware and responsible for protecting and maintaining the planted saplings in their surroundings till they attain the full-grown stage. The villagers residing alongside the roads are probably the 'best foresters' and can be considered as important stakeholders in the process for an established plantation programme. The authority will be immensely benefited and successful in this effort by involving them in the work. Trees like *Simila, Sonara, Ajan, Krishnachura, Radhachura, Nahor, Kanchan* and many other flowering tree species should be selected for the plantation programme. Yours etc., UDAI BARUAH, Teok.

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.

Letters to the EDITOR

Sir – This refers to your news item 'Sonowal for prompt disbursement after retirement' (AT, June 29). Of late the Chief Minister has put into the willingness of the State Government to dissolve the pension-related cases of the State Government employees in a timely manner, which is highly gratifying. The previous State Government in its 15-year-long rule totally failed to improve its pension disbursement system besides failing to devise efficient digital methods for the same. Subsequently after their retirement, coming to Guwahati almost every day for quick disbursement vexed the employees, many of whom included heart patients and specially-abled persons. The employees hailing from the remote areas and with low income were perhaps impinged the most since they had to bear huge travel fares along with other expenses. However, in the aftermath of the scanty work culture of the departments, the cases remained

Online pension disbursement system

pending, some even for years.

Thus it is quite important for the people to get a digital pension disbursement system with efficient, easily accessible procedures for all the State Government employees. Proper usage of the online system would bail out the cases without delay. If required, the employees should be given formal training for the purpose, which would ensure an easy-to-use online system and safe as well as speedy disbursement after retirement. Yours etc., BIBHASH DEVA NATH, Gauhati University.

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task. In this regard, the most vital approach is to ensure an effective direct communication between the agricultural field functionary and the general farmers in a time-bound schedule. Here, one may refer to the scenario of agriculture around the 70s and 80s when the World Bank-financed training and visit programme, popularly known as the Benor programme, was implemented maintaining a strict schedule in Assam; it is unfortunate that the programme failed due to some reasons. The Government may again give a second thought to revive and implement the same after removing the previous lacuna which led to the failure of the programme. Yours etc., SOME ASPIRANTS, Dhemaji.

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Students participating in a drawing competition held at Vidya Mandir School, Narangi, in Guwahati on Sunday. - UB Photos

Crew members get competency certificates

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, July 2: For the first time, the State's Inland Water Transport Department today conducted a written examination for providing competency certificates to crew members under various categories.

Some 100 candidates from various States appeared for the examination.

It may be mentioned that there is a crew training institute in a floating vessel under the Inland Water Transport, Assam.

Previously, no written examination was conducted for providing these important certificates to the basis of which candidates can get appointed in various jobs of the BSE ITBP, Indian Navy, Coast Guard and IWT departments of other States. The certificates are also helpful for promotion. The certificates were issued in a very casual manner earlier, without holding any written examination.

In fact, there have been reports that dalsos too had a role in providing these certificates.

"To streamline the entire

process and to examine the performance of the candidates, for the first time a written examination was conducted under a prescribed syllabus," IWT director Bharat Bhushan Dev Choudhury said.

He said that these certificates are very important from the perspective of safety and smooth operation of inland water vessels. The examination was held at the IWT headquarters here. The results were declared today and the certificates will be issued tomorrow.

The examinations were

Choudhury said that from now onwards, the written examination will be held regularly.

Meanwhile, the director informed that plans are afoot to set up a national level crew training institute in the State. It will be funded by the Centre and the State government has been asked to provide a land for it.

With the government laying

thrust on developing the inland waterways, there is likely to be a demand for more crew members and staff associated with the sector.

"The drivers themselves

drove the vehicles to the office of the District Transport Officer and nobody complained of any physical assault. No one has filed any complaint. We cannot confirm any assault," the official said. - PTI

Heart patient from B'desh successfully operated upon

STAFF REPORTER

Cancer Hospital, Silchar; Imchawati Kichu, Nagaon; Jadav Payeng, Jorhat; Pabitra Rabha, Tengnoupal; Bishnu Khargharia, film actor Moran; Lalmi Narzary, sports personality, Kokrajhar; along with two entrepreneurs Anil Mutha, Tripura and Abhijit Barooah, Guwahati.

The felicitation was followed by a programme of donation where the corporate social responsibility to four NGOs namely Mission Sama, Guwahati Lion's Eye Hospital, International Vedanta Society of Guwahati and Arunachal Vikas Parishad from Itanagar. The cultural night ended with fascinating performance by singer Zubilee, besides other enthralling performances by other groups.

The celebrations began with the reciting of pledge for bank employees followed by the art competition among the wards of the employees in the morning at its local head office on the day. Later in the evening, a function was organised where the bank felicitated seven eminent personalities – Panchali Bhattacharjee, Tripura; Dr Ravi Kamman, Cachar

senior officials of the bank and government.

"The SBI's role is exemplary. We appreciate the SBI for its dedication in financial inclusion, economic growth of the region," Patawary said in his speech.

He also urged the SBI to contribute in strengthening the rural economy of the State.

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SBI observes foundation day

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, July 2: Several programmes were organised to mark the foundation day of State Bank of India on Saturday.

The State Bank of India traces its origin from the founding of the Bank of Calcutta in 1806, making it the oldest commercial bank in the Indian subcontinent. Subsequently, Bank of Madras merged with other Presidency Banks in British India, Bank of Calcutta and Bank of Bombay to form Imperial Bank of India, which in turn became State Bank of India in 1955.

On the occasion, two eminent personalities from Northeast – gymnast Deepa Karmakar and mountaineer Anshu Jamseja – were

felicitated by SBI Chairman Arundhati Bhattacharjee in presence of other dignitaries at the SBI's Corporate Office, Mumbai, an official release said here.

The bank's North Eastern Circle also celebrated its foundation day known as 'Bank Day' by organising an art competition for children, felicitation of eminent personalities, entrepreneurs and giving donations to four NGOs.

The celebrations concluded with a fascinating cultural night at Srimanta Sankaradeva International Auditorium at Panbari in Guwahati in presence of State Industry Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary. The programme was attended by PVSLN Murty, Chief General Manager, and

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Importance of keeping Guwahati clean

JYOTIRMOKU PURKAYASTHA

After the BJP Government came to power at the Centre, Prime Minister Narendra Modi stressed the need of cleanliness in the country. Huge amounts of funds are being used for the cause of environmental cleanliness. Both the Union and Assam governments are spending a lot of money on publicity to make the public aware of the need to keep the environment clean. Some improvements have been noticed in this respect, but this development is not up to the mark yet. The campaign needs more concerted action on the part of the local authorities and the Government of Assam and the public in general.

The present garbage disposal system undertaken by the Guwahati Municipal Corporation is unhygienic as open garbage bins are placed on the roadside (these are not sufficient too). When garbage from households is thrown into the bins, street scavengers, stray dogs and crows rummage through the piles of litter. Some hawkers collect used plastic bags from the bins to recycle them for the manufacture of black carry-bags commonly used by fish and meat vendors. These black polythene bags pose a health hazard.

I had been to the US on five occasions to visit my son who resides near Los Angeles in the California State. During my stay, I observed how the



local authorities in that country provide infrastructural facilities for garbage disposal, water supply, power, roads, etc. In every household, there are three covered drums on wheels – black, blue and green. Vegetable and food waste is put inside the black drum. Plastic waste, metal scrap, glass items, paper, etc., are kept in the blue drum. Withered leaves, grass and twigs after gardening/scavenging are disposed of in the green drum. Most house owners engage gardeners or scavengers who come once every week. On a particular week day (Tuesday in the locality where I stayed), all residents keep the three plastic drums on the main street in front of their respective houses. On the following day, large covered vehicles with the

same colours as the drums take away the garbage from each of the drums. There is practically no littering.

I came to know that the food and vegetable waste is burnt to generate green energy. Paper, plastics, glass, metals, etc., are recycled for a variety of new items. Similarly, tree leaves, grass, etc., get decomposed on landfills as a renewable energy source. After the garbage is removed, the residents keep all their drums inside their home boundaries.

On Thursdays in the locality where I stayed, no residents are allowed to park their vehicles on the side of the main street as a big vehicle sweeps the road with an automatic machine. The people of that country are law-

abiding and nobody throws any trash on the streets.

Infrastructure facilities in every city of the USA are provided by the local authorities comprising the city mayor and councillors. The mayor enjoys immense power as he looks after the welfare of the residents in his city. Amenities available in the US cannot be compared with those available in Guwahati. Though the local authorities in Guwahati have also made arrangements for collecting garbage from every household, the service is mostly erratic. When the garbage collectors arrive after two or three days, the residents start throwing the garbage into the drains, leading to stench and clogging of drains.

I may cite the example of Barsapara in west Guwahati where a picturesque cricket stadium has come up and a big educational institution is also located. The population of the area will not be less than 10,000. Two drains were constructed in the area in 2005 and 2007, but both have been clogged due to dumping of garbage. During heavy showers, the Lokhra Road is submerged and the local residents suffer a lot.

The appropriate authorities should organise meetings with local NGOs and residents to spread the message of cleanliness. The Guwahati Municipal Corporation should also work on a better system of garbage disposal so that the city remains neat and clean.

Cow vigilantes stop vehicles ferrying cattle near city

GUWAHATI, July 2: A group of cow vigilantes today stopped three vehicles transporting cattle and allegedly beat the drivers and helpers on the outskirts of Guwahati despite the victims having 'valid papers' to ferry the animals.

According to a police official, a truck and two tempo were carrying the cattle near the Sonapuri area near Guwahati.

"We got the information that the members of the Hindu Yuva Chakra Parishad's Dimoria unit have stopped three vehicles transporting cattle. We dispatched a police team which took control of the vehicles and the persons," the official told PTI over phone.

The official said the transporters had proper challans for transporting the cattle.

The truck was coming from Tinsukia in Upper Assam while the two tempo returned from the Jagiroad market, he said.

"On checking, we found that there were some irregularities in the construction of the multi-level car parking at Palmonbazar, which resulted in a loss of Rs 1.28 crore to the corporation."

It was also stated in the document that a former managing director of the corporation had engaged around 35 staff after his retirement, but on

144 staff of Social Welfare Dept working without pay for 17 months

STAFF REPORTER

ants, graduate teachers, fine arts instructors, knitting and embroidery instructors, TCPC managers, TCPC instructors, skill helpers, etc, have not been getting their salaries ever since they were appointed," the association said in a statement.

The association added that the reason cited by the departmental authorities was that the salary of the employees had not yet received departmental approval, which was shock-

ing to say the least. "We have been told that the previous Government had not accorded departmental approval while recruiting the employees. Now it is learnt that the file has been forwarded to the Government for Cabinet approval," it said.

The employees had applied for the posts under the Directorate of Social Welfare against advertisement No DSW (ICDS) G/57/2012-88-A, dated 24th February, 2015.

Corruption caused heavy ...



(Contd from page 1) corporation. In one case, the rent of one space was abnormally reduced from Rs 90,000 to Rs 10,000. Further, an amount of Rs 60 lakh was spent on outsourcing the upkeep and maintenance to a firm, but the intended benefits were not achieved. This had even come under the scanner of the auditors.

During the year 2010-11, an "undue benefit" of Rs 30 lakh was given to a bus body fabricator contractor by allowing higher prices against the tender notice, the report said.

The document also states about irregularities in the construction of the multi-level car parking at Palmonbazar, which resulted in a loss of Rs 1.28 crore to the corporation.

It was also stated in the document that a former managing director of the corporation had engaged around 35 staff after his retirement, but on

records it was shown that the recruitment was done a day before his retirement. "It seems that tests, process and need assessment were not done properly and government money was spent without any logic," it states.

According to the document, there are possibilities of under-reporting of more financial and other irregularities if a vigilance inquiry is ordered.

The current revenue generation of the transport corporation is around Rs 9-10 crore, while its expenditure is around Rs 14 crore per month. The government provides an assistance of Rs 2.5 crore to the ASTC that runs over 700 buses in the State.

Tax collection to ...

(Contd from page 1) people that consumers will benefit under the new tax regime. "Earlier, traders used to take benefit of the variable tax systems in the country. This will stop now," he said.

On fixing of the exemption threshold at Rs 10 lakh in the Northeast against Rs 20 lakh in other states, the minister said, "When the traders are collecting the tax from the people, why will the government not tax them? In any case, we have raised the limit from Rs 6 lakh under VAT to Rs 10 lakh under GST. Rs 20 lakh threshold would be a luxury for a state like Assam."

Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said the Goods and Services Tax (GST) is a historic tax reform which will lead to inclusive growth in the country. He also informed that nodal officers will be engaged at the circle level for GST registration and awareness generation activities in the State.

State Tax Commissioner Anurag Goel told *The Assam Tribune* on the sidelines that the government is considering the exemption in the form of reimbursement for traditional handicraft items like *gamosa* in the State.

India increases troops ...

(Contd from page 1) Chinese troops entered 30 km into Indian territory till the Demchung Plains and claimed it to be a part of its Xinjiang province. They were, however, pushed back.

In the map, released by the Chinese Foreign Ministry, a blue arrow with markings in Chinese points Indian troops alleged transgressions into the area to prevent the PLA troops from building a strategic road.

The map shows Dokla as part of China's territory. The area where the Indian troops are stationed was placed under the Indian Army and the ITBP, which is the border guarding force and has a camp 15 km from the international border.

The map is in addition to two

photographs released on Thursday purportedly showing Indian troops on the Chinese side of the border.

During a media briefing in Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang displayed the photographs of the alleged Indian "incursion" into the area. Later, the ministry uploaded them on its website.

A stand-off erupted between the two militaries after the Indian Army blocked construction of a road by China in the Doklam area. Dokla is the Indian name for the region which Bhutan recognises as Doklam, while China claims it to be part of its Donglang region.

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photographs released on Thursday purportedly showing Indian troops on the Chinese side of the border.

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"But that must happen in conjunction with development of the North East. Our government's primary goal is development of the North East. We need to sustain the momentum and take it to even higher levels," Akbar said.

In his speech, Bangladesh State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam said that the bilateral relation between the two countries is at its best in decades.

"But there still remains some areas where we need to travel further," he said, adding that issues like river water sharing and market access to Bangladeshi products in India are among them.

State to seek Bangla ...

The Chief Minister added that the India-Bangladesh land swap deal has started a new era in the bilateral relations between the two nations and removed a major irritant.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister of State for External Affairs MJ Akbar said that both the Indian and the Bangladeshi governments have to move beyond the past and in this regard both sides have shown capability and maturity.

"Governments and people are not interested in timidity. We want to explore the brave new world," he said.

Akbar said that this part of the world had a troubled history and there have been political and demographic turmoils, but added that there is a need to move forward.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has laid out a map for the future with the Act East Policy and East begins with West Bengal, Bangladesh and the North East. Unless we bring prosperity to the North East we will not be able to

Sivasagar hotel staff arrested for voyeurism



ANN Service

SIVASAGAR, July 2: In a development having disturbing implications for the safety and privacy of hotel occupants, an employee of Hotel Shiva Palace here was arrested and the manager booked for interrogation on June 27 on the charge of snooping and attempting to video-graph a lady occupant in her bathroom from an adjacent room of the hotel. The employee of the hotel has been identified as Minu Nath of Nenumuri.

The lady occupant in Room No. 308, who happens to be a professor from a college in Guwahati, and had checked into the hotel with her mother and other family members on the night of June 24, noticed the intruder watching her secretly in the bathroom from an open window above and video-recording her.

She raised an alarm and the matter was immediately informed to the hotel manager, who, however, sought to trivialise it by saying that no such thing was possible in the hotel and that it was her illusion. The manager even refused to open the adjacent room from where the intruder was watching the lady, saying that the room was locked as the occupant was out at that time.

The aggrieved professor and her family members then left the hotel at around 11 pm and lodged an FIR (Case No. 432/17 U's 354-C, 504, 468 & 34-IPC) with Sivasagar Police. On inquiry, police found that the person from Tezpur who had occupied the adjacent room (No. 310) in the hotel had actually left the room in the morning the same day (June 24) and hence it had to be some other person - likely to be some hotel staff - snooping into the lady occupant's bathroom.

When the police checked the CCTV footage, it became apparent that a hotel staff was the actual culprit, and the interrogation of the manager and a few staff members revealed the truth. Shockingly, it was also found out that the manager manipulated the documents to show that the person from Tezpur was staying in the room on that eventful night even though he had actually left in the morning.

The aggrieved professor said it was a serious case of breach of privacy of an unsuspecting occupant by the hotel management, which was also a case of criminal conspiracy.

"It's shocking that a bathroom of a room in a hotel can be viewed from a nearby room. This is not a one-off incident. There has to be some connivance of the hotel management and even the owner. Apparently, a sinister racket has been at work. This needs to be probed and the guilty punished," she said.

Sivasagar Deputy Superintendent of Police Prafulla Sonowal told ANN Service that the arrested employee has been forwarded to Sivasagar jail and investigation into the technical matters of the sensitive case was on. Police would take stern action against anyone found to be guilty in this regard, the DSP assured.

Appeal to leave behind a greener Earth for progeny

GUWAHATI, July 2: Along with the rest of the country, the 68th Van Mahotsav got under way in the State too.

Reports filed by our correspondents are still trickling in, as hereunder:

In Nagaland: Attending the inaugural function of the 68th Van Mahotsav week at Kalabhor yesterday, Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal called upon the people to help build a pollution-free society for the future of humanity, besides all living beings.

Human beings can hope to live in this world only so long as there are plants, trees and animals, he forewarned. Sagas and saints of yore too emphasised on planting of trees in order to sustain life on Earth besides adding lungs to the society and making the world greener and more liveable.

The collective effort, therefore, should be to leave behind a greener Earth, he reasoned.

Among others, prominent personalities who attended the official function included ministers Atul Bora, Keshab Mahanta and Pramila Rauni Brahman, besides a number of higher officials of the Forest Department and civil administration. To mark the occasion, 32,000 sap-

lings were planted along the roadside from Kalabhor to Nungmigarh.

In Mangaldoi: The Deputy Commissioner of Darrang appealed to all the families of the district to plant at least one sapling and take responsibility for its proper growth and upkeep, on the occasion of the week-long Van Mahotsav-2017.

He formally inaugurated Van Mahotsav by planting an Ezaar sapling on the premises of Paschini Mangaldoi Kristi Bileash Kendra at Bheleghat in the presence of Mangaldoi MLA Gururaj Das, Pratap Bordoloi, Chairman of Mangaldoi Municipal Board, Manimati Gogoi, DIPRO of Darrang and distinguished local citizens and office-bearers of several leading socio-cultural organisations.

The Deputy Commissioner highlighted the observation of the scientific community, on how after approximately 400 years from now, due to global warming, the earth will no longer remain conducive for mankind or living creatures to survive. Under the circumstances, we can hope to get some sort of relief from such an alarming situation only through



Students during the 68th Van Mahotsav programme at Mashalpur in Baksa, on Saturday. — UB Photos

massive plantation. Earlier, in a public meeting held at the conference hall of the Deputy Commissioner here on Friday, a detailed day-wise schedule for celebration of the week-long programme was finalised for its smooth execution.

In Kaziranga: A sapling plantation programme on both sides of National Highway-37

got under way here yesterday as part of Van Mahotsav.

Planting of saplings does not mean there will be no four-lane road in Kaziranga area starting from Kalabhor to Bokakhat, clarified Agriculture Minister Atul Bora during the sapling plantation programme at Kohora.

He said a delegation of local organisations had met him and

expressed concern over the existing condition of NH-37, which was dotted with broken stretches and crater-sized potholes in multiple areas.

The Minister assured the delegation that the horrible road condition will be improved very soon. Later, students from Rising Sun English School at Kohora and Shank-

ardev Shishu Niketan planted saplings on both sides of NH-37. Various organisations participated in the sapling plantation programme from Kalabhor to Bokakhat yesterday.

In Tangla: As part of the week-long celebration of Van Mahotsav by Bhergaon sub-divisional civil office in Udalguri district, various programmes were organised at Tangla on July 2. The celebration was inaugurated near SBI, Tangla at 10 am by DN Hazarika, SDO (Civil). Bhergaon sub-division. Saplings were planted near the MB Road and distributed among people.

Pranabjoyvi Das, principal, Arunodip Junior Science College, Tamenglong, was the distinguished guest, besides others. The civil administration team also had a session at the premises of Pranabanda Vidyamandir, Babupara where people joined the Van Mahotsav celebration.

Binoy Kumar Medhi, senior educationist and former principal of Tangla College, took part in the event as the chief guest. The Bhergaon administration will organise Van Mahotsav celebration at Khagura HS near Khoirabari tomorrow.

11 arrested in Tinsukia Excise raid

CORRESPONDENT

TINSUKIA, July 2: In a series of raids conducted by Excise Department officials in different locations of Tinsukia district on June 30, 11 persons were arrested in connection with trading of both country made liquor and Indian-made foreign liquor (IMFL). The Excise officials started the raid from the midnight of June 30.

Eighteen cases have been registered under relevant laws and rules in this connection. The raids were conducted at

different locations of Doomdooma, Saikhowa, Dihing, Digboi and Tinsukia and about 10 litres of IMFL, 50 litres of Beer and 100 litres of country made liquor, besides several hooch making bhattis, utensils, etc. were seized in the raid. The Excise officials also raided a restaurant situated along NH-37 at Tinkonia of Tinsukia town for flouting the direction of the Supreme Court by serving alcoholic drinks to its customers and seized a good quantity of IMFL of different brands.

'Sivasagar Day' observed in a befitting manner

ANN Service

SIVASAGAR, July 2: Despite inclement weather, the Sivasagar district administration observed the 'Sivasagar Day' yesterday with a day-long programme which began with a marathon race at 4:30 am from Namti Chariali to Boarding Field.

Interacting with leading citizens and students here on the occasion, Sivasagar Deputy Commissioner Narayan Melang Konwar said the district would be developed as a major tourist destination of the country through sustainable plans and programmes in the next few years

in the next few years. The Yamuna canal would be converted into a water sports complex having facilities like water scooters, speed boats and a floating restaurant with financial assistance from Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC).

L i m i t e d , Konwar added. The Deputy Commissioner further said coordination committees with members from local societies would be formed to prevent anti-social elements from obstructing construction of different development projects in the district.

On the occasion, dozens of poets recited their self-composed poems in the poets' meet held in Yuva Dal Auditorium in the afternoon. The poets' meet was participated by Prema Gogoi, Dipali Bhattacharya, Borua, Sarodi Gogoi, Ganga Mohan Mili, Haren Gogoi, Tridip Borgohain, Santanu Chetia, Bijoy

DIPRO gave away mementoes to the participants.

Several citizens and young sports persons took part in the 'Heritage Walk' around the historic Sivasagar Borphukuri organised on the occasion. In the evening, the Sivasagar deputy commissioner inaugurated the cultural function at Yuva Dal Auditorium.

On the occasion, a competition under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan was organised. In the competition, Rupjyoti SHG received the first prize, Centrum Skill Development Centre received the second prize and Abortion SHG received the third prize. Namti Sishu Surakhyam Mekipore Te Sishu Surakhyam Samity, Impulse Yoga & Gym, Pragati Nursing Home, Dikhow Poriya SHG, Brainware and Uddipon also won prizes under different categories.

Jagat Chandra Sarma: a tribute

OBITUARY Krishna Devi Khandelia

CORRESPONDENT

DHEMAMI, July 2: Krishna Devi Khandelia, a pious and popular woman among the Marwari community of Dhemami town, passed away on June 29 last at 2.02 pm at her residence here due to old-age ailments. She was 95. It may be mentioned that Krishna Devi was also the mother of Umesh Khandelia, a senior journalist from Dhemami.

Wife of Late social worker Hariram Khandelia, Krishna Devi was mainly associated with religious activities in the town. She was loved and respected by all in the locality because of her amiable nature. She leaves behind four married sons and daughters-in-law, two grandsons and several grand-daughters.

Her death was deeply mourned by many individuals and several organisations including Marwari Samaj, Dhemami.

Although writing about somebody whom we love and respect, and with whom we had close relationships seems to be an easy task, it sometimes leads us to delve deep into the realm of inner realities, ideas, convictions and history, which mould that particular person.

Life of our father Jagat Chandra Sarma was and will remain an open book. Hailing from a small village named Misamara in Upper Assam, our father having realistic as well as spiritual background had as well sense of internal, external and transcendental knowledge to lead a good life in this world.

The stories of his brilliance since his school days fascinated us all. He passed his HSC and MA examinations from Calcutta.

On this day of his Adya Shradha, it is a humble attempt to bring to light some of his contributions to our lives in particular

and the society in general so that certain values continue to act as positive spirit and inspire the young generation.

Development in a broader sense was his main concern. He was thrilled witnessing even the construction of a road. Evolution and growth of Guwahati city was one of his favourite subjects. But he was averse to corruption in public life.

As a government servant, his professional commitment was supreme and he took everything with an academic pursuit. The strong capacity of critical analysis was his greatest asset. His respect for his seniors and deep concern for younger ones was the inspiration behind his long sessions of conversation with others.

I pray for the eternal peace of his departed soul.

— Dr Purobi Sharma

SBI foundation day celebrated

CORRESPONDENT

NAGAON, July 2: To mark the 62nd foundation day of Nagaon SBI, the bank staff greeted its customers and distributed chocolates yesterday in the presence of Chief Manager Mina Bainagi and eminent social worker-cum-businessman Bharat Ch Goswami. A ceremonial cake was also cut on the occasion.

Medical-cum-vety camp by SSB held at Kokrajhar

CORRESPONDENT

KOKRAJHAR, July 2: The 64th Battalion of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) organised a medical-cum-veterinary camp at Nabi Nagar LP School at Takampru in Kokrajhar district on Friday for the welfare of the people of the

area. The programme was attended by Oinam Sova Singh, Deputy Commandant of the 64th Battalion of SSB and Dr Ankur Tripathi, Assistant Commandant (Medical), besides Dr Manas Chaudhary, Veterinary Officer of 6th Bn SSB along with other dignitaries. A sizeable section of villagers also participated in the programme.

In all, approximately 105 patients, including children and women, besides 55 livestock of nearby villages were treated and free medicines distributed among the needy patients and owners of the livestock.

He also expressed TERI-NE's keen interest in work-

ing closely with the State Department of Science and Technology and ASTEC to usher in a new phase of technological advancement and development in the years to come.

Dr SK Sinha, senior fellow and area convenor, Biotechnology, TERI-NE, discussed TERI-NE's latest initiative under India's flagship programme for achieving SDG 6 (Water and Sanitation for All)

- Swachh Bharat Mission, wherein the institute is installing bio-toilets in schools of the North-eastern States. The need of making concerted efforts in achieving those broad yet interconnected goals. He also highlighted the importance of establishing strong community partnerships for better community understandings of the needs of people and ensuring higher success in implementation of projects.

CK Das elaborated on the fact that despite the rich depository of natural resources, the North-east region lags behind in socio-economic growth in the country. He also laid stress on the need for improving the work culture and synergising the research and development activities of different institutes in order to realise the potentiality of the region.

He also expressed TERI-NE's keen interest in work-

the three aspects which comprise sustainable development - social development, economic growth and environmental sustainability. He also spoke about collaboration between TERI and ASTEC in future.

The discussion concluded with a general consensus that, SDGs-2030 cover every sphere of life, and that they are elaborate in nature and one in individual department or organisation on its own cannot attain the ultimate goal of sustainable development. Every stakeholder - public, private and community - has a role to play and it is only through concerted efforts that one can progress towards sustainability.

Stress on collaboration, use of technology for sustainable development

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, July 2: The Energy and Resources Institute, North Eastern Regional Centre (TERI-NE) organised an interactive session titled, 'Synergising Efforts Towards Achieving Sustainable Development Goals 2030' at its city campus here on Tuesday.

The event was attended by Keshab Mahanta, Minister for Science and Technology, Water Resources & IT, Dr RM Dubey, Professor and Head, Centre for Sustainable Development Goals; CK Das, member of North Eastern Council and Dr Arup Kumar Misra, Director of Assam Science

Technology and Environment Council, besides officials from various Government departments.

The discussion primarily revolved around the challenges in achieving the goal of sustainable development through the SDGs-2030 and the initiatives undertaken in different sectors towards achieving the same.

Minister Mahanta in his address emphasised the need to collaborate efforts across departments and sectors in order to maximise outcome and also stress the use of technology to promote sustainable development.

Dipankar Saharia, Director of TERI-NE, made a presentation on various efforts undertaken by TERI-NE in the last 24 years to promote sus-

tainable development in the North-east. He discussed TERI-NE's efforts to enhance livelihood of farmers in a major way by supplying quality planting material to them.

"TERI-NE believes in development of human resources and therefore promotes skill development through its different capacity-building

programmes in the fields of agriculture and rural extension services and biotechnology," he said, and mentioned TERI University's plan for opening a campus in Guwahati, which would offer several unique professional courses related to sustainability.

He also expressed TERI-NE's keen interest in work-

ing closely with the State Department of Science and Tech-

nology and ASTEC to usher in a new phase of technological advancement and development in the years to come.

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Dr Arup Misra delved into

Several areas inundated at Gohpur, Majuli

CORRESPONDENTS

BISWANATH CHARIA- LI July 2: Due to the incessant heavy rain for the last couple of days, several villages were inundated in Gohpur sub-division in Biswanath district.

The surging water of the rivers like Chatrang, Sessa, Brahmapur, Magani Kekuriani and Solengi has flooded many areas of the sub-division including six wards of Gohpur town, Madhya Chatrang, Dhemudhara, Kekuriani, Nalibarai, Balijan, Katachuk, Hatimari, Timukura, Jalkubari etc. The flood water has also damaged the properties and paddy fields of the affected people.

The dyke along the Mara Chatrang river was breached at three places leading to serious threat to Gohpur town. The increasing water level of the Solengi river is also posing threat to the dyke.

On the other hand, the surging water of the river

Borgang caused severe erosion at several places like Shantipur, Tengabasti, Darjibasti, Tinisuti and Borjorani. Meanwhile, the administration has made necessary arrangements to provide relief materials to the affected people. The personals of SDRF were also put into service.

Majuli: Due to the increasing water level of Brahmaputra, many villages and choroporis of Majuli have submerged in the floodwater.

As per the latest information received till the filling of this report, 12 villages and a few chaparis like Arjunguri, Purachapuri, Natun Chapuri, Chelekh, Bahir Chiklakal, Lohit Chapuri, Kamalabari, Ferry Ghat etc., have been affected by floodwater in the flood.

Assessment is going on regarding the damages by flood and the administration is ready to face any emergency situation, official sources said.



Children using a country boat to move to a safer area in flood-hit Majuli on Sunday. - UB Photos

Submerged CRPF camp in Majuli shifted to safer place

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

JORHAT, July 2: The CRPF camp at Garur area in Majuli island today has been shifted to a nearby safer place after the camp was submerged by floodwater following rise in water level of the Luit river and water starting to flow into the area since last midnight.

An official source of Majuli administration said the central police force personnel along with their belongings have been temporarily shifted to a hall in the vicinity as it was found to be safe for accommodation at a high land.

Water from the river has entered about 10 nearby villages in few areas of upper

Majuli and has entered paddy fields and compounds of houses of the villagers. The source said there was an apprehension that if the water level of Luit continued to rise that the houses of the villagers will be submerged by tomorrow.

Source said that the administration was keeping a close watch on the situation and is ready to undertake rescue and relief measures in case of any emergency.

Source also said that there

were enough food stocks and medicines in the island and boats of both government and private were on standby to be pressed into service. The situation is also being monitored by the Assam Disaster Man-

agement Authority, the source added.

The Majuli island, which annually is wrecked by floods several times during the rainy season, since last year has been drawing more attention from Dispur with the Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal representing the constituency.

Weekly market inaugu-

rated: Assam Minister for Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Veterinary and Urban Development Atul Bora, today inaugurated the Kalapani weekly market development project under Teok revenue circle in Jorhat district.

Mariani MLA Rupjyoti Kur-

mi, Teok MLA Renupoma Ra-

jitha and chairman of the

Dispur with the Chief Minis-

ter Sonowal were present at the

inauguration ceremony.

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CAPSULE**Hero MotoCorp lowers prices**

NEW DELHI, July 2: The country's largest two-wheeler maker Hero MotoCorp has reduced prices of its mass selling models by up to Rs 1,800 to pass on GST benefits to its customers. "The quantum of reduction ranges from Rs 400 to Rs 1,800 across all models," the company said in a statement. The actual benefit varies from State to State, depending on the pre- and post-GST rates, it added. — PTI

HUL cuts rates

NEW DELHI, July 2: FMCG major Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) has reduced the prices of some of its detergents and soaps, extending the tax benefits the company has got under the GST regime to consumers. The company has slashed the price of its detergent soap Flin Bar of 250 gm from Rs 15 to Rs 13 and increased weight of its Surf Excel bar costing Rs 10 to 105 gm from 95 gm at the same price. — PTI

Whirlpool plans

NEW DELHI, July 2: Home appliance maker Whirlpool of India is looking to invest about Rs 200 crore in the next three years on technological innovations and to increase production capacity. The company, a subsidiary of Whirlpool Corporation, is eyeing a 25 per cent market share by 2020 on the back of new product offerings like water purifier, air purifier, dishwasher and other small domestic appliances. — PTI

Apple products

NEW DELHI, July 2: Tech giant Apple has launched products like iPhone, iPad and Mac, in India from July 1, as it looks to pass on the benefits accrued from the recently rolled out GST to customers. The iPhone 7 Plus (256GB version) — the most premium device in Apple's smartphone portfolio — will be available at Rs 85,400 (Rs 6,600 cheaper). — PTI

PNB debit cards

NEW DELHI, July 2: Punjab National Bank (PNB) Maestro debit cards will face a card blockage if they fail to replace it with a more secure EMV-chip-based card by the end of this month. The bank will not charge anything for the replacement and it will be provided free of cost. — PTI



Minister of State for Commerce & Industry (Indraba) Nirmala Sitharaman addressing the gathering during a conference titled 'India as a sourcing hub and investment destination', at Textiles India - 2017, in Gandhinagar, Gujarat on Sunday. Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, Anant Kumar Singh, CEO, NITI Aayog, Amitabh Kant and other dignitaries are also seen. — PTI

India can be reliable source of fibres for ASEAN: Irani

GANDHINAGAR, July 2: Government

development.

"Enhancing digital and infrastructure connectivity with ASEAN countries is a major priority for India," she added.

Speaking at the event, neighbouring Myanmar's Industry Minister U Khin Maung Cho said his textile and apparel sector offers huge opportunities for Indian business.

"Myanmar policies are attractive for foreign direct investment in various sectors, especially garments, textiles and agriculture," he said.

The conference organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) explored the value chain and institutional frameworks for collaboration in textiles between India and ASEAN countries under India's 'Act East' policy.

The Minister said that Indian textiles and apparel exports to ASEAN in 2016 were worth over \$1.2 billion.

"Export of textiles and apparels to ASEAN comprises 3 per cent of India's total exports to the world," she said.

Irani said there are enormous opportunities for collaboration between India and ASEAN in capacity building, sharing of knowledge and technology, and mutual assistance in education, research and

skill development, supply of cotton and research and development, and trade promotion with international partners were signed between various international and domestic organisations.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi today roped in seven Union ministers to attract foreign investment in the textile industry and to boost domestic players while urging them to focus on creating jobs.

Union Ministers M Venkaiah Naidu, Nitin Gadkari, Ananth Kumar, Nirmala Sitharaman, Radhamohan Singh, Mahesh Sharma and Rajiv Pratap Rudy took part in different sessions here at Mahatma Mandir and urged the players to help and support Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Make in India'.

They explained that the government was working towards modernisation of the various sectors of the textiles industry and emphasised that it was also working to develop skills, so as to create more employment opportunities. — IANS

GST to make India Inc more competitive: CII

NEW DELHI, July 2: The GST rollout will impart major competitiveness to Indian industry, incentivise exports and help expand the tax net, industry body CII said.

The implementation of the crucial tax reform gives tremendous confidence to the industry that the government will continue to facilitate investments and simplify the business environment, the industry body said.

"We have emerged... into a new era of economic reform with

the introduction of the game-changing GST. This will stand as an exemplar of collaborative reform for the world on an unprecedented scale," CII President Shobha Kammneni said.

The CII President said that going forward, GST will contribute to ease of doing business and accelerate new business ventures. She said that GST is based on self-compliance with the input tax credit as a powerful incentive to businesses to step into the tax fold.

Besides, Assocham said that with retail prices growing by the slowest pace in the last four years, the timing for the GST was perfect from the inflation

point of view. The chamber said that while the GST may face some initial hiccups, the broad and the most important macro matrix is perfectly placed.

"In the backdrop of subdued consumer demand, there is no reason for the industry not to pass on any benefit accruing from the GST. The top priority for the industry today is to step up its industry utilisation by increasing production, helped by consumer demand," Assocham said. — PTI

Adhia busts 7 myths about GST

NEW DELHI, July 2: Two days into the GST regime, Revenue Secretary Hasmukh Adhia today took to Twitter busting "7 myths" that were doing the rounds about the new tax regime.

Adhia, the architect behind the country's largest tax reform, sought to dispel concerns that if a person makes payment of utility bills by credit cards, then he/she will be paying GST twice.

"This is completely untrue.

Please do not circulate such message without checking it with authority," Adhia said.

India ushered in the goods and services tax (GST) regime on the intervening night of June 30-July 1.

A four-tier tax slab — 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent — has been introduced with essential items like salt, unpacked food grains, healthcare services being kept

zero rated.

People have been posting in social media pictures of receipts issued in grocery stores or eateries showing tax deductions as GST, instead of VAT/ Service tax earlier.

Busting the myth that GST rates are higher than VAT, Adhia said, "it appears higher because excise duty and other taxes which were invisible earlier are now subsumed in GST and so visible now."

He reiterated that businesses can continue to do business under GST with provisional ID number and businesses need not wait for Goods and Services Taxpayer Identification Number (GSTIN).

"Provisional ID will be your final GSTIN number. Start business," Adhia said.

He said that businesses need not generate all invoices on computer/internet only.

"Invoices can be generated manually also".

On the myth that businesses which were earlier exempt will immediately need new registrations before starting business now, Adhia said, "You can continue doing business and get registered within 30 days".

He said small retailers need not file invoice-wise details in their return forms and retailers will have to just file one return form as the two other forms will be auto-populated by the computer.

"There is only 1 return with 3 parts, out of which first part filed by dealer and two other parts auto-populated by computer," he said.

On the myth that internet is needed all the time to do business under GST, Adhia said the reality is, internet would be needed only while filing monthly return of GST. — PTI

Plan to provide Rs 16,709-cr support for 40 stalled hydel projects

Cabinet may consider hydro power policy this month

NEW DELHI, July 2: The Union Cabinet may take up for approval this month the hydro-power policy which aims to provide Rs 16,709-crore support for 40 stalled hydel projects, entailing 11,639 MW capacity and to classify all such ventures as renewable energy.

"Power Ministry had finalised the policy last month and sent to the Finance Ministry for vetting before placing it for the Cabinet approval," a source said.

The source said: "The policy will be listed this month for deliberation and approval by the Cabinet."

Once it is approved, the distinction between large and small hydro plants would go, which would enable India to achieve clean power capacity of 175 GW by 2022.

At present, a hydro power project of up to 25 MW is classified under renewable energy and is entitled to various incentives provided by the government. Projects beyond this capacity are not in this category and hence not entitled to the benefits.

Out of the 30 GW installed power generation capacity, 44.59 GW comes from large hydro projects while 225 GW by 2024. — PTI

GST to boost GDP; positive for rating: Moody's

NEW DELHI, July 2: Implementation of the GST will be positive for India's rating as it will lead to higher GDP growth and increased tax revenues, Moody's Investors Service said today.

"Over the medium term, we expect that the GST will contribute to productivity gains and higher GDP growth by improving ease of doing business, unifying the national market and enhancing India's attractiveness as a foreign investment destination," Moody's VP (Sovereign Risk Group) William Foster said.

The GST will also support higher government revenue generation through improved tax compliance and administration.

"Both will be positive for India's credit profile, which is constrained by a relatively low revenue base," Foster said.

Moody's has a 'Ba3' rating on India with a positive outlook.

The biggest tax reform in independent India was rolled out at the stroke of the midnight — the intervening night of June 30-July 1 — by President Pranab Mukherjee and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The US-based agency expects improved tax compliance to be driven by incentivisation of tax credits in a GST system.

It would also usher in greater ease of compliance through usage of a common shared IT infrastructure between the Central Government and the States; and a reduction in the overall cost of compliance from simplified tax rates, uniform across the country.

"We expect the net impact of GST on government revenues to be positive," Foster said.

The goods and services tax (GST) will remove plethora of taxes like excise, service tax and VAT and transform India into a uniform market for seamless movement of goods and services.

In the GST regime, goods and services will be taxed in either of 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent.

Besides, certain essential items like health care services, salt, unpacked food grains has been kept zero rated. — PTI



State Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma during an interaction on GST with youth and young entrepreneurs, at Rabindra Bhawan in Guwahati on Sunday. — UB Photos



As per the latest auction sale (No 26) held at Guwahati Tea Auction Centre (GTAC) on June 27-28, the total tea offerings were 13,078 packages, out of which 70 per cent were sold. Market witnessed a fair demand with bright Assam teas being barely steady while balance teas were irregular and tended easier as per quality. HUL operated with selective buying from TGBL. The western Indian buyers operated on liquorising sorts. The auction average price for this week stood at Rs 146.81, up by Rs 1.81 from last year.

Top garden prices

BOP	Price	BOP/SM/BP	Price	OP/FP	Price
HALMOL	507	364	500/500	267	
SOKKALATINGA	290	290	LUMWAH	260	
DURALATINGA	290	290	LUMWAH	241	SOOKKALTINGA
SOKKALTINGA	281	281	HALMPRA	232	
HOAKHOL	277	277	DEHA	250	SUNTOK

Secretary, Guwahati Tea Auction Buyers Association (GTABA)

Indian parents spend around \$19,000 on child's education: Study

With no GST breather, ready-to-move-in flats to cost more

MUMBAI, July 2: The consumers durables industry is expecting only a marginal price revision despite the category being placed under the highest tax slab of 28 per cent under GST, as the players look forward to the festive season in the coming months.

The festive season accounts up to 35 per cent of the consumer durables sales.

"In the short- to mid-term, I see the fundamentals remaining the same. Though consumer durables industry is being taxed at 28 per cent, which is slightly more than what the previous tax structure was, I don't anticipate any major price increases in the coming months," BSH Household Appliances MD Gunjan Srivastava told PTI.

Godrej Appliances business head Kamal Nandi expects prices to go up 1-2 per cent which could impact demand in the short run, but expects it to pick up during the festive season.

"Home appliances have become a necessity now with evolving consumer lifestyle and a lower tax slab would have made appliances more afforda-

bility in a low-penetrated market.

"With 28 per cent tax under the GST, we expect the consumer price of home appliances to marginally go up by 1-2 per cent. This could have an impact on demand in the short run," he said.

Panasonic India Chief Financial Officer Manish Gupta said they expect a revision in price of a select category.

"We are expecting the primary sales to retailers from companies to pick up from the second week of July," he said. — PTI

views of 8,481 parents in 15 countries and territories, including Australia, Canada, China, Egypt, France, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Singapore, Taiwan, UAE, UK and USA. The survey found that parents in India are considering postgraduate education for their child and, of these parents, 79 per cent expect to contribute towards funding that, too, it said.

The majority of parents in India (87 per cent) think completing a postgraduate degree is important for their child to get into full-time employment in their chosen occupation, fourth highest amongst all surveyed markets, it added.

It also revealed that more than half (59 per cent) of Indian parents are funding their child's education from their income, while 48 per cent through general savings, investments or insurance and almost a third (30 per cent) are funding through a specific education savings or investment plan.

To help fund their child's education, many parents in India are making financial sacrifices, including reducing spend on leisure activities (44 per cent), the study said. — PTI

All 6 accused in Byculla jail case arrested

MUMBAI, July 2: The Crime Branch of the Mumbai Police today arrested all the six accused in the death of Byculla prison inmate Manju Shete.

Those arrested have been identified as Manisha Poharkar, Wasima Shaikh, Shital Shegokar, Surekha Gulve, Aarti Shinde and Bindu Naikde, a senior Crime Branch official told this news agency.

Police had registered a case of murder against the jail officials and staff in connection with the death of the inmate, he said.

Shete (45) died at the Government-run JJ Hospital on June 23 after being allegedly beaten up by the jail officials and staff as she had failed to account for two eggs and five loaves of bread, which were distributed by her to the inmates, the official said.

Nakde was arrested in the afternoon, while the other accused were arrested later, said the official. All the six accused were already suspended by the jail department.

After Shete's death, around 200 prisoners began a protest on June 24 for their demands, including allowing the media inside the jail premises.

During the protest, some of the inmates went to the prison's roof, while others made a bonfire with newspapers and other documents inside the premises to express their anger.

Indrani Mukerjea, the prime accused in the Sheena Bora murder case, was among the 200 inmates of the Byculla jail who were booked by police for rioting and other offences after they staged a protest over Shete's death. — PTI

Six Amarnath pilgrims hurt

SRINAGAR, July 2: Six Amarnath pilgrims were injured today when their vehicle collided with a tipper in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district, police said.

The accident took place at Barsoo Ganderbal. The injured have been admitted to the sub-district hospital at Ganderbal. — PTI

Textbook sparks row

NEW DELHI, July 2: An image in a Class-VI textbook taught in ICSE schools showing a "mosque" as a source of noise pollution has sparked outrage on social media, prompting an apology from the publisher and the promise that the picture would be removed in subsequent editions.

The science textbook, published by Selina Publishers, has a chapter on the causes of noise pollution.

The picture, shared widely on social media, shows a train, car, plane and a mosque, all with symbols depicting loud sound, next to a man grimacing and shutting his ears.

Netizens have now launched an online petition demanding the book be withdrawn. While ICSE board officials were not available for comment, the publisher has apologized for the image.

"This is to inform all concerned that we will be changing the picture in subsequent editions of the book," publisher Hemant Gupta said on social media sites.

Gupta said the diagram on page 202 of its publication titled *Integrated Science*, consisted of "a structure resembling a portion of a fort and other noise producing objects in a noisy city".

"We do apologise if it has hurt the sentiments of anyone," he said.

Bollywood singer Sonu Nigam had stoked a controversy in April this year when he said he was woken up by the sound of *azan* — early morning call for prayers from mosques — amplified by loudspeakers.

There have been several incidents of controversial content being found in school textbooks in recent months. — PTI

Aadhaar centres only at Govt premises from Sept

NEW DELHI, July 2: Aadhaar-issuing authority UIDAI has asked States to ensure that all enrolments, even those by private agencies, shift to Government or municipal premises from external sites by September this year.

The move will have a bearing on 25,000 active enrolment centres across India and ensure that they come under direct supervision of the authorities.

It is also expected to curb cases of overcharging by private operators as enrolment update can be closely monitored by the Government under the new arrangement.

Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) CEO Ajay Bhushan Pandey has written to the States asking them to identify centres within Government premises for enrolment and

update activities by July 31. UIDAI has said the process of shifting enrolment operations to such centres should be completed by August 31, 2017.

When contacted, Pandey confirmed this saying the enrolment centres will have to shift from private locations into Government premises such as district collectorates, zila parishad offices or municipal offices.

They could also be re-located at banks, block offices, taluk offices or other delivery offices run by the State Government, where direct supervision can be ensured.

According to Pandey, shifting of the enrolment operations into State premises would result in greater convenience for the residents.

"There are times when people find it difficult to locate en-

rolment centres and many times they complain to us. Or they may go to a centre and find it closed. At times, there are complaints of overcharging," he said, adding that tighter control over private agencies will ensure that services are performed strictly as per prescribed norms and there are no deviations.

The latest move assumes significance as most Government and other services such as benefits, subsidies and services like PAN, GST, bank accounts, passports and property registration now require Aadhaar.

Hence, it would be imperative for State governments to provide the facility of enrolments and updates at secure and convenient locations so residents are not inconvenienced. — PTI



Brightly decorated chariots being readied for the 'Return Car Festival' from Gundicha Temple to Puri Jagannath Temple in Odisha, on Sunday. —UNI

Cong abandoned its own child: Javadekar on GST launch boycott

BENGALURU, July 2: Union Minister Prakash Javadekar today hit out at the Opposition, especially the Congress, saying by boycotting the GST launch event at Parliament, they "have abandoned their own child".

"Its (GST's) credit does not go to the BJP or the Congress or anybody alone. It is everybody's credit and we want to share that with everybody. But, for the first time, I saw some parents abandoning their own children," he said.

"The GST is their child. How can you abandon it? But that was how things happened," Javadekar said at the 68th Chartered Accountants' Day celebration, organised by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India here.

The Union HRD Minister said that ultimately, collective wisdom has prevailed and everybody has started implementing the GST and that is the best way forward.

The Congress, the Trinamool Congress, the Left and some other parties had boycotted the special midnight

meeting convened by the Government on GST implementation.

Taking a dig at the Opposition for

boycotting the event, Ananth Kumar said, "As the Parliamentary Affairs Minister, I had requested every political

party, everybody to participate in the midnight event which unified India in the economic sense."

He said the presence of the President, the Vice President, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, and former Prime Minister Deve Gowda, along with leaders of various parties have sent a "wonderful signal across the world that India has made a big stride in integration of the economy."

The Opposition stood a divided house as several parties, said to be "like-minded" with the Congress, such as the JD(U), the BSP, the BJD, the Samajwadi Party and the Janata Dal(S) along with the NCP, a key constituent of the UPA, participated in the midnight launch of the GST. Speaking at the event, Union Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu termed the GST as a "game changer".

Himself a chartered accountant, he called on the CAs to think differently in the GST era.

"Chartered Accountants should not only be tax consultants or auditors, but essentially business advisers. We should think about our role in advising businesses," Prabhu said. — PTI

The unsung heroes who made GST a reality

NEW DELHI, July 2: India ushered in a new economic reality with a 60-minute star-studded midnight gala at the imposing Central Hall of Parliament, thus becoming only the 7th country in the world to have a nationwide Goods and Services Tax (GST).

But away from the media glare and relentless public commentary, there were men and women who worked tirelessly to bring to fruition the country's biggest taxation overhaul since Independence.

The rollout of the GST was in the making for over a decade, which was effected through an amendment to the Constitution and five supporting laws being passed by Parliament and State Assemblies.

Since the passage of the Constitution Amendment Bill in August 2016, there were over 175 officers' meetings and 18 sittings of the GST Council — totalling 18,000-plus man hours of discussions for a smooth rollout of the new tax regime.

A battery of Central and State Government officials

burnt the midnight oil to meet the July 1 target for launching the GST.

Official sources said as many as 30 sub-groups and committees worked tirelessly to devise rules and laws as well as fix tax rates for over 1,200 goods and services.

While the final decisions were taken by the GST Council comprising Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and his State counterparts, who met on an average twice a month in the last nine months, officials in the fitment and rate committees met thrice or four times a week to sort out differences between the Centre and States and present an acceptable proposal to the Council.

Most of the State tax officers would camp at the national capital for the entire week during the meetings, before returning to their states over the weekend to look into issues there.

The widespread deliberations of Central and State officials laid the groundwork for the new law's implementation. — PTI

Musical protest in Darjeeling Hills

DARJEELING (WB), July 2:

Bands and solo singers are crooning in support of their demand for a separate Gorkhaland in the streets of Darjeeling.

The most renowned band of the hills, *Mantra*, is one of the bands that is composing songs supporting the Gorkhaland movement.

"We have composed a song in favour of Gorkhaland movement. We feel that song is a powerful weapon both to reach out to the masses and make yourself heard," Briju Chowdhury, drummer of *Mantra*, said.

"Through these songs we will reach out to the people across the country and create public opinion about Gorkhaland," Chowdhury told this news agency.

Mantra was formed in 1999 when six young singers decided to make music their career.

"It is injustice if someone beats you up and brands you as a terrorist when you are fighting for your rightful demand in a democratic way. No one has given this right to the State

Government to treat us like refugees," he said.

"You cannot stop a struggle by using batons and tear gas shells. History says you can't just wipe out a movement by using brute force," another member of the band said.

Like *Mantra*, several small music bands of Darjeeling and Sikkim have also composed songs in favour of Gorkhaland.

"We have composed songs, but are unable to upload it on social media due to Internet ban. So we are organising small street corner performances in favour of a separate State and our identity," said Pranay Chetri, lead vocalist of a band in Kurseong. Solo singers too are doing the same to present their songs supporting the movement as a "fight for the identity of the Gorkhas".

"We respect every religion and community. But others also need to respect ours. I hope these songs will help increase the morale of foot soldiers of this Gorkhaland movement," said a singer of Darjeeling. — PTI

BJP hopeful of cross-voting among Opposition ranks

NEW DELHI, July 2: The Bharatiya Janata Party expects cross-voting from Opposition ranks, especially in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, in favour of National Democratic Alliance presidential candidate Ram Nath Kovind.

The internal bickering in the Samajwadi Party, some of whose MLAs owe allegiance to Mulayam Singh Yadav and his brother Shivpal Yadav, coupled with the fact that Kovind is a son of the soil, could nudge a section of its lawmakers to vote for him, sources said.

Mulayam, a Lok Sabha Member of Parliament had expressed his support for Kovind after he was declared the National Democratic Alliance candidate. The recent meetings of Shivpal, who is opposed to the leadership of party president and former Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav, with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath

has fuelled speculation about his future move.

BJP sources involved with Kovind's campaign said they expected some lawmakers from the Samajwadi Party to vote for him.

With the Mayawati-led Bahujan Samaj Party staring at an uncertain future, some

Opposition members may sway to vote for its nominee.

Though Opposition parties are in much stronger position in Bihar, and the fissure in their ranks after Chief Minister and JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar's support to Kovind has made things fluid.

A BJP leader said they were not ruling out cross-voting from the Congress and the RJD camps.

RJD chief Lalu Prasad is working overtime to ensure that there is maximum possible voting in favour of Kumar, but the Congress could be more vulnerable, he said.

As there is no provision for party whips in the presidential election, MPs and MLAs are free to vote as per their preference and it is not possible to find out an individual's choice.

The poll is scheduled for July 17 and the counting of votes will take place on July 20. — PTI

Govt to come out with fresh norms for disability pension

NEW DELHI, July 2: The

Government has decided to remove existing "anomalies" and come out with a specific percentage-based system for granting disability pension to Army, Navy and Air Force personnel sustaining injuries in the line of duty.

The decision has been taken in view of the long-standing demand of the armed forces that the current system of determining disability pension needs an overhaul.

Official sources said the Government is aiming at addressing most of the concerns of the armed forces that is expected to reduce litigation against the Government.

Under the existing mechanism, 30 per cent of the last salary minus the dearness allowance is given as disability pension to those sustaining 100 per cent disability.

The pension amount reduces depending on specific percentage of the injury and sources said

the affected personnel often take legal recourse, alleging discrepancies in determining the quantum of injury.

As per the new slab-based system, security personnel with 20-50 per cent disability will be considered 50 per cent disabled while those with 50-75 per cent bracket will come under the 75 per cent disabled category.

Personnel with more than 75 per cent disability will be considered 100 per cent disabled. So all the eligible disability pensioners will be considered under three broad categories and accordingly pensions will be determined.

"It will be a robust system and will address long-pending grievances of the armed forces," a senior official said.

Explaining the new system, he said, "Any person with 50 per cent disability will get half of the total pension being given to a person with 100 per cent disability under the existing mechanism." — PTI

MHA starts recruiting more women in paramilitary forces

NEW DELHI, July 2:

The Home Ministry has started the process of recruiting more women to achieve the target of 33 per cent in the two paramilitary forces — the CRPF and the CISF — and 15 per cent in the BSF and the ITBP.

The 33 per cent reservation

in constable-level posts in Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and 14-15 per cent posts in border guarding forces of Border Security Force (BSF), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) will start immediately, a Home Ministry official said.

These forces together comprise around nine lakh personnel with only around 20,000 of them being women.

The CRPF, considered to be world's largest paramilitary

force, are mostly deployed in law-and-order duties, anti-militancy operations in Jammu and Kashmir and anti-Naxal operations. It has just around 6,300 women in its ranks.

The Government has found that women personnel constitute only a little over nine per cent in most of the police forces.

In March 2015, the Central Government had approved reservation of 33 per cent for women horizontally and in each category (SC, ST, OBC and others) in direct recruitment in non-gazetted posts from constable to sub-inspector in the police forces of all Union Territories, including Delhi Police.

However, the decision is yet to be implemented fully. — PTI



Children enjoying a ride on a toy train at Vanbala in Nagpur, on Saturday. —UNI



Kids

CN

13:00 Ben 10
14:00 Ben 10
15:00 Ben 10
16:00 Ben 10
17:00 Ben 10
BEN 10
17:30 Teen Titans Go
18:30 Lanca
19:30 Ben 10
20:30 Ben 10
21:30 Ben 10
22:00 Ben 10
23:00 Ben 10
23:30 Teleshopping

BHQ

The Tom And Jerry Show

13:30 Chhota Bheem
14:00 Mighty Raju
15:00 Chhota Bheem
17:30 Chhota Bheem
20:30 Chhota Bheem
21:30 Chhota Bheem
22:00 Chhota Bheem
23:00 Chhota Bheem
23:30 Teleshopping

Dora

Dora The Explorer

13:30 Dora The Explorer
14:00 Dora The Explorer
15:00 Dora The Explorer
17:30 Dora The Explorer
20:30 Dora The Explorer
21:30 Dora The Explorer
22:00 Dora The Explorer
23:00 Dora The Explorer
23:30 Teleshopping

Entertainment

colors

13:00 Crime Patrol Satak
14:00 Crime Patrol Dial 100
15:00 Yeh Moh Moh Ke Chhage
16:00 Yeh Moh Moh Ke Chhage
17:00 Yeh Moh Moh Ke Chhage
20:00 Sankat Mohan Mahabali...
20:30 Yeh Moh Moh Ke Chhage
21:30 Kuch Rang Pyar Ke Ase Bhi
22:00 Crime Patrol Dial 100
CRIME PATROL
13:00 Zindagi Ki Mahekk
13:30 Aisi Deewangi...Dekhi...
14:00 Woh Apna Sa
15:00 Zindagi Ki Mahekk
15:30 Sa Re Ga Ma Pa ULT...
16:00 Zindagi Ki Mahekk
16:30 Satti
17:00 Aisi Deewangi...Dekhi...
20:00 Zindagi Ki Mahekk

StarPlus

Shakti-Astha Ke Ehsaas K

Udani

13:00 Shakti-Astha Ke Ehsaas K

14:00 Dil Se Dil Tak
15:00 Dil Se Dil Tak
16:00 Karam
17:00 Bhag
18:00 Dil Se Dil Tak
19:00 Ek Shringar - Swabhiman
20:00 Shakti-Astha Ke Ehsaas K

Kasam

Shakti-Astha Ke Ehsaas K

21:00 Kamaal Daala Shani
22:00 Mehmood
23:00 Bhag
23:30 Bhag Bakol Bhag
23:30 Savitri Devi College and...

Zcafe

Crime Patrol Dial 100

13:00 Criminal Mind
14:00 Just For Laughs
15:00 Top 20 Funniest
16:00 Comedy Central
17:00 100% Two and Half Men

Zcafe

Maigai

18:00 I Holi Mihirabekhan
17:00 Jhappaz
18:00 Mrs Arme Arme
19:00 Yeh Moh Moh Ke Chhage
19:30 Shah Nishabdha Sasthya
20:00 Yeh Moh Moh Ke Chhage
21:00 Chandni Nandis
22:00 Kishore Chhore
23:00 Tulsing Man Singh/Piyaj
23:30 Iey Pyaar Ko Kya Haan.

Infotainment

NEWS

LIVE

13:00 Lion Battle Zone
14:00 Plain Starts
14:30 Food Techs
15:00 Do Or Die: A Gory End
16:30 Brain Games: Imagination
17:30 Mystery Of The Week
18:00 Do Or Die: A Gory End
19:30 Science Fiction And Fantasy
20:00 Sharks In The City
21:00 Animal Farm: Animals
22:00 Animal Fight Club
23:00 Science Of Stupid
23:30 Brain Games: Logic

Discovery

The Island With Bear Grylls

13:00 Animal Planet
14:00 Animal Planet
15:00 Animal Planet
16:00 Animal Planet
17:00 Animal Planet
18:00 Animal Planet
19:00 Animal Planet
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Animal Planet

The Island With Bear Grylls

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The Jungle Safari

The Jungle Safari

13:00 Animal Planet
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Jaws and Claws

Animal Planet Satin

13:00 Animal Planet
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23:00 Animal Planet

National Geographic Channel

Lion Battle Zone

13:00 Animal Planet
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17:00 Animal Planet
18:00 Animal Planet
19:00 Animal Planet
20:00 Animal Planet
21:00 Animal Planet
22:00 Animal Planet
23:00 Animal Planet

Regional

NEWS

LIVE

07:00 Breakfast Live
08:00 Good Morning Assam
09:00 Good Morning Assam
11:30 Korda Barla (F)
12:00 Good Day Live
13:00 Assam Prime Time
17:30 Assam Prime Time
18:00 Goodwill Live
18:30 Goodwill Live
19:00 Assam Prime Time
20:00 Discussion Show
21:00 Assam Prime Time
22:00 Live To Life
22:30 Nokone Batori
23:00 Nokone Batori

Kamrupi Lokogat

Breakfast Live

08:00 Good Morning Assam
09:00 Good Morning Assam
11:30 Korda Barla (F)
12:00 Good Day Live
13:00 Assam Prime Time
17:30 Assam Prime Time
18:00 Goodwill Live
18:30 Goodwill Live
19:00 Assam Prime Time
20:00 Discussion Show
21:00 Assam Prime Time
22:00 Live To Life
22:30 Nokone Batori
23:00 Nokone Batori

North East English News

Breakfast Live

08:00 Good Morning Assam
09:00 Good Morning Assam
11:30 Korda Barla (F)
12:00 Good Day Live
13:00 Assam Prime Time
17:30 Assam Prime Time
18:00 Goodwill Live
18:30 Goodwill Live
19:00 Assam Prime Time
20:00 Discussion Show
21:00 Assam Prime Time
22:00 Live To Life
22:30 Nokone Batori
23:00 Nokone Batori

Sports

STAR SPORTS 1

13:00 Cricket World Cup
13:30 New Zealand Round India
14:00 India vs New Zealand
15:00 India vs New Zealand
16:00 India vs New Zealand
17:00 India vs New Zealand
18:00 India vs New Zealand
19:00 India vs New Zealand
20:00 India vs New Zealand
21:00 India vs New Zealand
22:00 India vs New Zealand
23:00 India vs New Zealand

STAR SPORTS 2

Cricket World Cup

13:00 India vs New Zealand
13:30 New Zealand Round India
14:00 India vs New Zealand
15:00 India vs New Zealand
16:00 India vs New Zealand
17:00 India vs New Zealand
18:00 India vs New Zealand
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20:00 India vs New Zealand
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22:00 India vs New Zealand
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STAR SPORTS 3

Cricket World Cup

13:00 India vs New Zealand
13:30 New Zealand Round India
14:00 India vs New Zealand
15:00 India vs New Zealand
16:00 India vs New Zealand
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18:00 India vs New Zealand
19:00 India vs New Zealand
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22:00 India vs New Zealand
23:00 India vs New Zealand

STAR GOLD

Cricket World Cup

13:00 India vs New Zealand
13:30 New Zealand Round India
14:00 India vs New Zealand
15:00 India vs New Zealand
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17:00 India vs New Zealand
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23:00 India vs New Zealand

NEO SPORTS

Cricket World Cup

13:00 India vs New Zealand
13:30 New Zealand Round India
14:00 India vs New Zealand
15:00 India vs New Zealand
16:00 India vs New Zealand
17:00 India vs New Zealand
18:00 India vs New Zealand
19:00 India vs New Zealand
20:00 India vs New Zealand
21:00 India vs New Zealand
22:00 India vs New Zealand
23:00 India vs New Zealand

STAR PIX

Cricket World Cup

13:00 India vs New Zealand
13:30 New Zealand Round India
14:00 India vs New Zealand
15:00 India vs New Zealand
16:00 India vs New Zealand
17:00 India vs New Zealand
18:00 India vs New Zealand
19:00 India vs New Zealand
20:00 India vs New Zealand
21:00 India vs New Zealand
22:00 India vs New Zealand
23:00 India vs New Zealand

ZEE ACTION

Cricket World Cup

13:00 India vs New Zealand
13:30 New Zealand Round India
14:00 India vs New Zealand
15:00 India vs New Zealand
16:00 India vs New Zealand
17:00 India vs New Zealand
18:00 India vs New Zealand
19:00 India vs New Zealand
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22:00 India vs New Zealand
23:00 India vs New Zealand

ZEE KOREA

Cricket World Cup

13:00 India vs New Zealand
13:30 New Zealand Round India
14:00 India vs New Zealand
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19:00 India vs New Zealand
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22:00 India vs New Zealand
23:00 India vs New Zealand

Gangaajal

Cricket World Cup

13:00 India vs New Zealand
13:30 New Zealand Round India
14:00 India vs New Zealand
15:00 India vs New Zealand
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18:00 India vs New Zealand
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21:00 India vs New Zealand
22:00 India vs New Zealand
23:00 India vs New Zealand

STAR GOLD

Cricket World Cup

13:00 India vs New Zealand
13:30 New Zealand Round India
14:00 India vs New Zealand
15:00 India vs New Zealand
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22:00 India vs New Zealand
23:00 India vs New Zealand

JUMBLE WORDS

Cricket World Cup

13:00 India vs New Zealand
13:30 New Zealand Round India
14:00 India vs New Zealand
15:00 India vs New Zealand
16:00 India vs New Zealand
17:00 India vs New Zealand
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Diagnosing autism

Measuring protein levels may help in early diagnosis of autism, says a study

Researchers have identified two proteins that may help diagnose autism spectrum disorder (ASD), especially in boys, with 82 per cent accuracy.

Autism is a neuro-developmental disorder that is characterised by social interaction and communication challenges, and restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviour.

The findings, led by researchers from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, showed that measuring the levels of proteins, namely thrombomodulin-1 (TSH) and interleukin-8 (IL-8) alone would result in 74 to 76 per cent.

However, using both proteins together – which were previously identified as potential biomarkers in the blood – the diagnostic accuracy could increase up to 82 per cent, the researchers said.

For the study, published in the *Journal of*

Neuroinflammation, the team included 30 boys with ASD and 30 typically-developing boys, aged 2-8 years.

The results indicated that TSH levels were significantly lower in ASD boys, whereas IL-8 levels were significantly elevated, suggesting that TSH levels may be useful for assessing specific ASD phenotypes.

These data suggest that information on hormone status and inflammation together provides greater diagnostic accuracy for the identification of autism spectrum disorder, the researchers said.

"Autism is very heterogeneous disorder, and if we can identify biomarkers for even a subgroup of autism patients, then that would be extremely helpful not only for early diagnosis but also for the development of therapeutics," said Dwight C German from the University of Texas.

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For the study, published in the *Journal of*

Know your DAY

By JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Monday, July 3, 2017.

This year you have the creativity, drive and energy to manifest more of what you want. You possess an innate charm that draws others to you, no matter where you are. If some, sometimes, after summer you could consider getting away, pack your bags and go. You will be rewarded with a romantic period full of surprises.

GOOD LUCK for Tuesday, July 4, 2017.

Others are likely to reveal more of themselves than they have in a while. Touch base with an artist friend. Make plans as the experience of being with him or her is always different and exciting. Tonight: Go along with a suggestion.

GOOD LUCK for Wednesday, July 5, 2017.

You might be faced with a decision between your priorities and other values. Honor your feelings. You can integrate them more easily than you realize. A discussion need not be with the people involved. Tonight: Happiest at home.

GOOD LUCK for Thursday, July 6, 2017.

Others are likely to reveal more of themselves than they have in a while. Keep some of your thoughts and opinions to yourself. You are coming out of a period of being somewhat withdrawn, and you'll need to take your time. Tonight: Keep a secret but truth.

GOOD LUCK for Friday, July 7, 2017.

You could come through a problem that you tend to go overboard. Know when to say "enough is enough." Listening to others' ideas does not mean you have to agree with them. Tonight: Buy a favorite treat on impulse.

GOOD LUCK for Saturday, July 8, 2017.

You remain actively involved in a creative project. Listen well, and try not to skip right over any comments. Take in the whole conversation and be more upbeat than anyone else. Others will respond to your positive energy. Tonight: Be more positive.

GOOD LUCK for Sunday, July 9, 2017.

You feel more creative and open with one specific person than you have in a while. Keep some of your thoughts and opinions to yourself. Honesty, feelings, and acknowledgement of what others opt to share. Tonight: Don't head directly home.

THREE STARS

Thought for the day

Sleep after toll, port after stormy seas. Ease after war, death after life does greatly please.

- EDMUND SPENSER

THE PHANTOM

R

By Lee Fallk



BLONDIE

R



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE

R



SOLUTION TO TRIBUNE CROSSWORD - 6021

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18 killed as car bombers strike Damascus

DAMASCUS, July 2: A suicide car bomber pursued by security forces blew himself up in eastern Damascus today, with a monitor reporting 18 killed in the deadliest attack to hit the Syrian capital in months.

Syrian State media and the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said security forces intercepted three car bombers on their way into the city early on Sunday morning.

State television said two of the vehicles were blown up on the outskirts of the city.

A third managed to reach the eastern Tahrir Square district, where he was surrounded but able to detonate a bomb.

The Observatory, a Britain-based monitor, said 18 people were killed in the bombing, including at least seven members of pro-regime security forces and two civilians. It had not identified the remaining victims.

Syrian state news agency SANA quoted an interior ministry statement as saying two of the vehicles had been "destroyed" at a roundabout on the road to the city's airport.

The driver of the third blew himself up while being pursued, it said, "killing a number of civilians, injuring others, and causing material damage to public and private properties."

An AFP correspondent at Tahrir Square saw extensive damage to nearby buildings. Two bombed-out cars were visible to one side of the square, which was strewn with debris.

A woman was crying in an apartment near the site of the attack. Her balcony had collapsed and the living room was a mess of broken glass and shattered masonry, with pictures and curtains strewn across the floor.

The woman said her daughter had been taken to hospital after being injured by flying glass.

Tahrir Square resident Mohammad Tinawi said AFP that he had heard "gunfire at around 6:00 am (0300 GMT), then an explosion which smashed the glass of houses in the neighbourhood."

He said he had seen Red Crescent volunteers treating two wounded soldiers. A shopkeeper confirmed that the explosion had gone off at around 6:00 am. - AFP

Around the WORLD

New solar-power smart windows

WASHINGTON, July 2: Scientists have developed solar-powered smart windows with tunable glazing that can control the heat and light inside a home, saving up to 40 per cent in an average building's energy costs.

The system, developed by researchers at the University of Illinois in the US, features solar cells that selectively absorb near-ultraviolet (UV) light, so the windows are completely self-powered, inexpensive and easy to apply to existing windows.

"Sunlight is a mixture of electromagnetic radiation made up of near-UV rays, visible light, and infrared energy, or heat," said Yuhan Loo, from Princeton.

"We wanted the smart window to dynamically control both the natural light and heat that can come inside, saving on energy cost and making the space more comfortable," said Loo.

The smart window controls the transmission of visible light and infrared heat into the building, while the new type of solar cell uses near-UV light to power the system.

"This new technology is actually smart management of the entire spectrum of sunlight," said Loo.

Some near-UV light is invisible to the human eye, the researchers set out to harness it for the electrical energy needed to activate the tinting technology. - PTI

Smartphones altering human walk'

LONDON, July 2: Smartphones are altering our gait and the speed at which we walk, say scientists who found that people move at slow, cautious pace while text messaging.

Researchers at Anglia Ruskin University in the UK found that when using a phone, irrespective of how it is being used, people look less frequently and for less time at the obstacle on the ground.

The relative amount of time spent looking at the phone

obstacle reduced by up to 61 per cent, researchers said.

The team noted that phone users adopted a cautious and exaggerated stepping strategy, which involved lifting their lead foot higher and slower over the obstacle to reduce the risk of tripping.

Researchers found that writing a text results in the greatest adoption in visual search behaviour and walking style, or gait, compared to reading texts or talking on a phone.

When writing a text the lead foot is 18 per cent higher whilst clearing the obstacle compared to not using a phone, and is 40 per cent slower. Similar, but less extreme, results are seen when reading texts and talking on the phone, researchers said. - PTI

Travesty of logic to link Jadhav with civilian prisoners: Pak

ISLAMABAD, July 2: Pakistan today said that it was "travesty of logic" to link the case of Kulbhushan Jadhav with civilian prisoners, a day after India sought early consular access to its national sentenced to death by a military court.

"Indian attempt to equate Commander Jadhav's case with civilian prisoners' and fishermen's is a travesty of logic," the Foreign Office said in a statement here.

The FO remarks came a day after the two countries exchanged a list of prisoners lodged in each other's jails.

According to the list Pakistan shared with India, at least 546 Indian nationals, including nearly 500

fishermen, are languishing in jails in that country.

"Commander Jadhav is a serving Indian Naval officer and sent to Pakistan by its intelligence agency RAW for espionage, terrorism and subversive activities which resulted in loss of many innocent lives and damage to property," the FO said.

It said Pakistan remains committed to the 2008 Agreement on Consular access, which stipulates the exchange of comprehensive lists of nationals of each country in the other country's jails twice a year



on January 1 and July 1.

Pakistan has implemented the bilateral consular agreement in letter and spirit and is committed to ensuring that humanitarian cases are not held hostage to politics, it added.

"We expect India to reciprocate through action rather than rhetoric," it said. The Foreign Office said that five Indian nationals who completed their sentence were repatriated on June 22.

"In contrast, 20 Pakistani civilian prisoners who have completed their sentence still await repatriation, while consular

access to 107 Pakistani fishermen and 85 civilian Pakistani prisoners is also pending," it said.

It said that two juvenile Pakistanis - Ali Raza and Babar Ali - who inadvertently crossed the border in July 2016, despite orders of the Indian courts, were repatriated after a year's delay on June 5.

"India's humanitarian claims appear contrary to reality in view of the impossible conditions imposed for medical visits for Pakistani patients," it claimed. Under the directive of the Prime Minister, arrangements are being made for such treatments/operations to be carried out in Pakistan, it added. - PTI



A member of the Counter Terrorism Service carries a displaced Iraqi woman in the Old City of Mosul, Iraq on Saturday. - UNI

'Baby Moshe's nanny says honoured by PM Modi's invitation

JERUSALEM, July 2: Sandra Samuels, the brave Indian nanny who saved Israeli child Moshe Holtzberg during the 2008 Mumbai terror attack, feels Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision to meet her along with the boy during his visit here indicates that the government cares for the victims.

Sandra, who was awarded an honorary citizenship by the Government of Israel so that she could live the country and be with Moshe, continues to share a unique bonding with the boy, who is now 10-year-old.

Moshe was barely two years old when his parents Rivka and Gavriel Holtzberg, serving as em-

issaries of Chabad in Mumbai, were killed along with six others by LeT terrorists at the Nariman House, a popularly known as Chabad House.

"I could not believe it when Rabbi Shimon Rosenberg (Moshe's grandfather) told me that we have been invited to meet PM Modi. It's a huge honour and comes as a pleasant sur-

pise. I am deeply touched. Its a clear indication that the Indian government cares for the victims of 26/11 terror attack," she told PTI.

"He means much more than two of my own sons. Moshe is the reason I am here in Israel. I work in Jerusalem but rush over the weekend to be with him. We also talk quite often during the week. I cannot really describe our relationship," says the nanny.

Sandra's heart wrenching picture holding Moshe close to her chest immediately after escaping the terror attack site is still imprinted on everybody's mind. Her two sons, Martin and Jackson, 34 and 26 respectively, live in Mumbai. - PTI

Al-Qaeda video shows '6 foreign hostages alive'

BAMAKO, July 2: Al-Qaeda's Mali branch has released a photo-life video of six foreign hostages, including elderly Australian surgeon Arthur Kenneth Elliott and Frenchwoman Sophie Petronin, US-based monitoring group SITE said.

The 16 minute, 50 second video by Nasrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen, also known as the Group to Support Islam and Muslims, was released on Telegram yesterday, SITE said.

The other four hostages shown are South African Stephen McGowen, Romanian Julian Ghergut, Swiss missionary Beatrice Stocky and Colombian nun Gloria Cecilia Narvaez Argoti.

No group had previously claimed

responsibility for kidnapping Frenchwoman Petronin, who was abducted in late 2016 by armed men in the northern Malian town of Gao, where she ran an organisation for malnourished children.

After a video clip showing Petronin, the narrator said she was hoping the French president would return her to her family, according to SITE. The video was released just before President Emmanuel Macron arrived in Mali to potentialise Western backing for a regional anti-jihadist force.

In the video, the hostages are separately introduced by a narrator, who says that so far there have been no negotiations for their release.

The first shown is McGowen, who was abducted in Timbuktu, northern Mali, in November 2011.

"It's long time to be away ... Until when do you think this will come to an end? Now we're making a new video, but I don't know what to say. It's all been said in the past. It's all been said in previous videos I've made," McGowen says, according to a transcript by SITE.

He is followed by Australian Elliott, in his 80s, who, along with his wife Jocelyn, was abducted in January 2015 in Djibo, Burkina Faso, where the couple had run the sole medical clinic since 1972. Jocelyn was released in February 2016. - AFP

Earthquake jolts Nepal

KATHMANDU, July 2: An earthquake measuring 5.1 on the Richter scale jolted parts of eastern Nepal today, officials said.

According to the National

Seismological Centre (NSC), the epicentre was at Bitjur Bagaincha of south-eastern Nepal in Okhaldhunga district.

The seismic event was recorded at 7:43 AM. The Himalayan NSC recorded a significant aftershock of the 2015 Gorkha earthquake. The Himalayan Times reported.

The tremor was also felt in adjoining districts and in the Kathmandu Valley. Nepal was hit by a massive 7.8 magnitude earthquake in 2015 that left nearly 9,000 people dead and as many as 22,000 injured. - PTI



Pedestrians and vehicles cross a flooded street during heavy rain in Changsha, Hunan province, China on Saturday. - UNI

NASA developing first asteroid deflection mission

WASHINGTON, July 2: NASA is developing the first-ever mission that will deflect a near-Earth asteroid, and help test the systems that will allow mankind to protect the planet from potential cosmic body impacts in the future.

The Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) - which is being designed and would be built and managed by the John Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory - is moving from concept development to preliminary design phase, the US space agency said.

"DART would be NASA's first

mission to determine what's known as the kinetic impactor technique - said Andy Cheng, who serves as the DART investigation co-lead. "Since we don't know that much about their internal structure or composition, we need to perform this experiment on a real asteroid," Cheng said.

"With DART, we can show

how to protect Earth from an asteroid strike with a kinetic impactor by knocking the hazardous object into a different flight path that would not threaten the planet," he said. The target for DART is an asteroid that will have a distant approach to Earth in October 2024, and then again in 2026.

The asteroid is called Didymos - Greek for "twin" - because it is an asteroid binary system that consists of two bodies: Didymos A, about 780 metres in size, and a smaller asteroid orbiting it called Didymos B, about 160 metres in size. DART would impact only the smaller of the two bodies, Didymos B.

The Didymos system has been closely studied since 2003. The primary body is a rocky S-type object, with composition similar to that of many asteroids. The composition of its small companion, Didymos B, is unknown, but the size is typical of asteroids that could potentially create regional effects should they impact Earth. After launch, DART would fly to Didymos and use an APL-developed onboard autonomous targeting system to aim itself at Didymos B.

Then the refrigerator-sized

spacecraft would strike the smaller body at a speed about nine times faster than a bullet, about six kilometres per second. - PTI

Debutant Hasaranga, Sandakan spin hosts Sri Lanka to victory



Sri Lanka's Wadu Hasaranga exults after dismissing Zimbabwe's Donald Tiripano during the 2nd ODI at Galle, on Sunday.

GALLE, July 2: Teenager Wadu Hasaranga took a hat-trick on his international debut as Sri Lanka took revenge on Zimbabwe with a seven-wicket drubbing in their second One Day International on Sunday.

Fellow-spinner Lakshan Sandakan also took four wickets, to earn the man-of-the-

match award, as Sri Lanka hit back at their critics with a confident performance in Galle.

Sri Lanka bowed out Zimbabwe for 155 and then reached 158-3 in 10 overs. Upul Tharanga ended unbeaten on 75.

The win relieved pressure on Sri Lanka captain Angelo Mathews after the squad was accused

of being unfit by the country's sports minister.

"I wouldn't call it a clinical performance," he said. "We still dropped catches. Attitude and intensity was superb. We just need to regroup, and it was great effort from the boys."

The captain hailed Sandakan and Hasaranga, two of the

three changes made after Zimbabwe tore apart the Sri Lanka bowlers in their six wicket win on Friday.

"Sandakan was brilliant, so was Wadu. Credit should go to the selectors to pick him. I honestly, haven't seen him much," Mathews said of the newcomer.

Nineteen-year-old all-rounder Hasaranga bowled only 16 balls but tore through Zimbabwe's tail.

Malcolm Waller hit Hasaranga for four but was bowled the next ball going for another big hit. The teenager then snapped up Donald Tiripano and Tendai Chatara with googlies.

Mathews won the toss and put Zimbabwe into bat.

Hasaranga replaced Lahiru Madushanka with fast bowler Dushmantha Chameera and Sandakan coming in for Amila Aponso and Akila Dananjaya.

Zimbabwe looked rocky from the start. Solomon Mire, who scored his maiden one-day century in Friday's win, was out for zero after facing just five balls.

Hamilton Massakha scored

a patient 41 and Waller hit out for his late 38. But Zimbabwe never got to grips with Sri Lanka's spinners.

"We thought the wicket was a little bit different. Maybe 230 would have been a good score," said Zimbabwe captain Graeme Cremer. "It was just one of those days."

SCORECARD

Zimbabwe: H. Massakha c & b Guernsey 41, SF Mire c Dickwella b Prolly 6, C.R. Ervine c Dickwella b Prolly 1, D.M. Chameera c Dickwella b Guernsey 1, S. Mire c Dickwella b Prolly 1, D. Tiripano c & b Sandakan 9, MN Waller b de Silva 36, PJ Moor b Sandakan 11, AG Cremer 0-15-1, D.T. Chatara c & b Sandakan 0, Tendai Chatara c & b Sandakan 1, B. Chameera c & b Sandakan 1, S. Mire c Dickwella 1, P. Sandakan 75, R. de Silva 16, P. Sandakan 1, P.V.D. Chameera 5-0-2-0, P. Sandakan 1, MD. Gunathilaka 1-0-9-1, P.W. de Silva 1, D. Tiripano 1-0-6-0, S. Mire 1-0-4-0, S. Chameera 1-0-6-0, AG Cremer 9-1-0-4-1, SC Williams 3-0-20-0, RP. But 2-0-1-0. — Agencies

Eastbourne, July 2: Novak Djokovic clinched his first title since January with a 6-3, 6-3 victory over Gael Monfils in Saturday's Eastbourne final, while Karolina Pliskova lifted the women's trophy after defeating Caroline Wozniacki.

"I think it was a great decision to come here," Djokovic, whose form has dramatically failed off court, completed the career

titles at the French Open, told Eurosport.

"Coming to Eastbourne I obviously hadn't had as much success as in previous seasons, during the last six months."

The world number four will face Slovakia's Martin Kollar in the first round at Wimbledon.

don where he is a three-time former champion.

The Serb, who will have former players Andre Agassi and Maria Sharapova on his Wimbledon coaching team, spent only an hour and a quarter in taming the French second seed.

Djokovic, playing the week before Wimbledon for the first time since 2010, captained his 68th career title – but just the second this year – after downing Monfils for the 14th time in as many meetings.

He didn't drop serve, while breaking Monfils three times en route to his first grass-court title outside of Wimbledon.

Earlier, third seed Pliskova beat Danish sixth seed Wozniacki in 2011. The world number three was clinical in going one better than when she lost to Dominika Cibulkova in last year's final, becoming the first Czech to win the Eastbourne title since Jana Novotna in 1998.

The 25-year-old fired ten aces in an impressive serving display, as Wozniacki was unsuccessful on four break-point chances. —AFP

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"Coming to Eastbourne I obviously hadn't had as much success as in previous seasons, during the last six months."

The world number four will

face Slovakia's Martin Kollar in the first round at Wimbledon.

"I just wanted to play some

matches and to see how it goes

especially when I came from Czech Republic, I didn't practice much on grass,"

Pliskova said.

"That's what happened, and it

came out that I got the title. I

didn't really expect this start of

the grass-court season, but it

gave me a lot of confidence com-

ing to London."

Pliskova needed 80 minutes to

to win the trophy and become

the first top-10 player to win

the event since former Wimble-

ton champion Marion Bartoli in 2011. The world number

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as Wozniacki was unsuccessful on

four break-point chances. —AFP

Federer won't count out Wimbledon rivals

LONDON, July 2: Roger Federer insists he won't have an easy road to a record eighth Wimbledon crown despite the recent string of his title rivals.

Federer is the bookmakers' favourite to win Wimbledon for the first time since 2012 after landing the Australian Open title in January and then pulling off the French Open to remain fresh for his latest assault at the All England Club.

The 35-year-old's challenge could be helped by Andy Murray's hip injury, which prompted the reigning Wimbledon champion to withdraw from two exhibition matches this week after he was stunned in the Queen's Club first round by world number 90 Jordan Thompson.

The world junior champion, however, managed 78.69m and 79.52m in the next two attempts to settle for a fifth position.

Germany's Johannes Vetter

managed a distance of 88.74m to

clinch the gold medal. Czech Republic's Jakub Vrdlicka bagged the silver with a personal best throw of 88.02m while Olympic champion Thomas Rohrer of Germany finished third with a best effort of 87.23m. —PTI

"Depending how fit it is, if he's anything close to 100 per cent physically, I consider Andy one of the big favourites to win the

Queen's for Andy doesn't matter so much because I feel like he's one of the best players in the first week at Wimbledon.

"I don't worry too much for him there. He can play himself into shape hopefully for week two. It's the same for Novak and the same for Rafa. I think it's very even when we put it all out on the line."

"Look, Novak is just coming back from winning Eastbourne now. Rafa is coming in red hot on the clay."

"I see it positive for them rather than negative in some shape, which I'm sure people will try to see, that way I see that they are going to be tough to beat there."

Leyton Hewitt was the last man other than Federer, Nadal, Djokovic and Murray to win Wimbledon, back in 2002. There appears little chance of that changing this year and Federer, bidding to win his 19th Grand Slam title, agrees that the big four are still head and shoulders above the rest.

"Zverev and Kyrgios have shown what they can do, how good they can be. The likes of Raonic and Nishikori and Dimitrov I think are in a good spot right now where they can go very deep and nobody would really be surprised," he said. —AFP

"For me, everything that happened be-

tournament. It's that simple," Federer told reporters at Wimbledon.

"I don't want to talk about the Aus-

tralia A to boycott SA tour if no pay deal

SYDNEY, July 2: Players will boycott an Australia A tour of South Africa this month in an escalation of their bitter dispute with Cricket Australia unless a new pay deal is agreed, the Australian Cricketers' Association said today.

Ankit registered a similarly comfortable win over Indonesia's Minahira Reza to enter the quarterfinal. Awaiting him tomorrow is Kyrgyzstan's Egenberdi Ulu Adilet, who got a first-round bye.

Naveen defeated Kyrgyzstan's Yryskulov Erzhus to set up a clash with Huang Ru of China. Rui also got an opening-round bye.

The experienced Etash, who has competed in the World Youth Championships as well, sailed past Mongolia's Tsagambataar Munkhbaatar in his first round contest. —PTI

It leaves as many as 230 male and fe-

male players unemployed and threatens fixtures including this year's prestige tournaments.

"They don't intend to tour but the reality is they don't fly out of the country until Friday," Nicholson told reporters at the Aus-

tralia A tour.

"So the players are going to go into camp as planned and hopefully we can make some

progress with regards to the MoU."

"There would need to be a significant breakthrough on the key issue of the revenue sharing model."

CA said in response it would never force

any players to play for an Australian team.

"Australia A is a development tour which

gives players an opportunity to perform at

high level," CA said in a statement.

"It is therefore surprising that players

would elect not to tour; however CA has

never forced anyone to play for an Australian team who is unwilling to do so. CA remains ready to negotiate a new MoU and has again called on the ACA to show genuine flexibility and commence negotiations in the best interests of the game and the game," he said.

The players' union decision also includes

players who are on multi-year deals with

their respective State teams and who will

refuse to play without an MoU."

"It's not a easy thing to do... But we are very determined," said CA captain Hussain Khanji told reporters.

"We're still going to be training this week.

Hopefully something can be resolved, but if it's not, it's a tough decision that sort of has to be made," he said.

"Not to go is a sacrifice in some respects,

but we see the broader picture."

The ACA also warned that upcoming Aus-

tralia A tour to Bangladesh and India were also under threat. —AFP

dent could be termed as a breach of discipline," a BCCI source in the know of things told PTI on condition of anonymity.

When pointed out that coach and the captain were not interacting with each other during practice sessions, the official replied: "He was specifically asked to mention any incident worth reporting which may have affected the dressing room environment or morale of the team.

"Kapil Malhotra has submitted his report. At least there is nothing in the report which suggests that skipper Virat Kohli was ever ride to the coach or mention of any inci-

dent could be termed as a breach of discipline," a BCCI source in the know of things told PTI on condition of anonymity.

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India thrash Pakistan by 95 runs

DERBY (England), July 2: Left-arm spinner Ekta Bisht came to the fore with a stellar show as India crushed arch-rivals Pakistan by 95 runs in a low-scoring encounter to record their third successive victory in the ICC Women's World Cup here today.

After a couple of impressive outings by the batsmen, it was the turn of Bisht (10-2-18-5) and Co. to defend a meagre total of 169, skittling the opposition out for a lowly 74 in 38.3 overs.

India now have six points from three games and are at the top of the table.

It was a sweet revenge for the Indian eves, who were beaten at home when the two teams met in the ICC World T20 in Delhi, last year.

What looked like a sub-par score turned out to be a challenging one for Pakistani batters, who have never successfully chased more than 134 in a 50-over World Cup game.

They were all at sea against Ekta's arm balls. She removed Yousaf (1), Sidra Nawaz (0) and Iram Javed (0) in her first four overs to wreak havoc.

All three deliveries were almost identical where the batters played for the turn but it didn't turn much after pitching. She later came back to get a couple of wickets more.

Pakistan never recovered from that setback. Seemers Jhulan Goswami (1/12 in 5 overs) and young Mansi Joshi (2/9 in 6.1 overs) were also on target. Deepthi Sharma (1/21) and Harmanpreet Kaur (1/6) were economical as all the batsmen struggled to get going.

Opener Nahida Khan (23 off 62 balls) and skipper Sana Mir (29) were the only ones to reach double figures for Pakistan.

Indian skipper Mithali Raj praised Ekta for her performance.

"I am proud of Ekta's performance. Whenever she has been handed the new ball, she has performed. There were some anomalies when we lost the top-order (while batting). The partnership between Sushma Verma and Jhan Goswami towards the end was also important. When we got to a total of 169, I knew that if we could bowl well, it could be anybody's game," said Mithali.

Man-of-the-Match Ekta said: "The plan was to pin on balls, because we were confident of the target we set."

She said that she never had any problems bowling with the new ball.

"I don't face much of a problem bowling with the new ball. The track spun more than it had during our game against England. Irrespective of how the pitch is, my job is to bowl and take wickets and I know I can continue doing that for my team."

Earlier, Indian batters had a disappointing day as they could only manage a paltry 169 for 9 after electing to bat.

The Indian innings never gained momentum in their innings once in-form Smriti Mandhana (2) was dismissed cheaply. Worse, skipper Raj (8) and her deputy Harmanpreet Kaur (10) could not also score too many runs, making it difficult for the other players to accelerate.

Opener Poonam Raut (48) consumed 72 balls while Deepthi Sharma fared no better playing 63 balls for a sedate 28.

It was keeper Sushma Verma (33 off 35 balls), who used the long handle to get the team near 170-run mark.

One of the main reasons for India not being able to get past 200-run mark was because of a very slow fifth wicket partnership between Moni Meshram (6, 35 balls) and Harmanpreet (10, 23 balls).

They were together for 8 overs between 26.3 and 34.3 which yielded only 13 runs.

While Harmanpreet was finding it difficult to hit big as she is playing with a finger injury, Meshram just could not pick the singles.

This was the time when Pakistan's spinners were in operation.

SCORECARD

India: Poonam Raut c & b Nisha Verma, 47, Smriti Mandhana c Sana Mir b Dania Baig, 2, Deepthi Sharma c Sushma Verma b Nahida Khan, 29, Mithali Raj b Sana Mir 10, Harmanpreet Kaur c Sana Mir b Sadiya Yousaf 10, Mona Mestram Sadiya Yousaf 6, Sushma Verma c Diana Baig b Sadiya Yousaf 1, Deepthi Sharma c Diana Baig b Sadiya Yousaf 14, Mansi Joshi not out 4, Ekta Bisht run out 1, Poonam Yadav not out 6. **Extras:** (b 4, w 1, lbw 10, Toss: 9 wickets) 169. **Pakistan:** Nahida Khan 10-46-1, Diana Baig 10-3-28, Sushma Verma 10-1-26-4, Sana Mir 0-0-0-4, Sadiya Yousaf 10-1-28-4. **Wickets:** 17-2, 25-3, 36-6, 111-7, 121-8, 159-9, 161-10. **Bowling:** Amritsara Iqbal 10-4-6-1, Diana Baig 10-3-28, Sushma Verma 10-1-26-4, Sana Mir 0-0-0-4, Sadiya Yousaf 10-1-28-4. **Umpires:** Ayesha Zafar b Bishit 1, Nahida Khan v Ermera B Kaur 23, Javeria Khan ibw 1, Nahida Khan v Ermera B Kaur 10, Sadiya Yousaf 1, Diana Baig b Bishit 0, Sadiya Yousaf not out 3. **Extras:** (Wk) 6. **Total:** 169. **Target:** 264. **Over:** 74-4, 8-5, 9-51. **Bowling:** Jhulan Goswami 5-0-12-1, Ekta Bisht 10-2-9-2, Deepthi Sharma 6-1-21-1, Mansi Joshi 6-1-2-9, Poonam Yadav 5-1-8-0, Harmanpreet Kaur 2-0-6-1. — PTI

Pacquiao camp, social media slam judges after shock loss



Jeff Horn of Australia punches Manny Pacquiao of the Philippines during the WBO World Weighttitle fight in Brisbane, on Sunday.

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by any stretch!"

American football quarterback Aaron Rodgers of the Green Bay Packers was equally forthright.

"Boxing is a joke, and it proves it again tonight. Are you kidding me with those scorecards? #joke #rigged," Rodgers said on Twitter.

Baseball and NFL legend Deion Sanders said: "@manypacquiao was robbed! I'm

really upset right now. Really.

This is ignorant, God bless u Manny and all u do for your country & Truth."

The fight statistics seemed to back the belief that Pacquiao had done more than enough to win.

Broadcaster ESPN said that Pacquiao had landed 182 punches to 82 from the challenger over the 12 rounds in front of more than 51,000 fans in Horn's

home town of Brisbane.

Fortune, who once fought against Lewis and has been with Pacquiao since 2002, said Horn had been allowed to get away with a host of illegal tactics as he brawled his way to victory.

"That's what you get down here," he said of the tactics.

"You'll never get away with that anywhere else in the world. You'd be penalised points." — AFP

Aditi Ashok slips to Tied 27th at Women's PGA

OLYMPIA FIELDS (USA), July 2: Indian golfer Aditi Ashok dropped four bogeys

in the back nine in a round of two- over 73 to slip from overnight Tied 12th to Tied 27th in the third round of the KPMG Women's PGA Championship here.

The 19-year-old, who is playing only her second Major, was never able to settle down in the third round, after two successive bogies in the first two rounds.

She did four birdies, one on the front nine and three on the back nine, but two bo-

geys on front nine and another four on the return journey wrecked her card.

At two-under 211 for 54 holes, she is T-27 but eight shots behind co-leaders, Korea's Chella Choi (67) and American Danielle Kang (68) at 10-under each. — PTI



Veteran sports journalist Premadhar Sarma being felicitated by the Electronic Media Sports Journalists Association on the occasion of the World Sports Journalists Day, on Sunday.

Seminar on sports journalism

GUWAHATI, July 2: On the occasion of the World Sports Journalists Day the Assam Sports Journalists Association (ASJA) today stated that seminars on sports journalism at various places across the State will be organised.

In an initiative to attract more people towards sports journalism, seminars will be conducted by professionals. The initiative will be supported by the State Level Advisory Committee (SLAC) for Student and Youth Welfare. It will get underway in Guwahati on August 5 and youngsters below 20 years of age can participate in the seminars, stated a press release.

Bodousa Cup kicks off

SPORTS REPORTER

GUWAHATI, July 2: NF Railway Sports Club made a flying start with a resounding 7-0 victory against local outfit Star Sporting in the inaugural match of the Bodousa Cup at the Nurul Amin Stadium in Nagon today.

Sibra Narzary fired five salvos while Chayaram Basumatary and Santosh Siil added one each. For the losing team Pranjal Deka reduced the margin.

Assam Football Association secretary Ankur Dutta and Arunjoy Moran, secretary of the organising body, Bodousa Sports Club were present on the occasion.

Five State footballers – Bhagan Bharati, A Rahman, Abdul Matin, Rajesh Das and Ramajudin along with former national referee Manoranjan Dutta, who inaugurated the championship were honoured in the opening ceremony.

Today's match: Kardaguri, Talap vs AIMPS, Manipur

Would love to play on England county circuit again: Pujara

(who both play for Nottinghamshire) and former Nottinghamshire coach Peter Moores," he added.

"I discussed playing on different kinds of pitches and learnt about life on the county circuit,"



Pujara, who scored 233 runs from five innings, said.

This was his third county stint, after having previously played for Yorkshire and Derbyshire.

With a tour of Sri Lanka in line later this month, Pujara re-

called the series in 2015 when India won 2-1 after losing a closely contested first Test and said the century in the final Test at Colombo was a career-defining one for him.

The Saunashtra right-hander had been on the reserves and got a call-up for the third Test due to injuries to Murali Vijay and Shikhar Dhawan.

His unbeaten 145 in the first innings was one of the highlights of the memorable victory, which helped India win a series in Lanka after 22 years.

Pujara topped the batting charts in the 2016-17 home season with 1316 runs in 13 Tests at an average of 62.66, inclusive of four centuries and eight fifties. — PTI

Tickets for Vijender's bout go on sale

MUMBAI, July 2: The online ticket sales of Indian boxing star Vijender Singh's showdown with Chinese Zuklipak Maimaitiali in a double title fight next month started today.

WBO Asia Pacific Middleweight Champion Vijender Singh will face on the WBO Oriental Super Middleweight champion in a winners-all clash on August 5 at NSCI Dome in Mumbai. The tickets will be available on www.boxingnowshow.com.

The tickets are priced from Rs 1200-12,000 in different categories. Tickets for general stands are divided into two categories, Purple and Diamond.



mon Rs 12,000 respectively.

Speaking on fighting in Mumbai, Vijender Singh said, "I love the city of Mumbai, the people here are very welcoming, the vibe of this city is very exciting. I hope a lot of people come out

after a gap of 9 years. — PTI

I have to be at my best during World C'ship: Sindhu



CHENNAI, July 2: India's Olympic silver medallist shuttler PV Sindhu today said she is focused on doing well in the forthcoming World Championship in Glasgow and is working hard with her coaches to be in her best form during the prestigious tournament.

"It (World Championship next month) is a big event. I am looking forward to it and working hard for the tournament. It is not going to be easy, I have to be at my best," Sindhu said.

The Indian, currently ranked 5th in the world, has previously won bronze medals at the Championships in 2013 and 2014.

Having stolen the thunder from Saina Nehwal following her exploits in the Rio Games, Sindhu thus far has seen two Super Series titles (Indian Open and China Open) but is aware that the achievements come with a bigger responsibility.

"Of course, life has changed for me. Winning a silver medal was a huge moment for me. It has come

with a lot of responsibilities. I am expected to win (more) these days. I have to work hard and keep doing well in the tournaments ahead," she told PTI.

Gopichand, I have been associated with him for several years. Me and the other players have to be thankful to him, for his guidance. The

infrastructure is very good and the arrival of Indonesian coaches (Mulyo Handoyo and Hariawan) has been of great help," the ace shuttler said when asked about Gopichand's role in her development.

She gave a thumbs up to the good performance of the Indian male shuttlers in recent times with Kidambi Srikanth claiming back-to-back Super Series titles in Indonesia and Australia

and B Sai Prajnesh claiming his maiden Super Series title in Singapore (defeating Srikanth in the final).

"The men (shuttlers) have been doing very well, getting great results. They have been working very hard with the Indonesian coaches and that is paying off. In the years to come, many more strong players will emerge in men's section," Sindhu, who was here for a promotional event, said.

"Badminton has witnessed a spurt in recent times and the Indians doing well at the global level is a positive sign. The good work done by the players and coaches is bearing fruit," she pointed out.

Asked about her rivalry with Saina Nehwal, who blazed a trail on the women's circuit before Sindhu joined the big league, she said, "When we play matches, we are rivals. Off the court, we are friends. She trains in Bengaluru and me in Hyderabad. We have our individual styles and try to win when we meet in a match." — PTI

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