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## NEWS CAPSULE

### Flood situation

GUWAHATI, Sept 3: The floods spread to newer areas in Dhemaji district today while over 41,000 people are still stranded in six districts of Chirang, Cachar, Morigoan, Nagaon, Dhemaji and Golaghat. Currently 149 villages and over 5,500 hectares of crop areas are inundated. — PTI

### N Korea N-test

TOKYO, Sept 3: North Korea announced it detonated a thermonuclear device today in its sixth and most powerful nuclear test to date, a big step toward its goal of developing nuclear weapons capable of striking anywhere in the US. — AP  
(Details on Page 14)

### True violation

JAMMU, Sept 3: Pakistani troops today violated ceasefire twice by firing on forward posts across the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch and Kupwara districts forcing the Army to retaliate, officials said today. — PTI

### Girls rescued

RANGIYA, Sept 3: On specific inputs received from a scribe, Government Railway Police today rescued two teenage girls from a passenger train here. The girls hailing from Jorhat were later handed over to the district child protection committee by police. — Correspondent

The Assam Tribune on Internet  
<http://www.assamttribune.com> &  
<http://epaper.assamttribune.com>

## Union Cabinet reshuffled



Goyal gets Railways, 3 junior ministers promoted to Cabinet rank

President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi with new ministers at Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi on Sunday. — UNI

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: With a focus on delivery as he prepares for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi today handed key portfolios to ministers with "proven" track record and sprang a surprise by ele-

vating Nirmala Sitharaman as the first full-time woman Defence Minister.

In a major rejig of his council of ministers, Modi also promoted three other senior ministers — Piyush Goyal, Dharmendra Pradhan and Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi — to cabinet rank and in-

ducted nine new faces, including four former government ministers, as ministers of state.

The exercise raised the strength of the Union Council of Ministers from 73 to 76. Goyal, who has been praised for his work in the power sector, was given the

Railways Ministry, which has been facing criticism over a spate of accidents, prompting Modi to shift Suresh Prabhu to Commerce and Industry Ministry. Goyal will continue to head the Coal Ministry. In an overhaul of infrastructure ministries, Modi handed

important portfolios to two former IAS officers and one former diplomat, giving them independent charge and brought Nitin Gadkari in place of Uma Bharti in the Water Resources and Ganga Rejuvenation Ministry.

(See page 7)

## Gross irregularities in ASTC alleged

SANJOY RAY

take a call on this.

The copy of the letter accessed by this reporter also alleged that a private security agency that did not possess any valid licence was engaged without following the laid down rules to protect the ASTC assets besides maintaining law and order in the corporation's offices, workshops and other centres.

An alleged loss of Rs 25.56 lakh to the State exchequer due to non-adherence of the stipulated precondition of realising 50 per cent of the total cost of journey from 22,687

(See page 7)

However, sources in the Janata Bhawan said that the State government is yet to

## State Assembly session from today

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, Sept 3: Speaker Hifendra Nath Goswami will introduce some new features in the seven-day Assembly session that will begin tomorrow.

Every Tuesday, the 'zero hour' will be replaced by 'member hour' where two legislators will speak on issues relating to their constituencies, Assembly Principal Secretary Mrigendra Kumar Deka said. On the last day of Assembly session, a discussion — 'Speaker's Initiative' — will be held on a particular issue. "This time the topic is tea sector," he said.

The short notice question rules have also been amended. A legislator can submit questions seven days before the last day of the session. Earlier, it was ten days.

The session will see presentation of the list of Supplementary Demand for Grants and Supplementary Appropriation for the year 2017-18, voting and passing of Supplementary Demand and Supplementary Appropriation for 2017-18 and introduction, consideration and passing of the Assam Appropriation Bill, 2017.

Modi arrives in China to attend BRICS Summit

XIAMEN (China), Sept 3: Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived here today to attend the BRICS Summit during which he would look forward to having "productive discussions and positive outcomes" with leaders of the grouping to support the agenda for a stronger partnership among the member countries.

During his two day visit, Modi is also expected to hold a series of bilateral meetings including with Russian President Vladimir Putin and other BRICS leaders.

He is also expected to meet leaders of countries like Egypt, invited by China as part of the outreach exercise. China has invited Egypt, Kenya, Tajikistan, Mexico and Thailand as guest countries for the Summit.

"I look forward to building upon the results and outcomes of the Goa Summit. I also look forward to productive discussions and positive outcomes that will support the agenda of a stronger BRICS partnership under the chairmanship of China," the Prime Minister had said ahead of his visit to this Chinese city.

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## Sitharaman first full-time woman Defence Minister

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: In a big promotion, Nirmala Sitharaman today became the first woman to become a full-time Defence Minister of the country as she faced the challenge of speeding up modernisation of the three forces in her new role.

58-year-old Sitharaman, a Rajya Sabha member, is the second woman to take charge of the crucial ministry as Indira Gandhi, as the Prime Minister, had also held the portfolio in the seventies.

Her elevation is seen as reward for her good work as the Commerce Minister, Finance



Minister Arun Jaitley was handing the Defence Ministry after Manohar Parrikar quit to become the Goa's chief minister in March.  
(See page 7)

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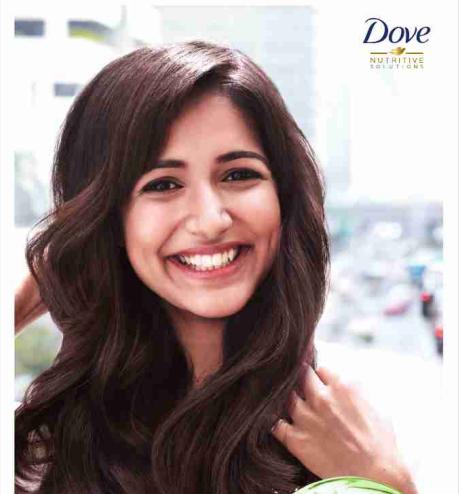
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## Shutdown continues, manhunt on for Gurung

DARJEELING (West Bengal), Sept 3: The situation in Darjeeling remained tense as the indefinite shutdown in the hills entered its 81st day today.

A massive search operation launched by the West Bengal Police for the abducting Gorkha Janmukti chief Bimal Gurung continued even today.

Since Friday, the police were coming Darjeeling hills and its adjoining areas for Gurung against whom a lookout notice had been issued for his alleged involvement in various cases, including a bomb blast in Kalimpong Police Station in which a civic volunteer was killed.

There are also cases under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) against him.

Protests by pro-Gorkhaland supporters demanding continuation of the shutdown and a separate State of Gorkhaland were organised in various parts

### Tamang dares Gurung to return to Darjeeling

DARJEELING (WB), Sept 3: Expelled GJM leader Binay Tamang today alleged that he was receiving death threats and challenged party chief Bimal Gurung to come out of hiding and return to Darjeeling.

Tamang, who said that no one has the right to expel him as he is the founding member of the Gorkha Janmukti Party (GJM), today wrote a letter to Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh requesting him to find a solution to the Darjeeling crisis.

"I am receiving death threats since the last few days. I feel that I too will meet the same fate as Madan Tamang, who was killed in 2010. Who are Bimal Gurung and Roshan Giri to expel me? I am the founding member of the party."

"It is very easy to deliver a lecture by hiding in some place. If Bimal Gurung and Roshan Giri have the guts, let them come back to the hills," Tamang said in a press conference. Tamang alleged GJM general secretary Roshan Giri is misleading Gurung in order to serve his own vested interests.

"They accused me of playing into the hands of State Government. But now they too have agreed to sit for talks with the State Government on September 12. Then what wrong did I do? Before announcing suspension of the shutdown, I had taken the permission of Bimal Gurung over the phone. This is an absolute lie that I did not take any permission," he said. - PTI

of the hills. Rallies were taken out in Darjeeling, Kurseong, Mirik, Sonada and Kalimpong.

Picketing by GJM supporters has been strengthened in several parts of the hills and posters and leaflets were distributed in support of the shutdown.

Barring medicine shops and hospitals, all the shops, business establishments, schools and colleges remained closed.

The shutdown in the hills is on after Gurung revoked party convenor Binay Tamang's decision of suspending it till September 12, when the next round of dialogue with the State Government is scheduled.

The GJM chief had also expelled Tamang on Friday on the charge of "violating the party line and indulging in anti-party activities".

The police and security forces maintained a strict vigil in order to avoid any untoward incident. - PTI

## Virbhadrappa's farmhouse attached by ED

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: A special court here has confirmed an Enforcement Directorate (ED) order to attach a farmhouse in connection with its money laundering probe against Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Virbhadrappa and his family.

The Central probe agency had attached the property in March in upmarket south Delhi's area of Dera Mandi near Mehrauli, alleging it was purchased "out of money laundered through shell firms".

The agency had issued a provisional attachment order for the farmhouse under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). It had said while the book value of the asset is Rs 6.61 crore, its market value is Rs 27.29 crore, per a valuation done by the Income Tax Department.

A recent order of Tushar V Shah, Member (Law), adjudicating authority of PMLA, said the asset was "involved in money

laundering". "I, therefore, hereby confirm the attachment of the properties made under sub-section (1) of Section 5 of PMLA," the order said.

"...The said attachment shall continue during the pendency of the proceedings relating to offence under the PMLA..." it said, confirming the ED order of March 31.

The farmhouse, the ED had said, is in the name of Ms Maple Destination and Dreamland Private Limited, a firm in which Singh's son Vikramaditya is a major shareholder and his daughter Aprajita a minor shareholder.

Both are also listed as the directors of the firm, it had said.

The ED had said its probe found that "illicit money of Singh was also invested in purchase" of the immovable asset.

"The farmhouse was purchased for an amount of Rs 1.20 crore as per registry value. The payment was made by two cheques of Rs 15 lakh each (Rs

30 lakh) and two cheques of Rs 45 lakh each (Rs 90 lakh).

"The investigation further revealed that a sum of Rs 5.41 crore was paid in cash to purchase the farmhouse. Investigation... Revealed that the funds had been provided through Vakamulla Chandrashekhar, Promoter/Director of Tarini Group of Companies, engaged in hydropower projects," the agency had said.

It said that "indeedly Chandrashekhar's company was awarded Saikohi plant in Chamba, Himachal Pradesh" and the cheque amount for purchase of the farmhouse was given from his personal bank accounts.

"He (Chandrashekhar's) had given a total of Rs 5.9 crore to Singh and family members out of which Rs 90 lakh was transferred from the account of Singh to his son Vikramaditya which was ultimately utilised for purchase of farmhouses by Ms Maple Destinations and Dreamland Private Limited," it had alleged. - PTI

lived between 1917 and 1930.

Kovind offered his floral tributes at Gandhiji's statue inside the Ashram, which is managed by the Sabarmati Ashram Preservation and Memorial Trust. Chairperson of the trust, Elieben Bhatt, along with trustees Kartikeya Sarabhai and Amrit Modi accompanied Kovind during his brief tour of the Ashram, which is celebrating 100 years of its establishment.

During his visit, Kovind planted a tree

### Army probe into missing man in Kupwara

Srinagar, Sept 3: The army said an inquiry was underway into allegations that a person went missing while another was tortured after being taken into custody by Army personnel in north Kashmir's Kupwara district on August 31.

"The Army has taken cognisance of the matter. It is under investigation," a Defence spokesman said here.

He said "action will be taken accordingly".

Protests broke out in Kupwara district on Friday as a man went missing and another was hospitalised in a critical condition after the duo were allegedly taken into custody by Army personnel on the previous night.

Residents of Kakar Diver in Lolab area of Kupwara staged a protest demanding to know the whereabouts of Manzoor Ahmad Khan who, along with Nasrullah Khan, was allegedly taken into custody by troops of 27 Rashtriya Rifles. - PTI

## Four killed in TN building collapse

TIRUCHIRAPPALLI (Tamil Nadu), Sept 3: At least four persons, including a five-year-old boy, were killed and five others critically injured in the collapse of a 70-year-old residential building here early today.

An 18-month-old girl of a deceased couple had a miraculous escape as she was pulled out safely from the debris hours after the collapse of the three-storey building.

The residents of the building were asleep when it collapsed around 3 am, police and fire brigade officials said.

The deceased were identified as Karthick (30), his son Harish (5) and the

couple - Palani and Rajathi, they said.

Chief Minister K Palaniswami condoled the deaths and announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh each to the next of kin of Kartick and his son Harish and said Rs 5 lakh will be deposited with the Tamil Nadu Power Finance and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited as relief for the 18-month-old girl of the deceased couple.

He said a monthly interest of Rs 4,062 from the deposit will be used for the child's monthly expenses.

The Chief Minister also announced Rs 50,000 as compensation for those injured. Officials said the ground floor of the

building, located on the Thanjavur Kula Street, adjoining the Rockfort area, could have got weakened due to heavy rains overnight, leading to the collapse.

A total of 20 people lived in the building.

One of the family was out from the city while two of its residents ran out for safety after they felt some vibration. The five injured persons were admitted to a hospital, where their condition is stated to be critical, the police said.

In all, 20 rescuers along with earth-moving machines were pressed into service and the removal of the rubble was almost over by late afternoon, they said. - PTI



A woman carries a child in a sling while begging for alms in Chandigarh, on Saturday. - UNI

### Staying positive essential for cancer patients

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: Bollywood actor Manisha Koirala firmly believes that body and mind are inter-connected and staying positive during her cancer treatment was "tough but achievable" for her.

Koirala, who has done many memorable films after debuting with *Saudagar* in 1991, said it was "shocking" to learn about her ailment, but she said she has learnt her lessons from her painful struggle to survive the disease.

"Earlier, I used to fall apart and crumble even while facing small challenges in life. But I had no choice this time. I had to face the situation positively and be brave and have faith in myself."

"I firmly believe that body and mind are inter-connected. Body reacts accordingly to a negative and a positive mind. It is really essential to stay positive for all those who are going through this challenge. It is tough, but is achievable," she said.

The actor was attending a programme titled 'Hausla-Fight Against Cancer' organised by NGO Gramene Seh Foundation.

She said she tries to motivate other patients to have hope and get the best treatment they can.

"When I meet cancer patients, the only thing that I tell them is to get better medical treatment. Every decade is a change of experience and mindset. In today's world there are many examples of cancer survivors. So one must have hope," she said.

Koirala has been associated with the NGO which has been working to support cancer patients across the country for the past three years. - PTI

## President on two-day Gujarat tour

AHMEDABAD, Sept 3: President Ram Nath Kovind today began his two-day Gujarat tour by visiting Mahatma Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram here.

Kovind, who is visiting Gujarat for the first time after becoming the President, was greeted by Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, Governor OP Kohli and other dignitaries at the city airport this afternoon. From the airport, the President went straight to the Sabarmati Ashram, where Mahatma Gandhi

on the premises of the Ashram. He also held talks with the trustees about the ongoing work of preserving the Gandhian era documents and letters.

The President also visited 'Friday Kunj', a house inside the Ashram where Gandhiji and his wife Kasturbai once lived. Before leaving, Kovind also wrote a message in the visitors' book outside Friday Kunj.

"It is a matter of great honour and privilege for me to be on the sacred

precincts of the Sabarmati Ashram, epitomising the globally cherished Gandhian values of truth and non-violence, which continue to be as relevant today as they were in the past," Kovind wrote.

"Join the nation in paying tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, whose teachings and ideals are an eternal source of inspiration and strength not only for India, but also for the entire world," the message further read. - PTI

### Call to clean rivers on priority basis

THANE, Sept 3: Eminent water activist Rajendra Singh urged cleaning of rivers

on a priority basis and emphasised the need to educate the present generation about the importance of water bodies.

The Ramon Magsaysay Award-winning campaigner was speaking at an international conference, where speakers also called for a ban on building hotels and houses within 1 km radius of the river banks in the country.

The speakers said the Centre should take up steps to improve quality of crops and increase the agriculture productivity.

The conference, organised by Govardhan Eco Village, set up by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) in Wada taluka near here, urged the state industrial development corporations to construct special dams for industries and demanded a ban on hotels, tourism activity and housing develop-

ment within 1 km radius of the river banks.

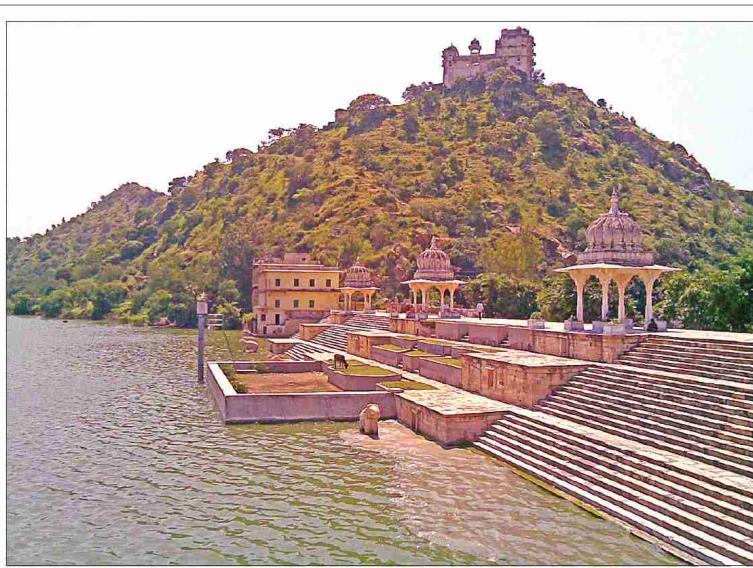
Academicians, policy-makers, scientists and NGOs from India and abroad took part in the two-day seminar on Climate Change Adoption for Sustainable Development", held on August 27 and 28.

The participants harped on the need to ban hazardous fishing activities and prevent discharge of harmful effluents and town sewage of solid waste into the rivers.

Singh, popularly known as the 'Waterman of India', and ISKCON spiritual leader Radhanath Swami Maharaj, noted that rivers were the lifeline of the country and there was an urgent need to protect them.

No intervention in the name of development should obstruct, pollute, erode or result in adverse impact on ecology and bio-diversity, they said.

Both the speakers said modern technology should be used for desilting of rivers and dams. - PTI



A view of Jaisamand Lake in Udaipur, on Saturday. - UNI

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Prince Albert II and his wife, Princess Charlene of Monaco, arrive with their twins Prince Jacques, Princess Gabriella and an unidentified child to take part in the traditional Monaco's picnic in Monaco on Friday. - UNI

## Massive evacuation, rescue ops under way in Texas

HOUSTON, Sept 3: Massive evacuation and rescue operations continue to take place in Texas that has been battered by Hurricane Harvey, one of the most destructive storms in American history that claimed over 50 lives.

More than 185,000 homes were damaged and 9,000 destroyed as 42,000 people remain in shelters amid overflowing rivers and reservoirs, Texas officials said.

Amidst all this, death toll has crossed 50, Houston Chronicle quoted local officials as saying.

"We just continue to pray that once the water starts receding and we're able to do secondary searches and complete assessments of the interior of homes and businesses that the body count – that we know will rise – doesn't rise significantly," Houston Police chief Art Acevedo said.



Harvey made landfall as a Category 4 hurricane on August 25 in Texas, then went back out to sea and landed off the coast as a tropical storm for days.

The storm brought five straight days of rain totaling close to 52 inches at one location, the heaviest tropical downpour ever recorded in the continental US.

One week after Harvey roared into the Gulf Coast, residents of Texas city struggle with no drinking water, fires at a stricken chemical plant, curfews, and more evacuations.

Fresh mandatory evacuation has been issued for west Houston residents who live along Buffalo Bayou and have water in their homes should leave, Mayor Sylvester Turner said yesterday.

"Turner said engineers believe water has been released from the Addicks and Barker reservoirs in west Harris County and it will continue for at least 10 days and could last as long as 15 days."

He said personal safety and the strain on first responders are the primary reasons for the evacuation request. There are 4,700 dwellings in the flooded area, including houses and apartments.

An estimated 156,000 dwellings in Harris County – more than 10 per cent of all structures – were damaged by flooding, according to the flood control district.

Dangers remain as the water recedes as mud can cause coughing and asthma attacks, making it dangerous for people with chronic breathing conditions.

Experts have been urging residents to dry out their homes as soon as possible. Waterlogged material such as carpet and drywall must be removed. - PTI

## Record-breaking astronaut Peggy Whitson lands safely on Earth

WASHINGTON, Sept 3: NASA astronaut Peggy Whitson, the first female International Space Station commander, who broke multiple space records, has safely landed on Earth along with her crewmates, the US space agency said today.

Whitson's return marks the completion of a 288-day mission that began last November and spanned 222.2 million miles and 4,623 orbits of the Earth – her third long-duration mission on the station.

During her latest mission, Whitson performed four spacewalks, bringing her career total to 10. With a total of 665 days in space, Whitson holds the US record and places eighth on the all-time space endurance list.

Her crewmate Jack Fischer of NASA, who launched in April, completed 136 days in space, during which he conducted the first and second spacewalks of his career.

The mission landed safely in the remote town of Dzhezkazgan in Kazakhstan.

While living and working aboard the

## 'Iran tests home-grown air defence system'

TEHRAN, Sept 3: Iran has tested its home-grown air defence system, designed to match the Russian S-300, the head of the Revolutionary Guards' air defence has said.

"In parallel with the deployment of the S-300, work on Bavar-373 system is underway," Farzad Esmaili told state broadcaster IRIB late Saturday.

"The system is made completely in Iran and some of its parts are different from the S-300. All of its subsystems have been completed and its missile tests have been conducted."

Bavar (which means "belief") is Tehran's first long-range missile defence system, and is set to be operational by March 2018, he added.

In 2010, Iran began manufacturing Bavar-373 after the purchase of the

S-300 from Russia was suspended due to international sanctions.

Russia resumed the sale following the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers which lifted sanctions, and Iran's S-300 defence system became operational in March.

On Sunday,

state television aired the first footage from a "secret" drone base in an undisclosed desert location, where dozens of different types of unmanned aircraft were lined up.

"If necessary, a great number of Iran's high-speed eagles (drones) will



## Japan princess' engagement with commoner!

TOKYO, Sept 3: Japan's Princess Mako and her fiancé – a commoner – announced their engagement Sunday, a match which will cost the princess her royal status according to a law that highlights the male-dominated nature of Japan's monarchy.

Like all female imperial family members, Mako, who is Emperor Akihito's eldest granddaughter, forfeits her status upon marriage to a commoner under a controversial tradition. The law does not apply to royal males. But at a televised press conference held to an-

nounce her engagement, she told the nation that she felt "really happy".

"I was aware since my childhood that I'll leave a royal status once I marry," she said. "While I worked to help the emperor and fulfill duties as a royal family member as much as I can, I've been cherishing my own life."

Her fiancé, Kei Komuro, a telegraphic 25-year-old who works at a law firm and once won a tourism promotion contest to be crowned "Prince of the Sea", said he had proposed to her more than three years ago.

He described Mako as someone who quietly watches over him "like the moon".

The princess said his smile was "like the sun".

The announcement had originally been planned for July but the couple decided to postpone it out of consideration for a southern region hit by heavy rains and flooding in the month.

An official of the Imperial Household Agency said their wedding will take place after the summer of 2018. Mako, 25, is the eldest daughter of

Princess Akishino, Akihito's second son.

The law removing her royal status upon marriage does not apply to male royals, with Akihito and both his sons wedded to commoners, who are now part of the monarchy. The news of the engagement has intensified a debate on whether the law should be changed so women born into the imperial family can continue in their royal roles.

That could help increase the number of potential male heirs to a monarchy that does not allow females to ascend the Chrysanthemum Throne. - AFP

## Nepal-India joint military exercise begins



KATHMANDU, Sept 3: India and Nepal today began their joint military exercise in the western part of the Himalayan country, focusing on counter-terrorism and forest fighting operations.

The exercise - Surya Kiran

- was being participated by around 300 troops each side in Rupandehi district.

Senior Nepali Army officer Rajendra Karki inaugurated the exercise, according to a statement by the army.

The 12th edition of Nepal-

India joint military exercise will conclude on September 16.

According to the Indian Army officials, the Surya Kiran is the largest joint exercise in terms of troop participation.

The battalion-level joint

training between the two armies will focus on counter-terror operations in mountainous terrain by facilitating interoperability.

Disaster management and joint operations for disaster relief will also be a part of the exercise. The 11th edition of the joint exercise was held in Pithoragarh in Uttarakhand.

The Nepali Army said the joint exercise will provide the two armies a platform to exchange experiences, ideas and skills.

"The joint military exercises will further strengthen friendly relations existing between the two countries for centuries and will promote mutual understanding between the two armies," it said.

Surya Kiran series of exercises are held alternately in India and Nepal. - PTI

of US, Asia

VATICAN CITY, Sept 3: Pope Francis has prayed for those affected by floods in Texas, Louisiana and southern Asia. Addressing faithful in St. Peter's Square, Francis on Sunday prayed for comfort for the US communities hit by a hurricane and "exceptional rains."

Francis said he was joining in the suffering of residents of Texas and Louisiana and cited the "victims, thousands of homeless and the enormous property damage."

He said he was praying to Mary, Jesus' mother, "the consoler of the afflicted," so that God grants "the grace of comfort for our brothers who have been sorely tried."

He also renewed his "spiritual closeness" to those in southern Asia still suffering from the consequences of recent extensive flooding there. - AP

"I am not sure what the future holds for me personally, but I envision myself continuing to work on spaceflight programs," she said.

"My desire to contribute to the spaceflight team as we move forward in our exploration of space has only increased over the years," she added.

Among their scientific exploits, Whitson and Fischer supported research into the physical changes to astronauts' eyes caused by prolonged exposure to a microgravity environment.

They also conducted a new lung tis-

sue study that explored how stem cell work in the unique microgravity environment of the space station, which may pave the way for future stem cell research in space.

Additional research included an antibody investigation that could increase the effectiveness of chemotherapy drugs for cancer treatment, and the study of plant physiology and growth in space using an advanced plant habitat.

Expedition 53 continues operating the station, with Randy Bresnik of NASA in command, and Sergey Ryazanskiy of Roscosmos and Paolo Nespoli of ESA (European Space Agency) serving as flight engineers.

The three-person crew will operate the station until the arrival of NASA astronauts Mark Vande Hei and Joe Acaba, and Alexander Misurkin of Roscosmos.

Vande Hei, Acaba and Misurkin are scheduled to launch September 12 from Kazakhstan. - PTI



At the age of 57, Whitson is also the oldest female astronaut in the history of space exploration.

They also conducted a new lung tis-

## North Korea nuke test poses threat to US, says Trump

WASHINGTON, Sept 3: US President Donald Trump on Sunday said the latest nuclear test by North Korea posed a danger to China, which is trying to help but with little success," Trump tweeted.

North Korea is a rogue nation which has become a great threat and embarrassment to China, which is trying to help but with little success," Trump tweeted.

He also warned South Korea that its strategy for dealing with Pyongyang had been a failure. "South Korea is finding, as I have told them, that their talk of appeasement with North Korea will not work, they only understand one thing!" Trump said.

The explosion caused a 6.3-magnitude earthquake and North Korea state media confirmed that a bomb with "unprecedented power" had been successfully tested on the orders of



19 students died in Nepal floods: official

KATHMANDU, Sept 3: At least 19 students have died in the widespread flooding in Nepal, officials said today.

According to a spokesperson of the Ministry of Education, the students died over the past few weeks and were mostly from the southern districts, including the worst-hit Chitwan and Makwanpur.

Nearly 500 school buildings have been damaged due to the monsoon-triggered floods and landslides, officials said, adding the damage in Jhapa and Sunamganj districts were yet to be assessed.

The ministry said that most of the people affected by the flooding have been taking shelter in the schools.

Some 38 schools in Saptari district have incurred losses of Rs 20 million while 26 schools in Dhamashu have suffered losses to property worth Rs 6.6 million due to the natural disaster.

More than 150 people were killed in Nepal this year. - PTI

**Third charge expires against fugitive Thai Red Bull heir**

BANGKOK, Sept 3: A third criminal charge against the fugitive heir to Thailand's Red Bull fortune over a fatal hit-and-run expired today but prosecutors said it would not affect their heavily-criticised attempts to bring him to justice.

Worayuth Yoovidhya, better known as "Boss", is wanted for drunk driving his Ferrari into a police officer riding a motorcycle in Bangkok in 2012, dragging the officer to his death.

After years giving prosecutors the run around, the 32-year-old billionaire has become an emblem for the impunity enjoyed by the rich and connected in unequal Thailand.

Earlier this year he fled the kingdom after an arrest warrant was finally issued following a series of no shows at police interviews.

Worayuth initially faced four charges: speeding, drunk driving, fleeing the scene of an accident and causing death by dangerous driving.

The statute of limitations on fleeing the scene of an accident, which carried up to six months in jail, expired on Sunday. Speeding and drunk driving have already run out.

He can now only be prosecuted for causing death by dangerous driving which does not expire until 2027 and carries up to 10 years in jail.

"It will not affect any request for extradition," Lieutenant General Somnuk Siengkong told reporters on Saturday.

Interpol has issued a "Red Notice" international arrest notice for Worayuth, whose whereabouts is still unknown.

His private jet was seen in Singapore shortly after he fled and his family are known to own properties in London.

Red Bull has repeatedly declined to comment saying the matter is private. - AFP





## B Borooah College to host int'l seminar

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, Sept 3: The B Borooah College will host the XI International Geographical Union (IGU) Commission Seminar cum 29th Biennial Conference of the North East India Geographical Society (NEIGS) from February 8 to 10 next year.

The focal theme of the seminar has been selected as "Environment and Sustainable Livelihood".

The seminar will be organised in collaboration with the five IGU commissions viz., IGU Commission on Biogeography and Biodiversity, IGU Commission on Land Use and Land Cover Change, IGU Commission on Local and Regional Development, IGU Commission on Geography of Governance and IGU Commission on Heritage and Soil and Water Assessment.

An organising and advisory committee has been formed with professors, eminent academicians and scholars from different institutions of India and abroad, heads of State and Central government departments and NGOs for smooth functioning of the event.

The event will be attended by Professor Yukio Hinnanya, Hokkaido University of Japan and president of IGU, and Professor Elena dell'Agne, University of Milano and vice president of IGU along with many other eminent scientists from abroad.

The organising committee has invited research papers from academicians and researchers from various disciplines under 21 sub-themes under environment and sustainable livelihood for oral and poster presentation. Intending participants can submit their abstracts on or before October 31 through online submission at [iguguwahatih2018.org](http://iguguwahatih2018.org) or may contact Dr Nripendra Ram Kalita and Dr Dhanjali Deka, joint convenor of the organising committee.

Dr Satyendra Nath Barman, Principal of B Borooah College and president of the organising committee, has appealed to the scholars of the State to share their suggestions and views to make the event a success.

# 6,172 TET qualifiers get appointment letters

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, Sept 3: "Teachers must commit themselves to the cause of creating capable citizens for the country as primary school teachers are the agents of change for the society who can instill good qualities in the students from a nascent stage," Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal today said while taking part as the chief guest in the ceremony for distributing appointment letters to 6,172 TET-qualified teachers at elementary schools under Sarba Siksha Abhiyan, Assam, at Veterinary College Playground, Kanapara in the city.

Urging the newly appointed teachers to take up the responsibility of spreading light of education in the far flung and remote areas of the State, Sonowal said that teaching is not a mere profession but an opportunity to serve the society and to become partners in nation building by shaping the future generations of the country and he urged the teachers to perform their duties with *gyan* (knowledge), *bhakti* (devotion) and *boiragi* (sacrifice).

"For building a society based on equality where all people are empowered to lead a life of dignity and to meet modern day challenges like corruption and increasing crimes, the education system



Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and Education Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma handing over an appointment letter to a TET qualifier in Guwahati on Sunday. — UB

must produce citizens with high moral values and integrity," Sonowal said.

Saying that the government is striving to facilitate an environment for growth and economic progress in the State so that meritorious and brilliant students do not need to go outside the State for finding

employment and live a better life, Sonowal informed that State government's plans to build International Trade Centre in Guwahati with twin towers of 65 floors and expansion of the Guwahati city for creating State Capital Region are steps towards making Guwahati the gateway to

southeast Asia. The Trade Centre will bring global industrial players to the State who will set up their bases here for doing business in southeast Asia and it will create a lot of employment opportunities for the youth of the State, Sonowal said.

Reiterating Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for the Northeast, he said to become the new engine of growth for the country, Chief Minister Sonowal said that some elements are trying to foment trouble in the State by inciting the people of different religious faiths and linguistic groups against each other and he called on the people to maintain age-old peace and harmony to defeat all such designs of forces inimical to the State's growth and development.

"It was our electoral promise to recruit 28,000 TET-qualified teachers and we are on our way to fulfil that promise," Sonowal said, while informing that an ACS Training Centre would be set up at Umrasang in Dima Hasao district covering an area of 1,000 bighas which would be able to provide training to not only Assam Civil Service officers, but also to officers of other State civil services as well.

Education Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that till now 17,000 TET-qualified teachers have been recruited in three phases and another 10,000 teach-

ers would be given appointment on September 8, 2017. He expressed happiness that TET has made the teacher recruitment process in the government schools completely transparent and eliminated all scopes for corruption from the system.

Owing all TET-qualified elementary school teachers to enrol themselves at the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) website by September 15, 2017, for obtaining DElEd (Diploma in Elementary Education) within March 2019, Sarma stated that without the diploma, all those teachers working in the State would have to lose their jobs as Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, has mandated teachers to have DElEd as minimum qualification for teaching from April 1, 2019.

A 'One Day Orientation Programme' for newly recruited TET-passed teachers of elementary education was also organised by Sarba Siksha Abhiyan, Assam, in collaboration with Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University.

Commissioner and Secretary of Elementary Education Department, Pritam Saikia; Commissioner and Secretary of Secondary Education Department, RC Jain; Mission Director SSA, Assam, Aruna Rajora; Vice-Chancellor of KKHOU, Hitesh Dekar, were also present on the occasion among others.

## 'Green Corridor' provided to infant battling rare disease

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, Sept 3: For the first time, vehicular traffic was brought to a standstill for nearly half an hour in one of the busiest stretches of the city to make way for the free movement of an ambulance carrying an ailing five-month-old infant to the Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport from where the baby boy was airlifted to New Delhi for advanced treatment.

Green Corridor was set up for the first time in the city along the nearly 36 kilometres stretch from the Pratiksha Hospital located at VIP Road (Borbari), where the infant was admitted, to the airport via National Highway 37.

Snigdha Bhuyan, who was critically ill, was flown to New Delhi in an air ambulance for his treatment at the Sir Gangaram Hospital.

The ambulance left the Pratiksha Hospital around 10.30 am and after

traversing a distance of over 36 kilometres in about 23 minutes, it reached the airport. The air ambulance took off at around 11.50 am.



The ailing child who hails from Biswanath Chariali was accompanied by his parents in the air ambulance.

Guwahati Police Commissioner Hiren Nath said there was a request for facilitating green corridor and accordingly "we did so as it was a genuine case of urgency and the child needed advanced treatment".

Nath, acknowledging the support of the people in general for the cause, said Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal himself was following the development.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Amanjee Kaur, who supervised the entire movement, said, "The ambulance after leaving the hospital took around 23 minutes to reach the airport."

The entire route was freed of any other vehicular movement as per the norm of green corridor and the vehicles moving on the other side of the road too were stopped to avoid any kind of noise pollution during the time when the ambulance made its way.

Earlier this year in March, when an eight-day-old baby from Dibrugarh was also taken to Delhi for emergency treatment, a similar green corridor was created in the national capital at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention.



Kathak danseuses Meghranjani Medhi and Moroni Medhi performing at the Sursangam festival at Rabindra Bhawan in Guwahati on Sunday. — UB Photos

## Workshop on solid waste management

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, Sept 3: A two-day workshop under the Faculty Development Programme of the AICTE-NEQIP on 'Sustainable solid waste management practices' was held on August 31 and September 1, which was organised by the Department of Chemical Engineering of the Assam Engineering College (AEC), Guwahati.

According to a press release, Prof Tapan Jyoti Sarma, associate professor of Chemical Engineering, Assam Engineering College, delivered the welcome speech. Ajay Kalamdhad, associate professor of the Department of Civil Engineering, IIT Guwahati, was the chief guest on the occasion, who delivered the keynote address.

In his speech, he addressed the key issues in solid waste management with reference to the Guwahati city and the North-Eastern states.

Dr Kalamdhad, with his vast experience in the field of solid waste management, highlighted the importance of segregation of organic waste at source, and thus preventing it from

going to the landfill sites.

"The organic waste is the main culprit behind all the foul smells, and leachate and green house gas emission from the landfill sites, which affects the groundwater and the environment," asserted.

In an audio visual, he touched upon the harsh reality of the solid waste management scenario in the city and the pathetic conditions of the rag pickers who are cleaning up the trash produced by the urban dwellers of Guwahati.

He sent a strong message to the urban local bodies that until and unless they restructure the solid waste handling system, dangerous days are ahead of the citizens. In his speech, he also appealed to the citizens to act responsibly in handling waste to save this beautiful city from further damage.

In the second technical session, Dr Kalamdhad elaborated on the biological treatment of organic fractions of the waste to produce compost, which can pave the way for a revolution in organic farming in the State.

There was a practical demonstration on composting, in the afternoon session, which was conducted by Dr

Kalamdhad's Research Group.

The last session of the first day of the workshop was chaired by DR Rabindra Singh, retired ACS officer, who has served as an adviser to the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC). He delivered his talk on solid waste collection and treatment in the city. He touched upon the core issues in solid waste handling in the city and explained the solid waste handling rules.

The final day of the workshop started with an elaborate talk by Dr Amar Jyoti Kashyap, chief functionary of ENVIRON group, Guwahati. Dr Kashyap put emphasis on practising the art of organic kitchen gardening by one's own generated waste by showcasing his invention of waste assimilator.

He blamed the multilayered plastic used in shampoo sachets and the like which pose real challenges in recycling. His talk was followed by another interactive session led by Chanmud Bhadury, retired engineer of the Pollution Control Board, Assam (PCBA), who gave a detailed account of the proposed waste management plant in Dibrugarh district. He also discussed the policy issues related to

waste management.

Partha Pratim Phukan, Director of Fresh Air Waste Management Services Private Ltd, which deals with disposal of biomedical waste (hospital waste) generated by various health-care facilities of Kamrup (Metro), Kamrup, Nagaon and Nalbari districts, delivered the next lecture.

He gave an elaborate presentation on how to segregate various types of biomedical wastes by referring to biomedical waste handling rules, 1998.

This was followed by a talk by Dr Pradip Baishya, assistant professor of Mechanical Engineering, AEC, who spoke on various issues related to waste segregation. He showcased his patent on the waste segregator, a vessel of very simple design which can come very handy for segregating the dry waste and wet waste at household level.

The last lecture was delivered by the coordinator of the workshop, Dr Ujwala Hujuri, assistant professor of Chemical Engineering, AEC. Dr Hujuri spoke on zero waste philosophy, which when implemented by an individual can go a long way in waste reduction.

Ganeshpara, Near Essar Petrol Pump, Guwahati -25.

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Sd/- Tilak Ch. Das, Advocate

TILAK CHANDRA DAS,  
ADVOCATE  
Gauhati High Court

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Sd/- Tilak Ch. Das, Advocate



**MESSAGE FOR TODAY**

To avoid criticism do nothing, say nothing, be nothing.

— ELBERT HUBBARD

**Balancing act**

The ordinary person of the street does not quite know why the national media gets so worked up every time there is a prospect of changes to the Union Cabinet, aptly designated as a 'reshuffle', as though it were a pack of cards. Speculations grow rife, opinions are aired and the last drop of excitement is sought to be extracted from the exercise. Yet the fact remains that no single individual, ensconced at the top of a well structured heap, can work miracles with any department. All that she or he can do is to work to the best of capability and leave the rest to the powers that be, in the current case Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his lieutenant Amit Shah. Such a truth is reflected in the fate of Suresh Prabhu, who has had his Railways portfolio taken away from him, though no one can even theoretically assert that a Union Minister is 'responsible' for the spate of railway accidents that had taken place recently. It is unlikely, given the pathetic state of the Indian Railways, that his replacement, Piyush Goel, would end his tenure with a clear record, but then luck also has a great role to play in ensuring who 'performs' how! This is why it is difficult to state with certainty what impact would be made by the induction of experienced professionals into the Cabinet.

Clearly, in doing so, the PM has attempted a balancing act between political expediencies and capability and experience. The big four, Home, Finance, Foreign Affairs and Road Transport, have not been tinkered with, though Jaitley's Defence portfolio has been given to Nirmala Sitharaman at his own request. Bringing in individuals like Hardik Singh Puri, former Foreign Service officer, and RK Singh, former Home Secretary, will to an extent serve to play up the experience factor. However, it is not all 'P' for P' — passion, proficiency, professional and political acumen for progress, since the Government currently confronts some serious issues which have to be handled politically. Thus the thrust has been towards giving greater representation for MPs of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Karnataka, which go to the polls next year, as well as attempting to increase BJP presence in States such as Kerala. Similarly, Modi must be keeping the 2019 general elections in mind in opting for individuals like Virendra Kumar who is a prominent Dalit face in the BJP, or the elevation of Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi to Cabinet rank in an unapologetic gestures to please alienated communities. It is also not clear whether the ignoring of NDA allies like Shiv Sena, JD (U) and AIADMK is deliberate and by mutual consent; but the reality might well be that the BJP feels confident enough to go it alone in future elections.

**'Ease' of business**

Even as successive governments in the State keep shouting over the rooftops about the 'ease' of doing business in Assam, the picture on the ground tells a tale in stark contrast. As per a NITI Aayog assessment conducted between April 2015 and April 2016, all the parameters of ease of doing business — be it power availability or clearance of business proposals — are depressing. While the power shortage per month at 156 hours in Assam is more than three times the national average of 46 hours, the average gestation period for getting construction permission in Assam at 270 days is more than double the national average of 112 days. Similarly, it takes an average of 248 days to set up a business in Assam whereas the same consumes just 118 days (national average). And it is as less as 63 and 67 days in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh respectively. We do not need any further proof to see the reality of industrialization in the State. This is a serious issue and rather than taking solace in attributing the ills to previous regimes, the State Government should do the spadework for facilitating an enabling environment for prospective investors and development of entrepreneurship among the local youths.

For creating the ideal industrial climate, it is imperative that the absence of industrial infrastructure is addressed at the earliest. Much as we talk about industrialization or promotion of trade and commerce, things are unlikely to improve as long as we continue to struggle even with a basic prerequisite like power. A quick single-window clearance is another must for attracting private investment. As we now have the Assam Ease of Doing Business Act, it should be ensured that the legislation actually helps investors to set up their business in a hassle-free manner. It also calls for a mechanism that can fix accountability in the event of any undue delay in clearing proposals. The youth of the State, too, need to shed their typical mindset of hankering after government jobs and learn to develop entrepreneurial skills. The Government should act as a catalyst here and facilitate setting up of institutes that can promote entrepreneurial skills through training and market linkage. The time has come to give a serious thought to tapping the market that the neighbouring South-east Asian nations offer. The Act East Policy, which envisages establishing surface and air links between the North-east and South-east Asia, would do well to give thrust on developing our traditional industries in a manner that the products can capture international market. There are quite a few areas replete with possibilities such as tourism, handloom and handicraft, horticulture, food processing, etc., that can be turned into potent tools for effecting economic resurgence. These industries do not call for heavy investment and are non-polluting and labour intensive. Since the North-east is naturally suited for such ventures, the need is to tap the potential through capacity building and promotion.

# The misadventure called demonetization

■ Shibdas Bhattacharjee

**A**fter months of dilly-dallying, the Reserve Bank of India has finally come out with the figure that nearly 99% of the currency notes demonetized in November 2016 have come back to the banking system. The total value of the demonetized currency comprising Rs 500 and Rs 1000 notes was Rs 15.44 lakh crore, of which Rs 15.28 lakh crore have already come back to the banking system. Now it is official that the so-called courageous, unprecedented and biggest currency reform initiated by the Modi Government has flopped which has brought the Indian economy onto the verge of a collapse. Things became evident from what had happened so far since November 8 last year. This is evident today that demonetization has inflicted a heavy blow to the informal economy, and boosted unemployment among the poorest apart from causing massive hardships for the common people. Demonetization also caused the deaths of 103 persons. Thus the annual report of the Reserve Bank of India is only a confirmation of what has been apprehended so far, that the move of currency change will misfire no matter whatever logic provided in support of the decision.

This is the time Indians try to remember the assurance given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 8, 2016 and afterwards. The PM appealed to the nation to keep patience and wait for just two months. People responded positively. A single decision compelled the

whole nation to stand before the banks and ATMs for hours together. In fact, the decision changed the daily routine of many Indians as waiting for exchanging money and getting the new currency became a compulsion that rescheduled their day-to-day activities. Things became tough in the rural areas. Trade of seasonal crops almost stopped. Nevertheless, people standing in the long queues before the banks and ATMs affirmed that they were ready to face this hardship for the larger interests of the nation.

Now the basic question obviously is: What have the people got in return? This should have made the Modi Government accountable. But just the opposite has happened. Even after the RBI's shocking revelation, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley is not ready to accept the reality. Rather he has expressed

doubt on the efficiency and intelligence of not only the ordinary Indians but the renowned economists in the country to understand the inner-lying ramifications of the RBI report. The Finance Minister wants that the Indians should rather look into his data and try to heed his logic like connecting more people with the banking system, increased rate of cashless economy and collective tax payers and so on. This means the Finance Minister is trying to shift the focus from the prime issues and the set destination for

which the Government took the drastic step of demonetization with the people extending overwhelming support considering it a noble mission!

The Government had three stated objectives for demonetization, i.e., to curb black money, to check fake currency and stop terror funding. But all these objectives have miserably failed. In fact, the concept of black money and existence of a parallel economy in this country

with the high denomination notes after demonetization and the Government neither has a policy nor mechanism to control this. Also, the financial loss of the Reserve Bank is estimated at Rs 21,000 crore in printing the new currency notes against the Rs 16,000 crore old currency that have come back as the fallout of demonetization. Condition of the banks has worsened considering the customer service. A scheme was announced in the name of Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, an amnesty for the black money holders in which only Rs 5,000 crore have been deposited so far. The Government also admitted that the growth rate began to decrease from December 2016. Thus, from every aspect, whether monetary, black money and the economic growth rate, demonetization has miserably failed to deliver.

The report card of demonetization revealed by the RBI has raised two important questions related to economy and morality and the Government must have to answer these in the days ahead. One important question is: Is this logical to interpret the entire cash economy as black economy in India? This question arises as there is a tradition in India to save cash for different personal purposes and meet the emergency needs. Other point is that the RBI report has shaken the confidence of the ordinary Indians regarding black money. After all, if 99% old cur-

## Doklam and the Chinese agenda in Australia

■ Rekha Bhattacharjee

**W**hile the international community is taking a collective sigh of relief over the proposed withdrawal of forces by India and China from Doklam, concerns are being raised over the way China is using its proxies in Australia to flux its message.

"The challenge for (Australia) is, how do we cope with the fact that our single biggest customer is instructing students and teachers to have red hot patriotic sentiment when they are red hot patriots," John Gerrard, a former adviser to Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, has said. Gerrard, who has also been a correspondent in China, has expressed concern over the way Chinese students had mobilized against teachers who displayed what they perceived to be anti-China sentiment, the *Australian Financial Review* has reported.

The senior Australian bureaucrat seems to be referring to a recent incident in which a University of Sydney Information Technology

lecturer was forced to issue a public apology after the Chinese international students expressed outrage by his use of a map showing Chinese-claimed territory as part of India.

A Wechat account run by the Chinese students' group, aptly named Australian Red Scarf, posted an article demanding that the map is removed.

The timing of the demand surprised many as the map was used as lecture material 18 months back by the University of Sydney lecturer concerned. It is believed that the Indo-Chinese border spat at Doklam provoked the protest by the aforementioned Chinese students' social media group.

The fact that the senior IT lecturer Khimji Vaghjiani of Indian origin seems to have instigated the complaint about the map downloaded from the internet. The disturbing incident came after a bizarre protest staged by a Sydney-based Chinese automobile group as they drove in their luxury cars in front of the Indian Consulate

General on the 70th anniversary of India's Independence.

Bentleys, Lamborghinis, BMW, Audis and Maseratis were reportedly among the 10 luxury cars which joined the parade representing a Communist Country's viewpoint.

"Anyone who offends China will be killed no matter how far the target is," read one of the slogans painted on one of the luxury cars.

It is this unveiled aggression precisely which is worrying the academics and political commentators Down Under.

In the past month or so, at least three similar incidents in different Australian universities have also been reported. The recent assertiveness of the Chinese students is being linked to instructions, reportedly, emanating from Beijing.

"One of [Chinese President] Xi Jinping's objectives has been to ensure that the party can project its interests into the world, including following Chinese people wherever they go," John Garnaut said in his speech at the *Australian Financial Review's* Higher Education Summit recently. Ac-

cording to Garnaut, President Xi of China is relying on the United Front Work Department to exert influence abroad.

"It's got a large presence in Australia which is not sufficiently understood," Garnaut was quoted by the *Australian Financial Review* in an article headlined: "Beijing is stirring up 'red hot patriotism' among Chinese students on Australian campuses".

Garnaut is not the only one raising concerns over the 'large presence' of the Chinese expats and international students and the way they are pushing China's agenda in Australia.

A senior journalist Andrew Bolt has already expressed concern over the way the Chinese expats and students show their aggressive stance while pushing their nationalism in Australia. "More than 12,000 Australians have Chinese ancestry," Andrew Bolt wrote in his regular column in *Herald Sun* last week.

"This is a security risk as China asserts its power — both in foreign affairs and over the Chinese at

## Letters to the EDITOR

Sir — The news of combining two subjects, History and Geography, into one 'Swadeshi Adhyayan' (AT, August 31) has persuaded me to write these few lines. The AHSEC deserves applause from all sections for this move which is indicative of social transformation. To expedite this process, all the stakeholders ought to work narrowing the cultural lag and in a concerted way. The goal is attainable as envisioned; the answer may be derived from the past. We may recall the subject 'Civics' which was an elective subject at the secondary level which contained much more valuable things which were certainly necessary for inculcating the civic sense among the learners of that stage. This subject was substituted with other subjects like Social Studies, subsequently Social Science, that possesses composite contents. Again, we may cite the example of Environmental Education which is a compulsory subject at the HS first year since the last three years. But unfortunately, if we make an empirical study at different strata of the society, it will reveal a collective lack of civic and environmental sensibilities which were expected from studying these subjects. It is because these are treated only as subjects. Even the teachers have failed to advocate the main motive

## Making the school syllabus swadeshi

of these subjects. So we expect that before the subjects History and Geography are included in the syllabus, the teachers who will teach the subjects should mandatorily be invited to the orientation programme conducted by the actual experts.

Though the move is welcome, what will happen with the CBSE students is the question, as most of the English-medium schools in our State are not under the control of the State boards. They should also be included within this *swadeshi* syllabus without any delay by enacting a state legislature covering all levels of education irrespective of boards. Yours etc., RAJESH KAKATI, Chhatma, Nalbari.

### Unicode standard

Sir — The news captioned "Unicode standard for Assamese in the offing" (AT, August 24) is a happy one for every Assamese. So far the Government of India well the Unicode Consortium says that the Assamese language is written using the Bengali script. It took about a decade's struggle to establish that the script used for writing Assamese is a distinct and independent script that has developed through the ages. Therefore, a separate code chart submitted by the Assam Government has been accepted by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) thereby paving the way for allocating a slot or range in International Standard for which it needs to be approved by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) based in Geneva. Hence, a hurdle has been overcome. There is a Unicode influencing lobby working against Assamese getting a separate slot which also needs to be dealt with. Moreover, the Indian Government must recognize the Assamese as a distinct script and take a strong and proactive role in pursuing the matter in the ISO for final approval. The BIS represents India in the ISO. The Unicode Consortium synchronizes with the ISO 10646. Let's work and hope for the best. Yours etc., AZIZ-UL HAQUE, Panbazar, Guwahati.

### (II)

Sir — The BIS has recently accepted the proposal of a separate Assamese code chart submitted by the Assam Government. Now the proposal will be submitted to the ISO for consideration and acceptance of the Assamese script as an international standard. The interactive session between the BIS and the Assam Government in New Delhi held on August 23 last has brought us the good news. Though the BIS does not provide Unicode, it is a member of the ISO that provides Unicode. Therefore, we are quite hopeful that the Assamese script will get a sanction of Unicode standard. Yours etc., KALYAN RABHA, Bhengia, Udalguri.

### Sinister motives

Sir — Some sections of the people wanted to take advantage

out of the recent Nagaon incident. With the passing of days, it has come to light that the whole incident at the tractor dealership office in Nagaon was the outcome of some business-related matters. As soon as the video footage of the incident got circulated in social media sites like Facebook and WhatsApp and later telecast by various news channels, some sections of people with sinister motives tried to add a controversial colour to it. Some of the news channels in search of securing high TRPs even added fuel to it by repeatedly telecasting the same video clip just to incite the people. These channels sowed opinion without verifying the facts which can lead people to wrong direction. A particular community of doubtful nationality tried their best for a conflict between the Hindu Asomites and Hindu Bengalis so as to reap benefits for their community. Definitely such a conflict would have pushed some vital issues of the State like the NRC update, illegal migration of Bangladeshis, etc., to the back burner. Thankfully, the indigenous populace of the State barring a few have understood their game plan and didn't let the issue spread further. Yours etc., GAURAV CHOWDHURY, GNB Road, Guwahati.

### Unauthorized occupation

Sir — The inauguration of the Brahmaputra Guest House in February 2011 was a political

gimmick. The two state guest houses are currently occupied by the former and current Chief Ministers of Assam. This Government has now decided to transform the Hotel Brahmaputra Ashok into another guest house. We need more guest houses but not at the cost of a heritage hotel, which is a pride for Assam. In fact, this hotel at the bank of the mighty Brahmaputra could have been made into a tourist hub.

There are over a thousand government/state houses in Delhi illegally occupied by our legislators/parliamentarians. On the other hand, there is a compendium of rules for accommodation of government employees. It is interesting to note that when the Supreme Court said that no Chief Minister has the right to occupy government accommodation for lifetime, Assam passed a Cabinet proposal for the same! This is unconstitutional and illegal. If Barack Obama can rent a house, why do our retired politicians bank on the taxpayers' money forever? They merely shift from one government lodge to another. Our Prime Minister being a crusader of reforms should bring legislation against such defaulters. Yours etc., KAMAL BARUAH, Rukminigao, Guwahati.

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



## Inequality being cynically constructed: Sainath

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, Sept 3: "Never in the history of India as an independent nation has inequality been so cynically constructed, so systematically engineered as it has been in the past 25-30 years," Ramon Magasawa Award winning journalist P Sainath's above observations were categorically substantiated during the 13th Brajamohar Sarma Memorial Lecture delivered today at the Vivekananda Kendra here.

This time, the topic of the annual lecture series, organised by Brajamohar Sarma Memorial Trust, was Inequality and what it does to India.

Citing the data of Credit Suisse's *Global Wealth Book*, the acclaimed journalist asserted that economic inequality has grown faster in India compared to any major nation of the world in the past 16-20 years.

"The concentration of wealth has occurred much faster in the hands of the top one per cent, compared to anywhere else in the planet. The data further suggest that the bottom 30 per cent of the country practically own nothing," he said.

When the top one per cent of a country owns three times more than the rest 90 per cent, there is no way they will treat others as equal. If fact, there is no way a democracy can stick to its basics in such a situation, he observed.

Replete with National Sample Survey data and other survey reports on inequality of wealth, Sainath said

### Brajamohar Sarma Memorial Lecture

1,300 per capita income and the income of the main bread-winner in 75 per cent of families is Rs 5,000 or less per month. On the other hand, the percentage of crorepati MPs has gone up to 82 currently, from 32 per cent in 2004, as per their self-declaration of wealth in affidavits. Thus, the biggest growth sector in India today is the inequality sector.

The former Rural Affairs

Editor of *The Hindu* also gave a detailed account of the perceptions and reality in the agrarian sector, where the interests of the farmers come at the deep bottom in the priorities of the policies meant for them. "We associate drought

ming pools for each dwelling unit. In drought-prone Marathwada in Maharashtra, a poor woman has to pay between 45 paise to Re 1 per litre of water, whereas beer manufacturers get millions of litres of water per day at 4 paise per litre."

Sainath also mentioned the inequality prevailing in the education sector, caste-driven differences and an alarming trend of accepting it as 'normal.'

The social regression this country is facing today is the fallout of its course of action in the past 20-25 years. As a result, we have started accepting blatant cruelty as normal. When dissent is criminalised and rationalists are murdered, the Constitution, the fundamental rights and the directive principles are grossly undermined," he rued.

An awareness meeting was organised for the general public and an art competition was held among schoolchildren. Jabeen Ghosh Dashtidar, principal of Government College of Arts and Crafts, Guwahati, was the judge of the competition.

## Sitharaman ...

(Contd from page 1)

Sitharaman will now be a member of the crucial Cabinet Committee on Security whose members include the Prime Minister, Home Minister, External Affairs Minister and the Finance Minister.

"Somebody who has come from a small town, grown into the party with all the support of the leadership, and given such responsibility, it just makes you sometimes feel that cosmic grace is there. Otherwise, it is impossible," she told reporters.

"I am sure, now that I have an extremely competent successor in Nirmala Sitharaman, she will carry the road forward," Jaitley said, congratulating Sitharaman.

One of the BJP's chief spokespersons before its ascent to power, Sitharaman is an alumnus of the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru University. As the Defence Minister, Sitharaman will face several challenges, including strengthening of the combat capabilities of the Army, Navy and Air Force due to the changing regional security matrix and geo-political dynamics. - PTI

## Gross ...

(Contd from page 1)

ASTC authority and it was reflected in the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, the letter stated. It further alleged that during 2010-11, the then ASTC authority allegedly extended undue benefit of Rs 30 lakh to bus body fabricator contractors by allowing higher prices against tender notice.

"Irregular allocation of rooms/species in Paltan Bazar ASTC campus to various individuals, including an ex-ASTC employee at throwaway prices, and that too without following the standard norm or assessing the rent, also caused major financial loss to the Corporation," the letter said. However, AP Tiwari could not be contacted for his comments despite repeated attempts by this newspaper.

as failure of rainfall, a meteorological failure. But the nation has been having a hydrological drought, a severe ground water crisis and uneven distribution of water between rural and urban India, which does not attract our attention.

In the same country, we have women queuing up for hours in front of public water supply pumps and have residential complexes planned with personal swimming pools for each dwelling unit. In drought-prone Marathwada in Maharashtra, a poor woman has to pay between 45 paise to Re 1 per litre of water, whereas beer manufacturers get millions of litres of water per day at 4 paise per litre."

Sainath also mentioned the inequality prevailing in the education sector, caste-driven differences and an alarming trend of accepting it as 'normal.'

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An awareness meeting was organised for the general public and an art competition was held among schoolchildren. Jabeen Ghosh Dashtidar, principal of Government College of Arts and Crafts, Guwahati, was the judge of the competition.

## Assamese culture carries basic traits of early Aryan civilisation'

STAFF REPORTER

contributions of diverse smaller ethnic groups of the entire Northeastern region.

Senior journalist DN Chakravarty, who released a souvenir of the Sahitya Sabha and a book, said that while Anandram Dhekial Phukan, the prophet of Assamese renaissance of the 19th century, visualised the advent of glorious days of a vibrant Assamese nation, left behind the message to be carried forward by a succeeding generations of great Assamese writers and thinkers like Lakshminath Bezbaroa, Chandra Kumar Agarwala, Kamalakanta Bhattacharya, Jyotiprasad Agarwala and Dr Bankanta Kakati.

He called upon the younger writers of Assam to shake off their lethargy and intellectual diffidence and raise the banner of Assam's glorious culture and literature in the comity of nations.

In the evening, Governor Banwarilal Purohit was present as the chief guest in the function organised for the felicitation of family members of eye donors. In his speech, Purohit stressed the need of eye donation and made an appeal to the citizens to come forward for cornea donation.

An awareness meeting was organised for the general public and an art competition was held among schoolchildren. Jabeen Ghosh Dashtidar, principal of Government College of Arts and Crafts, Guwahati, was the judge of the competition.

Chakravarty, in the course of his discourse, dwelt at length on how the great 15th-century saint Srikrishna Sankaradeva enriched Assamese language and culture with his monumental contributions.

Analysing the growth and development of Assamese culture, Chakravarty said that the solar-centric Assamese culture accepted and gave due recognition to the

## Donation to CM's fund

GUWAHATI, Sept 3: The Assam Senior Citizens' Association (ASCA) and the Guwahati Senior Citizens' Association (GSCA) have donated Rs 11,000 and Rs 10,000 respectively to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

DN Chakravarty, president, GSCA, and Uttam Baruah presented the amount on behalf of the GSCA, while Dr Manoranjan Sarma, president, ASCA, and Baneswar Khound, general secretary, presented the cheques to the Chief Minister.

Chakravarty also presented a memorandum to the Chief Minister, requesting him to modify the State policy for elderly persons by making provisions for a separate directorate for the welfare of elderly citizens of the State.

The memorandum submitted by the associations also included the demand for a guesthouse and geriatric subjects in the syllabi of medical colleges and also a provision for separate geriatric wards in all the district hospitals of the State. - Staff Reporter

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## Union Cabinet reshuffled

(Contd from page 1)

Pradhan and Naqvi retained their portfolios of Oil and Gas, and Minority Affairs respectively. Pradhan was given the additional charge of the Skill Development Ministry, which was earlier held by Rajiv Pratap Rudy who quit the post a few days ago.

Former diplomat Hardeep Puri and former IAS officer Alphons Puri and Saman Kannahatti were made MoS (independent charge) of Housing and Urban Development, and Tourism respectively.

RK Singh, former Home Secretary, was given charge of Power and New and Renewable Energy portfolios. Former Mumbai police commissioner

Satyapal Singh has been made Minister of State in HRD, Water Resources and Ganga Rejuvenation.

Six ministers – Rudra Kalraj Mishra, Bandaru Dattatreya, Sanjiv Kumar Balyan, Faggan Singh Kulaste and Mahendra Nath Pandey – had resigned ahead of the reshuffle, in which nine ministers were inducted.

While Modi has focused on governance, he has also taken care of the BJP's political considerations.

Pradhan, now a Cabinet minister, was given the additional charge of the Environment Ministry following the demise of Anil Dave in May, continues to hold the portfolio.

Similarly, Smriti Irani, who

was given the additional charge of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry in July after M Venkaiah Naidu was made the Vice Presidential nominee of the NDA, too retained the ministry.

Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore replaced Vijay Goel in the Sports Ministry, while Ajay Singh Shekharawat was made MoS in the Agriculture Ministry.

Goel, who earlier held independent charge, has been shunted as the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs and Statistics and Programme Implementation.

New inductee Shiv Pratap Shukla has been made MoS in the Finance Ministry, replacing

Arjun Ram Meghwal, while Ashwini Kumar Choubey has been appointed MoS in Health and Narendra Kumar MoS in Women and Child Development. Meghwal now has been shifted to Parliamentary Affairs.

Another new face Anant Kumar Singh has been made MoS in the Skill Development Ministry, while Jagendra Singh Shekharawat was made MoS in the Agriculture Ministry.

Two ministers Santosh Gangar and Giriraj Singh have also seen a promotion as they are now MoS with independent charge of Labour and Employment and the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises respectively. – PTI

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### Taxpayers liable to pay Advance Tax

- Any assessee, including salaried employee, whose tax liability for the financial year as reduced by the tax deducted/collected at source is ₹10,000/- or more.
- Resident Senior Citizen not having income from business/profession is not liable to pay.
- Assessee in respect of eligible business referred to in Section 44AD is liable to pay whole amount of such Advance Tax on or before 15th March of respective Financial Year.

### Mode of Payment

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### Schedule for payment of Advance Tax

- | Due Date  | Amount                           |
|---|----------------------------------|
| a) On or before 15 <sup>th</sup> of September, 2017 | 45% of the Advance Tax payable.  |
| b) On or before 15 <sup>th</sup> of December, 2017  | 75% of the Advance Tax payable.  |
| c) On or before 15 <sup>th</sup> of March, 2018     | 100% of the Advance Tax payable* |





Pehiwi village of Gogamukh in Dhemaji district inundated by flash floods on Saturday. — UB Photos

## 300 Reang ultras to lay down arms: Tankha

CORRESPONDENT

HAILAKANDI, Sept 3: Nearly 300 Reang militants of Hailakandi district are expected to return to the mainstream of the society. The Inspector General of Police, Anurag Tankha said that the members of two Reang outfits, mainly active in Hailakandi district's Assam-Mizoram bordering areas have expressed their wish to lay down arms for the sake of development and peace. Tankha said that they have held two rounds of discussions with the top leaders of the outfits and they agreed to lay down arms. Top police officials held elaborate discussions recently at Ramnathpur village along the Assam-Mizoram border in Hailakandi district with the members of the United

Democratic Liberation Army (BLA) and BLA (Reang) Revolutionary Army Union.

After assumption of power by the Sarbananda Sonowal Government, the peace process was initiated by the State police and preliminary discussions were also held at Guwahati where Hailakandi SP Pranabjyoti Goswami took active part. Besides, Katticherra MLA Sujamudin Laskar brought the leaders of both the outfits to Guwahati and held discussions with two Cabinet ministers Rihan Daimary and Pramila Rani Brahma and got a positive response from the Government.

It can be mentioned here that more than 300 Reang activists of the United Democratic Liberation Front laid down arms in 2008 at Guwahati in

front of the then Chief minister Tarun Gogoi and returned to the mainstream.

After returning from Ramnathpur police and civil administration officials held a closed door discussion. The meet was attended by the IGP Anurag Tankha, DIG Akhilash Kumar Sinha, SPs of Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi districts, Rakesh Roushan Gaurav Upadhyay and Pranabjyoti Goswami respectively. 30 Assam Rifles Col Siddhartha Dilip Deshmukh, Major Jackson Jose, Col Jacob, Hailakandi's Deputy Commissioner, Krishna Gobinda Bhuyan, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Amalendu Roy, Rajesh Chorki, Dhanyaram Reang on behalf of the outfit and social workers Pitaram Reang and Kiran Kumar Reang. IGP Tankha said that within the next

two months, the names of militants and their arms and ammunition will be listed. He said that the process of bringing them to the mainstream began last year and now it is in the final stage and there will be some terms and conditions. The date and place of surrender and package will be decided after the preparation of the list of militants and it will definitely take some time, Tankha added.

Meanwhile, the militants said in the meeting that the main criteria of surrender will be the development of Reang-dominated villages along the Assam-Mizoram border area of Hailakandi district. They informed the officials that the entire area is totally backward and the plight of people is unbearable and they want the declaration of development packages for the area

of NOCs of the said office for verification. After verification, it was found that of the 422 NOCs issued by the office, 265 were found to be fake which did not match the official records.

The DC also lodged an FIR with the Dhubri Police station where it clearly mentioned that fake certificates were used for land sale and land gift.

When contacted, DC Dibriraj Chaudhary said that most of the fake certificates were issued during the month of April this year. "According to my assessment, these fake NOCs were provided during the introduction of online system. During that

time the duo manipulated the genuine certificates," he claimed. He further added that police have been asked to investigate the matter so that a single person is spared involved in the scam. "I think a gang has been associated for collecting huge funds," he said.

Meanwhile, a senior police official informed that a group of people has been apprehended for further interrogation. "We are also examining various aspects and we are confident that we will be able to arrest more persons soon," the police official said. He, however, refused to divulge more in this regard.

**Army's free medical camp in flood-hit village**

CORRESPONDENT

MANGALDAI, Sept 3: The Deomorai unit of Red Horns Division under Garaj Corps in association with Darrang district Health Department on Monday conducted a free medical camp for the people of flood-affected Hazarkapura-Borachubla village under Operation Sadbhavana.

The medical camp was inaugurated by Kalpana Deka, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Darrang.

Army medical officers, including a dental officer from Red Horns Division and four doctors, including an eye and an ENT specialist from the civil hospital provided medical assistance at the camp. In all, 11 patients suffering from cataract were identified for further free treatment in Guwahati.

## Man-elephant conflict on the rise in Somitpur

SHAMBHU BORO

fact shortage of food for which they have to move around different parts of the town.

Saurav Barkatika, a leading environmentalist while talking to this correspondent appealed to the State Government not to allot any land in the Ghoramari AIDC sector for setting up of industries because that might affect the flora and fauna of the town.

"The people of Tezpur have been witnessing a series of man-elephant conflicts over the years and the problem is aggravated. What we need is to protect our forest area for our animals," he opined.

Not only that, a group of villagers of the locality alleged that the State Government had allotted land to the private

companies without any verification. "Our forest areas and animals should be protected at any cost. We have also seen growing instances of smuggling and rhino poaching cases in the famous Kaziranga National park. So, the State Government should be careful while allotting land," the villagers said. What is more alarming is that this year altogether 50 people have lost their lives in various places of Tezpur due to elephant attacks. Echoing the sentiment, Aranya Suraksha Samiti, which has been working for protection of forest in Tezpur for the last couple of years, urged the Chief Minister to look into the matter considering the gravity of the situation.

## State-level essay, drawing contests by Rangiya Police

CORRESPONDENT

TEZPUR, Sept 3: Tezpur seems to have seen a terrible form of man-elephant conflict over the years. The problem is aggravated day by day due to obstruction of elephant corridor. The people of the cultural town have now sought help from the State Government for a permanent solution in this regard. Leading environmentalists are of the view that the problem has taken a serious turn due to loss of habitat, shortage of food and course obstruction of the corridors.

The Ghoramari AIDC sector

is generally known as an elephant-grazing area, but due to allotment of land for industrial purposes, elephants are now

open to all. The best drawings will be considered for the said souvenir. Rangiya SDPO Pranab Kr Pegu, on behalf of the Rangiya Police has received participants to send their entries (essays and cover page drawings) to the office of the SDPO, Rangiya, Kamrup or e-mail at pranabkrpegu2010@gmail.com before September 20 next.

## Blue Whale Game

## Hailakandi SP asks parents to keep vigil on children

CORRESPONDENT

the last few days and said that it is unfortunate that some meritorious students of the State have got addicted to it and that one Sashikanta Bora, who was studying outside the State, also became a victim. Goswami informed that the Intelligence section of the department is collecting all information in this regard and a special cell has been entrusted to maintain strict vigil on it.



State Water Resource, Science and Technology Minister Keshab Mahanta flagging off a Mobile Medical Unit ambulance, under Jakkalabandha Rural Hospital at Kaliabor, on Saturday. — UB Photos.

## Dibrugarh AASU for more colleges, HS schools

BUREAU

LIC Jorhat division earns Rs 460 cr  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

JORHAT, Sept 3: The Jorhat division of LIC has sold 2,00,987 policies and earned Rs 459,92 crore in the last fiscal year (2016-17).

Jorhat division of LIC covers upper Assam districts, few northern Assam districts and whole of Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland.

This was disclosed by senior divisional manager LIC Jorhat division, NT Bhattacharya, while addressing mediapersons here on Friday on the launching of week-long celebrations of the company to commemorate 61 years of its establishment.

Bhattacharya said that the Jorhat division at present has 20 branches, 14 mini offices and eight satellite offices. He said one more satellite office will be opened at Silpatbari in Dhemaji district soon.

He said that in the last fiscal year the Jorhat division donated Rs 24,42,000 to Christian School Molvom, Dimapur from the golden jubilee foundation fund of the company.

### Free career guidance

CORRESPONDENT

RANGIYA, Sept 3: A seven-day-long free educational coaching-cum-guidance camp is being organised by the Career Launching Pad, a career guidance institute here at its office near Panchayat Bhawan next month. Aspirants for bank, SSC, and competitive exams may contact the institute for registration, a release stated.

### OBITUARY

#### Gajendra Nath Bhattacharya

GUWAHATI, Aug 3: Gajendra Nath Bhattacharya, a resident of Rukmingia in the city, passed away at a private hospital on September 1. He was 70.

A retired Public Health Engineering (PHE) Engineer, Bhattacharya was associated with many social activities.

He leaves behind his wife, son and three daughters besides a host of relatives.

## Diamond jubilee celebration of Bajali College concludes

ANN Service

PATNACHUKUCHI, Sept 3: The diamond jubilee celebration of Bajali College, an educational institution for higher education in Bajali subdivision, concluded on September 1.

During the open session, Barpeta Deputy Commissioner Thaneswar Malakar formally released the souvenir published on the occasion. He lauded the scholastic performance by the students of the college and informed the audience that meritorious students of the locality were presently scattered all around the world by dint of their unique qualities through which they have achieved both name and fame not only for themselves, but also for their motherland.

He subsequently referred to steps taken by the Government to upgrade the college into Bhattebad University. Among others, Dr Dipak Kumar Sarma, Vice-Chancellor of Kumar Bhaskar Varma Sanskrit University, Pabindra Deka, MLA of Patnachukuchi LAC,

participated in the State Government through a formal appeal routed through the Deputy Commissioner here, urging the Government to take prompt steps to increase the number of students in the existing higher secondary schools and junior colleges, and also to establish more of such institutions.

All Dibrugarh District Students' Union president Likhon Baruah and general secretary Shankarjoyti Baruah have asked the State Education Depart-

ment to consider their suggestion very seriously and take immediate measures in the interest of a vast number of Class X-pass students. With the HSLC compartmental examination results declared on Friday, a huge number of students are now finding to their horror that they have no institution to go to, to seek higher education. The student leaders said the matter has become very serious. They have also pointed to an acute shortage of degree seats for XII-pass students.

Prerna Sarma, SDO (C) of Bajali, advocate Girindhar Choudhury and Dr Manoj Kumar Mahanta, Principal of the college attended the open session.

Sampurnananda Talukdar presided over the meeting while Dr Binita Bora Dev Choudhury and Chitra Deka anchored the session. Some books were also released on the occasion.

Earlier on August 30, the celebration began with hoisting of the college flag by Dr Manoj Kumar Mahanta, while the ceremonial flag of the diamond jubilee celebration was hoisted by Sampurnananda and Talukdar. Altogether, 62 flags were hoisted by a host of dignitaries to mark the celebration. A colourful cultural procession was taken out, which was declared open by Krishna Roy, producer of Abahan Theatre. Students of various departments took part by reflecting on the socio-cultural life of Assam. Ceremonial lighting of the lamp was done by Dr Chandana Sarma, Vice-Principal of the college.

On the following day, plantation of sap-

lings was undertaken in the college campus with the participation of nature lovers. Deben Dutta delivered a lecture on the topic 'Globalisation and its Social Impact'. An interactive programme of ex-students was conducted by Murari Mohan Dutta. Students who brought laurels to the college by securing top positions in various examinations was felicitated in the programme.

The stage was declared open by Pulak Patgiri, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Barpeta, an happens to be an ex-student of the college. Sidhlaty Chetia, Superintendent of Police, Barpeta, lit the ceremonial lamp while Manoj Baruah, Vice Chairman of the Agriculture Department declared open the cultural programme. Kuladip Patgiri, an upcoming artiste and former general secretary of the college was felicitated on the occasion.

Every evening cultural programmes were held to mark the diamond jubilee celebration. The college authority thanked one and all for helping to make the programme a success.

## Amal Kumar Das: a tribute



er on he shifted to the industrial sector and joined Ashok Paper Mill, Jorhat. His thirst for knowledge landed him in the reputed Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi. Soon afterwards, he joined BRPL (now IOC) Bongaigaon and retired as the head of the Public Relations Department. He was actively involved with the Public Relations Society of India (PRSI) NE Chapter. He led a purposeful post-retirement life keeping himself engaged with various social causes, writings and was also associated as lecturer.

Deuta was a gifted writer. During his tender years in school, he penned down the first story in 1955 named, *Eti Kalam* for a magazine in Goalpara called *Bikash*. With the passage of time, his love for writing and literature grew stronger. He was the president of Bongaigaon district Sahitya Sabha from 2004 to 2006. Due to his tireless efforts, the Goalpara district Sahitya Sabha under his tenure as president expanded from 9 chapters to 23 chapters.

He contributed many stories, poems and articles in various Assamese and English dailies. Some of his works which

were appreciated and liked by many were: *Jatri, Bodhibriksha, Hasina Biwi, Simnir Dhuwa, Bagdatta, Godparara aru Anyanya, Gholtokosor Diary, Bradmata Ganga Sindhu, Klonio Polik* etc. The government of Assam bestowed on him the Sahityik Bota. He had a very soft corner for the poor section of the society and had helped many. He continued to influence the society through his thought-provoking articles till his last breath.

Today on his *adyashraddha*, we pray to Almighty for his eternal peace.

— Sanghamitra Bhattacharjee



# Gogoi flays Sonowal, alleges Govt running on Sangh Parivar ideology

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

JORHAT, Sept 3: Former Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi today took a dig at the State BJP-led Government for "falling" to fulfil the pre-poll promises made after coming to power following a massive victory. Gogoi likened Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal with King Dhrutarashtra of mythological epic Mahabharata, who was blind.

Addressing media persons here today, Gogoi said Sonowal was turning a blind eye to all the problems plaguing the State and is maintaining a stoic silence.

Gogoi said that the BJP had given big slogans of good governance and development, but after coming to power the government seems to have forgotten the assurances they made to the people and was instead doing irrelevant things

and courting controversies.

"May be the government is indulging in irrelevant acts and controversies to divert the people's attention," he said, referring to the move to name many colleagues after one person, who had no contribution towards Assam except for being a ideologue of Sangh Parivar.

Stressing Sonowal, the former Chief Minister said that the present Chief Minister is maintaining silence and is allowing his Cabinet colleague Himanta Biswa Sarma to take the centre stage. He wondered whether Sonowal was running the government or Himanta.

Mincing no words about Sarma, Gogoi said his former blue-eyed boy (Sarma) was behaving in a manner like the mighty Bhima of the epic Mahabharata by forcefully trying to do things against the people's wishes unlike the epic character who never did any-

thing unjust.

"Himanta has been showing his arrogance and disrespect to the people every other day and have not even spared the teachers who are placed on high pedestal in the society. He (Himanta) is on the way to become modern day Ravana," Gogoi observed.

He said it is implementation, development, law functioning, and law and order, economic scenario, the government has not only failed to move ahead, but has gone backwards.

Pointing out to the extension of AFSPA in Assam by the State Government, which no earlier State Government had done since 1990, Gogoi said the move very well reflects the deterioration of law and order situation in present times contrary to an era of peace developed during 15 years of Congress rule.

Gogoi also lambasted the Prime Minister Narendra Modi who "who made tall promises before the Assam polls, but has completely forgotten thereafter". He took a dig at Modi for rushing to Guajarat as floods hit the State but came to Assam after floods wreaked the State.

Activists of All Adivasi Students' Association of Assam taking out a bike rally demanding Scheduled Tribe status, in Kokrajhar on Sunday. — UB Photos



## Assam-Nagaland border security intensified along Mariani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

JORHAT, Sept 3: Security along the Assam-Nagaland border in Mariani constituency under Jorhat district has been tightened after the Naga

militants demanded an extension of RS 80 lakh from a manchikowar few days back by two persons. The envelope containing the note reportedly had two bullets of a 9 mm pistol – a tactic earlier used by the militants to create fear.

Source said that police were taking all necessary steps to prevent any untoward incident with increased patrolling and surveillance along the Inter-State border.

## Cohesive bid must to dispel literacy disconnect

CORRESPONDENT

Sioner S Vishwanathan.

SILCHAR, Sept 3: Gunotav, the quality enhancement initiative of the State Government for bringing about improvement in learning level of students at the Elementary level has exposed the "disconnect" in the education system where the participants in the process – teachers, students, parents and also management did not fall on the same page, said Cachar Deputy Commis-

sioner S Vishwanathan.

Addressing a gathering at the District level Literacy seminar 'Shikshan' highlighting the flagship scheme TEACH organised by Rotary Club of Greenland Silchar on Sunday, Vishwanathan said "during the Goutoutsava, one school in Hailakandi district had students who could not write properly. This gave rise to the disconnect or the gap among the constituents of the system which demand attention," He urged

upon the Rotary District 3240 governor Sunil Saraf and members of the Rotary Club of Greenland Silchar to pitch in efforts to take this event in sync with mission New India 2022.

Former vice-chancellor of Assam Agricultural University Prof Tapodip Bhattacharjee was of the view that literacy in India has no rosy pictures to present. "Literacy cannot be achieved sans a healthy check on the prevailing sociopoliti-

cal issues," the former vice-chancellor maintained.

Echoing similar reactions, Prof Rajat Gupta, director NIT Silchar expressed concern over the rate of literacy and gender literacy rates in India.

Eminent orthopedician Dr Rajdeep Roy was of the view that time has come when people in India should prepare to take a leap forward to e-literacy winning the battle against illiteracy. He added to say that

literacy, skill development and competence must go hand in hand to achieve the desired results.

Debadish Mitra, zonal co-ordinator of Rotary India Literacy Mission, Bibhab Das Purakaysta, district literacy committee chairman also spoke on the occasion.

A souvenir envisaging total education and quality education was also released on the occasion.

## Translocated rhino gives birth to calf in Manas



Female rhino Jamuna with her second calf in Manas National Park, on Sunday.

SIVASISH THAKUR

GUWAHATI, Sept 3: In a big boost to long-term rhino conservation in Manas National Park, Jamuna, a translocated rhino, gave birth to a calf in the wee hours today.

Significantly, the birth of a rhino calf in Manas has come after a long gap of 20 months. The previous recorded birth took place in December 2015.

The total number of rhinos in Manas now stands at 29.

"It is a great news for Manas – more so because a calf has been born after a long wait. Both the baby and mother are doing fine," HR Sharma, Field Director, Manas Tiger Reserve, told The

Adulthood, improving the male-female ratio. This is a good development for the rhino's future," Sharma said.

Manas, which once used to shelter some one hundred rhinos, saw its entire rhino population decimated during the prolonged period of social unrest during the 1990s. The translocation process to Manas was started in 2006, with Manas

started in November 2010. Sharma added that they were expecting three more calves in the coming months.

"The number of male rhinos in Manas had been less than the required, and this explains the lack of births for a long period. But late, a few juvenile males have entered

the weaning period.

On another dimension, for

the second time this year,

a person was killed inside Manas National Park due to a rhino attack on September 2. The earlier incident took place on April 20, 2017.

## Deendayal College inaugurated at Behali

CORRESPONDENT

BISWANATH CHARIALI, Sept 3: State Education Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma inaugurated Deendayal College at Gajnia, Behali in Biswanath district on Friday.

Dr Sarma expressed the hope that the college would manage to be at par with Nalanda and Taxila universities of ancient India. He announced that a nursing college would be established very soon in Gohpur subdivision of the district, while eight girls' colleges would also be set up in the State in memory of freedom fighter Kanaklata Baruah and Mukunda Kakati.

The Minister also informed that an engineering college would be established

Behali in memory of Chhabil Upadhyaya. He also highlighted the developmental schemes in the education sector being undertaken by the State Government and added that around 14 lakh students were provided free education this year and free admission would be provided to poor students up to the post-graduate level from next year onwards.

Criticising a section of intellectuals and organisations of the State for their opposition in naming the colleges after Deendayal Upadhyaya, he commented that a good relationship prevails between Assam and the rest of the country since the days of Ramayana and Mahabharata, besides Kumar Bhaskar Barman. We

would have to create a greater Assam following this tradition, he justified.

Minister for Irrigation, Handloom-Textiles and Sericulture, Ranjit Dutta, Minister for Labour and Employment, Tejaswi Barua, Minister for Power, Pallab Biswas, Commissioner Asitakar Chakravarty, MLA of Gohpur Utpal Borah, MLA of Biswanath Promod Borthakur, Principal Dr Debjit Baruah, among others, were present at the meeting.

However, a number of student bodies, including AASU, AJCPG, AGSU, KSKU etc., protested against the Minister's programme and shouted slogans against the Government decision.

No. GM/33/2014

**PRESS NOTICE**

The Chief Engineer P.W.D. (Building), Assam on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites fresh bids for the following project from registered contractor/firm of class (A), (B) & (C) under PWD (Building) Assam having eligibility criteria as laid down in the standard bidding document. The Bidders must be registered with the E-tendering system provider. Details of the bids including tender schedule may be seen in the P.W.D. portal [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in) and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours.

Package No.	Name of Work	Approx. Value of Work Rs. in Lakh	Time of completion	Bid Security	Tender Cost in Rs.
Group-I	•Renovation, Upgradation and Construction of Kambar Nabin Chandra Bordolia A.C. Indoor Stadium, Sarusajia Sports Complex competition venue and Dhalukha Tarun Ram Phukan Indoor R.G. Baruah Sports Complex, Ulubari, Gauhati (Training Venue) for ABA Women's Youth Boxing Championships, Gauhati. (Upgradation/ Renovation of DTRP indoor Stadium at R.G. Baruah Sports Complex,(Nehru Stadium), Uluberi, Gauhati-7. (ii) Construction of Gym (Civil work) (iii) Renovation of DTRP indoor Stadium (iv) Sanitary and Internal water supply work.)	52,39,289/- (Approx.)	45 days	Rs. 1.05 Lakh for General & Rs. 0.524 Lakh for SC/ST/OBC	1600/-
Group-II	•Renovation, Upgradation and Construction of Kambar Nabin Chandra Bordolia A.C. Indoor Stadium, Sarusajia Sports Complex competition venue and Dhalukha Tarun Ram Phukan Indoor R.G. Baruah Sports Complex, Ulubari, Gauhati (Training Venue) for ABA Women's Youth Boxing Championships, Gauhati. (Upgradation/ Renovation of DTRP indoor Stadium at R.G. Baruah Sports Complex,(Nehru Stadium), Uluberi, Gauhati-7. (ii) Supplying and installation of Gym equipment)	1,68,99,545/- (Approx.)	45 days	Rs. 3.38 Lakh for General & Rs. 1.69 Lakh for SC/ST/OBC	5100/-
Group-III	•Renovation, Upgradation and Construction of Kambar Nabin Chandra Bordolia A.C. Indoor Stadium, Sarusajia Sports Complex competition venue and Dhalukha Tarun Ram Phukan Indoor R.G. Baruah Sports Complex, Ulubari, Gauhati (Training Venue) for ABA Women's Youth Boxing Championships, Gauhati. (Upgradation/ Renovation of DTRP indoor Stadium at R.G. Baruah Sports Complex,(Nehru Stadium), Uluberi, Gauhati-7. (ii) Providing AC at Gym, AC at DTRP indoor Stadium)	3,13,35,491/- (Approx.)	45 days	Rs. 6.27 Lakh for General & Rs. 3.14 Lakh for SC/ST/OBC	9110/-
Group-IV	•Renovation, Upgradation and Construction of Kambar Nabin Chandra Bordolia A.C. Indoor Stadium, Sarusajia Sports Complex competition venue and Dhalukha Tarun Ram Phukan Indoor R.G. Baruah Sports Complex, Ulubari, Gauhati (Training Venue) for ABA Women's Youth Boxing Championships, Gauhati. (Upgradation/ Renovation of DTRP indoor Stadium at R.G. Baruah Sports Complex,(Nehru Stadium), Uluberi, Gauhati-7. (ii) Providing AC at Gym, AC at DTRP indoor Stadium)	5,48,48,500/- (Approx.)	45 days	Rs. 10.97 Lakh for General & Rs. 5.49 Lakh for SC/ST/OBC	12,500/-
Group-V	•Renovation, Upgradation and Construction of Kambar Nabin Chandra Bordolia A.C. Indoor Stadium, Sarusajia Sports Complex (competition venue) and Dhalukha Tarun Ram Phukan Indoor R.G. Baruah Sports Complex, Ulubari, Gauhati (Training Venue) for ABA Women's Youth Boxing Championships, Gauhati. (Renovation/ Upgradation and Construction of Kambar Nabin Chandra Bordolia A.C. Indoor Stadium for ABA Women's Youth Boxing championships,India, 2017@SSCG, Gauhati-34. (i) Civil works- Construction of external R.C.C Staircase, (ii) Renovation, Upgradation and Construction of Kambar Nabin Chandra Bordolia A.C. Indoor Stadium including Sanitary and W.S. interior furniture and electrical works.)	32,43,823/- (Approx.)	45 days	Rs. 0.65 Lakh for General & Rs. 0.325 Lakh for SC/ST/OBC	980/-
Group-VI	•Renovation, Upgradation and Construction of Kambar Nabin Chandra Bordolia A.C. Indoor Stadium, Sarusajia Sports Complex (competition venue) and Dhalukha Tarun Ram Phukan Indoor R.G. Baruah Sports Complex, Ulubari, Gauhati (Training Venue) for ABA Women's Youth Boxing Championships, Gauhati, 2017@SSCG, Gauhati-34. (i) Providing External Illumination including Renovation of Panel Board. (ii) Providing Video Board & TV	51,49,492/- (Approx.)	45 days	Rs. 1.03 Lakh for General & Rs. 0.52 Lakh for SC/ST/OBC	1545/-

Sdi-Chief Engineer, P.W.D. (Building)  
Assam, Gauhati-3

Janansyog/CF/1350/17



## HC orders 'absolute ban' on tree cutting in Manipur

SOBHAPATI SAMOM

IMPHAL, Sept 3: High Court of Manipur has directed an "absolute ban on cutting down of trees in reserved forest areas as well as excavation of hills for any purpose without permission" of the court.

A division bench of the High Court comprising Justice N Kotsiwar Singh and Justice Kh Nabin Singh on Wednesday passed an interim order in this regard while responding to a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) on the "unauthorized and indiscriminate excavation of hills, especially the reserved forest areas" in the Heingang areas in Manipur's Imphal East district.

The illegal activities of deforestation and illegal excavation are going on in various reserved forests in and around Imphal valley, according to the PIL filed by chairman of Safe Environment Campaign Committee, Heingang, Mutum Iaobi Singh.

It is a matter which requires immediate attention by the authorities concerned, it added, as the Forest Conservation Act 1980 provides for restriction on the dereservation of forests or use for forest land for

non-forest purpose, the PIL said.

Accordingly, the court issued the directive to ban the cutting down of trees and excavation of hills until further orders. The concerned authorities of both the State and Central Governments have been directed "to ensure that the order of the Court is complied with in letter and spirit," the order said. The next hearing will be held on October 11 this year.

In the recently concluded Assembly, the State Forest and Environment Minister Th Shyamkumar Singh had informed that a total of 85 encroachers including 53 from Heingang reserve forest and 32 from Langol reserve forest have been evicted. He said people cannot construct houses and settle in these reserve forest areas.

The total area of reserve forests (RF) in the State was 984.25 sq km including 338.32 sq km in Churachandpur district and 0.09 sq km in Bishnupur district, he said. With area coverage of 253.89 sq km across its 8 RF areas, Senapati district has the second highest RF areas coverage among all the hill districts while Chandel district has 3 RFs measuring 141.86 sq km.



### WEATHER NORTHEAST

**Forecast for North Eastern States:** Rainfall is very likely to occur at most places over Assam & Meghalaya on September 4. Heavy rain is very likely to occur at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh on September 7, over Assam & Meghalaya on September 5, 6, 7, and over Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram & Tripura September 4, 5, 6, 7.

**Temperatures:**

	Max (°C)	Min (°C)
Dibrugarh	31.7	23.1
Tezpur	31.0	25.1
Silchar	30.2	24.8
Dispur	31.0	25.1
Jorhat	29.8	20.0
N Lakhimpur	29.6	21.8
Shillong	22.9	16.1
Imphal	29.2	22.4
Itanagar	31.5	23.0
Aizawl	29.1	17.7
Agartala	32.6	25.3
Kohima	25.0	18.8
Pasighat	30.4	23.5

### GST will benefit Manipur: Dy CM

NEWMAI NEWS

IMPHAL, Sept 3: Manipur Government will be able to generate revenue of around Rs 150 crore to Rs 200 crore annually under Goods and Services Tax (GST).

This was informed by Manipur Deputy Chief Minister Yunniam Joykumar, who is also the Finance in-charge, while responding to a starred question raised by MLA Surjikumar Okram during question hour in the recently concluded Assembly session.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the State is likely to get an increased amount of Rs 103 crore on account of GST revenue compensation assured under GST Compensation Act.

He said that 4,100 dealers have been registered in the State under the new tax regime so far. Out of these 4,100 dealers, 2800 dealers migrated from VAT regime and the remaining 1,300 had registered under GST, Joykumar informed.

Stating that the revenue impact of GST would be positive, he observed that the State would gain from GST.

Responding to a question raised by MLA Y Surchandra, the Deputy CM stated that a total debt of Rs 7,774.42 crore is being incurred by the State.

He also informed the House that the State currently spends Rs 153 crore in Debt Service every month, out of which Rs 110.63 crore is principal amount and Rs 42.37 crore is interest.

Replying to a starred question by MLA RK Imo, Education Minister Th Radhesayam said that the Government would implement the recommendations of the 6th Pay Commission with respect to the salary of Government aided schools when the financial health of the State Government improves.

### Opp demands repeal of Mizoram Parliamentary Secretaries Act

NEWMAI NEWS

AIZAWL, Sept 3: Days after all seven Parliamentary Secretaries in Mizoram tendered resignations following the Supreme Court ruling, main Opposition Mizo National Front (MNF) has demanded that Mizoram Parliamentary Secretaries (Appointment, Salaries, Allowances and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2009 be quashed forever.

Addressing a press conference here on Thursday, former Minister H Rammawia said that the Opposition had moved the Gauhati High Court in 2009 challenging the appointment of seven Parliamentary Secretaries by Mizoram Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla.

Senior advocate C Lalramzauva who stands for the MNF had demanded that Mizoram Parliamentary Secretaries Act, 2009 be quashed as it is a clear violation of the Article 164 (IA) of the Constitution.

"We are against the appointment of Parliamentary Secretaries who are enjoying the status at

par with Minister as this is unconstitutional," Rammawia said.

He said that Gauhati High Court, however, asked them to await the Supreme Court decision as the Parliamentary Secretaries Act of Assam and Nagaland are being challenged in the apex Court.

He said that on July 26, the Supreme Court made a judgment declaring "The Assam Parliamentary Secretaries (Appointment, Salaries, Allowances and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2004" as "unconstitutional." This clearly indicates that the Mizoram Parliamentary Secretaries (Appointment, Salaries, Allowances and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2009 is also unconstitutional, he added.

Rammawia further said that even though all the seven Parliamentary Secretaries have resigned, the MNF will continue to move and appeal the High Court to quash Mizoram Parliamentary Secretaries Act as it is a clear violation of Article 164 (IA) of the Constitution.

Constitution. — Correspondent

### Wanton daylight tree felling in Khasi Hills

TURA, Sept 3: West Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya has been plagued by wanton tree felling with no authority able to control the menace. The lack of DFO Territorial has complicated things even further.

It is believed the district has more than 500 illegal saw mills most of which are in plain sight and near the highway. "There is no control as the Syiemship in the area has allowed cutting of trees, most of which find their way to Assam through Boko.

To add to the problem, the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council (KHADC) has done literally nothing to stop this menace with most of the saw mills getting permission to run as they want," said a source.

WHK deputy commissioner too raised the lack of control stating that with the lands falling under legal patta, there was little the district administration could do to control deforestation or the movement of timber.

President of Centre for Environment Protection and Rural Development (CEPAR), Samgar R Sangma has urged the State Government to control the menace immediately. — Correspondent

## ACAUT warns of full-blown agitation in Nagaland

CORRESPONDENT

Court order dated August 8, 2016, before September is out.

On the issues of Nagaland Lokayukta, the anti-graft group reminded the Chief Secretary that it has been consistently raising this issue since 2014, and yet, even after immediate effect, ACAUT Nagaland has warned of a full-blown statewide agitation in case the State Government refuses to do so.

In a representation to Nagaland Chief Secretary, the ACAUT urged the Government of Nagaland to implement the four demands, of the seven, addressed to the State Government, particularly to institute Nagaland Lokayukta Bill 2015, first in the Monsoon Session 2015, the State Government has not passed the Bill even after two years of tabling the bill. It is said it is a serious breach of people's trust for the demands of the ACAUT to remain unfulfilled.

As per the demands of ACAUT rally, if the Nagaland Government decides to convene a special session of the Nagaland Assembly and pass the Nagaland Lokayukta Bill, the ACAUT would appreciate it but it would not accept any "watered down draft" apart from those

### 2 senior Manipur police officers suspended

CORRESPONDENT

headquarter without obtaining permission of the competent authority during the period of suspension.

**MLAs pledge eyes:** Three Manipur MLAs have pledged to donate their eyes during an Eye Donation Campaign Fortnight at Moirang Khunou locality in Bishnupur district on Sunday.

The three MLAs are Pukhrem Sarat Singh (Moirang), Tongbram Robindro (Thanga) and Sanasan Bira Singh (Kumbi). In his speech during the gathering, Sarat Singh, a former bureaucrat, stressed on the philosophical concept about attaining happiness and contentment when one helps and gives for the welfare of mankind.

Robindro and Bira Singh appealed to the public to know the importance and the need of giving vision to the visually-impaired ones, and to pledge their eyes.

The order said the police officers were not to leave their stations or

### HPC(D) faction's peace talks with Mizoram Govt fizzle out

AIZAWL, Sept 3: The proposed peace talks between Mizoram Government and a faction of Hmar People's Convention (Democratic) did not materialise as the State Government rejected the conditions put forward by it, a senior State Government official said.

"The HPC(D) faction led by La Imlungthanga Sanate set pre-conditions like establishment of an autonomous district council under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution in the Hmar community concentrated area and tripartite talks by inclusion of a senior official from the Centre," he said.

The State Government rejected the conditions as its stance was that there should be no conditions for holding talks, he said. The talks were to be held in August end.

Peace parleys with the major faction led by H Zosangberi would soon resume and the next round of talks was likely to be the last official level talks as it would be elevated to the political level, he said.

Sanate was the founder president of the HPC (D) when the outfit went underground, soon after the surrender of HPC cadres following the agreement inked with Mizoram Government in July 1994. — PTI

### Manipur to set up 2 science centres

IMPHAL, Sept 3: Manipur Government is all set to set up two district science centres and planetarium in Churachandpur and Ukhru district. Presently, the State has just one science centre in the capital Imphal.

The construction works will start soon, according to Director of Science and Technology department E Ibocha. The North Eastern Council has released the required fund for the two science centres.

The civil works of the project will be taken up by Manipur Tribal Development Corporation while the exhibit portion will be looked after by National Council of Science Museums (NCSM), Government of India.

The department has also proposed to set up Science Centre and Planetarium in every district headquarter in a phased manner. It could not be taken up now due to unavailability of fund and land, the Director said. — Correspondent



### Cong a divided house ahead of Meghalaya Assembly polls

RAJU DAS

SHILLONG, Sept 3: The Congress is heading for the 2018 Assembly elections in Meghalaya as a divided house with serious questions being raised about Chief Minister Dr Mukul Sangma's leadership.

Some of those against the Chief Minister's leadership include Prestone Tynsong – an aspirant for the CM's post. Tynsong was dropped from the Cabinet by Sangma last month and asked to "reinforce his position" within the party.

Yesterday, the Block Congress of Pymursla, which is Tynsong's constituency, was dissolved and therefore he would have a tough job to reinforce his position amongst the new party functionaries possibly owing loyalty to Sangma.

Others are Siuawbalang Dhar, dropped from the Cabinet for defying the party's diktat and trying to promote his brother-in-law from a constituency in Jaintia Hills currently held by Deputy Chief Minister, RC Laloo. The Block unit of Dhar's con-

stituency in Nartiang was also dissolved.

Some of the other senior Congress legislators against Sangma's leadership include Debora Marak, a Cabinet Minister holding the School Education portfolio amongst others.

Last year, Ronnie Lyngdoh, then chief whip of the party, was starting to show his disaffection towards Sangma, but was promptly awarded the plump Cabinet berth of Urban Affairs to win over him.

Similarly, Amapareen Lyngdoh was also part of a rebel group who wanted to oust Sangma from his post last year. But she developed cold feet largely because the alternative candidate, former CM DD Lapang, was reportedly not to her preference.

She, moreover, had little room to maneuver as she faces a Court case for alleged corruption in a job scam.

Another sitting Congress leader and former Deputy CM, Rowell Lyngdoh was dropped from the Cabinet by Sangma. Lyngdoh has been critical about Sangma. The Block unit at Mawkyrwat which is Lyng-

doh's constituency was also dissolved.

"As of today, Mukul Sangma is the leader... I don't see any necessity to replace him," Home Minister HDR Lyngdoh said. However, that does not make him a total Sangma loyalist, as Lyngdoh too was toying with the idea to replace Sangma from his chair last year.

Knowing the mood within the party, the Congress has begun its clean up job before the campaign, first by dismantling the Congress Block committees across the State. It has also started distributing forms to potential candidates to seek party ticket and many sitting MLAs are unlikely to get the ticket this time.

Here again it is to be seen whether Sangma has his way and senior Congress leaders like Tynsong, Dikhan Lyngdoh are denied party tickets in preference to new faces.

It also depends on Lapang, the party president who was ousted from his CM's chair by Sangma. Lapang still fancies his chances to be in the CM's chair again. He could also be a possible spoilsport to Sangma's aspiration to get a third term by getting his say on choosing candidates for the election.

The former CM enjoys a good rapport with Congress President Sonia Gandhi, while Sangma with Congress vice-president, Rahul Gandhi.

Meanwhile, Sangma has his loyalists too and can surely count on his wife D Shira and brother Zenith Sangma who are among a few of the legislators standing strong with him.

Most of his loyalists come from Garo Hills, which include Forest and Environment Minister, Clement Marak and a host of first time winners from the region.

He can also count on Deputy CM, RC Laloo, who is on thin ice as far as retaining his seat is concerned and would need all the support to win. Health Minister Roshan Warjiy has been a silent and strong Sangma loyalist.

Sangma has also tried to widen his support base by inducting Celestine Lyngdoh, who is from Ri-Bhoi and Comingon Ymon from Jaintia Hills in the Cabinet last month. However, the induction may have come a bit too late.



**CAPSULE****Skoda target**

MUMBAI, Sept 3: After many years of rough ride, Skoda Auto India expects over 30 per cent sales growth this year on the back of the momentum it has been witnessing of late and has set a target of 18,000 units by December. Over the weekend, the Volkswagen Group company rolled out a new model Octavia, the latest model Octavia – the Octavia RS 230 – at a killer price of Rs 24.63 lakh, which is going to give a tough time to the rivals, which are priced much higher. – PTI

**Sun Pharma**

MUMBAI, Sept 3: Pharma major Sun Pharmaceutical Industries said its short-term outlook continues to be challenging and expects a single-digit decline in consolidated revenues for FY18. "The short-term outlook continues to be challenging as the US generic industry is facing rapidly changing market dynamics...," Sun Pharmaceutical Managing Director Dilip Shangvi said in its annual report. – PTI

**Next Gen Verna**

GUWAHATI, Sept 3: Hyundai Motor India Ltd, country's second largest carmaker, unveiled its Next Gen Verna at Saraghat Hyundai here on Friday. The Next Gen Verna is developed on four pillars: Future design, dynamic performance, super safety and new technology-driven advanced features, a press release said.

**HPCl stake sale**

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: JM Financial has been appointed as the transaction advisor to the shareholders' offer Rs 37,000-crore stake sale in HPCl to QNCC. Besides Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas has been selected as the legal adviser for handling the stake sale. – PTI

**IRDAl campaigns**

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: Insurance regulator IRDAl has empanelled seven creative agencies for production of TV spots, radio jingles and organising exhibitions with an aim to increase insurance penetration in the Country. The empanelled agencies would be carrying out publicity campaigns at the national level. – PTI

**Hero Electronix**

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: Hero Electronix, part of the Hero Group, is gearing up to venture into new areas like Internet of Things (IoT), defence electronics and automotive sector according to a senior company official. The company has identified IoT-enabled home solutions as a priority area as part of its strategy to scale up overall business. – PTI

**FabAlley plans**

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: Fashion brand FabAlley is looking to open about 10 exclusive stores in India by next year as part of efforts to expand its offline presence. The Bengaluru-based firm was till now present in online spaces including Amazon and Myatra, is looking to game up 25 per cent sales through the offline channel. The company recently announced the layout of its first brick-and-mortar store in Bengaluru. – PTI

**JSW Steel**

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: JSW Steel's Rs 25,600-crore capex plan is on track and the company plans to spend Rs 8,000 crore this year. Joint Managing Director Seshagiri Rao said, "Our mission is to become a 40-million-tonne (mt) steel company... Taken together, we have a capital plan of Rs 25,600 crore to be spent over three years. So this year, we will be spending Rs 8,000 crore..." Rao, also the group's CFO, told PTI.

# Telecom panel to discuss NE connectivity plan on Sept 8

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: The inter-ministerial Telecom Commission is likely to consider this week a proposal for setting up mobile towers in the unconnected villages of the North-east, official sources said.

"Telecom connectivity plan for improving connectivity in the North-east will be placed before Telecom Commission on September 8," a government official, who did not wish to be named, told PTI.

The mobile towers will be installed under the Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for the North-Eastern Region (NER) which was approved by the Cabinet in September 2014.

Under the plan, 8,621 villages out of 9,190 unconnected villages are to be covered by installation of 6,673 mobile towers with a total outlay of Rs 5,336.18 crore.

The Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), which is handling the project, is likely

to submit its bid proposal for installing around 4,000 out of the 6,673 mobile towers.

The state-run BSNL has been entrusted with the task of installing network in tough terrain

and HFCL for installing around 2,000 towers for Rs 1,648 crore. These two domestic telecom equipment firms had rolled out mobile network project for BSNL in Left-wing extramist areas across nine States.

Rest of the project was to be rolled out with help of private telecom operators. After no show by private telecom players for the tender, the USOF finally received a bid from Bharti Airtel this year.

Airtel had placed a bid for installing around 2,000 mobile towers for around Rs 1,660 crore.

According to sources, the USOF has deferred its plan to roll out mobile towers in Meghalaya for the time being and will work on the project through separate tenders.

The Telecom Commission has to take a call on the price difference between the two bids and validity of the single bid received from Bharti Airtel. – PTI



## Finmin writes to heads of PSU banks on consolidation

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: The Finance Ministry has written letters to all heads of PSU lenders informing them of the government's decision to set up a ministerial panel to facilitate consolidation in the public banking space.

A formal communication to CEOs of the banks from the Department of Financial Services last week has set in motion the consolidation process, a senior Finance Ministry official said.

The government has been nudging the state-owned lenders to go for mergers so that there can be fewer and stronger banks.

The ministry wants banks to undertake a financial exercise for the best match and come up with the merger idea for the alternative mechanism (AM) set up for the purpose.

The banks should analyse regional balance, geographical reach, IT compatibility, financial burden and human resource transition while firming up the merger proposal for the ministerial panel.

Last month, the Union Cabinet decided to set up the alternative mechanism to oversee proposals for expedited consolidation of public sector banks (PSBs) so as to create larger and stronger lenders.

The proposals received from banks for in-principle approval to merge so that they were subsidiaries of the largest lender, the official added.

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This exemption will be applicable for ten years and comes at a

time when several experts and even policy-makers have been talking about the need for consolidation in the banking sector, especially among state-owned banks.

Asked how soon could there be consolidation, the official said, "It will be a few months as it is not a simple process."

The merger of associate banks with SBI was slightly easy because they were subsidiaries of the largest lender, the official added.

Earlier this year, the government had approved the merger of SBI's five associate banks with the parent. In March, the Cabinet also approved the merger of Bhatiyari Mahila Bank (BMB) with SBI.

Following this, the number of public sector banks declined to 21 from 27. – PTI

## Tata Motors' CV sales up 24% in July-Aug period

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: Tata Motors, which is on a turnaround drive, saw its domestic commercial vehicles sales grow by 24.35 per cent in the July-August period after a decline of 15.62 per cent in the first quarter of the ongoing fiscal.

The sales rose to 59,378 units in the two-month period of 2017-18, from 47,750 units in the year-ago period.

In the April-June quarter of the current fiscal, the company's domestic CV sales had declined by 15.62 per cent to 66,397 units, as against 78,693 units in the same quarter of 2016-17.

"After a sluggish Q1, our commercial vehicles in the domestic

market grew by 15 per cent in July and 34 per cent in August over last year," Tata Motors Head - Commercial Vehicle Business Unit,

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Girish Wagh said.

The growth has been on the back of ramp-up of BS4 production across segments, passing on the benefits of GST to consumers by price re-

duction along with increased imposition of restrictions on overloading, growing momentum in the infrastructure, mining and construction segments, he added.

Increasing acceptance of the company's selective catalytic reduction (SCR) technology has led to undertake appropriate measures to improve our performance across segments," Wagh said. – PTI

"In line with our turnaround strategy, we will be introducing new products and will continue to undertake appropriate measures to address the millennials."

"Our plan is to add 35-40 stores a year. We would be over 350 stores by 2020-21 fiscal," Spykar Lifestyles COO Sanjay Kapoor told PTI.

The company operates 205 stores pan India and is aiming to have Rs 700-crore sales by 2020-21.

"Last fiscal, we had closed around Rs 310 crore and this fiscal, our target is over Rs 370 crore," he said.

Most of the new stores would be in non-metro markets and on franchise model.

"We are planning to open stores in metros and tier-I cities where we have opportunities and we are also now expanding in tier-II and III places significantly to open Spykar stores there," Vaishnavi Kharolia added. – PTI

shuttle inspires confidence that the path of reforms, ease of doing business and timely implementation will continue to be top priority. This is vital at time when the GDP growth has been flagging," CII President Shobana Kamineni said.

Industry welcomes the new ideas and fresh action agenda that the new ministers will bring to their portfolios. At the same time, continuity too has been maintained in

the Council, the statement added.

Four junior ministers – Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Dharmendra Pradhan, Nirmala Sitharaman and Piyush Goyal were elevated to the Cabinet rank and nine fresh faces induced as Ministers of State in a major rejig of his team by Prime Minister Narendra Modi today.

The exercise raised the strength of the Union Council of Ministers from 73 to 76. – PTI

resulting in 15 per cent rise in bookings for peak season," MakeMyTrip COO Online Mohit Gupta told PTI here.

Kolkata-Delhi and Delhi-Hyderabad are few of the most travelled routes with more than 100 per cent growth during this festive season as compared to last year, it added.

According to the trend, average fares for the top 20 sectors on domestic flights have increased by 10 per cent this from last year.

In some of the major sectors, the fare has increased by up to 30 per cent, with festivities still one month away, it added.

It found that from the average fares of bookings from the metros, maximum increase in fares was seen from cities like Mumbai and Bengaluru.

"The average fares from Mumbai and Bengaluru have witnessed maximum increase, but have remained same from Delhi and Kolkata, as compared to last year," it added. – PTI

## Cabinet rejig indicates stress on reforms: CII

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: Industry body CII today said the Cabinet reshuffle has instilled confidence that the path of reforms and 'ease of doing business' will continue to be the Modi government's top priority.

The rejig has been "carefully strategised" with an aim to impart fresh impetus to India's development process, CII said in a statement.

"Overall, the direction of the re-

shuttle inspires confidence that the path of reforms, ease of doing business and timely implementation will continue to be top priority. This is vital at time when the GDP growth has been flagging," CII President Shobana Kamineni said.

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The exercise raised the strength of the Union Council of Ministers from 73 to 76. – PTI

Surge in air travel bookings around Diwali: Report

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## Produce more special steel to cut imports: Minister to PSUs

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: Seemingly not too happy with the show of PSUs like SAIL and RINL, Steel Minister Birender Singh has a policy prescription – put to good use the huge Rs 60,000-crore investment made by them and beat private peers.

Acknowledging that things are not as bad for the steel sector as it used to be some two-three years ago, Singh strongly felt that PSUs should develop an appetite for special steel as value-addition remains the mantra for success.

"Things are not that bad which it used to be two to three years back. I think in the last two years the private sector is improving itself much better than the PSUs..."

"PSUs... When they have advantages like captive mines... why don't they utilise it... Why not to put up washeries... Why not to go for value-addition... Special grades of steel," Singh told PTI in an interview.

"Rs 60,000 crore has been spent on expansion and modernisation of our PSUs... Their capacities have ramped up but the need today is to produce special steel also," he said.

Despite India being the world's third largest producer of steel, it is still dependent on imports for some products and "there is dire need to develop technologies to produce electrical grade and auto grade steel in India to become self-sufficient. Instead of producing just

semi-finished and basic steel products, we must produce high value-added products, which also get better prices," he asserted.

Barely a few months back, Singh had minced no words in cautioning PSUs, including domestic giant SAIL, to "perform or perish," saying complacency cannot be tolerated at a time when private players are excelling on various parameters.

Chairing a meeting of chiefs of top steel PSUs, the minister had pulled up public sector firms like SAIL and RINL for lagging behind not only on international benchmarks, but also their private counterparts and being complacent in raising capacities.

"In production and productivity parameters, PSUs are far behind their counterparts in private sector. In terms of international benchmarks, performance of Indian steel companies is very poor," Singh had told PSU top brass and indicted SAIL for missing deadlines for modernisation.

He said one area which his ministry has prioritised for rollout of National Steel Policy is raw material security.

"I have directed the ministry officials to take two actions on a priority basis. These are setting up of coal washeries and optimising pellet utilisation. These will help reduce dependence on imports by maximising usage of domestic raw materials," he said. – PTI

## It may take 3 months for ATMs to start dispensing Rs 200 notes

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: While the RBI launched the 200-rupee notes a week ago, it may take up to three months for ATMs to start dispensing the new denominations currently as it will involve a huge exercise of recalibration.

Some banks have even asked the

said that they have not received any directive from the RBI regarding the recalibration of ATMs for the new Rs 200 note. They disclosed that some banks have at an informal level asked them to start testing of the new note, since it is of a different size.

It is yet to be seen whether all the 2.25 lakh ATMs across India would be recalibrated for dispensing the new note.

Ravi B Goyal, Chairman and Managing Director, AGS Transact Technologies Ltd, which claims to have an installed base of 60,000 ATMs, told IANS, "The process of recalibration will begin once we receive the directive from the RBI.

The size of the new notes is different from the existing ones and so, once we receive the new notes, we will have to understand its dimensions and accordingly reconfigure the ATM cassettes. Next, we will have to check if the supply of notes is good enough to run the cassettes at full capacity.

"The entire process of recalibration can be completed within 90 days without affecting the regular functionality of ATMs to a large extent. In fact, the ATMs will continue to be fully operational during recalibration and will continue to process Rs 100, Rs 500 and Rs 2,000 denominations," he said.

Currently, Rs 200 notes are available through select RBI offices and some banks.

State Bank of India and Punjab National Bank are reported to have received the new Rs 200 notes. The Rs 200 note is currently being printed only by RBI presses. – IANS



AS per the latest auction sale (No 35) held at Guwahati Tea Auction Centre (GTAC) on August 30-31, the total tea offerings were 1,61,479 packages, out of which 72 per cent were sold. Good and best liquoring sorts sold at around last level while other tea tended easier according to quality. Hindustan Unilever and Tata Global actively participated. Western India buyers operated on liquoring sorts with some export enquiry. The auction average price for this week stood at Rs 150.08, up by Rs 4.67 from last year.

### Top garden price

BOP	Price	BOP/MBP	Price	OF/PF	Price
HALMARI	328	LUKWAH	251	LUKWAH	242
SOCKLATINGA	253	LOPHOKHA	261	MACHIPUR	231
DULFATING	235	GHILDARY	290	SOTAL	231
HALMIRA	230	HALMRA	248	SOCKLATINGA	228
HIRAJU	230	SOCKLETING	246	MAZBAT	226

Secretary, Guwahati Tea Auction Buyers Association (GTABA)

Guwahati Tea Auction Buyers Association (GTABA)

Guwahati Tea Auction Buyers Association (GTABA)



## 'Top-performer' Gadkari in charge as Govt eyes clean Ganga deadline

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: Faced with the herculean task of fulfilling the BJP-led Government's promise of cleaning the Ganga, the Centre needed nothing short of a silver bullet to meet the deadline for the project, which some allege, is being implemented at a snail's pace.

This sluggish implementation is the ostensible reason behind Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari, considered one of the top-performing ministers, getting the additional charge of Water Resources Ministry, sources say.

The ministry is tasked with the responsibility of executing the project dear to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Gadkari replaces Uma Bharti, who has now been given the charge of Drinking Water and Sanitation, in the re-jigged Modi Cabinet.

The Centre has set a target of 2018 for cleaning the mighty river, which touches lives of millions of Indians in or out of the country.

According to sources in the Union

Water Resources Ministry, a total of 160 projects worth around Rs 12,500 crore have been approved under the Namami Gange Mission – a Rs 20,000-crore project for cleaning the river.

These include developing river fronts, setting up sewage treatment plants and construction of ghats and crematoria, among others. Till now, only 40 projects have been completed, the sources said.

The BJP coming to power in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh, two of the five key

Ganga-Brahmaputra States in March did not help the project gain the expected momentum, they added.

Bihar, West Bengal and Jharkhand are the other three Ganga basin States.

In Bihar, the BJP returned to power only towards the end of July.

"The reason offered until six months ago (i.e., prior to the UP and Uttarakhand Assembly polls) that barring Jharkhand the remaining four States had non-BJP governments, so seems specious," a source in the Water Resources Ministry said, requesting anonymity.

"Because, even though the BJP came to power in UP and Uttarakhand, things haven't changed much. This could be the reason that there is a change in guard in the ministry as the pressure mounts," the source added.

Gadkari has been associated with the Namami Gange Mission in his capacity as the Transport & Shipping Minister to develop waterways in the 2,525-km river. Sources said this might have worked in his favour.

"Since he is aware of the project in some or the other way, he may not eat into much of the crucial time left to understand the project's nitty-gritty."

"Plus, he is considered as a go-getter, a Minister who prefers to hear answers from officers only in either yes or no," the sources added.

Apart from Namami Gange, the Water Resources Ministry is implementing the key Ken-Betwa river-linking project, first project aimed at connecting two rivers to meet water needs of drought-prone swathes of the Bundelkhand region, which falls in both Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

The project, too, has been delayed due to environmental clearance issues and also as the BJP Government in Madhya Pradesh refused to give its approval for implementing the project.

The Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchay Yojana, an ambitious irrigation programme, is another scheme the Ministry is executing. – PTI

## Prabhu bids adieu to Railways

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: Suresh Prabhu today bade farewell to the Railway Ministry and moved on to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, after Piyush Goyal was given charge of the crucial portfolio which runs the transport behemoth.

Soon after the oath ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhawan ended where Goyal and three other Ministers of State were elevated to the Cabinet rank and nine new faces inducted into the council of ministers, Prabhu tweeted indicating his exit.

"Thanks to all 13 lakh+ rail family for their support, love, goodwill. I will always cherish these memories with me. Wishing you all a great life," he said.

In the reshuffle of the Council of Ministers, Prabhu was shifted from the Railways to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, while Goyal was made the Railway Minister and also given the task of handling the Coal portfolio as well.

Prabhu, who had taken moral responsibility of the slew of accidents last month and met Prime Minister Narendra Modi offering his resignation, was not attending his Rail Bhawan office since August 23. He was also not attending any function of the ministry



since then.

However, he had attended a BJP rally in Goa recently as well as the 'Sankalp Se Siddhi' event of the party.

Prabhu had also remained absent when the Railway Ministry inked two agreements with Switzerland earlier this week and called off several media conferences where he was to speak.

Wishing the fresh inductees to the Council of Ministers, Prabhu said "Congrats to all members of #TeamModi for new responsibility. Making our country better is our common mission."

He also applauded Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Dharmendra Pradhan, Nirmala Sitharaman and Goyal for their elevation as members of the Union Cabinet.

"Congrats to @dpradhansbjp @PiyushGoyal @nitharam @naqivmukhtar for their new responsibilities. Best wishes for great success," he tweeted.

On August 19, 23 people were killed and over 200 injured when 13 coaches of the train came off the tracks in Khatauli, near Muzaffarnagar. On August 23, 10 coaches of the Kaifiyat Express heading towards Delhi derailed after colliding with a dumper, again in Uttar Pradesh. – PTI

## Satyapal Singh – tough cop becomes Minister

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: A Mumbai Police Commissioner who quit the post to join politics, Satyapal Singh seems to have found his true calling after taking the electoral plunge to become an MP and now a part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Cabinet.

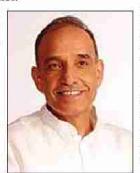
61-year-old Singh wanted to resign before he in 1980 and got cadre.

But in his own voice "told time to change. He quit the job of ever, became an as a Union Minister to work for the work with renewed energy."

Singh's first posting was as Assistant Superintendent of Police at Nasik. He then went on to become the Superintendent of Police of Buldhana.

Prior to being appointed the Mumbai Police chief, Singh was Maharashtra's Additional Director General of Police. He has also served as the Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime) in Mumbai.

He has been often on deputation to the CBI and received a special service medal for extraordinary work in Xaxali infested areas of Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. He received the President's Police Medal for distinguished service in 2004, the President's Police Medal for Meritorious Service in 1996 and the DG's Insignia in the same year. – PTI



Satya p a l  
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Students participating in a 'Run for Nation' programme in Patna, on Sunday. – UNI

## GST bad for tottering art industry, claims noted artist

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: GST aims at making the tax structure uniform across India, but is bad for the already struggling art industry, which needs more incentives and opportunities to grow, says renowned artist Jagannath Panda.

For the Odisha-born artist, who is showcasing his new series of works in a solo exhibition, titled 'Crystal Cities', after a seven-year hiatus, taxation is a sensitive topic for artists struggling to survive.

Questioning the uniform Goods and Services Tax law, he asks how "intellectual art" can be compared to an industrial commodity.

"It is bad because you can't look at any creative intellectual product as a commodity. It is not a mass product. Sometimes we sell and sometimes we don't. And if the Government compares it to any industrial product, it is not fair to the artist," Panda told this news agency.

He recalls the days of his own struggle when putting up an art show posed huge challenges. From finding an affordable place to showcase art works to gathering support from sponsors, Panda has overcome several hurdles in his artistic journey.

NIC developing e-mail server for all Govt officers

HYDERABAD, Sept 3: The NIC is building a massive server to boost capacity vis-a-vis official e-mail usage by Central and State Government officers, a senior official has said.

"NIC (National Informatics Centre) is developing an e-mail server for the Government. Today, the present e-mail server has kind of already exceeded its capacity. We are now creating a massive e-mail server. Slowly and slowly, people are being on-boarded onto this e-mail server," Ajay Kumar, Additional Secretary, Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, told this news agency here.

"We do endeavour to make sure that all Government officers use official one (e-mail id)... All Government officers, Central and State. We will offer this facility to the States also.

"Because, when you are using private servers, your data is going outside the country, which may be of strategic importance. Therefore, official work should be done on official e-mail servers," he said.

States can have their own official mail servers or they can use Central servers, the official said.

"NIC is the only agency (which has taken up the job). We have no objection if some other agency wants to do it as long as it is official. NIC is providing a service which can be availed," he said. – PTI

## Folk music-based films screened at Singapore fest

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: The fourth edition of Singapore Film Festival that featured folk music-based films from the country, concluded here today.

Organised by the Singapore High Commission in partnership with the Directorate of Film Festivals, the festival was themed after Singapore folk music, Xin Yao.

Known for its lyrics and melodies, Xin Yao, which was popular among Singaporeans in the 1980s and 90s, was the inspiration behind two of the films screening during the festival.

*That Girl in a Pinapple* by Lee Wei Chai tells the story of a group of teenagers and their dedication to Xin Yao. The screening was followed by a dialogue with director Chai and composer Zenon Goh, who produced the songs in the film and is one of the pioneers of the Xin Yao movement.

Another film, *The Songs We Sang* talked about the origin and impact of Xin Yao in Singapore.

The screening was followed by a dialogue with director Chai and composer Zenon Goh, who produced the songs in the film and is one of the pioneers of the Xin Yao movement.

"In the spirit of cultural exchange, we wanted to share

with our friends in India works that have meaning for us, Singaporeans. It was a matter of great pride for us to see two home-grown filmmakers' works screened at Cannes.

"It showed that Singapore has stories to tell which can resonate with Singaporean as well as international audiences," Tay said.

A Singapore-India filmmakers' residency exchange programme was held concurrently with the film festival.

Budding Singaporean filmmaker Kang Sheng Yang will spend a month in India shooting scenes for a short film, while Indian filmmaker Daljit Ani will spend a month in Singapore shooting a documentary on the British Indian Army forces in Singapore during World War-I.

The festival concluded with *7 Letters*, which featured seven short films by Singapore's seven top filmmakers. – PTI



Kolkata-based classical singer Kalpana Zokarkar performing on the 2nd day of Thumri Festival organised by Sahitya Kala Parishad in New Delhi, on Saturday night. – UNI

## Virendra Kumar - the Dalit face of BJP in MP

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: Associated with the RSS from childhood, Virendra Kumar is a six-time Lok Sabha member from Tikkamgarh in Madhya Pradesh and the BJP's Dalit face.

The 63-year-old is passionate about the cause of cow protection and is closely associated with the successful management and functioning of the Gau Seva Sangh Sanstha in Sagar town of Madhya Pradesh.

Kumar is known for his simplicity and is often seen taking a lift from anyone in the town to reach his destination.



"Even when he comes from Delhi, he just gets down at the station like any common man and takes an auto-rickshaw to reach his home," his close associate said.

He still roams around in his constituency on a scooter and stays away from all kinds of security paraphernalia usually associated with the post.

Born on February 27, 1954, Kumar became MP for the first time in 1996 in the 11th Lok Sabha from Sagar. Since then, he has never looked back and won from Sagar till 2004. – PTI

## 'Will do my very best', says ex-diplomat Hardeep Puri

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: Former diplomat Hardeep Singh Puri, who was today inducted into the Union Council of Ministers, said he will "do his best" to fulfil any responsibility assigned to him.

Puri was among the nine new Ministers of State sworn in by President Ram Nath Kovind at a ceremony in the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

"I am deeply grateful to the Prime Minister for having included me as a member of his team and whichever portfolio is assigned, I will do my very best," he told reporters after taking oath.



Puri, who has decades of diplomatic experience, also appreciated the Government's foreign policy, saying "diplomacy is going well and the challenges are being dealt well by the ministers under the guidance of the Prime Minister."

To a query over Modi inducing people with proven administrative abilities in his new team, he said "if you see, they are not only bureaucrats, but they also come with experience in their respective fields... It will prove to be good." – PTI





## Migraine over money!

Financial stress may increase migraine risk, says a study

**S**tress caused by financial hardship can increase the risk of developing migraine in people with a particular gene variant, a study has shown. Migraine is a serious and debilitating neurological disease affecting one billion people worldwide.

The findings showed that the genetics of circadian rhythms has an effect on migraine and those with the CLOCK gene variant have more migraines under financial stress.

The CLOCK gene has an important role in regulating many rhythmic patterns of the body, including body temperature or level of cortisol – the primary stress hormone.

Though the researchers did not find a significant direct connection between the gene and migraine when they stored in financial stress, they found that the mutated gene variants increased the odds of having migraine type headaches in those subjects who suffered from financial hardship by around 20 per cent.

"The study does not show what causes migraine but it does show that both stress and

genetics have an effect. We were able to show that stress – represented by financial hardship – led to an increase in migraine in those who have a particular gene variant," said Daniel Baksa from the Semmelweis University in Budapest, Hungary.

For the study, presented at the 30th ECNP Congress in Paris, the team of researchers from Hungary and the UK checked 999 patients from Budapest and 1,350 from Manchester, for two variants (single nucleotide polymorphisms, SNPs) of the CLOCK gene, and how these are associated with migraine.

The gene variants was found in nearly one-third of the population, so they are common variants with small effect size, the researchers said.

"Our results shed light on one specific mechanism that may contribute to migraine. What it does mean is that for many people, the stress caused by financial worries can physically affect you," Baksa said.

"What we need to do now is to see if other circadian gene variants in association with different stress factors cause the same effect," – IANS

Kids	Entertainment	Movies
<b>CN</b> 13:00 Red No. 21 14:00 Dora the Explorer 14:30 Ben 10 Omnitrix 16:00 Ben 10 21 16:30 Cogz & Cockrach 17:30 Teen Titans Go 18:00 Dora & the Explorer 18:30 Land of 19:00 Kris in Dash Niral 20:00 Dora & the Explorer 21:00 Teen Titans Go <b>Colors</b> 13:00 Crime Patrol - Star 17:00 Crime Patrol - Star 18:00 Crime Patrol - Star 19:30 Pethwa Bajiro 20:00 Mahabali Hanuman 21:00 Bhagya Lakshmi 21:30 Kuch Rang Pyar Ase/Bhi 22:00 Crime Patrol - Star <b>StarPlus</b> 13:00 Shakti <b>SONY</b> 13:00 Kundal Bharya 14:00 Kundal Bharya 14:30 Kundal Bharya 15:00 Jeet Gay To Piya Money 15:30 Kundal Bharya 17:00 Kundal Bharya 18:00 Sethi 18:30 Kundal Bharya 19:30 Asl Deewangi 20:00 Hole In The Wall 21:00 Tom And Jerry Show 21:30 Tom And Jerry Show 22:00 Tom & Jerry Tales 23:00 Tom & Jerry Tales 23:30 Telephones <b>Zcafe</b> 13:00 Misses 13:30 Grey's Anatomy <b>Infotainment</b> <b>ANIMAL</b> <b>PLANET</b> 13:00 Jaws and Claws 14:00 Crocs from Africa Land 15:00 Extreme Survivors 16:00 Biggest & Baddest 17:00 Animal Planet Select 18:00 Lions & Leopards 18:00 Wild Winners 20:00 The Life Cycles <b>ZEE MASTERS</b> <b>INDIA</b> 21:00 Yeh Masti India 22:00 Zee Masters India 23:00 Animal Planet Select <b>NATIONAL</b> <b>GEORGIC</b> <b>CHANNEL</b> 13:00 Animals Gone Wild 14:00 Inside 16:00 India's First Law of Defense 18:00 Science of Stupid 18:30 Diana: In Her Own Words 19:00 Nat Geo Investigates <b>Discovery</b> 13:00 Food Fight: Bear Grylls 14:00 Food Fight: Bear Grylls 15:00 River Monsters 16:00 Wild Hunt 17:00 Wild France in Africa 18:00 Man vs. Wild 19:00 Wild France in Africa 19:30 How Do They Do It? 20:00 River Monsters 21:00 Wild Hunt 22:00 Man Vs. Wild 23:00 A Haunting <b>raing</b> 13:00 Prawn Show 14:00 Food Fight: Bear Grylls 15:00 Storage Wars 16:00 Wild France in Africa 17:00 Wild France in Africa 18:00 Man vs. Wild 19:00 Wild France in Africa 19:30 How Do They Do It? 20:00 River Monsters 21:00 Wild Hunt 22:00 Man Vs. Wild 23:00 A Haunting <b>HISTORY</b> 13:00 Food Fight: Bear Grylls 14:00 Storage Wars 15:00 Wild France in Africa 16:00 Wild France in Africa 17:00 Wild France in Africa 18:00 Man vs. Wild 19:00 Wild France in Africa 19:30 How Do They Do It? 20:00 River Monsters 21:00 Wild Hunt 22:00 Man Vs. Wild 23:00 A Haunting <b>Top Cat</b> 21:00 Big Meg Kitchen 22:00 Megatronics 23:00 Living in Space <b>DAW</b> 13:00 Prawn Show 14:00 Food Fight: Bear Grylls 15:00 Storage Wars 16:00 Wild France in Africa 17:00 Wild France in Africa 18:00 Man vs. Wild 19:00 Wild France in Africa 19:30 How Do They Do It? 20:00 River Monsters 21:00 Wild Hunt 22:00 Man Vs. Wild 23:00 A Haunting <b>NEWS</b> <b>LIVE</b> 07:00 Breakfast Live 08:00 Good Morning Assam 09:00 Good Morning Assam 10:00 Assamnews news 11:00 Assamnews news 12:00 Mid Day Live 13:00 Assamnews news 14:00 Assamnews Prime 15:00 Assamnews Prime 16:00 Assamnews Prime 17:00 Assamnews Prime 18:00 Assamnews Prime 19:00 Assamnews Prime 20:00 Prime Time Debate 21:00 Prime Time Debate 22:00 Prime Time Debate 23:00 Prime Time Debate 23:30 Prime Time Debate 23:30 Prime Time Debate <b>raing</b> 07:00 Breakfast Live 08:00 Good Morning Assam 09:00 Good Morning Assam 10:00 Assamnews news 11:00 Assamnews news 12:00 Mid Day Live 13:00 Assamnews news 14:00 Assamnews Prime 15:00 Assamnews Prime 16:00 Assamnews Prime 17:00 Assamnews Prime 18:00 Assamnews Prime 19:00 Assamnews Prime 20:00 Prime Time Debate 21:00 Prime Time Debate 22:00 Prime Time Debate 23:00 Prime Time Debate 23:30 Prime Time Debate <b>STAR MOVIES</b> 13:00 Dhaka Ki Prem 13:30 Ek Astha Ai Bhee 14:00 Love Ka Hain Intzaar 14:30 Ek Chakreyuh 15:00 Dance Plus 15:30 Utsav 16:00 Dukh Di Tak 16:30 Ek Shringar – Swabhiman 17:00 Kundal Bharya 17:30 Kundal Bharya 18:00 Sethi 18:30 Kundal Bharya 19:00 Asl Deewangi 19:30 Jeet Gay To Piya Money 20:00 Savitri Devi College and... 20:30 Savitri Devi College and... 21:00 Kundal Bharya 21:30 Kundal Bharya 22:00 Kundal Bharya 23:00 Kundal Bharya <b>STAR MOVIES</b> 13:00 Top Funniest 16:00 The Big Bang Theory 16:30 The Big Bang Theory 17:00 The Good Wife 19:00 Top Funniest 20:00 Top Funniest 21:00 Grey's Anatomy 22:00 New Blood 23:00 Mistresses <b>HOME ALONE 3</b> 13:30 Dhaka Ki Prem 14:00 Love Ka Hain Intzaar 14:30 Ek Chakreyuh 15:00 Dance Plus 15:30 Utsav 16:00 Dukh Di Tak 16:30 Ek Shringar – Swabhiman 17:00 Kundal Bharya 17:30 Kundal Bharya 18:00 Sethi 18:30 Kundal Bharya 19:00 Asl Deewangi 19:30 Jeet Gay To Piya Money 20:00 Savitri Devi College and... 20:30 Savitri Devi College and... 21:00 Kundal Bharya 21:30 Kundal Bharya 22:00 Kundal Bharya 23:00 Kundal Bharya <b>STAR MOVIES</b> 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## Macron urges very firm response to N Korea nuclear test

PARIS, Sept 3: French President Emmanuel Macron called today for a "very firm" response by the international community to North Korea's announcement that it had successfully tested a hydrogen bomb.

"The international community must be very firm in its handling of this latest provocation, in order to get North Korea to unconditionally return to talks and proceed with the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of its nuclear and ballistic programmes," Macron said in a statement.

He called on the UN Security Council to "quickly react" to the escalation and also urged the European Union to come up with a "clear and united" response.

North Korea said it tested a hydrogen bomb that could be mounted on a missile and that its biggest-ever nuclear detonation had been a "perfect success".

Hydrogen bombs or H-bombs – also known as thermonuclear devices – are far more powerful than the relatively simple atomic weapons the North was believed to have tested so far.

The announcement drew swift and strong condemnation from regional powers, including Pyongyang's ally China.

US President Donald Trump, who last month threatened North Korea with "fire and fury" for firing two long-range ballistic missiles, had yet to react. – AFP

## Around the WORLD



A mutant vehicle drives through the city as approximately 70,000 people from all over the world gathered for the annual Burning Man arts and music festival in the Black Rock Desert of Nevada, US on Friday – UNI

### Racial abuse

LONDON, Sept 3: A group of Muslim men were hurled with racial slurs by a blonde woman while walking down a road after paying their respects at a cemetery as part of Eid rituals in the UK, police has said. The 43-year-old blonde-haired woman in a red car was filming yelling racial abuses at the men.

In West Yorkshire, police said a group of Asian men were walking near to Dewsbury Cemetery when a vehicle pulled up alongside them and a female passenger shouted racial abuse. The police, however, did not identify the nationality of the men.

A video of the incident shows the woman who is a passenger in a small red car, aggressively targeting the men, the Huddersfield Examiner reported.

Police investigating the incident initially appealed for witnesses for a red BMW Mini car seen driving away. One of the women has been arrested on suspicion of a racially aggravated public order offence and is currently in police custody. The men identified by local media as Muslims – had reportedly been paying respects at the cemetery as part of Eid rituals when the incident happened on Friday.

"This was an incredibly distressing experience and our enquiries are very much underway to identify those involved. The victims were understandably left shocked and upset following this incident," said Superintendent Roger Essell, Kirklees District Police. – PTI

### New France forest fire

MARSEILLE (France), Sept 3: A forest fire broke out in southeastern France, destroying more than 400 hectares near urban areas, damaging two houses and forcing the evacuation of a camping site, the fire department and local authorities said today.

"The fire is very violent, very virulent," a local official in Var, Emmanuel Cayron, told AFP from the crisis centre which has been activated.

Some 430 hectares had been burned and two houses were ravaged, a spokeswoman for the local prefecture said. And 165 people were evacuated from a camping site.

The fire broke out in Hyeres around 10pm Saturday (2000 GMT), which was considered high risk due to dry weather and strong wind, according to a fire department spokesman.

Several roads, as well as a high-voltage power supply, have been cut off at the rear of the fire department.

About 450 firefighters were battling the flames on Sunday. The fire department has requested reinforcements from neighbouring districts.

"The fire is huge, it's impressive. We can see the flames on the ridge line of the hills, and the blue lights of the firefighters," said Danièle, a resident of Hyeres.

This summer has seen blazes across southern France, which is experiencing a particularly hot and dry summer. – AFP

## North Korea conducts 6th nuclear test, says it was H-bomb

SEOUL, Sept 3: North Korea said it set off a hydrogen bomb today in its sixth nuclear test, which judging by the earthquake it set off appeared to be its most powerful explosion yet.

South Korea's weather agency estimated the nuclear blast yield of the presumed test was between 50 and 60 kilotons, or five to six times stronger than North Korea's fifth test in September 2016. That would mark a significant step forward in the North's quest for a viable nuclear missile capable of striking anywhere in the United States. On North Korean television, a newsreader called the test a "complete success" and said the "two-stage thermonuclear weapon" had "unprecedented" strength. Hours earlier, Pyongyang claimed its leader had inspected a hydrogen bomb meant for a new intercontinental ballistic missile.



Seoul's weather agency and the Joint Chiefs of Staff said an artificial 5.7 magnitude quake occurred at 12:29 p.m. local time, in Kilju, northern Hamgyong province, the site where North

Korea has conducted nuclear tests in the past. Seoul officials revised their earlier estimate of 5.6 magnitude quake. The US Geological Survey called the first quake an explosion with a

magnitude 6.3. The US State Department had no immediate reaction. South Korea's presidential office said it will hold a National Security Council meeting chaired by President Moon Jae-in.

South Korea's military said it has strengthened its monitoring and readiness while nulling a variety of possible responses that could be exercised in collaboration with the US.

Japan confirmed that North Korea conducted a nuclear test, Foreign Minister Taro Kono said. "It is absolutely unacceptable if North Korea did force another nuclear test, and we must protest strongly," Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said.

The USGS and China's earthquake administration detected a second tremor in North Korea minutes after the first, describing it as a cave-in or collapse. South Korea's weather agency, however, said no second quake occurred. – PTI



A firefighter watches as a Burning Man participant (L) evades a chasing firefighter and falls into the flames of the "Man Burn" after evading the attempted tackles of multiple rangers and law enforcement personnel at the annual Burning Man arts and music festival in the Black Rock Desert of Nevada, US on Saturday. – UNI

## US seizes control of three Russian diplomatic posts

WASHINGTON, Sept 3: The United States seized control of three Russian diplomatic posts in the US today after confirming the Russians had complied with the Trump administration's order to get out within two days, officials said.

As the Kremlin cried foul, accusing Washington of bullying tactics, the US disputed Moscow's claims that American officials had threatened to "break down the entrance door" to one of the facilities, and that the FBI was "clearing the premises." Not true, said a senior State Department official, adding that US officials had joined Russian Embassy personnel for walkthroughs of the three buildings.

"These inspections were car-

ried out to secure and protect the facilities and to confirm the Russian government had vacated the premises," the official said in a statement emailed today to reporters by the State Department on condition the official not be named.

Russia has been incensed by the move to shutter Russia's consulate in San Francisco and trade offices in Washington and New York, actions the US took in retaliation for Moscow's decision last month to force the US to cut its diplomatic personnel in Russia to 455. Moscow has accused the US of violating international law by shuttering the facilities, a charge the US disputes.

Yesterday, Russia's Foreign Ministry said it had summoned

the US deputy chief of mission in Moscow, Anthony Godfrey, to deliver a formal protest note calling the purported trade office search an "unprecedented aggressive action."

The Foreign Ministry also posted video on Facebook that said showed FBI agents inspecting the consulate general building in San Francisco. In the video, a man in a tie knocks on several numbered doors and enters what appears to be apartment units, taking a quick glance inside before declaring everything in order.

There was no additional comment from the US about whether the FBI was involved in the inspections. The State Department declined to answer additional questions about whether the premises might be searched for intelligence-gathering purposes now that the Russians have left.

A day earlier, black smoke was seen billowing from the chimney at the consulate as the Russians rushed to meet the deadline today, and workers could be seen hauling boxes out of the stately building.

The US did appear to bow to one Russian complaint that they were given a mere 48 hours to vacate homes used by diplomats and their families. Softening the original order, the US said it had made "separate arrangements" to give families "sufficient time" to pack their belongings and vacate apartments on the consulate grounds. – AP

## China asks N Korea to stop wrong actions after nuclear test

BEIJING, Sept 3: China today strongly condemned North Korea's sixth nuclear test and asked the reclusive nation to "cease" its "incorrect actions" and return to the dialogue table for denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula.

North Korea claimed today that it successfully conducted a test of a hydrogen bomb meant to be loaded onto an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). It is the rogue nation's sixth, and most powerful, nuclear test.

China, North Korea's main diplomatic ally, criticised the country for ignoring international condemnation of its atomic weapons programme.

China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement, "The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has once again conducted a nuclear test in spite of widespread opposition from the international community. The Chinese government resolutely opposes and strongly condemns it."

It said that China's firm stance, as well as the common goal of the international community, was achieving denuclearisation on the Korean Peninsula, protecting the nuclear non-proliferation mechanism and maintaining peace and stability in northeast Asia.

It asked North Korea "to seriously consider" the steadfast will of the international community on a demilitarised Korean Peninsula and to comply with the UN Security Council resolutions.

China also asked North Korea to "cease incorrect actions that worsen tensions and run against its own interests, and return to dialogue to resolve the problem". – PTI

## Buddhists, Hindus flee Myanmar's sectarian clashes

MAUNGDAW, Sept 3: Village chief San Tun's remote Mro tribe used to get by foraging in the Myanmar jungle, living among the patchwork of ethnic groups who co-existed imperfectly in Rakhine state.

But last month murder visited his community.

An attack on his people, allegedly by Muslim Rohingya militants, was the catalyst for the worst round of fighting the region has ever seen, forcing them to flee death, arson and suspicion.

San Tun says Rohingya militants killed eight villagers as they were out foraging, including his brother and oldest son, on August 3.

Following the deaths a build-up of security forces in northern Rakhine sent tensions soaring.

Heavy fighting broke out three weeks later between Islamist militants and security forces, causing some 73,000 Rohingya Muslims to flee west into Bangladesh, bringing with them harrowing tales of rape and murder at the hands of the military and Buddhist mobs.

But a smaller and similarly terrified stream of civilians from Rakhine's Buddhist and Hindu communities – some 11,000 – have headed in the opposite direction, their lives also upended by neighbour turning on neighbour. – AFP



## UK calls on Suu Kyi to curb Rohingya violence

LONDON, Sept 3: The UK government has joined the international community to increase pressure on Myanmar to tackle the violence against Rohingya Muslims, warning that the treatment of the Rohingya is besmirching the reputation of the country.

UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said the attacks were "besmirching the reputation" of the country following reports by a human rights group that people, including young children, have been burned alive in the country, while others have been beheaded.

Johnson said in a statement this week: "Aung San Suu Kyi is rightly regarded as one of the most inspiring figures of our age,

but the treatment of the Rohingya is also besmirching the reputation of Burma."

"She faces huge challenges in modernising her country. I hope she can now use all her remarkable qualities to unite her country, to stop the violence and to end the prejudice that afflicts both Muslims and other communities in Rakhine."

Rakhine, the poorest region in Myanmar, is home to more than a million Rohingya. They have faced decades of persecution in the Buddhist-majority country, where they are not considered citizens.

"It is vital that she receives the support of the Burmese military, and that her attempts at peacemaking are not frustrated. She and all in Burma will have our full support in this." – PTI

## Fifteen genes behind intellectual disabilities identified

LONDON, Sept 3: Scientists have discovered 15 gene mutations that can cause intellectual disabilities, a study has found.

Intellectual disabilities are often caused by a mutation that damages a gene, preventing the associated protein from functioning properly.

However, a mutation can also change the function of a gene. As a result, the gene in question acts in a completely different way.

Researchers from Radboud University Medical Centre in Netherlands discovered this mechanism in fifteen genes playing a role in the development of intellectual disabilities.

Genes are responsible for protein production in cells. A common cause of intellectual disabilities is a de novo

mutation (ie a mutation present in a child, but not in its parents) damaging a gene so severely that it is no longer able to produce functional proteins.

The resulting protein defect will cause illness. In a number of disease-

related genes, it is shown that a de novo mutation does not eliminate the gene, but probably alters its function. These mutations are only located on specific parts of the gene.

In order to find out how often this mechanism is involved,

researchers combined the gene mutations in Dutch patients with a large international database comprising de novo mutations in patients.

"With our method, we were able to detect genes in which mutations not so much eliminate as affect the gene in another way," said Christian Gilissen, who led the research.

"We found fifteen genes in which mutations cluster closely together, twelve of which being associated with developmental disorders," said Gilissen.

"Although mutations eliminating genes were often thought to be the main cause of intellectual disabilities, mutations altering the function of genes are now shown to be an important factor as well," he said. – PTI

"We also found three new genes that are likely to play a role in the development of intellectual disabilities as well," he said.

The de novo mutations that were found only change a very small part of a protein. The function of the protein remains largely, but not entirely the same.

"The mutations are more likely to affect superficial parts of the proteins. These disturb interactions with other proteins and cause problems," said Gilissen.

"Although mutations eliminating genes were often thought to be the main cause of intellectual disabilities, mutations altering the function of genes are now shown to be an important factor as well," he said. – PTI

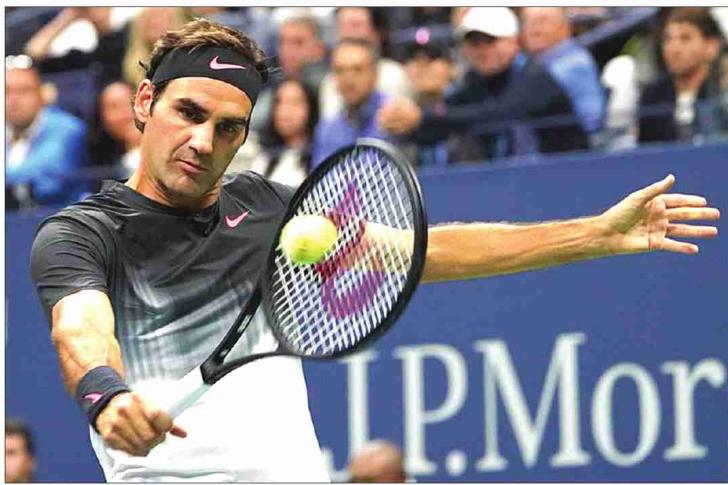


# Nadal, Federer move on at US Open, Fognini kicked out

NEW YORK, Sept 3: Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer edged closer to a US Open semifinal blockbuster as controversial Italian Fabio Fognini was kicked out for a vile, misogynistic tirade at a female umpire.

Nadal, 31, saw off Argentine lucky loser Leonardo Mayer 6-7 (3/7), 6-3, 6-1, 6-4, taking his record over the world number 59 from Buenos Aires to 4-0.

He will face Ukraine's Alexandr Dolgopolov, against whom he is 6-2, for a place in the quarterfinals.



Roger Federer in action against Feliciano Lopez during their third round match of the US Open.

**CSA reports fiscal loss; banks on Indian visit for recovery**

JOHANNESBURG, Sept 3: Cricket South Africa (CSA) has announced an anticipated loss of Rand 159 million for the current year, but is banking on the upcoming home series against India and Australia to boost its coffers again.

CSA reported the expected loss when it tabled its financial statements at its AGM in Cape Town yesterday, but added that the authority's finances were still strong.

"In commenting on the financial statements, I would like to stress that CSA remains in a very healthy financial position. We have a very strong balance sheet and a favourable cash position. Our income balance after taking into account the loss for the year is R655-million," CSA President Chris Nenzani said.

"As is well known our budgetary forecasts are based on a four-year rolling plan as the vast majority of our income comes from television revenue generated from incoming tours. As a result, we anticipate a very strong financial year in 2018 as a result of the incoming tours from India and Australasia," Nenzani added.

CSA said there had been investments in major capital projects to grow the sport in South Africa.

It is also in the process of building its own headquarters which Nenzani said would be a significant money-saving project in the long term. - PTI

## BCCI expects windfall from IPL media rights auction today

MUMBAI, Sept 3: Top companies from across the globe is set to vie for various rights when the IPL media rights auction gets underway tomorrow even as IPL chairman Rajeev Shukla rescinded himself from the event.

The BCCI is expecting a windfall from the IPL media rights auction with estimated earnings of over 20,000 crore through the bidding process.

The rights have been segregated in two categories—broadcast and digital (internet and mobile) rights. The rights on offer are Indian sub-continent TV rights, which is the most coveted along with emerging Indian sub-continent digital rights.

There is also rest of the world media rights on offer which in-

cludes key markets like the Mid-East, Africa, Europe, USA, Australia and New Zealand.

All the rights will be for a period of five years from 2018-2022.

The BCCI Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Rahul Johar has said that the revenue generation from the upcoming IPL media rights auction could be "historic", considering the huge interest shown by various stakeholders.

It is learnt that telecommunications major Airtel and web service provider Yahoo have also bought bid documents.

Along with them, the other two new companies are BAMTech and DAZN/Perform Group, who also have bought documents. Both BAMTech and DAZN/Perform Group are

working in the digital space.

In 2008, Sony Pictures Networks won the IPL media rights for a period of 10 years with a bid of Rs 8200 crore. The global digital rights of IPL for a period of three years was awarded to Novo Digital in 2015 for 302.2 crore.

The eligible companies, who bought bid documents last year before it was stalled are: Star India, Amazon Seller Services, Followon Interactive Media, Taj TV India, Sony Pictures Networks, Times Internet, SuperSport International, Reliance Jio Digital, Gulf DTH FZ LLC, GroupM Media, beIN, Econet Media, SKY UK, ESPN Digital Media, BTG Legal Services, BT PLC, Twitter, Facebook Inc. - PTI

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## Pacquiao wants Horn rematch in the Philippines

MANILA, Sept 3: Manny Pacquiao said today that he still wanted a rematch with Jeff Horn after the Filipino boxer hero pulled out of their scheduled bout in Australia later this year.

Queensland's premier, whose state government was the financial backer of a November 12 fight, announced on Friday that Pacquiao "cannot return to the ring" due to other commitments.

"It will not push through there in Australia. But we are bringing the fight here in the Philippines," Pacquiao said on radio station DZBB, adding negotiations were ongoing.

"This will be good for our country's tourism."

Pacquiao, 38, had initially called for a rematch after losing his World Boxing Organization welterweight title to the 29-

year-old on points in a major upset in Brisbane on July 2. Pacquiao, who has won world titles in an unprecedented eight weight divisions, had demanded

a review of the bout but the WBO declared Horn the clear winner after a panel of judges re-scored the fight.

Now in the twilight of a 22-

year professional career, Pacquiao has not stopped an opponent in eight years and briefly quit boxing last year to pursue his long-held political ambitions and was elected senator.

But he quickly made a successful comeback against Jessie Vargas in November, saying he still felt like a youngster.

Pacquiao has defied calls to retire for good, including from his family and celebrated American trainer Freddie Roach.

Pacquiao dismissed funding concerns about hosting the multi-million dollar fight in the Philippines.

"We have lots of friends who are supporting us including our tourism (department). The president is giving his all-out support," Pacquiao said referring to his political ally Rodrigo Duterte. - AFP

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## Woodburn revives Wales' World Cup bid

CARDIFF, Sept 3: Teenager Ben Woodburn enjoyed a dream international debut as he fired Wales to a 1-0 victory over Austria in Cardiff to bolster their chances of reaching

next year's World Cup.

The 17-year-old Liverpool striker drilled home the winner just four minutes after coming on as a second-half substitute to keep Wales un-

beaten in qualifying and four points adrift of Group D leaders Serbia.

Chris Coleman's side also cut the gap to second-placed Republic of Ireland, held 1-1 in Georgia, to two points with three matches to play as they attempt to reach the World Cup finals for the first time since 1958.

"The ball just came out of the air and I just tried to shoot it as quickly as I could," Woodburn told Sky Sports, after becoming Wales' second youngest goalscorer in history at 17 years and 322 days, behind only Gareth Bale.

"It's a great feeling. I couldn't ask for much more from the fans. I won't sleep tonight."

Bale returned from suspension at the Principality Stadium after missing the 1-1 stalemate with Serbia in June, the fifth time in six qualifiers Wales had been held to a draw.

Arsenal midfielder Aaron Ramsey fired a left-footed drive narrowly over inside the opening 10 minutes, while Marko Arnautovic curled over

with just Wayne Hennessey to beat a terrific through-ball from Julian Baumgartlinger.

Austria defender Martin Hinteregger bravely blocked a firmly-struck effort from Ramsey early in the second period before Heinz Lindner palmed behind a vicious, dipping shot from Bale.

Woodburn replaced Tom Lawrence on 69 minutes and Coleman's gamble reaped immediate rewards as the youngster controlled a headed clearance before rifling beyond Lindner from 25 metres to spark jubilant celebrations.

Captain Ashley Williams diverted an Arnautovic attempt over his own crossbar as Austria searched desperately for an equaliser, but Wales nearly added to their advantage twice in stoppage time.

First, Bale's acrobatic overhead effort was superbly clawed away by Lindner before Hal Robson-Kanu's drive clipped the base of Georgia. - AFP



Wales' Ben Woodburn celebrates after scoring against Austria during the FIFA 2018 World Cup Qualifier in Cardiff.

Five-time champion Federer brushed aside 31st seed Feliciano Lopez 6-3, 6-3, 7-5 to take his career record against the Spaniard, playing a 63rd successive Grand Slam, to 13-0.

Next up for Federer is Philipp Kohlschreiber, who he leads 11-0.

Nadal had dropped the first set of his second-round match against Japan's Taro Daniel before winning in four.

Saturday was almost a carbon copy with the 15-time major winner unable to convert any of his six points in the opener.

But the match turned in the 10-minute seventh game of the second set when, on his 14th break point of the encounter, Nadal finally smashed through.

"It was tough. It took 14 break points—that's not a good figure. But I was there mentally and fought a lot at the right moments," said Nadal under the Arthur Ashe roof as rain fell outside.

Federer had needed back-to-back five-setters to defeat Frances Tiafoe and Mikhail Youzhny in his first two rounds.

However, on Saturday, he swept past Lopez to reach the fourth round for the 16th time.

"I'm very happy to get through. It's a great feeling to play out here," said Federer.

"I struggled in the first two rounds but tonight I played a very clean match."

Nadal had just seven wins on the tour this year, but all have come at the Slams.

Had she lost on Saturday, Pliskova would also have been guaranteed to lose her world number one ranking to either Wimbledon champion Garbine Muguruza or Elina Svitolina.

Ukraine fourth seed Svitolina stayed in contention with a 6-4, 7-5 win over Shelby Rogers of the United States.

Russia's Daria Kasatkina reached the last 16 of a major for the first time by seeing off French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko, the 12th seed, 6-3, 6-2. - AFP

Damir Dzumhur 6-4, 6-4, 5-7, 6-4.

Rublev, just 19, faces Belgian ninth seed David Goffin, who progressed when 2016 semifinalist Gael Monfils retired with a right knee injury.

Meanwhile, Fognini was kicked out of the tournament for making foul-mouthed comments to female umpire Louise Engzell during his first-round loss to Stefano Travaglia.

Fognini and compatriot Simone Bolelli had reached the third round of the men's doubles but tournament organisers axed him from the event.

Fognini, the world number 26, was also fined \$24,000.

Women's top seed Karolina Pliskova saved a match point to defeat China's Zhang Shuai, hanging on to her world number one spot in the process.

Top seed Pliskova, the runner-up in 2016, triumphed 3-6, 7-5, 6-4 but was forced to save a match point in the 10th game of the second set and recover from a break down in the decider.

"I was a match point down and I thought I haven't done what I did. I may not have got another chance," said the 25-year-old, who will next face Jennifer Brady of the United States.

Brady has just seven wins on the tour this year, but all have come at the Slams.

Had she lost on Saturday, Pliskova would also have been guaranteed to lose her world number one ranking to either Wimbledon champion Garbine Muguruza or Elina Svitolina.

Ukraine fourth seed Svitolina stayed in contention with a 6-4, 7-5 win over Shelby Rogers of the United States.

Russia's Daria Kasatkina reached the last 16 of a major for the first time by seeing off French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko, the 12th seed, 6-3, 6-2. - AFP

## Action over foul-mouthed Fognini too slow, says Nadal

NEW YORK, Sept 3: Rafael Nadal insisted that tennis chiefs were wrong to wait three days before kicking controversial Italian Fabio Fognini out of the US Open for a vile, sexist trade at a female umpire.

The 30-year-old Fognini aimed two misogynistic blasts at umpire Louise Engzell as he crashed to defeat in a first-round singles match against fellow Italian Simone Bolelli. However, Fognini with compatriot Simone Bolelli, won two rounds of men's doubles on Thursday and Friday before the Grand Slam bowed out on Saturday.

Fognini, the world number 26, had already been fined \$24,000 for the incident.

Tennis chiefs explained the delay in making a decision on a possible suspension on having to wait for a translation of the player's brief remarks.

"It takes four days for that translation? I don't think so. Easy to find. Of course it is not a positive thing. Of course if you are not doing the right things on the court, of course you need to be in some way affected, no?"

Now he is out already winning two matches. I think it is not the ideal situation.

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