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NEWS CAPSULE

Silapathar case

GUWAHATI, May 14: Around half a dozen bail applications and pre-arrest bail applications in connection with the Silapathar violence case have been listed for disposal before the Gauhati High Court tomorrow. The bail petitions will come up before the court of Justice Ajit Kumar Barthakur. — Staff Reporter

Pak firing

JAMMU, May 14: Pakistani troops heavily shelled areas along the LoC in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir for the second consecutive day today, causing heavy damage to buildings and forcing evacuation of 1,000 border dwellers. The Indian army effectively retaliated. — PTI

Militant nabbed

LUCKNOW, May 14: A Hindu Mujahideen militant – Naseer Ahmed alias Sadia, hailing from Banital in Jammu and Kashmir – was apprehended at the Indo-Nepal border in Maharaiganj in Uttar Pradesh while trying to cross into the country for carrying out terror activities, officials here said. — PTI

SE monsoon

NEW DELHI, May 14: The Southwest Monsoon has covered the Nicobar Islands and the entire south Andaman Sea, three days ahead of its normal onset date, the IMD said, adding, it was too early to forecast whether the monsoon would hit the Kerela coast ahead of schedule. — PTI



Environmental activist Jadav Payeng planting a sapling during a plantation drive at Nagajangka near Morigaon on Sunday. — UB Photos

India boycotts China's Belt & Road summit

BEIJING, May 14: India today boycotted China's high-profile Belt and Road Forum, taking its protest over a controversial economic corridor traversing through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) to a new level despite Beijing's overtures to ensure India's participation.

Following India's boycott, Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, taking a veiled swipe at New Delhi's move, said the multi-billion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was an economic project open to all the nations in the region and it "must not be politicised".

No Indian official of any level was present at the elaborate opening ceremony attended by 29 heads of state and government along with top officials of the world bodies like the UN, the World Bank and the IMF.

India skipped the meeting due to its so-

vereignty concerns over the USD 50 billion CPEC, which passes through PoK.

Sharif, Sri Lankan Premier Ranil Wickramasinghe, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan were among the world leaders who attended the meeting inaugurated by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

The US sent a delegation led by Matt Pottinger, special assistant to the President and senior director for Asia at the National Security Council.

China apparently saw India's boycott coming as no seat was allotted to it at the high-level Convention Centre during the opening ceremony telecast live.

The event, however, was attended by a few Indian scholars representing think tanks, which took part in the group discussions.

(See page 7)

Social welfare scam
 Accused move
 HC for bail
 STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 14: Despite gathering vital evidence against two senior officials of the social welfare department, the anti-corruption bureau (ACB) of Assam Police is still refraining from detaining or arresting them.

The mysterious approach of the investigators has now raised questions whether there is any pressure on the investigating agency from within or outside.

The two top officials of the department have already approached the Gauhati High Court for pre-arrest bail in the anti-corruption police station case number 19/2016, sources

(See page 7)

Spurt in radical activities in Bangla causing concern to India

R DUTTA CHOWDHURY

GUWAHATI, May 14: Growing activities of radical forces in Bangladesh has become an area of concern for India, particularly in the states of Assam and West Bengal, on the positive side, India and Bangladesh are sharing "real time intelligence" to deal with such forces. On the other hand, presence of militants in Myanmar remains a matter of concern for the North East region and the proposals for augmenting security measures along the India-Myanmar border are awaiting clearance from the Cabinet Committee on Security Affairs.

India and Bangladesh are sharing intelligence inputs regularly to deal with extremist groups

considered most vulnerable because of the population pattern along the international border areas.

Sources said that the second ma-

jor area of concern is the presence of North East based militant groups in Myanmar. The Government of Myanmar has assured to take action against the militants time and again but so far, no major crackdown has been launched. According to records available with the Government of India, a large number of members of the Khaplang faction of the NSCN are nationals of Myanmar. The chairman of the outfit, SS Khaplang is also a Myanmar national. Most other outfits of the region are using the facilities of NSCN(K) in Myanmar, while, a number of Manipur based outfits

(See page 7)

Judgement on first NIA case on terror funding today

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 14: Fate of 13 charged accused, including top DHD(J) leaders Jewel Garlosa and Nirjanan Hoja, will be decided tomorrow in the first ever case of terror funding registered with the National Investigation Agency (NIA) of the country.

The Court of Special Judge, NIA Robin Phukan here will deliver the judgement tomorrow in connection with the case (NIA/1) registered in June 2009.

As many as 13 accused in NIA/1 are currently facing the trial in connection with the case and already 150 witnesses have been examined during the course of the trial.

The NIA had filed the chargesheet in 2009 against militant group DHD(J) chief Jewel Garlosa, DHD(J) commander-in-chief Nirajan Hoja, Chief Executive Member of NC Hills Autonomous Council Mohit Hoja, Malaswakini, Phojendra Hoja, Babul Kemprai, RHM Khan, Alshringdom Warua, Vanalanchhana, Jayanta Kumar Ghosh, Debasish Bhattacharjee, Sandip Ghosh and Karuna Ghosh.

The judgment in the case NIA/2 is also expected tomorrow.

Advocate Bijon Majahan, the counsel for Nirjanan Hoja, said, "We have faith in the judiciary and justice will prevail."

(See page 7)

AAP lied on donations: Mishra

NEW DELHI, May 14: Suspended AAP leader Kapil Mishra on Sunday accused AAP of lying to the Election Commission (EC) about donations and laundering money through shell companies, before he fainted midway through the presser and was hospitalised.

The AAP dismissed the charges as a "conspiracy" by the BJP and said the latter was shooting at the sacked minister's shoulder.

Mishra alleged that the AAP had over Rs 45 crore in its account in 2013-2014, but in its declaration to the poll panel it showed only Rs 9 crore, thereby concealing around Rs 36 crore.

"Three years later, when the EC sent a notice to the party asking for details of the declared Rs 9 crore, the party clarified they had Rs 30 crore," Mishra said at a press conference held at his official residence here.

"Out of this Rs 30 crore, the party did not reveal the details of Rs 15 crore to the EC."

He alleged that during 2014-15, the party had around Rs 65 crore in its account but disclosed only Rs 32 crore whereas the fund details on AAP website showed Rs 27 crore.

"I have all the documents pertaining to the party's financial transactions, which include 461 bogus entries in their account books," Mishra alleged.

The AAP categorically denied the allegations and said it had followed rules in maintaining its books. — IANS

(More on page 12)



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Cong for legal powers for EC on bribe-for-votes cases

NEW DELHI, May 14: A proposal of the Election Commission seeking statutory powers to countermand a poll over cases of bribe-for-votes has received the backing of the Opposition Congress, but the ruling BJP says first there is a need for definition of 'gratification' in all laws.

At an all-party meeting held here on Friday, the poll panel had sought the views of parties on its proposal to have a specific clause in the Representation of the People Act "to take appropriate action including cancellation of election in the event of incidents of bribery of electors".

The Congress, the main opposition party in Parliament, said it stands for strengthening of democratic institutions in their fight against graft. "The Congress party stands for strengthening of institutions of democracy. All steps which will fight and reduce the menace of money power will have their support," party leader Vivek Tanka said.

Tanka, a former Additional Solicitor General, had represented the Congress in all the party meetings.

BJP general secretary Bhupendra Yadav said his party will apprise its stand in detail to the Election Commission on the agenda items. - PTI

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NATIONAL

Rajnath, Adityanath review preparations for Yoga Day event

LUCKNOW, May 14: Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath today reviewed preparations for the main function to mark International Yoga Day on June 21 to be attended by the prime minister here.

Besides Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other dignitaries, nearly 55,000 people are expected to participate in the Yoga Day event at Ramakrishna Mission Ashram in the state capital. A spokesperson of the UP government said Singh met Adityanath to discuss and review the preparations. Union AYUSH Minister Shripad Yeso Naik was also present.

The AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy) Ministry is the nodal agency for Yoga Day celebrations.

Praising the presentation made for the event, the home

minister exuded confidence that the International Yoga Day celebrations will be successful.

Adityanath said LED screens would be installed at different parks in the city so that visitors could also take part in the celebrations simultaneously. He is set to hold a 28-day workshop for the participants prior to June 21. The main function for International Day of Yoga (IDY) celebrations this year.

Earlier, the government was considering Bhopal, Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Ranchi and Bengaluru as possible venues for the main event.

The ministry is also planning to organise a major yoga event in at least one city in each district across the country.

The ministry zeroed in on Lucknow as the possible venue for the day, the home

minister wanted to divide the society on religious lines.

Adityanath, who had in the past lashed out at a section of Muslims for terming the practice of 'surya namaskar' as "un-Islamic", said the sun salutation was a beautiful example of religious harmony.

"The namaz offered by Muslims resembles different positions and asanas of surya namaskar including pranayama (breathing exercise). What a beautiful example of harmony (between two religions). But some 'bhogis' who do not believe in yoga, indulged in dividing the society on lines of caste, creed, religion and region among others," he said.

"Before 2014 (when the BJP came to power at the Centre), even talking about yoga was considered communal. But things changed after Modi took steps to make yoga popular across the world," he had said. - PTI

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Evacuation of rebel Damascus district begins

DAMASCUS, May 14: Civilians and rebels began evacuating a third opposition-held district of Damascus today, bringing the government closer to cementing its control over the Syrian capital.

An AFP correspondent inside Qabun saw around 10 buses carrying out residents and fighters in the morning, after a deal for the neighbourhood was announced late Saturday following heavy fighting.

The agreement mirrors those implemented earlier this week in the nearby rebel-held districts of Barzeh and Tishrin.

State media announced the evacuation had started, and an activist inside the remaining opposition-held part of the district earlier confirmed preparations for the operation were underway.

"The buses are being prepared, they are waiting in the areas controlled by the regime," Oda Awdah told AFP.

"The names of those who want to leave, whether civilians or fighters, are being registered," he added.

The evacuation deal came on Saturday night after government forces advanced inside the neighbourhood.

"The Syrian army yesterday managed to encircle dozens of armed elements inside Qabun neighbourhood, forcing them to surrender and hand over their weapons," a source from the pro-regime National Defence Forces militia told AFP.

The deals for Qabun, Barzeh and Tishrin neighbourhoods follow a pattern of agreements under which the rebels agree to surrender in exchange for safe passage to opposition-held territory elsewhere.

The government says the deals are the best way to end the six-year war, but the opposition says it is forced into the agreements by regime bombardment and siege. Two groups of evacuees left Barzeh neighbourhood this week, with one leaving from Tishrin.

All three headed to Idlib province, in northwest Syria.

The negotiations on evacuating Qabun had stalled earlier this week. – AFP

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LEGAL NOTICE

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL JUDGE - FAMILY COURT - T: KAMPUR-AT GUWAHATI NOTIFICATION FCGN/2013/01/17 Dtd: 11.5.17 Case No. F. C. (Civil) 1003/2013 Mr. Siddhartha Pratim Borghohain ... Petitioner

Vs- Mrs. Nalakshi Konwar ... Opp. To: Mr. Nalakshi Konwar

Div. Sri Chuchen Konwar

P/o: Flat No. B-4, Chandra Prabha Enclosure: Kanakata Path, Survey: Agartala, District: Dibrugarh, Assam.

This was his first extended public appearance since firing FBI director James Comey this week. "A small group of failed voices, who think they know everything, and understand everyone, want to tell everybody else how to live and what to do and how to think," he said.

"But you aren't going to let other people tell you what you believe, especially when you know that you are right," Trump told the graduates.

The president said "the future belongs to the dreamers, not to the critics."

"Nothing is easier or more pathetic than being a critic, because they are the people that can't get the job done," Trump said.

"But the future belongs to the dreamers, not to the critics. The future belongs to the people who follow their heart no matter what



Chinese President Xi Jinping, his wife Peng Liyuan and Russian President Vladimir Putin attend the welcoming banquet for the Belt and Road Forum, in Beijing, on Sunday. – UNI

Have seen first-hand how system is broken in Washington: Trump

WASHINGTON, May 14: US President Donald Trump on Saturday said he has seen first-hand how the system is broken in Washington DC in a short span of little over 100 days of his presidency.

"In my short time in Washington, I've seen first-hand how the system is broken," Trump told graduates at Liberty University, an evangelical school, in Virginia where he was felicitated with an honorary law degree.

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the critics say" he said in his address.

Delivering his first commencement address, Trump said in America people do not worship government, but they worship God. "America has always been the land of dreams because America is a nation of true believers," he said.

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ISIS executes over 145 civilians

BAGHDAD, May 14: The ISIS terror organisation has executed more than 145 civilians for trying to flee the western part of the Iraqi city of Mosul, according to a top security official.

The official told Efe news on Saturday that the civilians from al-Zanjal neighbourhood in western Mosul were executed after they were caught attempting to escape.

He pointed out that ISIS extremists hanged the bodies of the victims from electricity poles after declaring them apostates for trying to leave "the land of the caliphate".

Al-Bayati added that the civilians had also been accused of providing information to Iraqi security forces. – IANS

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Experiencing beauty requires thought: Study

NEW YORK, May 14: For a person to experience beauty, he or she need to think, say researchers while confirming a philosophical notion by Immanuel Kant, the 18th century German philosopher.

The findings show that distractions do indeed detract from the experience of beauty. In other words, it takes thought to experience beauty when looking at a beautiful image.

On the other hand, sensuous pleasures were also found to be beautiful – a theory rejected by Kant.

"We find that beauty, when it happens, is strongly pleasurable, and that strong pleasure is always beautiful," said Denis Pelli from New York University.

"Strong pleasure and beauty both require thought," Pelli added, in the paper reported in the journal Current Biology.

For the study, the team asked 62 people to indicate how much pleasure and beauty they felt while they saw an image, said Denis Pelli from New York University.

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"Strong pleasure and beauty both require thought," Pelli added, in the paper reported in the journal Current Biology.

However, contrary to Kant's proposal that sensual pleasures can never be beautiful, about 30 per cent of participants said they'd definitely experienced beauty after sucking on a candy or touching a soft teddy bear. – IANS

Myanmar's State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi arrives at Beijing Capital International Airport for the Belt and Road Forum in Beijing, on Saturday. – UNI

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Egypt discovers new necropolis containing dozens of mummies

CAIRO, May 14: Egypt's antiquities ministry said that it has found a necropolis with as many as 30 intact mummies near the city of Minya, the first such find in the area, the media reported.

The discovery was made in the village of Tuna al-Gabal, a vast archaeological site on the edge of the western desert. The area hosts necropolises mainly for animals and birds, The Telegraph reported on Saturday.

The ministry said they belonged to the Late Period, which spanned almost 300 years up to Alexander the Great's conquest of Egypt in 332 BC.

But a spokeswoman said they could also date from the Ptolemaic Dynasty, founded by Alexander the Great's general Ptolemy.

Archaeologists believe that it



burial tomb with that number of mummies for ordinary people and in catacombs style.

Inside the catacomb, Khaled Anani, Egypt's Minister of Antiquities referred to the gaps inside the catacombs saying "The more we drill the more we find".

Four wells of eight metres deep were unearthed, which lead to catacombs where mummies of men, women and children are laid in good shape, The Telegraph.

In one chamber inside the tunnels, human bones and skulls are piled. Most of the mummies were laid in lines in both of its sides.

While some were left in plain stone and wooden sarcophagi, others were piled on top of each other.

"The excavation did not end yet, it's in the beginning" Anani said, adding that archaeologists expected to find many more. The site is close to an ancient cemetery. – IANS

Quake kills two, injures hundreds in Iran: state media

TEHRAN, May 14: A 5.7 magnitude earthquake near Iran's border with Turkmenistan killed two people, injured hundreds and caused widespread damage, state media reported today, citing the country's seismological centre.

The quake, which struck at 1800 GMT Saturday in and around the city of Bojnord, North Khorasan province, killed a 54-year-old woman and a teenage girl, ISNA news agency reported. It left more than 370 people injured and damaged as many as 40 per cent of houses in the area, it said.

The US Geological Survey put the strength

of the quake at 5.8 magnitude, and said it occurred at a depth of 12.5 kilometres.

The epicentre of the earthquake was just 50 kilometres from the border with Turkmenistan. On April 5, a 6.1 magnitude quake killed at least two people near Iran's second city Mashhad, which is located south-east of Bojnord.

The region is on an active fault line stretching from Turkmenistan's capital Ashgabat into Iran's three provinces of north, central (Razavi) and south Khorasan, according to state news agency IRNA. – AFP

Six wounded as mutinous Coast soldiers cut off key city

BOUAKE, May 14: Mutinous soldiers wounded six people in Ivory Coast's second city Bouake after fresh tensions gripped the world's top cocoa grower.

Five men and a mother of three children were brought to hospital in the central city of Bouake after being struck by warning shots fired to keep residents inside their homes, an AFP photographer saw. About 15 others were treated for minor injuries.

The rebels took to the streets Friday in a revolt over bonus payments and blocked access to Bouake, which served as the rebel headquarters after a failed 2002 coup which split Ivory Coast in half and led to years of unrest. Several Bouake residents were beaten by patrolling renegade soldiers.

The soldiers had already shot and seriously wounded one person yesterday in Bouake,

while another person was injured by soldiers rebelling in Korhogo, the main city in the north.

Korhogo residents had also gathered to protest against the mutiny but were dispersed by the rebellious soldiers. Soldiers have also rebelled in the central city of Daloa, a major trading hub in Ivory Coast's cocoa belt.

Today, rebels took up positions in a roundabout in front of Bouake's police headquarters, shooting into the air to prevent residents gathering for a planned protest against their revolt. "The shooting is continuing. The mutineers aren't letting people leave their homes to demonstrate," said a resident who requested anonymity.

"There's too much shooting this morning, it's practically impossible to go and attend mass. I'll pray with my family at home," another resident, Jean Yves Kobena, said. – AFP

Manhunt for hackers behind global cyberattack

LONDON, May 14: International investigators hunted for those behind an unpreceded cyber-attack that affected systems in dozens of countries, including at banks, hospitals and government agencies, as security experts sought to contain the fallout.

The assault, which began Friday and was being described as the biggest-ever cyber ransom attack, struck state agencies and major companies around the world – from Russian banks and British hospitals to FedEx and European car factories.

The attack used ransomware that apparently exploited a security flaw in Microsoft operating systems locking users' files unless they pay the attackers a designated sum in the virtual currency Bitcoin.

Payments appeared on victims' screens demanding payment in 300 Bitcoin, saying: "Oops, your files have been encrypted!"

identify the culprits," said Europol, Europe's police agency.

Europol said a special task force at its European Cybercrime Centre was "specifically designed to assist in such investigations and will play an important role in supporting the investigation".

The attack used ransomware that apparently exploited a security flaw in Microsoft operating systems locking users' files unless they pay the attackers a designated sum in the virtual currency Bitcoin.

Payment is demanded within three days or the price is doubled, and if none is received within seven days the files will be deleted, according to the screen message. But experts and government alike warn against ceding to the hackers' demands.

"Paying the ransom does not guarantee the encrypted files will be released," the US Department of Homeland Security's computer emergency response team said.

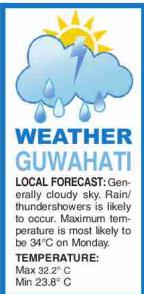
"It only guarantees that the malicious actors receive the victim's money and in some cases, their banking information." Experts and officials offered differing estimates of the scope of the

attacks, but all agreed it was huge.

Mikko Hypponen, chief research officer at the Helsinki-based cyber security company F-Secure, told AFP it was the biggest ransomware outbreak in history, saying that 130,000 systems in more than 100 countries had been affected.

He said Russia and India were hit particularly hard, largely because Microsoft's Windows XP – one of the operating systems most at risk – was still widely used there. French police said there were "more than 75,000 victims" around the globe, but cautioned that the number could increase "significantly". – AFP





Engineers' advice on flood shelters

GUWAHATI, May 14: The Senior Engineers' Forum of Guwahati in a memorandum to Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal has suggested that shelters for flood victims should be built by utilising the funds made available to the State Government under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.

Such shelters should be developed as clusters of units, with each unit covering an area of around 60 square metres in the flood-prone areas, it said.

AIR phone-in programme

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 14: The Regional News Unit of AIR Guwahati will hold a phone-in talk show titled 'Drishtipat' on Monday at 8.30 pm on 'Role of BSNL in Development of the North East'.

The CGM of BSNL MK Seth will be the guest in the show, which will be presented by BSNL.

Manas Pratim Sarma will host the show. Listeners can ask questions by dialling 0361-2661876 and 0361-2662325, said a statement.

CAG detects huge revenue leakage

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 14: Due to lack of proper monitoring system at Khanapara MV checkpoint, the District Transport Officer of Kamrup could not detect trucks carrying excess load of coal and limestone coming from Meghalaya, a report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India stated.

This laxity deprived the State Government from revenue earnings of approximately Rs 358.08 crore, the CAG report for the year-ended March 31, 2016, which was tabled in the recently-concluded special session of the Assam Assembly, stated.

Had the Transport Department installed a mechanism of cross-verification with departments concerned of other adjoining States and maintained records relating to the number of overloaded trucks carrying minerals through two other checkpoints of Meghalaya and entering Assam, the State Government could have earned much more revenue.

loaded vehicles, once detected, should not be allowed to continue with excess load and fines should be imposed.

Verification of records of one checkpoint of the Directorate of Mineral Resources at Umling in Meghalaya (exit checkpoint) revealed that vehicles suspected to be carrying more than the authorised weight can be weighed by a weighing device.

Whoever drives an overloaded vehicle invites punitive action, with a minimum fine of Rs 2,000 per vehicle and an additional amount of Rs 1,000 per MT of excess load.

passed through the Khanapara MV checkpoint and then entered Assam.

In test check, the audit team collected the registration numbers of some trucks carrying excess load of coal and limestone from Umling DMR checkpoint of Meghalaya, but could not cross-check the same with records of MV checkpoint of Khanapara as the DTO, Kamrup (Enforcement) stated that the MV checkpoint did not maintain any records relating to overloaded trucks carrying minerals from Meghalaya, the CAG report said.

Section 113 of the MV Act empowers the State Government to prescribe the maximum weight to be carried by transport vehicles. Also, Section 114 provides that vehicles suspected to be carrying more than the authorised weight can be weighed by a weighing device.

Whoever drives an overloaded vehicle invites punitive action, with a minimum fine of Rs 2,000 per vehicle and an additional amount of Rs 1,000 per MT of excess load.



Monjil Mahanta, secretary general of Asom Sangrami Mancha speaking at a Citizens' Meet organised by Pragatisil Nari Santhu, Revolutionary Youth Association, All India People's Federation, and All India Students' Association at Guwahati Press Club, on Sunday - UB Photos

Curtains fall on Inter-Railway drama contest

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 14: The Inter-Railway Cultural (Drama) competition was held at Rang Bhawan here at Mafalgau from May 10 to 12.

Teams from all zonal Railways and production units under Indian Railways participated in the three-day event.

Dramas were performed in

various languages like Assamese, Malayalam, Kannada, Bihar and Bengal.

The competition was judged by Abinash Sharma, Nayan Prashad and Robijita Gogoi, all eminent drama artists.

In the concluding function, Chhabati Ram, General Manager of NF Railway gave away the prizes to the winners.

Central Railway's drama

Tanusha of Humanity was adjudged the best drama in the competition.

Northern Railway's drama Gibarchikor was adjudged as the second-best drama, while Northeast Frontier Railway's drama Deeghamar Saopuna was adjudged as the third-best drama.

The best actor award went to Mihir Kumar Mishra of East Coast Railway, while the best

actress award went to Meera Sikdar of North Eastern Railway (Gorakhpur).

Northeast Frontier Railway's Manju Kumar Das won the best director award.

Best jury award for acting went to Diganta Kakati and Anindita Das of Northeast Frontier Railway. Utpal Nandi of Northeast Frontier Railway won the best light designer award.

BBCI to conduct research on pre-radiotherapy counselling

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 14: The city-based Dr Bhupaneswar Borooah Cancer Institute (BBCI) will conduct a research project on pre-radiotherapy counselling of patients with head and neck cancer, and its impact on the quality of life and radiation-related local toxicity.

This study will be completed in three months' time and is expected to shed light on the quality of life of head and neck cancer patients and the measures needed to raise it to international standards in our own setting, said a statement.

The study will use European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC) quality of life questionnaire to assess the quality of life at the end of treatment.

The investigators for the study are Dr Partha Pratim Medhi, Dr Apurba Konwar Kalita, Dr Moumuni Basumatary, Dr Manigreeta Krishnatreya, Manoj Kalita, and also Dr Amal Chandra Kataki, who is the Director of BBCI.

According to BBCI, cancer of the head and neck region are a significant problem in our population constituting one-third of all cancer cases in contrast to 4-5 per cent in the developed countries.

The cancer of oral cavity, pharynx and larynx together constitutes head and neck cancers. Radiotherapy is the main modality of treatment in patients with head and neck cancers.

In Kamrup Metro district, the incidence of pharynx cancer in women is highest in the country and in men it is the second-highest.

BBCI said that due to consumption of chewable tobacco, the incidence of oral cancer is very high in the State.

As per the Cancer Registry Report of BBCI, 2,541 patients attend the Outpatient Department (OPD) of BBCI every day and due to paucity of time, doctors are not in a position to answer all possible queries of every single

patient and their attendants related to radiotherapy during the limited working hours in a day.

"Thus it becomes imperative to do group counselling of patients prior to the start of treatment with radiotherapy regarding the side effects and other factors related to the treatment," said the statement.

According to BBCI Director Dr Kataki, treatment with external beam radiotherapy results in few local side effects which at times forces the patient to drop out during the course of treatment.

"In view of this, pre-radiotherapy group counselling to patients to maintain oral hygiene and toothcare, facial skin care, dietary requirements and recommended daily fluid intake is essential to counter the local side effects of radiotherapy. To overcome the side effects associated with radiotherapy, BBCI has started pre-radiotherapy counselling of patients with head and neck cancer from May 1," he said.

At present, radiation oncologists and resident doctors from the Department of Radiation Oncology of BBCI are providing pre-radiotherapy group counselling.

In addition to minimising the local side effects, pre-radiotherapy counselling will also improve the quality of life of these patients.

It is hoped that such pre-radiotherapy group counselling would provide succour to patients with head and neck cancer and set a precedent for other cancer hospitals to follow as well, stated Dr Kataki.

Patients with head and neck cancer

BBCI to conduct research on pre-radiotherapy counselling

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ATAL AMRIT ABHIYAN

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- ⦿ Phase-1 enrolment started at 7 districts – Kamrup (R), Dhubri, Baksa, Cachar, Karbi Anglong, Majuli & Dibrugarh. Remaining districts will be covered in phased manner.
- ⦿ Beneficiaries are requested to keep their Atal Amrit Abhiyan Card in safe custody until the cashless treatment facility is notified by the Government.

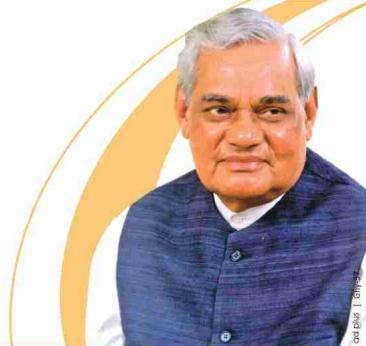
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Dept. of Health & Family Welfare,
Government of Assam



MESSAGE FOR TODAY

Science is organized knowledge. Wisdom is organized life.

— IMMANUEL KANT

The Assam Tribune

Modern pirates

The sudden and sensational revolution in technology has ensured that no longer do pirates like the legendary Captain Hook have to sail the seven seas in quest of treasure-carrying galleons. They can very well do the same sitting at home! True, information and communication technology has assisted human beings to store, access and share data; but the linkage with other hardware necessary for communication has also injected an element of vulnerability to the system. Indeed, the virtual world is also an insecure world, a weakness being constantly exploited by unscrupulous individuals either for personal profit or nefarious purposes associated with global terrorism. Individuals who can hack into computer systems are greatly in demand, both by security agencies as well as organizations with dubious objectives, and cyber attacks are becoming a common occurrence all over the world. But the latest one, in which an individual or a group so far unidentified has been able to penetrate and block files in hundreds of thousand computers across nearly hundred countries across the world, is the biggest cyber attack the planet has ever seen. Ironically the 'ransomware' virus used to hold computer systems captive, aptly titled as 'WannaCry' or 'Wanna Decryptor', was first identified by the American National Security Agency (NSA) and fell into wrong hands when its computer system was breached and hackers dumped a cache of NSA files into the public domain.

After this hacker has entered into a system, he sends out a ransom demand of \$300 in crypto-currency Bitcoins with the condition that if this is not paid within a stipulated time, the ransom demand would be doubled and further delay will entail deletion of the victim's data files. The attacker has not spared any organization on humanitarian grounds – in fact, the biggest casualty have been hospitals, where loss of medical records might result in death of a patient! Transport and telecommunication giants, banks and financial institutions, automobile and other commodities manufacturers across the globe have fallen prey to the attacker, with the world yet uncertain as to how to deal with the alarming situation. The ransom-demand has taken pains to keep the amount asked for at a petty level, which has meant that many have succumbed to the blackmail and paid up rather than lose their files, despite authorities asking them not to. It is one of the commonest experience of law enforcers that a blackmailer normally does not stop at a single demand, but repeats it if the first settlement is made. Security agencies now believe that this modern pirate must have already pocketed billions and are launching a two-pronged strategy to deal with the situation. First is to find an antidote to combat the ransomware tool, but equally important is to trace the perpetrator and bring him to justice.

State oil sector uplift

For a long time Assam, a major oil-producing State, had been denied its fair share of remuneration against crude oil at market rate due to discriminatory oil pricing. It is only recently that this unfair practice has ended, and the BJP Government at the Centre deserves credit for that. Given that crude oil was discovered in Assam way back in 1889 and its Digboi refinery happens to be among the oldest refineries in the world, the impact of the flourishing industry ought to have spread in a more visible manner in the State's overall development. The Government and the oil industry need to treat this matter seriously so as to effect discernible socio-economic uplift in the lives of the people. The oil industry which has a large presence in the State through the state-run PSUs like OIL, ONGC, etc., need to be more proactive in the discharge of their social obligation. Then, in order to sustain in the decades ahead, the oil industry needs to prepare a roadmap for tackling the emerging challenges. Indeed, we need a major revamp of the country's hydrocarbon sector keeping in view the challenges for the next four-five decades. Assam being a major oil-producing region boasting of Asia's earliest oil exploration well over a century back will naturally have a key role in the overall strategy to be adopted for augmenting oil production. This, in fact, has been long overdue, given that the region's hydrocarbon sector has been passing through a sluggish phase for quite some time. This stagnancy is largely attributable to the failure of the Centre and the public sector oil majors to upgrade and innovate to the desired level. It is, therefore, good to see that a plan is on the anvil to increase production of the Numaligarh Refinery from the current three million tonnes to nine million tonnes.

What should be another matter of concern is that crude oil and natural gas production in Assam and the Northeast has declined not due to depletion of reserves but because of technological and professional constraints. This warrants the authorities to identify the problem areas and resort to the best practices concerning exploration and production. Safe disposal of effluents, particularly oil-mixed water, is another matter that remains to be properly addressed as is the issue of wastage of associated natural gas in huge quantity which is simply being flared up. Also regrettable is the fact that despite being the birthplace of the country's oil industry, more than half the BPL households in Assam do not have LPG connection. In fact, the domestic cooking gas market is plagued by large-scale black-marketing and anomalies, causing immense hardship to the consumers. The much-publicized piped connection of cooking gas, too, is nowhere near materializing. It is for the Government and the oil industry to plug the loopholes and streamline the LPG distribution.

GSAT-9: Modi's space diplomacy

■ Biju Moni

The successful launch of the South Asia Satellite on May 5 last was another diplomatic milestone of the Modi Government in terms of regional cooperation, but this time not through land but through space marking the momentum for space diplomacy. Intended to cater to the "economic and developmental priorities" of the South Asian countries, ISRO's GSAT-9 (launched by the GSLV-F09) is a masterpiece in regional cooperation. A "priceless gift" to the South Asian nations and a "symbol of South Asian cooperation," the communication satellite GSAT-9 bearing a ku-band marks a historic moment in the direction of regional cooperation. Soon after the launch, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the leaders of the South Asian countries – President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani, Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bhutan Tshering Tobgay, Prime Minister of Nepal Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda), President of Maldives Abdulla Yameen and President of Sri Lanka Maithripala Sirisena.

As Prime Minister Modi addressed the leaders of the South Asian countries (except Pakistan) through a video conference just after the successful launch of the satellite, he started by saying, "Two years ago, India made a promise, a promise to extend the advanced space technology for the

cause of growth and prosperity of our brothers and sisters in South Asia. The successful launch of the South Asia Satellite marks the fulfillment of that. With the launch, we have started a journey to build the most advanced frontier of our partnership. As governments, our most important task is to secure growth, development and peace for our people and communities. And I am convinced that when we join hands and mutually share the fruits of knowledge, technology and growth, we can speed up our development and prosperity." This message of our Prime Minister had been equally appreciated and reiterated by all the leaders; in fact, Maldavian President Abdulla Yameen went to the extent of calling it an example of "India's 'neighbourhood first' policy" and "Sabbha saath, sabku vihak", one of the governance themes of the Modi Government.

Promised at the 15th Kathmandu SAARC summit of 2014, GSAT-9 is a communication satellite carrying ku-band transponder which India's neighbours can make use of free of charge for different needs. A communication satellite can be used for a variety of purposes like broadcast services, telemedicine, tele-education, banking networks, direct to

home (DTH) television services, weather forecasting and mapping of natural resources. It would also provide internet connectivity and would be useful in disaster management. Although proposed as a SAARC satellite, it has been renamed as South Asia Satellite after Pakistan left. Note-worthy to mention that Pakistan was also a part of the project as the satellite was supposed to be dedicated to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) coun-

try. The satellite gifted by India would only hurt her ego. The reason put forwarded by Pakistan is that India rejected her offer to share expertise.

The GSAT-9 is a regulation com-

munication satellite, not different from many other satellites launched by ISRO earlier including the IN-

SAT series, the last one of which flew in 2007 and, of course, now there is a whole constellation of GSAT series of satellites, providing

a vast array of services to the

country. Anything, it has ex-

tended the same services to the neighbouring countries free of cost.

However, what makes this GSAT-9 stand out from the rest of the satellites is

the fact that it is actually an exercise in neighbourhood diplomacy, the kind of which has not been attempted earlier. The sat-

ellite is intended to cater to the requirements of the

countries in India's immediate neighbourhood, most of whom have almost

negligible presence in space. In

keeping with her status of being one of the top space powers in the re-

gion, India has given a befitting gift to her neighbours. The launch of GSAT-9 with ku-band transponder

would be of immense use in terms

of communication and development

of the region as a whole. In this re-

gion only Pakistan and Sri Lanka are

the two countries that have launched

communication satellites of their

own, although with the help of China. While Afghanistan has leased a

part of the French telecommunica-

tion satellite, Eutelsat 4B, for its

use, Bangladesh is planning to launch

its own satellite, Bangabandhu-1,

later this year. Under such circum-

stances, India's offer to make a sat-

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Hard strategic calculations

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India's offer to make a satellite that all countries in the region can use freely is not only an act of generosity but also an act of great diplomatic move, a new kind of Modi's diplomacy. Hard strategic calculations have weighed in, and these have barely been disguised.

tries and named SAARC satellite. However, after Pakistan left the programme, the satellite was renamed as South Asia Satellite.

The launch of GSAT-9 is more about geopolitics and less about space technology. Although it is cooperation on the scientific and technological front, Pakistan left the mission more because of diplomatic reasons, as making of a satellite for all the SAARC countries and using such free

negligible presence in space. In keeping with her status of being one of the top space powers in the region, India has given a befitting gift to her neighbours. The launch of GSAT-9 with ku-band transponder would be of immense use in terms of communication and development of the region as a whole. In this region only Pakistan and Sri Lanka are the two countries that have launched communication satellites of their

French polls and Macron's victory

■ Shibdas Bhattacharjee

Globalization versus nationalism, conservatism versus liberalism and past versus present, these were the issues that set both the momentum as well as outcome of French presidential elections 2017. The French voters have chosen their youngest President in the country's history this time by electing 39-year-old leader Emmanuel Macron with a mandate of 66% voted for French right-wing hardliner Le Pen who managed to get 44% of the total vote-share. The youngest French President is said to have the potentiality of radically reshaping the extremely polarized French society. A strong exponent of the European Union, Macron is also seen as a leader with a far-fetched global views and distinguished indigenous roots standing against anti-immigrant and anti-globalization populism that have made way across the globe, more particularly in Europe and the USA. Europe that is passing through a turbulent phase at a time when its authority is being challenged on every front in the evolving world order, a dynamic leader like Macron becoming the President of France is seen a positive development not only for France and Europe but around the world, particularly for all those nations believing in the potentiality, relevance and effectiveness of existence of the European

Union for economic and security interests on the one hand and balance of power on the other. There has been apprehension that the democratic set-up of entire world is in crisis. The targets of terrorism have been there and democratic nations have been the worst victims of the Jihadi elements. But the parallel policy of labelling the Muslim community in different countries, particularly in France and the United States is not only tearing the fabric of fellow feeling but inviting new perils. Similarly, the policy against the immigrants, who not only constitute a formidable skilled workforce but contribute to the economy of the respective nations in Europe, is utterly wrong that has created an atmosphere of distrust and intolerance in almost the entire continent. The policy has got much enhancement since Donald Trump became the US President. Further, incidents like Brexit have weakened the European Union. Naturally, EU has got descended to an unprecedented low and its grip on international politics is loosening fast.

These are no doubt important issues. But there are some other issues that motivated the French voters to vote for Macron. The election result may be seen as a reflection of French people becoming disillusioned regarding the established political order, the policies of both

the extreme Rightists and the Leftists in addressing the prevalent issues of France coming to a naught. For nearly a decade, politics in France has helped in fomenting fragmentation in the liberal society in the name of religion and, more prominently, the language. The fact is: France has been losing competitiveness in global economy as well as in Europe that demands structural reforms of the existing economy of the country. It is time France gave serious thoughts on economic reforms in the form of both investment in the social sector and creating job opportunities. Significantly, similarly, the policy against the immigrants, who not only constitute a formidable skilled workforce but contribute to the economy of the respective nations in Europe, is utterly wrong that has created an atmosphere of distrust and intolerance in almost the entire continent. The policy has got much enhancement since Donald Trump became the US President. Further, incidents like Brexit have weakened the European Union. Naturally, EU has got descended to an unprecedented low and its grip on international politics is loosening fast.

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the extreme Rightists and the Leftists in addressing the prevalent issues of France coming to a naught. For nearly a decade, politics in France has helped in fomenting fragmentation in the liberal society in the name of religion and, more prominently, the language. The fact is: France has been losing competitiveness in global economy as well as in Europe that demands structural reforms of the existing economy of the country. It is time France gave serious thoughts on economic reforms in the form of both investment in the social sector and creating job opportunities. Significantly, similarly, the policy against the immigrants, who not only constitute a formidable skilled workforce but contribute to the economy of the respective nations in Europe, is utterly wrong that has created an atmosphere of distrust and intolerance in almost the entire continent. The policy has got much enhancement since Donald Trump became the US President. Further, incidents like Brexit have weakened the European Union. Naturally, EU has got descended to an unprecedented low and its grip on international politics is loosening fast.

Macron's victory is also seen as a ratification of the concept of the European Union. This is a befitting response to the UK's withdrawal from the EU. The choice of the pro-EU Macron as President of the Eurozone's second largest economy has prompted relief across the European Union. In his victory speech, Macron said that he will rebuild the relationship between Europe and the people that make it. Symbolically, Macron also said German Chancellor Angela Merkel will be the first foreign leader he will meet as President.

But Macron has formidable challenges ahead most at the domestic level, as an exponent of the EU and a global leader. Things have become tough considering passing of resolutions in the French Assembly as he will have to depend on his political opponents. It is really a tough task to create more employment opportunities in France considering the jobless economic growth because of the economic order nourished so far by the successive regimes in France. Security is another pivotal issue. Entire European Union and pro-EU nations across the world are looking at Macron with lot of expectations regarding the future of EU on the backdrop of Brexit and Donald Trump becoming the President of the US. All these will definitely test Emmanuel Macron as a leader of France and the EU. Will he be able to bring France and the European Union out of crisis? A lot depends how Macron performs in the days ahead.

Letters to the EDITOR

Sir, — The practice of giving grace marks to boost the HSLC pass percentages is another manifestation of our tendency to focus solely on symbolism, outwardly recognition/awards and meaningless show rather than real underlying work and actual progress. This is exactly the same as police stations refusing to lodge FIRs to keep the crime level down, while actual crime rates go through the roof! At the national level, the Government berates international institutions for not improving the country's 'rank' for ease of doing business rather than actually making it easy for real business people on the ground. We are focused on the 'mark-sheets' and manipulation at all levels. The same virus of focus on symbolism and status marks the use of red lights, armies of tax-funded security guards and cut number plates with the occupant's job designation in red letters announcing the occupant's exalted status in society. How pathetic! Observe any national sporting event, the athletes are in dormitories and bare hostels while the 'grandees'

the association officials, are in five-star hotels. Look at a simple annual day function: VIP guests, pomp and *tamasha* rule the roost, rather than diligently working through the year. I remember in my schools days in Guwahati having to buy 'projects' to showcase on 'school exhibition days' to impress the VIPs, never having had a single extracurricular class related to the projects that I ostensibly produced. Obviously, nothing has changed! Yours etc., ARINDOM CHAUDHURY, Wellington, New Zealand.

Not an avatar!
Sir, — I have gone through Badan Sarma's article, titled 'Buddhism: a golden thread to Nirvana' (AT, May 10). He has claimed that the "Buddha was accepted as an 'avatar', a God incarnate who came to this world in order to reform mankind from sanguinary rites and erroneous practices. The *Puranas* describe the Buddha as the ninth avatar of God Vishnu," etc. The Buddha never said and claimed that he was an 'avatar', a God incarnate of Vishnu. He was born as an ordinary man and died as a man who attained Nirvana. He was not an ordinary man and died as a man who attained Nirvana. The patients of this area, to mitigate the problems of the patients of this area. A case study of the Christian Medical College, Vellore should be done so that NGOs of this area can establish and run a hospital like that. Yours etc., NIRMAL AGARWAL, Guwahati.

Traditional attire
Sir, — This is in reference to the recent government move to promote traditional attire among the State Government employees. Welcoming the decision of the Government, I would like to say that the female teachers in the State educational institutions, especially in government schools, have to wear traditional attire like *mehelia-chadar* or *saree* every day. In the last few years, many female teachers were appointed in schools through the TET process. Most of them have to travel a long distance to attend their respective places of posting in the early hours of the day. Considering the rainy weather, pathetic road condition and the irregular public transport system, it is not easy to wear a *mehelia-chadar* or *saree* on a daily basis. There is always a risk of wardrobe malfunction in the overcrowded public transport and conducting classes thereafter. Also, the wearing of a *mehelia-chadar* or *saree* is time consuming and the maintenance of these dresses is also not pocket-friendly.

A teacher's dress should always be decent. Although there is no guideline from the government, yet the school management committees (SMCs) keep their eye on the teachers' dress code, especially women teachers. The SMCs have allowed long pants (formal trouser or jeans) and shirts or T-shirts for the male teachers while the female teachers must wear *mehelia-chadar* or *saree*. Now as per the government suggestion, the male employees can opt to wear *dhoti* and *kurti* or traditional attire on the first and third Saturday of every month, the female teachers should also be asked to opt for wearing *mehelia-chadar* or traditional attire only on these two specific days. They should be allowed to wear any decent Indian dress on the other working days. Hence, the Government should take necessary action in this regard and instruct the SMCs to review the matter of teachers' dress code without any gender discrimination. Yours etc., Dr SWAPNALI CHETIA PHUKAN, Bhetapara, 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@assamttribune.com.

his kingdom and luxuries, severed all worldly ties and became an ascetic to seek the truth. He saw the world as a theatre of misery, with pangs of suffering, disease and death for all, so, he sought an answer or a way out of his life's problems and an escape from all miseries in order to achieve ultimate happiness. He renounced all worldly pleasures to achieve the liberation of humankind from suffering.

Though Hindu mythology claims the Buddha as the ninth avatar of Vishnu, yet, he is not worshipped ceremoniously like other gods and goddesses, except the Buddhists and some peace-loving people. Yours etc., PROF. LALIT SHYAM, Dibrugarh.

Specialty services
Sir, — The North-east is lagging behind in specialty medical services. Patients from the NE visit places like Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai, Vellore for treatment. The Government should provide land and other infrastructure to India's top hospitals to set up their units in Assam and other NE States to mitigate the problems of the patients of this area. A case study of the Christian Medical College, Vellore should be done so that NGOs of this area can establish and run a hospital like that. Yours etc., NIRMAL AGARWAL, Guwahati.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Assembly Speaker HN Dixit along with others attending an all-party meeting at the Vidhan Bhawan in Lucknow on Sunday. - UNI

Former Special Secy of PWD BN Gogoi dead
STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 14: Budhinaran Gogoi, a former Commissioner and Special Secretary of the State's Public Works Department (PWD), and son-in-law of acclaimed scholar Late Krishna Kanta Handiqui, died at his Kharighuri residence here at around 9.30 am today.

According to family sources, he suffered a heart stroke about six months back and since then had been bed-ridden. He was 90.

Known as a very committed and successful engineer during his working days, Gogoi was also involved with socio-literary activities. He was a trustee of the KK Handiqui Sanskrit Award Trust, which was constituted to encourage the best performers among the degree-level Sanskrit Major students of the State. He was also a trustee of the KK Handiqui Literary Award Trust.

He leaves behind his wife, social worker Ahalya Gogoi, two sons, a daughter and a host of relatives. His last rites were performed at the Navagraha cremation ground here this afternoon.

Free health check-up camp
STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 14: Narayana Super Specialty Hospital here conducted a free health camp today at Terpari Bhawan in the Fancy Bazar area.

The camp included screening and consultation for all types of heart and gastro disorders such as heaviness or pain in chest, difficulty in breathing, extreme anxiety, nausea, sweating, pain or weakness in legs, arms, neck, jaw, throat, or back, and heartburn, indigestion, bloating, alternating constipation and diarrhoea, irritable bowel habits, abdominal cramps, etc. Problems related to urinary tract, bones and all other general day to day health complaints were also consulted for the camp.

A team of doctors from the hospital, Dr Subramanian Poonah (gastroenterologist), Dr Saikat Mallik (GI Surgeon), Dr Prosenjit Goswami (cardiologist), Dr Agnibala Basu (ENT, head and neck surgeon), Dr Rituparna Dhar and Dr JP Kakati (general physician) participated in the camps.

The camp witnessed participation of over 200 patients between 35 and 60 years of age, mostly women. Around 50 per cent patients who complained of pain or burning sensation in the chest while walking or climbing stairs were suspected of heart disease risks. Other common issues faced by people are indigestion, bowel problems, ear and throat infections, etc.

Ellis Island medals go to Buzz Aldrin, Malala Yousafzai

NEW YORK, May 14: This year's Ellis Island Medals of Honor go to 90 Americans, from a former astronaut and a yogurt company founder to a television journalist.

An Ellis Island International Medal of Honor is also going to Malala Yousafzai, the teenager

who won the Nobel Peace Prize after being shot in her native Pakistan while fighting for a girl's right to education.

National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations bestows the medals on Americans "who have distinguished themselves within their own ethnic

groups." A ceremony is being held Saturday on the New York harbor island.

Recipients in 2017 include Chobani founder Hamdi Ulukaya, Pepsi Co chairman and CEO Indra Nooyi, journalist Fareed Zakaria, and former astronaut Buzz Aldrin. - AP

Speaking foreign languages may cause vocal fatigue, disorders

LONDON, May 14: Speaking in a foreign language may cause vocal fatigue, that can lead to voice disorders, scientists say.

Researchers from the University of Tampere in Finland asked 20 Finnish and 23 English speakers to read a text in their native language and then in other foreign language.

Text reading and spontaneous speech samples were recorded in native and foreign language (English and Finnish).

A questionnaire was used to gather people's subjective notions of changes in voice caused

by the shift from speaking the native language to speaking the foreign language. The samples were then acoustically and perceptually analysed.

Researchers found that speaking a foreign language causes changes in voice, especially in pitch. Acoustical and perceptual analyses supported the subjective notions.

"They found that the voice was in many cases more pressed in the foreign language than in the native one."

Pressured adds loading of the vocal folds. Also, dose

measurements of vocal load, a trend towards more loading in the foreign language was found, researchers said.

"Speaking a foreign language and the changes it causes can have far-reaching consequences, as more pressed voice production can result in subjective symptoms of vocal fatigue and overloading of the vocal folds," said Katri Järvinen from University of Tampere.

"Overloading of the vocal

folds may cause voice problems and actual voice disorders," Järvinen said. - PTI

Thousands rally in Moscow

MOSCOW, May 14: Thousands of people protested in central Moscow today against the city's plan to tear down Soviet-era apartment blocks as part of a controversial urban redevelopment programme.

The measure, announced in

February by Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin, prompted an outcry from many residents who saw a plan to funnel state funds into construction companies. It would also rip through over property rights, they say, while forcing many homeowners to

move to neighbourhoods with lower property values.

Muscovites shouted down

envoys from the office of the

mayor, a staunch supporter of President Vladimir Putin who had served as his chief of staff. - AFP

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President Vladimir Putin who had served as his chief of staff. - AFP

Seminar held on gender & law

GUWAHATI, May 14: Cotton University and North Eastern Social Research Centre (NESRC) Guwahati organised a seminar on 'Gender and the Law' last week by noted women's rights activist Adv Flavia Agnes of Mumbai.

A pioneer of the women's right movement, she is the co-founder of Majlis, a legal and cultural resource centre with

the primary objective of providing quality legal services to women and children.

The seminar started with release of the Assamese translation of her book *My Story Our Story ... Of Rebuilding Broken Lives*, which has helped innumerable women in need of help. It is an inspirational book based on her experiences. The book was

translated into Assamese by Nani Saharish Bora and published by Anwesha.

During the seminar, she outlined the work of Majlis, which has helped thousands of women in need, especially of legal help, and dealt extensively on issues related to gender, identity and the law, including personal laws of different religions. She stressed on the

importance of NGOs and other stakeholders working together to protect the rights of women and children.

The seminar was followed by

an extensive and lively discus-

sion in which the participants

from a number of organisations

such as Cotton University,

NESRC, North Eastern Net-

work and Anwesha took part,

stated a press release.

Media clinic concludes at Guwahati Press Club

GUWAHATI, May 14: Bengaluru-based kidney transplant specialist Dr Sankaran Sundar graced the Saturday evening OPD clinic at Guwahati Press Club on May 13 and offered free health consultation to over 20 participants.

The Senior Consultant Nephrologist and head of international kidney transplan-

tion programme of Manipal Hospitals Ban-

galore advised a few participants to avail

further courses of treatment. The partici-

pants also got their blood pressure checked

by Rahul Sarma from the hospital.

The next Saturday clinic, organised un-

der the series of 'Evening with a Doctor'

programme on May 20, will be attended

by Dr Dhrubajyoti Dutta from Down Town Hospitals. Open for member-journalists of the press club along with their dependents, the camp will begin at 4 pm and continue till 6 pm. The May 27 camp

will be conducted by Dr Ashwin Rajagopal, Senior Consultant on Surgical On-

cology from the Manipal Hospitals.

India boycotts ...

(Contd from page 1)

Skirting any references to India's absence at the meeting, Xi, in his address after inauguring the Summit, said all countries should respect sovereignty.

"All countries should respect each other's sovereignty, dignity and territorial integrity, each other's development path and social systems, and each other's core interests and major concerns," the 63-year-old leader said.

Nigerians make up the largest group, followed by people from Bangladesh, Guinea and the Ivory Coast.

Nigeria is home to Boko Haram, which has terrorised the country with an eight-year fight to create a hardline Islamic state that has killed some 20,000 people and forced at least 2.6 million others to flee their homes. - AFP

link his country to much of Asia, Europe and Africa.

Pursuing the Belt and Road initiative, China has no intention to form a small group detrimental to stability," as the pursuit of the initiative requires a peaceful and stable environment, Xi said.

Xi, in his address, pledged to pump in a whopping USD 124 billion for projects that are part of the ambitious venture. - PTI

Accused ...

(Contd from page 1)

told this reporter.

The sources added that both the accused played the key role in siphoning off a huge amount of money in the name of ghost beneficiaries. ACB sources, however, denied the charges and said that the accused would not be spared.

Judgement on first NIA ...

(Contd from page 1)

Special public prosecutor Dilip Das appeared on behalf of the NIA, while advocate Ziaul Kumar appeared for Vanlalchhana.

Sources informed that investigation into the high-profile case unearthed siphoning-off of huge amounts of developmental funds and trans-

ferring these through illegal channels and their conversion into foreign currency, which were subsequently used for

procurement of arms and ammunition from foreign-based arms dealers.

The charge-sheet was filed under various provisions of the Indian Penal Code, including sections related to the waging of war against the nation, besides sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act relating to funding terrorism, harbouring terrorists, terrorist acts, etc.

The case was first registered at the Basistha Police

station (April 1, 2009) following the recovery of Rs 1 crore along with two pistols and letter heads of the banned DHDJ and subsequently, the Central Government handed over the case to the NIA, which went on to recover a huge amount of cash, allegedly meant for terrorist funding, from Kolkata and Haflong.

The NIA also recovered a huge cache of arms from Bhante's residence in Mizoram.

Spurt in radical activities ...

(Contd from page 1)

ures has already submitted its report with a series of recommendations. The report has been pending now before the Cabinet Committee on Security Affairs and the final decision is awaited. It may be mentioned here that among other recommendations, the Task Force had also recommended replacement of the Assam Rifles with the Indo-Tibetan Border Police along the border with Myanmar.

On the overall security scenario in the North East, the sources said that in the recent years there was vast improvement of the situation, but mil-

tancy is still to be wiped out completely and the police and security forces cannot lower their guards.

As militant groups have some bases in Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland, the possibility of them sneaking into Assam can never be ruled out, while the problems of some ethnic groups may lead to law-and-order problems. It may be mentioned here that the Union Home Minister, Rajnath Singh is scheduled to review the security scenario in the North East in a meeting with senior officers of all the State governments of the region on May 16.

Centre yet to release funds ...

(Contd from page 1)

crore for the 12th Five Year Plan schemes, prior to 2016-17 and it was to pay then an amount of Rs 27 crore, whereas the GoI released an amount of Rs 27.22 crore as its share against these schemes, prior to the change it effected to the funding pattern.

The change effected by the GoI in the funding pattern for these schemes made the State Government face the burden of an enhanced amount and now the amount it has to release against these schemes has shot up to Rs 68 crore from Rs 27.22 crore against the 12th Five Year Plan schemes.

The change effected by the GoI in the funding pattern for the 11th and 12th Five Year Plan FMP schemes of the State, has now inflated the remaining amount of the State's share against these schemes to Rs 115 crore, the sources said.

The State Government had made a supplementary budget provision in 2016-17 for the release of the above amount. However, due to shortage of time, it could not be processed. During the current financial year, the State Government has made a budget provision of Rs 234 crore, which includes the required amount for the State's share against the 11th and 12th Five Year Plan FMP schemes as also the new schemes, sources said.

The GoI released an amount of Rs 2.54 crore in 2012-13, Rs 15 crore in 2014-15, and Rs 47.22 crore in 2015-16, sources said.

Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and Water Resources Development Minister Keshav Mahanta have been taking up the issue of GoI funding of the FMP schemes with the authorities concerned constantly, the sources added.

'Only children' are creative, but selfish: study

BEIJING, May 14: Kids who grow up without siblings may be more creative, but are likely to be self-centred, say scientists who found significant differences in the brain structures of 'only children'.

According to the researchers, the brain structure of only children reinforces "undesirable personality traits, such as dependency, selfishness and social ineptitude." The "socialising effects" of having siblings, be-

stows upon most people "the realisation that they are not the centre of the world," the researchers said in the journal, *Brain Imaging and Behaviour*.

Researchers also noted that only children are more aware of parental expectations, which strongly influence their creativity. The

Telegraph reported.

"Only children might have more opportunities for independent activity and independence is strongly related to creative thinking," they said.

The findings may suggest that

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Researchers also noted that only children are more aware of parental expectations, which strongly influence their creativity. The

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"Only children might have more opportunities for independent activity and independence is strongly related to creative thinking," they said.

The findings may suggest that

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Awareness prog on GST

CORRESPONDENT

HAILAKANDI, May 14: The Silchar Central Excise and Services Tax Division organised a day-long programme on Goods and Services Tax (GST) here to create an awareness on the new tax regime. The programme was conducted by Assistant Commissioner of the department Chandan Biswas, who explained various positive aspects of the new tax system.

The GST is a comprehensive indirect tax system that will replace the taxes levied by the Central and the State Governments.

In the programme, experts claimed that with the introduction of GST, the economic condition of the country is likely to get a boost. Besides it will also help improve revenue.

"What is more important is that the consumers will be benefited from the GST and it is likely to bring in more transparency in the tax system," they observed.

The programme was also attended by Hailakandi Superintendent of Police Pranaboyogi Goswami, Additional Deputy Commissioner FR Laskar and senior State Government officials.

OBITUARY

Rupen Bara

 GUWAHATI, May 14: Rupen Bara, a resident of Kushal Konwar Path, Uzambazar passed away on May 9 at a local nursing home due to cardiac arrest. He was 65.

He leaves behind his wife, a son, daughter-in-law, a daughter, son-in-law and a host of relatives.

His death has been widely mourned.

A Bhattacharjee
CORRESPONDENT

 HAILAKANDI, May 14: A retired State Bank of India manager and a former famous cricketer of Hailakandi, Ashis Bhattacharjee died on May 13 morning due to a massive cardiac arrest. He was 61. Members of the district sports association of Hailakandi and various sports personalities have mourned his sudden demise.

He leaves behind his wife, a son and daughter.

Nazila Zafar
CORRESPONDENT

NAGAON, May 14: Nazila Zafar, an officer working for All India Radio died on Saturday following a protracted illness. She was 51.

She was loved and respected by all sections of people. She leaves behind her husband, a son and a daughter.

Her *nama-e-janaza* was performed at the Nagon town graveyard. Former Minister Rohybul Hussain and others have condoled her death.

Ghana Saikia
CORRESPONDENT

DHEM AJI, May 14: A devoted dramatist and cultural worker of greater Machhowna area in Dhemaji and retired secretary of the Co-operative Society, Ghan Saikia of Machhowna Pathialya village died on Friday morning at Bengengarh Community Health Centre following a cardiac arrest. He was 67.

He was actively associated with almost all the drama and cultural activities at Machhowna, including *Raas* festival. He subsequently formed a drama organisation named Jatrik Natya Goshthi at Machhowna.

He leaves behind his wife, two sons, two daughters-in-law, two daughters and several grandchildren. Saikia's death was widely mourned.



Boro youths performing traditional dance on the occasion of Rangjali Bwisage at Bhergaon, Tingla on Saturday. — UB Photos

Govt committed to develop tribal languages, claims MP

ANN Service

JONAI, May 14: Member of Parliament (MP) for 14 Lakhipur HPC, Pradan Barua said that the State Government has taken steps to develop the tribal languages, besides upholding traditional cultures of the indigenous tribes living in the state.

Speaking on the concluding programme of the four-day "Baisagu Biadai" at Simum Sapori here on Friday, Barua said he has already discussed with the State's Education Minister regarding introduction of BED and other professional courses in the District Institutes of Education Training (DIET) with Bodo and other recognised tribal languages as the medium of instruction.

One killed in road accident

JAGIROAD, May 14: One person was killed in a road accident at Dimorukuri under Jagiroad Police Station when he was run over by a speeding truck (AS 01 EC 7106). The deceased was identified as Pulasing Deuri (30) of Khologram under Mayong circle, police sources said. — Correspondent

Mothers Day observed

CORRESPONDENT

DOHJUBLI, May 14: Chetna, a socio-cultural organisation, felicitated 50 women of the district for their contributions to the society in the field of music, art and education on the occasion of the International Mothers Day.

The participants were also told about the immediate benefits of first aid, when the situation arises. International Red Cross Society official from Nagaon, Facility Gaps described before the participants about

the significant first aid tools during preliminary and fundamental treatment of both minor or major injuries, accidents etc.

"First aid tool works a lot and it is must for all burn injuries, snake bite, epilepsy, hypertension-related ailments etc. and even others can be attended at the earliest with first aid tools and aids which may save the victim from further danger or even death," Gaps said, urging all present on the occasion to use and keep a first aid tool always with them. Besides, Priyanka Singh, Anjuna Soni, Rituparna Konwar, Chandan Chutia, Laba Sarma, Dr Khabiruddin Ahmed, Krishna Kanta Lalakar and Narendra Sarma also spoke to the participants on first aid benefits. Earlier, the event was inaugurated by Dr Khabiruddin Ahmed. The participants were later presented certificates by the ICRCs.

Awareness on first aid generated

CORRESPONDENT

RANGIYA, May 14: In a bid to promote humanitarian values and promote philanthropy for the welfare of the common people, an awareness programme on first aid was held under the banner of Rangjali Chaitanya chapter of the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) at the Rangjya TT College with a two-day programme starting May 11.

Organised for the first time by the IRCS, the programme was participated in by a large number of people, which included students, youths, etc. Officials and distinguished resource persons from IRCS imparted relevant knowledge of the use of first aid measures.

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Echoes from the Valley ... released in Chandigarh

GUWAHATI, May 14: *Echoes from the Valley: Stories by Assamese Women* was released by theatre actor Neelam Man Singh Chowdhury at Chandigarh on Saturday, a press release stated.

Translated and compiled by Parbina Rashid, the anthology reflects upon the socio-cultural scenario of Assam through 21 stories. The stories span seven decades and come from three generations of authors.

The writers' list include the most powerful and finest writers of Assam — Sneha Devi, Indira Goswami, Nirupama Borgohain, Rita Choudhary,

Anuradha Sharma Pujari, Monikuntala Bhattacharya, Arupata Patang Kalita, Anuradha Gogoi, Moushumi Kandali, Gitali Borah and Juri Bora Borgohain.

Unveiling the book, renowned theatre artist Neelam Man Singh Chowdhury said, "The 'smell' and 'syntax' of Assam is not lost in translation. The range of content certainly reveal the women's real world and their real experiences. On the launch Guwahati-born and Chandigarh-based journalist Parbina said, "This was an endeavour to connect to my roots. This simple step

opened the treasure trove of Assamese literature. I am enriched knowing these wonderful writers and now it is turn for the world to know them," she said.

"These 21 stories come after a painstaking process of selection," Parbina said. "After shifting through hundreds of stories, I zeroed down on these 21, not because the others were less in terms of literary value, but because these 21 were like the pieces of a jigsaw, which when put together, completed the picture — the picture of an intriguing culture!"

Blupen Medhi, son of Late Balrani Medhi passed away on April 28 due to a viral lung infection. He left behind his wife, a son, a daughter and a host of relatives.

As a friend of his son, I had been closely associated with him for a long time. As I knew him he was a very helpful and kind-hearted person. He al-

ways extended a helping hand to all the needy persons close to him and his family. In the Beltole area, Guwahati, where he was a prominent resident, people loved and respected him for his helpful and amiable disposition.

Uncle, as we called him, was associated with various social and cultural organisations. He was an active member of the Beltole Bihu Sammelan. As a cultural activist,

uncle acted in various stage dramas and TV serials. He was seen in acting in the popular TV serial *Bhara Ghar*. He was also a yoga teacher and spread the message of importance of yoga in maintaining a good health.

He also did the noblest of things by donating his eyes after death.

May God grant eternal peace to his departed soul.

— Swapnali Gogoi

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Protect rights of indigenous people, PVM asks State Govt

SPL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, May 14: Prabanan Virodi, Manch (PVM) has asked the State Government to immediately correct its stand in the Supreme Court to ensure that the fundamental rights of the indigenous people are protected.

In a statement, senior advocate and convenor of the Forum, Upamanya Hazarika said that the Sonowal government should immediately correct its stand to reflect the actual position that the fundamental rights of the indigenous people should be protected.

The statement goes on to

explain in details the Clause 6 A of the Citizenship Act and recent attempts being made to grant citizenship rights to the children of the foreigners.

The first impression is sought to be created is that the entire Assam Accord is under challenge, which is not entirely correct. What is under challenge is only Clause 6 A of the Citizenship Act that is the cut-off date of March 25, 1971. The other issue is the grant of citizenship to children of illegal migrants for which AIUDF chief Badruddin Ajmal has thanked the Chief Minister, Hazarika, he said.

Both these issues are important for the future of indigenous people and on which the stand of BJP Government is

same as the AIUDF, Congress and AAMSU, Hazarika alleged.

The second development is that State Government's stand in favour of the migrants in the written submission has emboldened the migrant lobby, as all political parties in Assam support March 25, 1971 as the cut-off date, as also grant of citizenship by birth to children of illegal migrants for which AIUDF chief Badruddin Ajmal has thanked the Chief Minister, Hazarika noted.

The result is that in the last one week there have been several attacks on indigenous people, Hazarika alleged.

Country liquor seized; four arrested

CORRESPONDENT

NALBARI, May 14: The Nalbari district administration has launched a massive operation against country liquor in various places. As per the directive from Deputy Commissioner Ananta Lal Gyani, the Excise Department carried out raids at different places in the district. A team of the Excise Department raided five places, including Jagara, Goalpara, Chandukuchi, Muguchuchi and Sonpur and seized 160 litres of country liquor.

Four persons were arrested in this connection. The Deputy Commissioner has claimed that operations against country liquor would continue.

One killed

BAHATI CHARIALI May 14: One person was killed on the spot in a road accident at Khehenpara near Bezena under Bahati Chariali PS on Friday. The mishap occurred when a bike coming from Guwahati to Sipahip rammed into one vehicle on the NH-15 and another passenger bus ran over the bike riders. The deceased was identified as Shyam Kumar Chetry (32) of Mahalapara of Darrang district. — ANN Service

One arrested

CORRESPONDENT

RANGIYA, May 14: One Pranab Mahanta, a businessman of Pitambar Haatbazali village under Rangjya PS attended to commit suicide inside his grocery shop by pouring kerosene following alleged 'misbehaviour' by his mother-in-law. The youth, as per reports, was under severe mental stress for the past several days. Police have arrested his mother-in-law Pranati Kalita.

District Mineral Foundation Trust meet held at Tinsukia

CORRESPONDENT

DOOMDOWA, May 14: The first meeting of the District Mineral Foundation Trust (DMFT) of Tinsukia was held at the conference hall of the Deputy Commissioner's office at Tinsukia on Monday.

The meeting was chaired by Tinsukia DC Ranjan Rakraborty and attended by ADCs, District Development Commissioner, DFOs of Doomdoma and Digboi Forest Divisions, representative of Tinsukia Superintendence of Police, Lead Bank Officer of SBI, representatives of OIL and Digboi Carbon Industrial Estate, president of Margherita Anchikanchi Panchayat, Geetanjali Sonowal, Social activists Arjun Baruah and Jonali Saikia, besides several other members of the Trust.

To provide compensation to those who had been affected during extraction of mineral resources like coal, petroleum and minor minerals like sand, boulder, soil etc., the Government formed such a trust in every district through gazette notification by amending law during the financial year 2015-2016.

The DFOs of Doomdoma and Digboi informed the meeting that they would also deposit the amounts pertaining to their divisions in the Trust very soon.

The meeting also decided to conduct a survey of the affected people in the district and submit a report to the Trust before June 1. The next meeting of the Trust will be held on June 5.



Activists of Gramya Sangathan Samannoy taking out an awareness rally at Nagaon on Saturday. — UB Photos

Swachh Mela held at Haflong

CORRESPONDENT

HAFLONG, May 14: To make Dima Hasao an open defecation free and the cleanest district in Assam and a better health and hygiene zone, the Dima Hasao Swachh Mela - 2017 organised by Public Health Engineering Department, Haflong was held at the NL Daulaguri Indoor Stadium, Haflong on Friday.

Ranu Langhassa, Chairperson, NC Hills Autonomous Council, Haflong attended the programme as the chief guest and inaugurated the exhibition stalls of NGOs, District Disaster Management

Authority, the Social Welfare Department and Public Health Engineering Department, Haflong.

While the welcome address was given by Ramesh Thoason, Principal Secretary (T) NCHAC, Haflong, speeches were delivered by various dignitaries on why and how cleanliness would be materialised in Dima Hasao under the able leadership of Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi and Sarbananda Sonowal, Chief Minister.

Langhassa, Chairperson, NCHAC, Haflong in her short speech appreciated the Public Health Engineering Department, Dima Hasao, Haflong for organising such

a mega event and for achieving above the target during the year 2016-17 in constructing toilets in rural areas of the district.

As a part of the programme, 'Certificates of Excellence' along with trophies were awarded to various villages, NGOs and Self Help Groups for rendering services in the field of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. The programme was also attended by EMs, MACs, Principal Secretaries of NCHAC, Haflong, senior citizens, NGOs, social organisations, dignitaries, officers and staff of various departments, *mouza-dars, gaonbarsi* and students among a large number of the general public.



Artists performing traditional Rabha dance on the occasion of Rongali Bihu festival at Rajabari village in Boko on Sunday. — UB Photos

CM calls for spiritual orientation of youth

GUWAHATI, May 14: Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal advocated for spiritual orientation of youth for guiding them to lead a disciplined life. The Chief Minister said this while laying the foundation stone of a Rongamancha (auditorium) of an extended centre of Sri Sri Aumati Satra at Kacharbari, Mancota in Dibrugarh district today.

The auditorium is to be constructed with an expenditure of Rs one crore under Chief Minister's United Fund for 2016-17.

Underlining the pivotal role that spiritual institutions could play in spiritually energizing the youth, the Chief Minister said that spiritual teachings give purpose to life and guide people to serve society with deep sense of social responsibility.

Maintaining the view that the Rongamancha of the Aumati Satra would strengthen the bond of amity and harmony among the people of Manca area with its message of spirituality, the Chief Minister observed that spiritual teachings help in inculcating human values and contribute to social wellbeing. Sonowal also viewed that once completed, the auditorium would add glory to the rich heritage of 180 years old Dibrugarh town.

Terming the parents and teachers as the two most powerful forces which shape the future of the youth, the Chief Minister urged them to play an active role in creating a just and upright society. Sonowal also stressed on imparting moral education to the youth to develop them as ideal human being.

Stating that the State government has taken up various initiatives for conservation and development of the Sattras, the Chief Minister commented that the Sattras give a distinct identity to Assam culture and it is through the spiritual knowledge that Assam could establish its uniqueness in the national platform.

Satradhikar of Sri Sri Aumati Satra Pitambar Deva Goswami, MP Rameswar Teli, MLA Rituparna Barua also spoke on the occasion.

MLAs Prashanta Phukan, Sanjay Kishan, Suren Phukan, Ofc of Sonowal Kachari Autonomous Council Dipurjanan Markari, Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police, Dibrugarh were also present among others on the occasion, a press release stated.

Row over forest pillars along border

STAFF REPORTER

Jorhat district has triggered a row.

GUWAHATI, May 14: Erection of concrete pillars by the State Forest department in a disputed area along the Nagaland border in

Forest officials involved in the act.

The Forest department, on the other hand, has lodged an FIR against unknown "miscreants" who dismantled a pillar erected "along the northern boundary of Dibru reserve forest at Naginjan area". The FIR came on a day when local MLA Rupijyoti Kurmi led a group of villagers and dismantled the pillars as a mark of protest.

Debarpura Police have registered a case under sections 447 and 427 of IPC following the FIR by the beat officer of Morogolia.

In a statement issued in Guwahati, Opposition leader Seats in the State Assembly. Anil Kumar Saikia said the Forest department erected the pillars without consulting the local administration, local villagers or the headmen.

The inter-state border problem with Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram

and Nagaland has been dragging since long. The Supreme Court is yet to give any final verdict in the case. It has been reported that the encroachments in the inter-state border areas are more on forest land than in revenue land. Erection of pillars in the border areas in such a manner without any prior joint survey with the Revenue department is condemnable," Saikia said.

The Forest department claims that the pillars were erected to demarcate the forest land. The Congress, however, felt that erection of such structures along the border would encourage further encroachments. There have been sharp reactions in the area over the Forest department's "unwarranted" move.

Saikia demanded departmental action against the forest officials involved in the act.

Workshop on digital payments held at Silchar

CORRESPONDENT

SILCHAR, May 14: A workshop on digital payment initiative for small and medium business/traders was recently organised by National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT) at Rajiv Bhawan.

The workshop was sponsored by the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India and was conducted in association with Confederations of All India Traders (CAIT).

The workshop was inaugurated by K Baruah, Director, NIELIT Guwahati in the presence of Dr Sanjukta Neogi, assistant professor at Haflong Government College.

Dr Baruah, IAS Laskar Principal, MC Das College, Silchar, delivered the keynote address.

The opening day of the celebration witness a large turnout of people.

Twin bodies recovered:

Sensation prevailed across Digherkhali area under Katigor constituency after locals noticed dead bodies of two youths hanging on a tree.

According to police, the incident took place at Gobindokhola, an out garden of Craig Park tea garden where two youths identified as Sajan Das (28) and Sabita Das (22) were found hanged on a tree. Immediately police was informed and soon dead bodies were sent to Silchar Medical College and Hospital for post mortem. Suspecting this to be a case of suicide, police said that the deceased persons were love couples.

Speakers in the workshop highlighted on the benefit of Digital Payment System and about the initiatives by the government. In his address, K Baruah said "by adopting modes of digital payment, people can attract savings which if utilized can usher in development." Manab Kalita, Additional Director NIELIT Guwahati-Silchar

Extension Centre delivered the keynote address.

Rongali Bihu: The two-day Rongali Bihu celebrations organised by the Silchar Rongali Bihu celebration committee of the Asam Sahitya Sabha Silchar branch began at the premises of Deshbhakta Tarun Ram Phukan HS School on Saturday. The celebrations began with rally and hoisting of the flag by Cachar Deputy Commissioner S Vishwanathan. This was followed by various cultural and competitive events.

Raju Bora, secretary of the celebration committee said the celebrations have been aimed at integration of various communities and to foster the spirit of mutual coexistence. "The stages for various cultural events have been dedicated in the memory of the noted artists from Barak and Brahmaputra valley. The opening day of the celebrations witness a large turnout of people.

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**WEATHER****NORTHEAST**

Forecast for North Eastern States: Thunderstorms with showers are very likely to occur at many places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram & Tripura.

Warning: Wind storm with gale wind speed exceeding 30 kmph is likely to occur at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram on May 15. Heavy to very heavy rain fall is very likely to occur at isolated places over Assam & Meghalaya on May 15, 17 and 19. Thunderstorms on May 15 and over Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram & Tripura on May 15, 16 and 17.

Temperatures :

	Max (°C)	Min (°C)
Dibrugarh	32.2	23.2
Tinsukia	29.5	21.0
Silchar	29.2	22.0
Dhubri	28.2	23.5
Jorhat	29.4	22.5
N Lakhimpur	34.4	23.2
Sivasagar	30.0	17.3
Itanagar	34.1	22.6
Aizawl	30.0	15.7
Agartala	35.0	22.0
Kohima	34.4	15.6
Pasighat	32.5	22.2
Cherrapunji	22.5	17.9

Efforts on to pass GST bill this month: Lalsawta

AIZAWL, May 14: Arunachal Pradesh Minister Lalsawta today said that efforts were being made to pass the State Goods and Services Tax (GST) Bill in the State Assembly during this month.

Lalsawta said that he has already approved the draft Bill which was sent to the State Law and Judicial department for approval.

He said that after the Law and Judicial department vetted the draft Bill, he would seek the Cabinet approval by circulation.

"We are trying to clear everything from this week and introduce the Bill in the State Assembly which would hold a one-day emergency session during May - PTI

Witchcraft claims another victim in Garo Hills

TURA, May 14: A 70-year-old man was today brutally hacked to death with a 'khukuri' after the culprit's initial attempt at shooting him missed the mark. The shocking incident took place at 5 am today in Okkarpur Sonogchhang village in South West Garo Hills (SWGHD).

According to sources, Khaman Ch Marak and Rajan M Marak had a long personal enmity mainly on allegations of Rajan practising witchcraft on Khaman.

Incidentally the victim and the accused were relatives. Khaman initially tried to kill Rajan with a SWGHD gun but missed his target.

He later got hold of a 'khukuri' and brutally hacked the victim. The suspect was caught by the villagers and handed over to the Garo Gendarma investigation centre, under which Okkarpur falls.

The body was taken to Tura Civil Hospital where a post mortem is being done. The accused, Khaman Marak, has been arrested," said a police source.

Police later recovered both murder weapons and an investigation is currently on. – Correspondent



Arunachal Governor PB Acharya and State's First Lady Karita Acharya giving away the Governor's award for excellence in the fields of academics, performing arts and sports for children and wards of employees working in Raj Bhavan, in Itanagar on Friday. – DIPR

Khandu lauds Centre's decision to regulate stent price

ITANAGAR, May 14: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu has welcomed the Centre's decision to regulate the prices of coronary stents and extended his government's support to the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers.

Union Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister Ananth Kumar in a letter to the State outlined the Centre's measures to provide improved and affordable health care in the country.

These include regulating the prices of drugs and medical devices to reduce the burden of poor patients and their kin.

Taking view of high incidences of coro-

nary artery disease (CAD), the Centre included coronary stent implantation in Schedule I of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order of 2013.

This enabled the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) to bring down prices by 50 per cent.

The regulated price of bare metal stents is Rs 7,260 and of drug eluting metallic stents (DES) and bio-restorable vascular scaffold biodegradable stents is Rs 29,600. "This is a huge relief for poor patients suffering from CAD," Khandu said in a letter to the Union Minister yesterday.

He assured that the Centre's notifica-

tion will be made available to all concerned for necessary publicity.

"The State Government is committed to monitoring the availability and price of stent for the benefit of the denizens," the Chief Minister said. He also appealed to the people to avail the regulated benefit for CAD cases.

"If any hospital/nursing home over-charges or provides excuses of non-availability of stents, the matter should be immediately reported or complained to www.Nppa.Gov.In or through NPPA's helpline number 1800112255," Khandu said. – PTI

Manipur police probing 'threat' to SC advocate

CORRESPONDENT

IMPHAL, May 14: Manipur police have started investigations into the allegation by a Supreme Court advocate that he has been "threatened" to stay away from assisting a family of the 2011 road rage case.

Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Dr J Suresh Babu said this at a press conference here on Thursday. N Ajay, accused in the road rage murder case of teenage boy Irom Roher on March 20, 2011, was convicted on January 6 last by a trial court here and jailed.

Stating that the government is "seriously concerned"

about the matter as the accused is under imprisonment at Sajiva jail for the last nine months, Dr Suresh Babu said that preliminary investigations have begun after regressing a case by a Sub-Divisional Police Officer at Imphal police station. The police is trying to determine the veracity of the claim by the advocate.

DGP Manipur LM Khaita, who was present, said that adequate security would be provided to the lawyer whenever he visits the State in connection with the case.

Meanwhile, Dr Suresh Babu announced that a new policy to provide Rs 5 lakh ex-gratia to the next kin of two deceased personnel who lost their lives during the May 8 ambush.

In an official notification, principal secretary FP Solo said every school would introduce at least one local language in the school. However, depending on the enrolment, schools are at liberty to introduce more languages other than the language of the local linguistic area.

The local language will be taught upto the primary or elementary level depending on the level of development of the local language starting from Class I in schools where it has not yet been introduced.

The decision comes following recommendations of the Committee constituted by Nagaland Government to examine the present scenario on implementation of the three-language policy and make recommendations and modalities for introduction of MLSS/local dialects in schools in the State.

The government has encouraged all Nag tribes, including sub-tribes, to develop text books and introduce their mother tongues upto the elementary level, i.e., Class VIII.

However, all the existing text books of local languages being used in different classes would be reviewed and updated strictly in conformity with

an approved curriculum for mother tongue to be developed by SCERT, Nagaland, which is the academic authority of Nagaland upto elementary level of education.

To ensure and maintain uniformity and comparable standards, the notification stated that the SCERT with the assistance of different language officers would develop a prototype of textbooks in English, which would then be translated into local languages. Those series of text books would be titled 'Naga Heritage Studies' and used upto Class VIII.

Introduction of a local language in schools at different levels upto Class VIII would be considered only after the SCERT certifies that textbooks of that particular language have been developed as per the approved curriculum for mother tongue.

Nagaland Govt congratulates Aizawl FC

DIMAPUR, May 14: Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh Governor PB Acharya has congratulated Aizawl FC for winning the 10th I League title.

Dr Suresh Babu said, "There is no such information in writing or verbally (from the advocate)." He added the government is ready to hand over the case to National Investigation Agency, if required.

As per news reports, Babu said there is no such information in writing or verbally from the advocate." He added the government is ready to hand over the case to National Investigation Agency, if required.

In his letter to Robert R Royte, president and owner, Aizawl Football Club, the Governor said it is a proud moment in the history of sports for North East and Mizoram, in particular.

The hard work and team effort of the Club has paid off and will be an example for everyone.

In his letter to Robert R Royte, president and owner, Aizawl Football Club, the Governor said it is a proud moment in the history of sports for North East and Mizoram, in particular.

The Resu gets a new college

TURA, May 14: To ensure that no student is left unable to complete higher education, a bunch of residents of Resubelpara town have got together to start the Resu Union College.

The effort by the residents came in the wake of the problems faced by students to get admission after Class X.

The new college is set to start operations this year after the declaration of the MBSSE Class X results. It will be the first private institute and amongst 10 other institutions in the district.

The Resu Union College, which will initially offer the Arts stream, has been built in a plot of land gifted by the Nokma, at Mochorpura, about 3 km from Resubelpara.

The college building comprising of four classrooms can take in about eighty students per class. – Correspondent

'Action Team' to tackle prostitution racket in Dimapur

CORRESPONDENT

DIMAPUR, May 14: Dimapur district administration has constituted an 'Action Team' to deal with the prostitution racket in Dimapur.

According to an office memorandum, the district administration, as notified by Health & Family Welfare department, has informed that as per the provision of Section 4 of Nagaland Health Care Establishment 1997, no person

would set up any health care establishment including the ones run by voluntary organisations except under valid license granted by the authority.

The Action Team is as the convenor and representatives of Commissioner of Police, administrator of Dimapur Municipal Council, assistant public prosecutor and representative of Nagaland Council Dimapur as members. The team would study the potential hotspots related to prostitution activities, examine means and suggest ways to address the growth of such activities.

The team has been asked to submit its report within 30 days with effect from May 8, the office memorandum signed by Dimapur DC Keswani Yohome stated.

Meanwhile, the Dimapur

district administration, as notified by Health & Family Welfare department, has informed that as per the provision of Section 4 of Nagaland Health Care Establishment 1997, no person

would set up any health care establishment including the ones run by voluntary organisations except under valid license granted by the authority.

DC Thome stated that it is mandatory for all private health care establishments, irrespective of the system of medicine, to obtain license and register under the Nagaland Health Care Establishment Authority. Any violations of the Act and Rules is punishable with imprisonment for a term upto one year or fine which may extend to Rs10,000 or both, he said. All private health care establishments have been directed to register or renew license within three months.

Mizo woman gets int'l award

Kaul Misra, president, Community Services of Bengaluru.

Through her organisation, Dr Ralte has been working for women empowerment and gender equality in the strictly patriarchal Mizo society.

"Lots of women organisations came forward with AMWF taking the lead. Now over 10 women organisations are affiliated to AMWF making it even stronger. We organised seminars and many social awareness programmes," she said.

"I am honoured to accept this recognition. Our focus at the AMWF is women empowerment and gender equality in the society and politics," she said.

Speaking at the event, Dr Harleen Arora, Founder and Global Chairperson, All Ladies League (ALL) and Women Economic Forum (WEF) said, "WEF is a supportive platform where women from all walks of life can come and empower their skills, attitudes and networks. This year, almost 18 Women Economic Forum events would get organised across the world with the purpose of giving women worldwide greater voice and visibility."

The annual Women Economic Forum gathers women leaders from 100 plus countries at its conference in New Delhi. Better World for All' in recognition of her contribution in the philanthropy space.

Better World for All'

in recognition of her contribution in the philanthropy space.

Ralte was conferred the honour in a gala event on Friday in Delhi. Some of the other awardees included Dr Marissa Pei, Life Coach & Positive Talk Radio Personality and Suchitra

in Mizoram, but the State Government is reluctant to meet our basic demands, like allotment of land for cultivation," refugee leader Bruno Msha said.

"In several meetings with the Home Ministry and Mizoram Government officials in New Delhi and in refugee camps in Tripura, we demanded five hectares of land to each refugee family. However, the Mizoram officials summarily rejected this demand. If we do not have land, how will we survive?" he asked.

A 30-member team of Mizoram officials last year conducted a survey in the refugee camps to identify bona fide residents of Mizoram.

Despite several initiatives by the Mizoram government to bring the refugees back, they have been reluctant till their demands for food and security are met. – IANS



International Nurses Day being observed at Government ANM School at Aalo in West Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh on Friday. – DIPR

Over 32,000 Mizoram tribals to get Aadhaar cards

AGARTALA, May 14: More than 32,000 Mizoram tribals staying in seven refugee camps in Tripura for the past two decades will be issued Aadhaar cards by Tripura Government, an official said on Saturday.

An official of Tripura Relief and Revenue department said that Union Home Ministry had asked the State to provide Aadhaar cards to these tribals to ensure hassle-free government benefits to them.

The process to take photographs of these refugees will begin next week. "The 12-digit card will be first issued to schoolchildren of the refugees and then all the adults," Kanchanpur Sub-Divisional Magistrate Santosh Deb said.

The cards will be issued from the offices of Sub-Divisional Magistrates of Kanchanpur and Panisagar.

"We are ready to return to our homes

MeitY asks RBI, NPCI, UIDAI to secure systems

NEW DELHI, May 14: The IT ministry has reached out to key stakeholders like RBI, National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), NIC and UIDAI (Aadhaar) to advise them to protect their systems against 'Wanna Cry' ransomware to ensure that the digital payments ecosystem in the country is protected.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has also instructed cyber security unit CERT-In to gather information on 'Wanna Cry' ransomware that has wreaked havoc across sectors like healthcare and telecommunications in more than 100 countries.

Over the weekend, the ransomware hit systems in over 100 countries, including Russia and the UK, in one of the most widespread cyber attacks in history. It infected computers running on older versions of Microsoft operat-

ing systems like XP, locking access to files on the computer.

The cyber criminals have demanded a fee of about \$300 in crypto-currencies like Bitcoin for unlocking the device.

Microsoft has introduced a security patch to tackle the situation, and consumers across the globe have been advised

working in close coordination with all relevant agencies," it said in a statement.

The ministry has also reached out to the Department of Telecom (DoT) to alert internet service providers (ISPs) to secure their networks as well as the Data Security Council of India (DSCI) and CDAC to ensure that users across the country, especially those in the private sector, are cautioned about the ransomware.

Besides, it has also requested Microsoft India to inform all its partners and customers to apply the relevant patches.

As per the advisory issued by CERT-In, the ransomware infects other computers on the same network and is also spreading through malicious attachments e-to-mail. Security firms have suggested that users immediately disconnect the infected device from the local network to contain the spread of infection. - PTI

'Wanna Cry' ransomware

to download the solution at the earliest.

Noting that no reports have been formally received so far related to the ransomware attack, MeitY said a few systems of the Police Department in Andhra Pradesh were impacted and that the State government had been informed to follow the advisory by the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In).

"MeitY is keeping a close watch on the developments on the ransomware and is

noting that no reports have been formally received so far related to the ransomware attack, MeitY said a few systems of the Police Department in Andhra Pradesh were impacted and that the State government had been informed to follow the advisory by the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In).

"MeitY is keeping a close watch on the developments on the ransomware and is

CAPSULE

LIC investments

MUMBAI, May 14: Amidst some of its investment decisions being questioned by many, insurance behemoth Life Insurance Corporation, which manages Rs 25 trillion of assets, has divided its investment portfolio among the three Managing Directors so that a final decision can be taken, sources at LIC told PTI.

Industrial trade fair

GUWAHATI, May 14: The Department of Industries & Commerce, Govt of Assam, in association with Laghu Udyog Bharati, an All-India organisation of micro & small industries, is organising a five-day Industrial & Business Trade Fair at Manirang Dewan Trade Centre here from June 15, 2017. The fair will provide opportunity to the micro & small industrial sectors to highlight their products and facilitate marketing linkage, a press release said.

Tech Mahindra

BENGALURU, May 14: Tech Mahindra today said it has entered into the Top-20 global tech services brands list (by brand value) in 2017, as per an independent assessment by a valuation and strategy consultancy, Brand Finance. Tech Mahindra has been ranked at No 14, with an impressive growth of 21 per cent over the previous fiscal, a joint release by Tech Mahindra and Brand Finance said. - PTI

Birla Sun Life

GUWAHATI, May 14: Birla Sun Life Insurance (BSLI), the life insurance arm of the Aditya Birla Financial Services Group (ABFSG), recently launched its unique pan India campaign 'Swabhimaan' in Guwahati in the presence of women from various walks of life. 'Swabhimaan' introduced the women to the rewarding career opportunity of a life insurance adviser/ producer and in conjunction with the aim of building a strong team of women advisors in Guwahati, a press release said.

Spice garland

KOCHI, May 14: As spices are considered to be very important in Indian culture, the garlands made by stringing together spices like pure cardamom have found a unique place in the country's spices market, a top Spices Board official said here today. "The latest product launched by the Spices Board, the spice garland, has been commended for its novelty," Spices Board Chairman Dr A Jayathilak said. - PTI

Isuzu components

NEW DELHI, May 14: Japanese automobile manufacturer Isuzu is gradually ramping up component sourcing from India for its global operations as it develops local vendor network. The company has already roped in around 100 suppliers which are primarily meeting local requirements for rolling out pick-up truck from its plant in Andhra Pradesh. - PTI

NPCI plans mega promotional campaign

NEW DELHI, May 14: NPCI is planning to launch a mega campaign across the country to educate masses on how to go cash-less by using mobiles and RuPay-enabled Jan Dhan debit cards for day-to-day transactions.

The exercise is part of the digital drive of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), which is at the forefront of the campaign to make India less dependent on cash.

The intent is to make digital payment popular and be less dependent on cash, AP Hota, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of NPCI said. During the demonetisa-

tion period, debit card usage jumped by almost six times and e-commerce platforms witnessed five times more transactions, Hota said.

"After February, we saw the number going down from Jan-Dhan level but it has again started picking up. I believe May

RuPay (debit) card as well as the BHIM app as well as Aadhaar Pay," Hota said during an interaction.

It is to publicise different digital products and to educate the masses, he added.

Hota said NPCI so far has issued close to 37 crore RuPay debit cards, of which about 25 crore are Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan (PMJDY) cards.

"As many as 12 crore cards are mainstream cards and the usage has been growing. The point of sale (PoS) terminals have now expanded to 3 million due to government's special push from a mere 1.5 million earlier." - PTI

RBI goes for note storage security upgrade

NEW DELHI, May 14: The Reserve Bank has initiated an exercise of upgrading measures for secured storage and movement of currency at over 4,000 chests across the country in view of heightened threat perception.

In recent times, several instances of looting of cash vans and banks, as well as ATMs dispensing fake currency notes have been reported from different parts of the country.

The RBI has already constituted a High-Level Committee on Currency Storage and Movement (HLCCSM) to review the existing security arrangements relating to storage, movement and processing of currency.

The RBI is now seeking glo-

bal expertise to assist the committee in matters relating to security aspects, movement and storage of currency, automation of currency processing and handling.

The selected expert will also help the panel in devising a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for movement of currency. - PTI



Bollywood actor Shilpa Shetty Kundra in conversation with the delegates of Women Economic Forum- 2017, in New Delhi on Saturday. - UNI

Layoffs in Indian IT may continue for 1-2 yrs: Experts

NEW DELHI, May 14: As digitisation and automation become the new normal, IT biggies like Infosys, Cognizant and Tech Mahindra are seeing a spate of layoffs and this trend may continue for the next 1-2 years, say experts.

The pink slips are being handed out to thousands of employees as part of their performance appraisal process, but it is believed that these are directed more towards cost control amid pressure on bottom line due to a rising tide of protectionism in most target markets.

Indian software exporters in particular are facing headwinds in the business environment and stricter work permit regime in countries like the US, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand.

Moreover, with newer technologies in artificial intelligence (AI), robotic process automation and cloud computing, which help complete the job with less manpower, software companies are now having to retrain their resources.

"It's a situation wherein the available talent haven't kept up with the pace at which the industry was evolving and hence, many of them find themselves redundant," said Rituparna Chakraborty, TeamLease Services Executive Vice-President and co-founder.

Executive search organisation GlobalHunt MD Sunil Goel said: "This rationalisation does happen in every 3-5 years in the industry through new-age technologies, but this has impacted it more this time

as the US also has changed policies for foreign IT workers."

Goel further noted that "the consolidated trend may continue for next 1-2 years", but sees it as an opportunity for IT professionals to upgrade themselves and get into the new-age technologies where demand is going to be huge.

Pink slips are likely for jobs in manual testing, technology support and system administration since these are increasingly going to be managed by AI and robotics process automation-based systems.

However, there is a surge in demand for latest and innovative technologies like data science, artificial intelligence and digital domain-specific skills.

"It is a painful transition phase.

However, things would look up in

the next two quarters as each of the IT services company successfully steers towards a stable growth," Chakraborty said.

Talent management solutions provider KellyOCG India Country Director Francis Padamanad said: "We will continue to see some amount of rationalisation happening among IT companies though it is difficult to put a number."

Japanese brokerage firm Nomura, in a research note, said that the job cuts of 2-3 per cent of the overall headcount of nearly 7,60,000 by Infosys, Cognizant, Tech Mahindra and Wipro are not material. However, this kind of rationalisation is likely to be a continuing phenomenon until the workforce realignment towards digital skills is complete. - PTI



Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs Arjun Ram Meghwal at the function of 'Digital India Summit - Role of Cooperative Banks in Adopting and Advancing the Prime Minister's Flagship Digital India Programme', in Mumbai on Sunday. - PTI

Drinking water from air to soon become reality

NEW DELHI, May 14:

Imagine an appliance that pulls out water from air! Kolkata-based Vikram Solar has teamed up with Israel's WaterGen to manufacture a harvester to address safe and clean drinking water issue.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) has already been signed between the two firms to form a joint venture for manufacturing solar-powered water harvester using the Israeli technology that will suit the Indian conditions.

The technology is relevant to countries like India where a large part of population still does not have access to safe and clean drinking water.

"We are working seriously to finalise the joint venture. Hopefully, the deal will get through in the next few days," WaterGen Business Development officer Maor Zrahayhu told PTI.

A product with the unique water solution technology will be developed in a such way that is energy-efficient and cost-effective, he said without disclosing about investment.

This would help provide drinking water access to people in remote places making best use of easily available natural resources – air and humidity, he added.

According to WaterGen, the water harvesting device can be of different sizes depending on the extent of water to be harvested from atmosphere.

The committee is expected

to have representation from the Departments of Economic Affairs, Revenue and Financial Services, besides the Telecom Department, an official familiar with the matter told PTI.

The panel is expected to finalise its recommendations in the next three months.

Some of the recommendations could be placed before the Telecom Commission – the highest policy-making body in the Telecom Department – for approval. For the other proposals mooted by the panel, a Cabinet go-ahead may be necessary.

The internal plan is that the views of banks, telecom operators and also the large investors in the sector will be sought for its approval.

The Department of Telecom is attaching top priority to the issue, the official said, adding that the first meeting of the panel members is likely to be held this month itself.

Digitisation will curb shadow economy: Meghwal

NEW DELHI, May 14:

Pitching for rapid movement towards digitisation of the economy, Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said here today the government's digital initiative is crucial to curb the black market.

"In this country, 22-26 per cent is shadow economy (i.e., illicit economic activities like black market transactions and undeclared income existing alongside the official economy)," the Minister of State for Finance said.

"This is a large percentage and it is not good for a nation. As and when shadow economy is constrained, the gross domestic product (GDP) of the country will grow," he added.

Noting that post-democratisation of high-value currency notes the country has rapidly moved towards digitisation which has helped keep a check

on the shadow economy, Meghwal said 'digital India' is a necessary initiative to "hurt" the illicit economic activities.

"When we have a large shadow economy, digital India will help curb it and we will be able to account for the illicit transactions. This will result in growth in consumption, investments and exports, and as a result GDP will also grow."

The minister was addressing the 'Digital India Summit - Role of Cooperative Banks in Adopting and Advancing the Prime Minister's Flagship Digital India Programme'.

Meghwal observed that 2017

"would be known in history as the year of economic reforms"

on account of various government initiatives, including implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). - PTI

"This year we made various changes to the Budget like merging the Railways" with Union Budget and passed the Finance Bill before March 31 for the first time. Now we will roll out the Goods and Services Tax from July 1 which will make it easier to do business in the country," Meghwal said.

"GST will help make it easier to do business. For instance, in India logistic charges are high compared to the US and Canada but with GST these charges will come to par with these developed countries."

Hailed as the biggest tax reform since India's independence, GST will replace an array of Central and State levies with a national sales tax, thereby creating a single market and making it easier to do business in the country. - PTI

GCPL to boost personal care portfolio

NEW DELHI, May 14:

FMCG major Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL) plans to strengthen its personal care portfolio in India and Indonesia this fiscal with the launch of new products in soaps and hair colour segments.

The company will be launching the new products under existing brands in the respective geographies.

"This year we are planning about three or four launches in India and also similar number of launches in Indonesia," GCPL Managing Director and CEO Vivek Gambhir told PTI.

The launches will be in the later part of the year, he added.

In India, the company sells soaps under the Cinthol and No 1 brands, while the hair care range includes Expert, BBBlunt, Renew and Nupur.

In Indonesia, GCPL offers products under the brand Hit in household insecticides segment, Stella in air fresheners and Mitu in baby tissues and baby care.

Stating that the new launches will be under existing brands, Gambhir said: "Our entire focus would be to drive these brands to full potential. We are not planning for any new brand to be launched."

In January-December period, GCPL registered sales growth of 9 per cent in the soap category, he added. - PTI



Dinesh Bihani

As per the latest auction sale (No 19)

held at Guwahati Tea Auction Centre (GTAC) on May 9 and 10, the total tea offering were 97,915 packages, out of which 65 per cent were sold. Prices for good teas were barely steady to easier while medium and plainer sorts were easier with heavy withdrawals. HUL lent fair support along with western Indian buyers. The auction average price for this week stood at Rs 148.11, up by Rs 6.26 from last year.

Top garden prices

BOP	Price	BOPSM/BP	Price	OF/PF	Price
HALDARI	330	GWALI	275	MARALLOMI	236
GHLIDARY	281	SOTAI	271	SOTAI	234
DOODPURULLING	269	MAHJUJAM	266	ANGADA	228
HAJUA	251	DECKAJUJI	246	LOPHOPHA	227
DUFLATING	241	MADHUPUR	236	DECKAJUJI	224

Secretary, Guwahati Tea Auction Buyers Association (GTABA)

Kapil Mishra swoons after mounting attack on AAP

NEW DELHI, May 14: Sacked Delhi minister Kapil Mishra today fainted after accusing Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) of "masive" financial irregularities.

"It has now become clear that Arvind Kejriwal is a corrupt man," Mishra said before he swooned, apparently weakened by five days of fasting in protest against AAP's refusal to disclose details of five leaders' travels abroad.

Mishra told the media at his residence that AAP had received "cores of rupees" from "shell companies" run by people close to Kejriwal,

mentioning AAP legislators Shiv Charan Goel and Naresh Yadav.

He said there were discrepancies in the money received by AAP and the amount it declared before the Election Commission.

"His vitals are all normal," an RML doctor said. Earlier, referring to one of the cases of alleged discrepancies, Mishra said AAP received Rs 90 lakh as donation from a person identified as Priya Bansal of Bengaluru for 2014-15 and 2015-16, but the tax payable on her income was merely Rs 4000.

In 2014-15, AAP had Rs 65.52,40,752 (Rs 65.5 crore) in its bank account, but the Election Com-

mission was informed about only Rs 32,46,16,662 (Rs 32.4 crore) while the party put only Rs 27,38,71,611 (Rs 27.3 crore) in the public domain and told its volunteers it had no mon-

ey," Mishra said.

He also held that the party had made 461 "bogus" entries. "All this happened with the knowledge of Arvind Kejriwal as these shell companies deposited money in AAP's bank account on the same day and time in January 2014," Mishra said, brandishing a sheet of documents.

Mishra was accompanied at the meet by a man identified as Neil Haslam, who he said helped in "ex-

posing" the funding.

"This is why I have been demanding foreign travel details of five AAP leaders," Mishra said. Senior AAP leader Sanjay Singh said Mishra has been echoing the allegations that the BJP voiced just before the 2015 Assembly polls.

"This is the BJP's ploy to finish AAP. It should stop questioning the credentials of AAP and Arvind Kejriwal as we have ensured all transparency while accepting funds," Singh said.

On May 7, Mishra had claimed that he had seen Health Minister Satyendar Jain pay Rs 2 crore to Kejriwal. —PTI

BJP celebrating failures of Modi govt, says CPI

MUMBAI, May 14: The ruling BJP is "celebrating the failures" of the Narendra Modi government on all fronts, CPI national secretary D Raja said here today.

"The BJP, whose government completes three years this month, is celebrating its failures. The Modi government has failed on all fronts," Raja said after a two-day national meeting of his party at Karjat in adjoining Raigad district.

The two-day meet, which ended today, reviewed the socio-economic and political developments in the country, he said. "This government hasn't kept its promises. The PM is resorting to rhetoric instead of fulfilling the pre-poll assurances," he said.

"What happened to the BJP's promise of creating two crore jobs," Raja said, adding there is a large-scale unrest among young people on account of unemployment.

"The BJP is, in fact, celebrating the failures of this government. The economy is in a bad shape. The agrarian sector is in a crisis, which has worsened with the rising number of farmer suicides," he said. Raising the issue of farmers' suicide, the leader asked why the government waive off debt of farmers while it can write off huge corporate loans. —PTI

Woman held for filing false rape case

PANAJI, May 14: Police have arrested a 24-year-old woman from Indore for allegedly filing a false rape case against a Mumbai-based builder last year.

The woman, who is originally from Indore, had accused the 56-year-old real estate developer of raping her in a hotel room at Anjuna beach village in North Goa under the pretext of giving her a job.

"The woman was arrested yesterday following investigation in the case which revealed that the complainant against the builder was fake," Anjuna police inspector Sanjay Dalvi said.

The complaint was filed in March 2016 following which the realtor had filed for anticipatory bail before an additional sessions court at Mapusa in Goa which was granted to him.

He had also filed a counter-complaint against the woman and 11 others in October last year, accusing them of filing a false case against him to grab his property and extort money. Dalvi said the police investigation revealed that the builder was in Mumbai when the alleged incident happened. —PTI



Swayam sevaks of Delhi condemning the brutal killing of its worker at Kannur, staging a dharna in front of Kerala House, in New Delhi on Sunday. —UNI

Global ransomware virus found prowling in Indian cyberspace

NEW DELHI, May 14: The country's cyber security agency has alerted Internet users against damaging activities of a strong and globally active ransomware virus - "Wannacry" - that critically infects work stations and locks them remotely.

A red-coloured "critical alert" has been issued by the Computer Emergency Response Team of India (CERT-In), the nodal agency to combat hacking, phishing and to fortify security-related defences of the Indian Internet domain.

"It has been reported that a new ransomware named as Wannacry is spreading widely. Wannacry encrypts the files on infected Windows systems. This ransomware spreads by using a vulnerability in implementations of server message block (SMB) in Windows systems.

"The exploit is named as ETERNALBLUE," an advisory issued by the CERT-In, accepted by PTI, said.

It said the ransomware called "Wannacry" or "WannaCrypt" encrypts the computer's hard disk drive and then spreads laterally between computers on the same local area network (LAN).

"The ransomware also spreads through malicious attachments to emails," it said. A huge extortion cyber attack had hit dozens of nations yesterday, holding computer data for ransom at hospitals, telecommunications firms and other

Rs 11,000 cr for roads in Naxal-affected districts

NEW DELHI, May 14:

The Centre will spend Rs 11,000 crore over four years on a project to provide road connectivity to 44 Naxal-affected districts, including Sukma in Chhattisgarh, which had recently witnessed one of the deadliest Maoist attacks.

Five per cent of the total project cost Rs 550 crore will be kept aside for administrative expenses including for deployment of security forces at strategic locations, officials said.

To improve rural road connectivity in the left wing extremism affected districts, the Cabinet had last year approved the centrally-sponsored "Road Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism (LWE)-Affected Areas" scheme.

The project will be implemented under the Pradhani Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) in the districts that are critical from a security and communication point of view.

Under the project, there will be construction or upgradation of 5,411 kms of roads and 126 bridges. Work will be taken at an estimated cost of Rs 11,72,433 crore in the above districts.

The project is likely to be started in the next few weeks and all necessary arrangements have been made for its launch, a top government official said.

Out of these 44 districts, the maximum are in Chhattisgarh, where 25 personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force were killed by Naxals last month. —PTI

Need to expose those who distorted history: Yogi Adityanath

LUCKNOW, May 14: The UP government will take suggestions and change the syllabus to include "forgotten personalities" in history, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath today said underlining the need to "expose" those who have distorted history.

He also said that there was a need to decide whether there should be a place for those who "relate themselves" to Mehmod Gauzni, Allauddin Khilji, Bahadur and Aurangzeb.

"The name of Mahraja Shuhed and other great personalities were removed from history as per a conspiracy. There is a need to expose those who distorted history. We will carry forward this campaign," he said. Adityanath was addressing VHP's "Hin-

du Vijayotsav" programme here. "Maharaj Shuhed, who defeated foreign attack, Salar Masaad Ghazi, was forgotten as per a political purpose. History was distorted for political purposes to divide society and it's not hidden. The day when correct history comes to the fore the people will identify those who have distorted it," he said.

BJP has been wooing the Pasis and Rajbans, Shuhed, a warrior king, wielded influence around Bahraich and is revered by both Rajbans and Pasis.

He said the Narendra Modi government has initiated work to honour those great personalities who contributed to the freedom struggle. —PTI

PM to unveil roadmap for Narmada's revival today

BHOPAL/NEW DELHI, May 14: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will tomorrow unveil a roadmap for steps to be taken for the conservation of the Narmada river in Madhya Pradesh.

The event at Amarkantak, the place in Anooppur district where the river originates, will mark the conclusion of 'Narmi Devi Narmada Seva Yatra'. The Narmada river conservation awareness campaign was launched in December last year.

"I am delighted to join the programme to mark the conclusion of the Narmada Seva Yatra in Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh, tomorrow afternoon."

"Narmada Seva Yatra is an excellent mass movement to protect the Narmada and conveys a larger message of saving the environment as well," Modi said in a series of tweets. He said he will launch the 'Narmada Seva Mission' which will have a major impact on Madhya Pradesh's ecology.

"The prime minister will release a roadmap for the conservation of Narmada, the lifeline of Madhya Pradesh, at Amarkantak," Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said today.

"The roadmap has been prepared after wide-ranging consultations with various stakeholders, including environmentalists, river conservation experts and people directly associated with the Narmada," he said.

The yatra, which started on December 11, 2016 from Amarkantak, will conclude tomorrow after covering a distance of 3,344 km and passing through over 1,100 villages and towns.

A number of prominent personalities, including Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, BJP president Amit Shah, Union ministers Rajnath Singh, Uma Bharti, Anil Madhav Dave, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and well-known water conservationist Rajendra Singh, among others, took part in the yatra in its different stages.

Modi will arrive at Amarkantak, around 450 km from Bhopal, in the afternoon. He will also take part in 'Narmada Puja' and address a gathering, an official associated with the yatra said.

Elaborate security arrangements have been made for the prime minister's visit, he said. Narmada flows 1,312 km before draining through the Gulf of Khamhat into the Arabian Sea.

Narmada, also known as Rewa, is one of only three major rivers in the country that flows from east to west. The other two are Tapi and Mahi. —PTI



Spotted deer at the Thiruvananthapuram Zoo on Sunday. —UNI

Border dwellers in J-K bat for 'community bunkers' in their villages

NOWSHERA (J-K), May 14: Forced to flee their homes, cattle and ready to harvest crops due to frequent shelling by Pakistan, the residents along the Line of Control are battling for construction of 'community bunkers' in their villages.

For the thousands living in these miserable zones, fear prevails when the shells set as their homes come under intense shelling by the neighbour's army.

Mortar marks on walls of houses and shops in the area are a testimony to the brute firing by Pakistani army targeting the civilian population.

The Pakistani army had yesterday pounded civilian areas and forward posts along the LoC in Nowshera area with mortars, killing two civilians and injur-

ing three others. The border dwellers are now battling for construction of community bunkers to safeguard themselves from the heavy cross-border shelling which have seen a spike since 2002.

Madan Lal (62) said along with his five family members took shelter in an underground bunker built up near his house for 20 hours, before being ferried in a bullet-proof vehicle by police and housed in a camp in Nowshera.

"It was the worst shelling along LoC in Nowshera since 2002. Hundreds of mortar shells were fired by Pakistan, especially targeting civilian areas and hamlets. It was raining shells," he said.

With fear and terror writ large on his face, the farmer said, "We fled our houses

leaving behind the cattle and ready to harvest crops to save our lives. We took refuge in an underground bunker near my house for several hours."

His wife Sudha said, "The mud bunker near our house saved our lives as shells damaged our house. For border dwellers, such bunkers are the bullet proof jackets." The couple said such bunkers could also help in keeping their cattle safe.

Jangarh residents - Rajan Choudhary, Mohinder and Suresh Kumar - also vouched for the usefulness of such bunkers for safeguarding lives. They said community bunkers should be constructed in each and every hamlet dotting the Indo-Pak border.

Three civilians have been killed and

five others injured in Pakistani shelling along LOC in Nowshera sector of Rajouri district on May 11 and 13.

As many as 42 villages along the LoC have been caught in the crossfire recently.

"Our village Poldhurni was hit by over 70 mortar shells in just 10 to 15 minutes. A shell hit our house. My wife Akbari Bi died in the attack," 40-year-old Hameed, who was injured in the attack, said.

"If the government would have set up a bunker, my wife would not have died. The government has failed to keep the promise of setting up community bunkers for border dwellers," he said.

The border dwellers also want the Narendra Modi-led Central government to deal with Pakistan with an iron hand. "Give them (Pakistan) a befitting reply

so that they never dare to resort to even a single ceasefire violation in the future," a border resident Puran Chand said.

After the Pakistani shelling, 270 people were evacuated from various areas along the LoC in Rajouri district to safer places.

The government had last year said the Pakistani security forces had violated the ceasefire 268 times in the last one year. Nine persons were killed in these incidents. Minister of State for Defence Subhash Bhamre had said some time back that between April 2016 and March 2017, the maximum of 88 violations were witnessed in November 2016 followed by 78 in October 2016 and 22 in March this year.

The ceasefire between India and Pakistan came into force in November 2003. —PTI

Nepal votes in 1st local election in 20 years

KATHMANDU, May 14: Nepalese were voting today in the first local-level polls in two decades, an election crucial for cementing democracy amid political turmoil in the country.

The first phase of local elections are peacefully taking place at 281 local units out of 283 in province 3, 4 and 6, said the office Election Commission.

Out of 283 local bodies where first phase elections were scheduled, the elections are being held in 281 local bodies as candidates were elected unopposed in two local units, it said.

According to Election Commission spokesperson Surya Prasad Sharma, around 42 per cent of total registered voters in 34 districts have cast their votes by noon.

Altogether 4.9 million voters are eligible to cast their votes in the first phase of elections. Nearly 50,000 candidates are vying for the position of mayor, deputy mayor, ward chairman and ward member in 281 local municipalities.

Batuli Lamichhane, 115, is the oldest person to cast his vote. He cast his vote at the polling centre at Mati village in Nuwakot district, 75 km west of Kathmandu, according to the Election Commission.

Tulasi Kumari Khatri, 104, also cast her vote in Dungcheshwar village of the same district.

Nanda Bahadur Poudel, a 105-year-old citizen from Gorkha Municipality was the second oldest person to cast his vote. The second round of the domestic economic agenda he made a

N Korea test-fires missile, challenging South's new leader

SEOUL, May 14: North Korea test-launched a ballistic missile that landed in the Sea of Japan, the South Korean, Japan and US militaries said.

The launch is a direct challenge to the new South Korean president elected four days ago and comes as US, Japanese and European navies gather for joint war games in the Pacific. It wasn't immediately clear what type of ballistic missile was launched, although the US Pacific Command said that "flight is not consistent with an intercontinental ballistic missile."

Outside militaries will closely analyse what the North fired. While Pyongyang regularly tests shorter-range missiles, it is also working to master the technology needed to field nuclear-tipped missiles that can reach the US mainland. Past North Korean missiles have flown farther than Sunday's test, landing closer to Japan, at least for now, above a series of high-profile failures.

Whatever the type of missile, the launch forces the new South Korean

priority during his early days in office. Moon, a liberal who favours a softer approach to the North than his conservative predecessors, strongly condemned the launch during an emergency national security meeting, calling it a clear violation of UN Security Council resolutions

and a serious challenge to international peace and security, according to senior presidential secretary Yoon Young-chan.

"The president expressed deep regret over the fact that this provocation occurred just days after a new government was launched in South Korea," Yoon told

a televised conference.

"The president said we are leaving open the possibility of dialogue with North Korea, but we should sternly deal with a provocation to prevent North Korea from miscalculating."

Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said the missile flew about 800 kilometers (500 miles) from a launch site on North Korea's western coast for about 30 minutes and landed in the Sea of Japan, but not inside Japan's exclusive economic zone. Japan's Defense Ministry says the missile likely reached an altitude of 2,000 kilometers (1,240 miles).

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told reporters Sunday that the launch is "absolutely unacceptable" and that Japan will respond resolutely. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement that the missile was fired early Sunday morning from near Kusun, in North Phyongan province.

North Korea's past satellite rocket launches have been called clandestine tests of ICBM technology, but it is not believed to have tested a true intercontinental ballistic missile yet. - AP

US calls for stronger sanctions against N Korea

WASHINGTON, May 14:

The White House today described a ballistic missile test by North Korea as a provocative behaviour and called for stronger sanctions against Pyongyang.

"Let this latest provocation serve as a call for all nations to implement far stronger sanctions against North Korea,"

White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer said in a statement. The US Pacific Command detected and tracked a North Korean missile launch at approximately 10:30 AM (Hawaii time) Saturday.

The missile was launched near Kusun and landed in the Sea of Japan, PACOM said, adding that the type of missile is being assessed and the flight was not consistent with an intercontinental ballistic missile.

"With the missile impacting so close to Russian soil – in fact, closer to Russia than to Japan – the President cannot imagine that Russia is pleased," Spicer said. - PTI

Russia, China worried about rising tensions over N Korea

BEIJING, May 14: Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping expressed concern about rising tensions on the Korean peninsula after a North Korean missile test today, Putin's spokesman said.

Meeting on the sidelines of an international forum in Beijing, Putin and Xi discussed the situation on the Korean peninsula in detail and "both parties expressed their concern over the escalation of tensions," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

According to China's official Xinhua news agency, Xi said during the meeting that Moscow and Beijing have played the role of a "balance stone" in safeguarding regional and global peace and stability.

Xinhua did not publish other remarks. Putin and Xi met after the opening ceremony of a summit on the Chinese president's One Belt, One Road initiative – a massive global trade infrastructure project to connect China to Asian neighbours, Europe and Africa. - AFP

India calls for global co-op to tackle illicit financial flows

UNITED NATIONS, May 14: India has called for enhanced international cooperation to address illicit cross-border financial flows, tax evasion and "hawala" transactions as it stressed that the world's governance architecture for cooperation in taxation has not kept pace with the pace of globalisation.

"Raising awareness on the important issue of International Cooperation on Tax matters is a challenging task. This is so because the global governance architecture for cooperation in taxation has not kept pace with the pace of globalisation," India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin said here.

Participating in an informal workshop on International Taxation here on May 11, Akbaruddin said while multilateralism, which is seen faltering on many fronts, remains conspicuously absent in matters of international tax cooperation.

"There is a need for enhanced international cooperation to address illicit cross-border financial flows, tax evasion, trade mis-invoicing, and money transfer without money movement colloquially known as 'hawala' transactions in our part of the world," he said.

Akbaruddin emphasised that tax revenue is the lifeblood of the State and with integration of economies in a globalised world, actions on taxation in one country affect practically everybody, within and across borders.

"It has direct relevance to the illicit financial flows, especially of developing countries as well as in creating the right international system for the movement of finance," he said.

However, there are limits to what can be done by domestic policy alone, he said underscoring the need for negotiating strengthened international cooperation in tax matters.

"The figures of the financial flows on account of use, misuse and abuse of loopholes in national and global financial structures are staggering," he said, lamenting that multilateral organisations are on the sidelines of international tax cooperation.

Voicing India's support for an open, transparent and multilateral platform for global norm-setting on taxation, he said the ongoing work under Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and G-20 should not mean that meaningful and complementary work on taxation cannot be done in the UN.

"We strongly feel that everybody, every country, rich or poor, big or small does have a right to an inclusive place at the table to decide on an issue as important as international cooperation on tax matters. On such issues restrictive surrogates are no substitutes for representative fora," he said. - PTI

Thai forces kill 9 'drug smugglers' in Golden Triangle

BANGKOK, May 14: A gunfight between Thai security forces and a band of Golden Triangle drug smugglers left nine traffickers dead, a senior official said today, the latest clash sparked by the booming regional trade in narcotics.

Narongsak Oosothanakorn, governor of northern Chiang Rai province, said the firefight broke out yesterday two kilometres inside Thailand from the border with Myanmar.

"Authorities told them to halt but they refused and started shooting. The two sides exchanged fire for about 10 minutes leaving nine smugglers killed and the rest fled," he told AFP, adding the smuggling group was originally 15 people strong.

Some 700,000 methamphetamine tablets were found alongside semi-automatic rifles, he added.

The Golden Triangle, a region on the borderlands of Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and southern China, is the world's second largest drug-producing region after Latin America.

Huge quantities of opium, heroin and methamphetamine pills are churned out in remote jungle lairs each year for the Asia market and beyond.

Corruption and weak law enforcement help the trade thrive. Seizures have risen across the region over the last decade.

But the cartels appear able to shake off losses with ramped up productions while most of those caught or killed are low-level, not kingpins.

Governor Narongsak did not say what nationality the dead smugglers were. - AFP

Woman kicked out of bank in US for wearing hijab

NEW YORK, May 14: A Muslim-American woman was allegedly kicked out of a bank in the US for "wearing a hijab" – with staff threatening to call police if she did not "remove her hood".

Jamela Mohamed had gone into a branch of Sound Credit Union in Washington state on Friday to make a car payment.

Jamela, an American and a member of the credit union, recorded part of the incident on her mobile phone, claiming it shows blatant "discrimination".

She said she had been wearing a sweater and had the hood up because it was a Friday, which is when Muslims offer weekly prayers in the afternoon.

The teller asked Jamela, to take off her hood.

A sign inside the credit union says hats, hoods and sunglasses are not allowed, ABC-affiliated television station KOMO-TV reported.

Jamela said she was following the policy so she went to the car to grab her headscarf, or hijab. She went back in with her scarf, still wearing her hood, the report said.

While she was waiting,

Jamela says she took some video of the sign and of two male customers wearing baseball caps because they were being held without any issues.

"Why am I witnessing a man being serviced with a hat on and I'm being told to take off my hood?" she asked.

"This is my hood. My face is showing and so I currently have an issue today. I'm being polite, I'm complying, I simply stated that I just need to pay my car note today."

Then, a credit union supervisor approached her.

Jamela took cellphone video showing the branch supervisor counting to three and then saying she was going to call 911.

"It is clear our training

is to include more empathy and sensitivity to all cultures, because as a credit union, we believe in equal treatment of all people," it said. - PTI

Macron takes office as French president



French President Emmanuel Macron attends a ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown soldier at the Arc de Triomphe in Paris on Sunday. - UNI

PARIS, May 14: Emmanuel Macron becomes France's youngest ever president today, taking over from Socialist Francois Hollande in a solemn ceremony.

Macron, a 39-year-old centrist, arrived at the Elysee Palace in central Paris in a motorcade and walked down the red carpet under light rain to be greeted by Hollande for his inauguration.

The new president's wife Brigitte, a 64-year-old who was his high school drama teacher, arrived separately for the ceremony wearing a light blue Louis Vuitton outfit.

The new president faces a host of daunting challenges including tackling stubbornly high unemployment, fighting Islamist-inspired violence and uniting a deeply divided country.

Socialist Hollande's five years in power were plagued by a sluggish economy and bloody terrorist attacks that killed more than 230 people and he leaves office after a single term.

The 64-year-old launched Macron's political career, plucking him from the world of investment

banking to be an advisor and then his economy minister.

"I am not handing over power to a political opponent, it's far simpler," Hollande said on Thursday.

Security was tight with around 1,500 police officers deployed near the presidential palace and the nearby Champs Elysees avenue and surrounding roads were blocked off.

After a formal lunch, Macron will visit Paris' town hall, a traditional stop for any new French president in his "host" city.

Macron's first week will be busy. On Monday, he is expected to reveal the closely-guarded name of his prime minister, before flying to Berlin to meet German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

It is virtually a rite of passage for French leaders to meet their first European trip to meet the leader of the other half of the so-called "motor" of the EU. - AFP

Hero dog takes bullet meant for police officer in US

HOUSTON, May 14: A bomb-sniffing dog is being hailed as a hero after he took a bullet meant for his handler during a shootout.

K9 Kasper, who has protected President Donald Trump in the past, is recovering after being shot in the side when deputies with the Palm Beach Sheriff's Office (PBSO) exchanged gunfire with a wanted man who was killed.

Philip Oshea was accused of a shooting and robbery on Friday in Jupiter, Florida. Later that day, deputies came to apprehend him, and he fired shots at them, Fox 13 News reported.

"During the gunfire, PBSO K9 Kasper was shot while protecting his handler," the sheriff's office said in a Facebook post that included a photo of the wounded dog on a veterinarian's operating table.

Dputies had pursued Oshea to Jupiter following a shootout off Okeechobee Boulevard in which a police officer was injured while diving for cover.

Details of the final shootout were scant, but police said it took place in a parking lot.

During the encounter,



K9 Kasper

Man City beat Leicester, Arsenal close in on Liverpool



Manchester City's David Silva celebrates after putting his side ahead in the 29th minute of their Premier League clash against Leicester City at the Etihad Stadium, on Saturday.

We will have best XI for play-offs: Tiwary

KOLKATA, May 14: Mumbai Indians batsman Saurabh Tiwary feels that his side have got the momentum going ahead into the IPL play-offs as they have topped the league table and also tested their bench strength with success.

Playing his first match of the season, Saurabh Tiwary, who opened the innings in place of Parthiv Patel, sparked with a 43-ball 52, while Ambati Rayudu was their top-scorer with a 37-ball 63 as Mumbai Indians defeated Kolkata Knight Riders by nine runs.

"It's a good thing that our bench was tested. We will have our best XI for the play-off. The momentum is with us, and it's a big advantage that we will have in the play-off (Qualifier 1) at home," Tiwary said at the post-match news conference.

By virtue of being the table toppers, Mumbai will have the cushion of featuring in the Qualifier 1 between the top-two

sides that will give both the team two shots at making the final. The winning qualify for the final, while the losing team gets to play the Eliminator.

"There's very little margin of error in play-offs. But the good thing about us is, if we have someone injured, we would not have someone to play his match. It becomes difficult especially in a stage like play-offs where there's very little room for error," he said.

Captain Rohit Sharma opted to rest six of his side's regulars

- Patel, Nitish Rana, Harbhajan Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Lasith Malinga and Mitchell McClenaghan - but it did not affect their performance as they finished with 20 points.

"This was like a second string Mumbai Indians side. We have a very good bench strength.

The credit goes to our preparation in the build-up to the season," said the Jharkhand player - PTI

U-17 WC ticket to cost less than Rs 50 per match

KOLKATA, May 14: The price of the ticket for the FIFA U-17 World Cup final here on October 28 will be less than Rs 50, it was disclosed today by the local organisers.

The ticket price of the final or any other match will be Rs 48. There will be tickets for two other denominations of Rs 90 and 192 available.

The catch here is that one has to buy the season tickets to get the discount of "about 60 per cent".

For instance, to watch the final match, which will be held here at the Vivekananda Yuva Bharati Krirangan on October 28, one has to buy the season tickets of 10 matches costing Rs 480, Rs 960 and Rs 1920.

Kolkata will be home to

Group F teams and will host one

round of 16, one quarterfinal,

third place play-off and the final

Tournament director of the Local Organising Committee, Javier Cepi today said this

discount was unheard of in a football World Cup.

"You can actually see a World Cup final in less than 50 rupees, when you're buying it for 10 matches. It's amazing. We will open the venue packages initially. Effectively for the 10 matches in Kolkata, not individual matches."

Cepi said at a media interaction here.

"It will be limited inventory that will open up now. It will be at 60 per cent discount of the original price of the tickets when tournament begins. It's for rewarding the people who are buying first," he said.

By doing this, the LOC hopes to assess the football fervour among the six cities.

"It's a competition to gauge which city has the most passionate fans. It will give a sense which city likes football most. It's easy for us to see us then. I've been told that Bengalis like football, so it should reflect on ticket sales," - PTI

LONDON, May 14: Manchester City benefited from two strokes of fortune as they beat Leicester City 2-1 while Arsenal won 4-1 at Stoke City on Saturday to close in on the Premier League top four.

With the victory over Leicester, Pep Guardiola's side close in on a Champions League qualifying berth.

David Silva's opener was awarded despite an apparent offside against Raheem Sterling, while Riyad Mahrez had an equalising penalty disallowed after he slipped and Leroy Sane was scythed down by Yohan Benalouane.

Leicester halved the deficit shortly before half-time when Shinji Okazaki hooked a stunning volley into the top-right corner from Marc Albrighton's cross.

Mahrez won a 77th-minute

penalty after luring Gael Clichy into a clumsy foul, but despite sending the ball past Willy Caballero, the eagle-eyed Midfield ruled it out.

"We need one more game to be in the top four, but it's in our hands," said City manager Pep Guardiola, whose side host West Bromwich Albion on Tuesday.

"West Brom will be tough,

but hopefully we can be better than today."

Guardiola's City took the lead in contentious circumstances in the 29th minute at the Etihad Stadium.

Sterling took a clear swipe at

the ball as Silva's mishit shot

from Leroy Sane's cut-back came past him, but despite Leicester protests, referee Robert Madley allowed the goal to stand.

The hosts doubled their lead seven minutes later, Gabriel Jesus sending Kasper Schmeichel the wrong way from the penalty spot after Leroy Sane was scythed down by Yohan Benalouane.

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"Mahrez won a 77th-minute

penalty after luring Gael Clichy

into a clumsy foul, but despite

sending the ball past Willy Caballero, the eagle-eyed Midfield ruled it out.

"To the letter of the law it's a double touch, but we bring it back for an encroachment from Manchester City, so there's a bit of injustice," complained Leicester manager Craig Shakespeare.

"It's bad luck from our point of view. Two City players were in the penalty box."

At the other end of the ta-

ble, Swansea City took a big step towards safety by winning 2-0 at relegated Sunderland in the first half.

Swansea, revitalised since Paul Clement's appointment as manager in January, moved four points clear of the bottom three after Fernando Llorente and Kyle Naughton scored in a precious win.

"It's a huge result for us," said Clement, whose side host West Brom on the season's final day.

"We've got ourselves into a strong position, but the season is not over and we don't think it's done," - PTI

Third-bottom Hull City trudged

Swansea by four points and will be all relegated if they do not win at Crystal Palace - who are level on points with Swan-

sea - on Sunday.

In the battle for south coast bragging rights Southampton beat Middlesbrough 2-1 with goals by Jay Rodriguez and Nathan Redmond keeping them above Bournemouth who beat Burnley 2-1 thanks to Joshua King's late winner.

Southampton are ninth and

Bournemouth 10th with both clubs on 45 points. Junior Stanislas put Bournemouth ahead in the first half.

Chelsea wrapped up the title by winning 1-0 at West Brom on Friday, which gave them an unassailable 10-point lead over second-placed Tottenham Hotspur.

Arsenal maintained their late challenge with a classy 4-1 victory at Stoke City to keep the pressure on Liverpool who now sit just one point above the in-form Gunners.

Olivier Giroud's brace and goals from the brilliant duo of Alexis Sanchez and Mesut Ozil sealed an emphatic victory for Arsenal who have won five of their past six games to jump right back into contention.

"We had a difficult week but

we've won convincingly so the focus is there, the fighting spirit is there and we're pleased to win," manager Arsene Wenger told the BBC.

"I believe when the team plays well we have the right individual talent to win. We just have to win our games." - Agencies

WTA slams Nastase presence as Halep retains Madrid title

MADRID, May 14: Simona Halep thanked much-criticised Fed Cup coach the Nastase after defending her Madrid Open title, but the 70-year-old's role in the trophy presentation was labelled "irresponsible and unacceptable" by the WTA.

Halep, who edged out Kristina Mladenovic in a thrilling near-three-hour final 7-5, 6-7 (5/7), 6-2, was congratulated on court by Nastase as the Romanian received the trophy named after Nastase's former doubles partner and Madrid Open owner Ion Tiriac.

Nastase was banned from the French Open and Wimbledon after he was ejected from Romania's Fed Cup clash with Great Britain last month for a series of foul-mouthed rants directed at British captain Anne Keothavong and number one Johanna Konta, as well as umpires and members of the press.

"He had no place on court today," said WTA CEO Steve Simon in a statement.

"He is currently under a provisional suspension by the ITF for his prior offensive actions and we revoked his credential privileges at WTA events while the investigation is being completed." - AFP



Simona Halep of Romania celebrates with the Madrid Open title after defeating Kristina Mladenovic of France in the final, on Saturday.

England, Spain, Germany, Turkey qualify for U-17 WC in India

NEW DELHI, May 14: European football powerhouses England, Germany and Spain have qualified for the FIFA Under-17 World Cup in India after the latest round of the UEFA U-17 European Championship in Croatia.

England beat Republic of Ireland 1-0 at Veliki Gorica while Germany defeated the Netherlands 2-1 at Zarepcic in U-17 EURO quarterfinals to book their berths. They join Spain and Turkey in qualifying for the prestigious FIFA tournament to be held in India from October 6 to 28.

The fifth and final European spot for India 2017 will be determined via a play-off between Hungary and France, the best-ranked losing quarterfinalists, on May 16 in Zagreb.

In the semifinals on Tuesday, Spain will face Germany at Vardazdin, while Turkey take on England at Zarepcic.

For England and Germany this would be their second consecutive U-17 World Cup appearance. For Germany, it would be their 10th overall.

Iran, Iraq, Japan and North Korea, besides hosts India have qualified from Asia, while Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Paraguay have done so from South America. - PTI

Sumit enters gold medal round of Asian Championship

NEW DELHI, May 14: India's Sumit cruised into the gold medal round of men's 125kg Freestyle of the Asian Wrestling Championship here.

With the medal assured by Sumit, India have bettered their tally of nine in the last edition of the Asian Championship at Bangkok, Thailand.

The heavyweight grappler showed his mettle on his way to the final as he faced little difficulty in overcoming his opponents during the quarter-final and semifinal bouts.

In his first bout of the day, Sumit beat Taiki Yamamoto of Japan 6-3 in the quarters and then outplayed Farhad Anakulov of Tajikistan 2 in the semifinal to reach the gold medal round with much ease.

He will take on Yadollah Mohammadi of Iran in the final later in the evening. - PTI

Nadal beats Djokovic to reach Madrid Open final

MADRID, May 14: Four-time champion Rafael Nadal ended a three-year, seven-match losing streak against Novak Djokovic to reach the final of the Madrid Open.

Nadal will be aiming for a fifth Madrid title when he meets Austria's Dominic Thiem in the final. World number nine Thiem beat Uruguayan Pablo Cuevas 6-4, 6-4 in the other semifinal.

The Spaniard, 30, won 6-2, 6-4 to claim his first victory over the Serb since the 2014 French Open final.

Nadal got off to a dream start in the 50th meeting between the two great rivals, winning every point in the first game to break Djokovic, with the home crowd wildly celebrating his first point - a serve return which the Serbian could only hit into the ground.

Djokovic won the last meeting between the pair in the quarterfinals of the Rome Masters a year ago.

"It's a great result," Nadal said.

"To win against Novak by that score you have to be playing very well, otherwise it's impossible. It was an important match for me. I lost a lot of times in a row. To break that means there are always nerves."

On current No.1 Tai Tzu Ying of Chinese Taipei whom she beaten en route to the silver medal in Rio, Sindhu said: "We haven't played much recently. The last was Rio and All England. So I haven't faced her recently."

"But she is winning a lot of matches and doing well for herself. But when it comes to me playing against her, I feel it's going to be a good match," she said.

Asked about the high points for her after winning the silver in Rio, the lanky shuttler said, "Winning China Open and

"Currently I'm on fourth rank and I expect to see myself in top three by the end of the year.

"But I have already been in top two

match," she said.

Asked about the high points for her after winning the silver in Rio, the lanky shuttler said, "Winning China Open and

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