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NEWS CAPSULE

Uday Express

NEW DELHI, April 24: The Indian Railways will launch in July a special double-decker AC train service for overnight journeys between Guwahati and Gauhati. Dubbed the Utkrisht Double-decker AC Yatra Express, or Uday Express, the train will only have comfortable reclining chairs. – PTI

PDS subsidy

NEW DELHI, April 24: State governments should display at PDS shops the foodgrain subsidy banner by both the Centre and states that will prevent the latter from hijacking the credit for selling subsidised grains to the poor, Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said today. – PTI

BSNL plan

GUWAHATI, April 24: The BSNL will connect all gauon panchayats in Assam through optical fibre network by this financial year end. Anil Aswani, Chief General Manager MK Soth. There are 1,518 gauon panchayats in the State and 1,060 have already been covered, he said. – PTI

SC directive

NEW DELHI, April 24: The Supreme Court today directed the All Assam Minority Students Union to make National Register of Citizens (NRC) Assam Coordinator Prateek Hajela a party in the case challenging the Gauhati High Court's order on panchayat certificates. – PTI Correspondent

Poacher held

KAZIRANGA, April 24: Acting on intelligence inputs, Kaziranga National Park authorities today arrested a poacher, Manman Munda from Bohukhupa Chaura. A rifle and ten live cartridges have been recovered from him. – Correspondent

The Assam Tribune can be visited at <http://www.assamtribune.com> & <http://epaper.assamtribune.com>

Subansiri project Goyal discusses issue with Sonowal, Khandu

CORRESPONDENT

ITANAGAR, April 24: In what appears to be a positive development, Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and his Arunachal Pradesh counterpart Pema Khandu 'assured' the Centre that the 2,000 MW Lower Subansiri Project, Arunachal Chief Minister Pema Khandu said. "This project has been stuck for a long time. It is perhaps time that a meeting with the Chief Minister of Assam is called to kickstart the project. Local residents of Arunachal Pradesh have huge expectations from this project, which will be a first step in realising the hydro dream of the state."

When Khandu raised the issue of fast tracking the Khip-

m-Bomdila-Tawang 132 KV transmission line and Bomdila-Kahaktang 132 KV transmission line, the Union Power Minister directed the CMD of Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd (PGCIL) to start implementation of work of this line over the next few months.

While informing that 600 MW Kameng and 110 MW Paro hydropower projects are scheduled to be commissioned this year after much delay, Khandu requested Goyal to firmly advise NEEPCO to complete these two projects this year only without further delay.

Apparently, Kameng has been projected for completion by January 2018 and Paro by December 2017.

Both the Chief Ministers gave this assurance when Union Power Minister Piyush Goyal took a comprehensive review of issues relating to power/hydropower develop-

ment of Arunachal Pradesh with them in New Delhi today.

Works on the Lower Subansiri Project had been stalled since December 2011 due to protests from anti-dam groups from Assam.

Reiterating his stand over the Lower Subansiri Project, Arunachal Chief Minister Pema Khandu said, "This project has been stuck for a long time. It is perhaps time that a meeting with the Chief Minister of Assam is called to kickstart the project. Local residents of Arunachal Pradesh have huge expectations from this project, which will be a first step in realising the hydro dream of the state."

When Khandu raised the issue of fast tracking the Khip-

June 30 new deadline for ST status report

SPL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, April 24: Under attack, the Centre today set a new deadline of June 30 for submission of the report on grant of scheduled tribe (ST) status to six communities of Assam even as the tripartite dialogue remained inconclusive.

The delay in submission of the Singla Committee report by over a year was caused by chairman of the committee, The agitating organisations, however, were upset with the delay and described it as dilly-dallying tactics of the government. A series of tripartite meetings were convened by the Ministry of Home Affairs with

the representatives of the six communities seeking ST status. Today's meeting, chaired by Minister of State for Home Affairs Kiren Rijiju, was attended by Assam minister Chandra Mohan Patowary, besides senior officials of the Central Government and State Government and repre-

sen. That is why it has taken this," he said.

A leader of the Tai Ahom Chatra Sanstha, Animesh Chetia said Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal despite assuring that he would be present failed to turn up at the meeting. He said they were not satisfied with the government.

"The Mahesh Singla Committee was scheduled to submit its report on May 31, 2016 but it is yet to be submitted. The committee is now headed by Reena Mitra and it is scheduled to submit its report on June 30," he said, adding, "the government is playing with our emotions."

Koch Rajbongshi Chatra Sammelani leader Hitwar Barman said they too were not satisfied with the government.

(See page 4)

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(See page 4)

CM raises skill initiative issue with Rudy

SPL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, April 24: Faced with dearth of skilled construction workers, Chief Minister, Sarbananda Sonowal urged Minister of State, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) Rajiv Pratap Rudy to create a pool of quality contractors through proper training and expertise.

The Chief Minister today called on Rudy and sought his help to create a pool of quality contractors in the State for taking up major infrastructure projects like roads and bridges, water supply and power projects and those under JICA, World Bank and ADB externally aided projects.

"Dearth of quality contractors in Assam has created difficulties for us considering the huge network of roads as well as bridges we have to build in the next two-three years. I would like to request you to help us in tiding over this difficulty by creating a pool of quality contractors through proper training and expertise," he said.

Sonowal further urged Rudy to help in imparting skills to youth with minimum education for their recruitment in the Indian Army, CRPF and major organisations like the railways.

Following this suggestion, Rudy said that his Ministry in association with the World Bank technical team, NTPS and Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship in Guwahati will

(See page 4)

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(See page 4)



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An overcrowded boat crossing the Subansiri river from Selek to Dhunaguri of Bihupur in Lakhimpur district on Monday. — UB Photos

25 CRPF men killed in Naxal attack

RAJPIR, April 24: At least 25 CRPF personnel were killed and six wounded in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district today, the deadliest attack by Naxalites targeting security forces was about 99 personnel-strong.

President Pranab Mukherjee and Prime Minister Narendra Modi condemned the attack.

The Naxalites mounted the assault around 12:25 pm in Kalapathar area of south Bastar region, one of the worst hit by Left-wing extremism in the country.

The area is close to the Chinataga-Burkapal-Bhejia axis, the hotbed of naked violence which has seen a number of such attacks in the past resulting in high casualties.

"As per the latest report, we have lost 25 men. We are still to account for all the personnel and a search is on. About

7-8 boys are still missing. The last word on the encounter will come once the entire area has been searched and all troops contacted," a senior CRPF officer said, adding the paramilitary patrol was about 99 personnel-strong.

President Pranab Mukherjee and Prime Minister Narendra Modi condemned the attack.

"Strongly condemn attack on CRPF personnel in Chhattisgarh; condolences to families of deceased and prayers for injured (sic)" the President said in a tweet.

Calling the attack a "cowardly and deplorable" act, the Prime Minister tweeted, "Attack on @crpfindia personnel in Chhattisgarh is cowardly &

deplorable. We are monitoring the situation closely."

"We are proud of the valour of our @crpfindia personnel. The sacrifice of the martyrs will not go in vain. Condolences to their families," he added.

(See page 4)

Dadasaheb Phalke award to K Viswanath

NEW DELHI, April 24: Renowned filmmaker-actor Kastubh Viswanath, best known for his award-winning movies in Telugu, Tamil and Hindi, has been honoured with the Dadasaheb Phalke award for the year 2016 for his outstanding contribution to the film industry.

He became the 48th recipient of the award, the highest recognition in Indian cinema, which consists of a golden lotus, a cash prize of Rs 10 lakh and a shawl.

The award shall be conferred by President Pranab Mukherjee at a function on May 3 at Vigyan Bhawan here.

The recommendation of the Dadasaheb Phalke award committee to recognise 87-year-old Viswanath was approved by I&B Minister M Venkaiah Naidu today.

The recipient of five National Film Awards, Viswanath is known for his movies — *Sambarakaranam, Sugara Sangama, Suvam Mayam, Saptagadhi, Kaamran, Sunjay and Jaguguli, Utta Insan* among others.

Viswanath, who has made 50 movies since 1965, is known for making films on content-driven stories that have revolved around social themes. — PTI

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PM may open Sadiya-Dhola bridge

SPL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, April 24:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to visit Assam to take part in the function to mark the completion of Sadiya-Dhola bridge.

The Chief Minister accompanied by Sarma on Monday

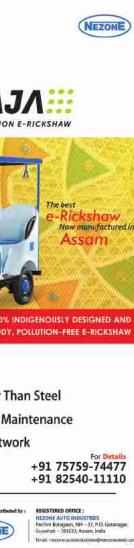
called on national president of BJP Amit Shah at his Akbar Road residence.

(See page 4)

JOCOSERIOUS



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Television actor booked under POCSO Act

MUMBAI, April 24: Television actor Parth Samthaan has been booked under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, a senior police official said today.

The actor, known for his roles in television shows "Kaisi Yeh Yaariaan?", was earlier booked under IPC Section 354 assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty) based on a complaint filed by a model.

POCSO charges were added yesterday after the complainant claimed that she was molested by the actor four years ago when she was 16-years-old, he said. Meanwhile, the actor has moved an anticipatory bail application to evade arrest, the official said. - PTI



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Recruitment of staff for the project "Building of a Biodiversity Information System for the State of Assam - Assam Biodiversity Portal (ABP)".

Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) with its headquarters in Bangalore and Regional Office Eastern Himalaya-North East India in Gangtok, Sikkim invites applications for the following positions:

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Interested candidates should send their applications along with their CV, a cover letter stating their interest to work in the project and contact details of two referees, by 5th May 2017 to hr@atree.org. The subject line should clearly say "ABP Project-Assam". Only short-listed candidates will be called for an interview.

NATIONAL

Shah to start BJP's expansion drive from Naxalbari today

NEW DELHI, April 24: BJP chief Amit Shah will tomorrow kick-off his party's expansion drive from Naxalbari, a West Bengal village from where the left-wing extremism had started in the late 1960s.

The Trinamool Congress-led State is among the five States, including Odisha and Telangana, where it will spend three-day each as it looks to strengthen the party in the States where it has been traditionally weak, with an eye on the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

Announcing this at a press conference here, Union Minister Smriti Irani also invited the occasion to take a dig at Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi.

The workers of a party going through a crisis are looking for their leader, she said

targeting Rahul, while the president another party, which has won one election after another, is not resting on his laurels and working hard to strengthen it.

"This is the biggest difference between the BJP and the Congress," she said, adding that the saffron party's leaders believe in leading by example.

She referred to Amethi, a Gandhi family pocketborough where she had lost to him in 2014 Lok Sabha polls, as her constituency, as she has been "serving" it for the last three years.

Shah had entrusted her with electoral responsibility in all five assembly seats in Amethi during the recent Uttar Pradesh assembly elections and the BJP won four of them while the Congress none, she said.

The Textile Minister regularly visits Amethi and has taken up welfare work there. The buzz in the BJP is that she will be pitted again from there in 2019 after putting up a strong fight against Gandhi in the last polls.

By starting his drive from booth number 93 at Naxalbari, Shah will give a message of solidarity to BJP workers, who have "suffered" violence there, Irani said. The party has accused the ruling TMC of unleashing violence on its workers in the last three years.

He will also take Prime Minister Narendra Modi's message of "development for all" to a place where a violent movement to uproot Indian State had started, she said. - PTI

Muslims don't want mosque at Ayodhya site: RSS leader

NEW DELHI, April 24: Pitching for the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya, senior RSS leader Indresh Kumar today claimed that Muslims themselves do not want a mosque to be built at the disputed site as it will be "unholy" for them.

"Muslims will never accept such a mosque which is in the name of a person. All those who believe in Islam say such a mosque is unholy (napak) and we will never accept it," he said. - PTI

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CPI leader Raja meets Sonia, discusses Prez poll

NEW DELHI, April 24: As part of the Opposition's consultations on fielding a common candidate for the presidential poll, senior CPI leader D Raja today met Congress president Sonia Gandhi and discussed related issues as well as the prevailing political scenario.

In the past few days, Gandhi had held meetings with Bihar Chief Minister and JD(U) leader Nitish Kumar and CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, among others, as part of informal consultations on the presidential election.

Parleys are also being held among leaders of other Opposition parties.

The presidential election has to be held before July 24, when President Pranab Mukherjee's term ends.

He had taken over the post in July 2012, defeating the NDA candidate, Late PA Sangma.

At the meeting which lasted about 30 minutes, Gandhi and Raja agreed to the possibility of fielding a candidate acceptable to all secular opposition parties, sources said, adding that there was no discussion on likely candidates.

The two leaders also discussed the prevailing political situation, while expressing concern over growing intolerance and its impact on the people, they said.

The Congress has said it would take a "conscious, concerted and balanced call" on a joint Opposition presidential candidate after consultation with all opposition leaders.

The sudden flurry of Opposition activities comes in the wake of the BJP's winning streak in States since the formation of the Narendra Modi Government in 2014. It currently has governments in 13 States and is a junior partner in the ruling alliance in Jammu and Kashmir and Andhra Pradesh. However, the party had lost badly in Bihar and Delhi.

The Opposition unity for contesting may well turn out to be a precursor to an anti-NDA front ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha election. - PTI



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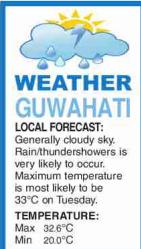


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Ex-SAKP leader's death mourned

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 24: The Sadou Assam Karmachari Parishad (SAKP) has mourned the death of its former vice president Karuna Sarma Baruah.

In a condolence message, the SAKP said that the late Baruah was an able leader who led the organisation in various capacities and was always at the forefront of upholding the cause of the government employees. It also conveyed its condolences to Baruah's bereaved family.

50 vendors evicted at Fancy Bazar



A scene of the eviction drive that was carried out at Fancy Bazar on Monday. — UB Photos

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 24: A major eviction drive was today carried out in the Fancy Bazar area of the city, during which over 50 vendors were removed.

The drive targeted vendors who had illegally occupied public space,

including footpaths, at SB Road, SRCB Road, MS Road and also the GMC Market.

Officials from the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC), City Police and the PWD were engaged in the anti-encroachment drive.

Speaking to *The Assam Tribune*, Kamrup Metro Deputy Commissioner

Dr Angamuthu said that the vendors were illegally using space and creating nuisance at many places, including near the statue of Lady Brabourne.

"The administration has directed GMC, police and the PWD to clear all the encroachment, including illegal parking, in the area and ensure that encroachers are not able to return," he said.

Addl FIR in minor assault case

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 24: Universal Team for Social Action and Help (UTSAH), an NGO working for the rights of children, today lodged an additional First Information Report (FIR) with the Sonapur Police Station in connection with the incident related to physical assault of a differently-abled child on the premises of Society for Health, Education, Development (SHED), a non-governmental organisation.

The FIR was lodged against Lanu A Aimol, who runs SHED; Hiranya Saikia, manager SHED; Lt Colonel (retired) Blim Anal, president, SHED; NG W Moyob, secretary SHED; Kushan Maan and

USTM English Dept observes Shakespeare's birth anniv

STAFF REPORTER

Dipanita Medhi:

The FIR has been lodged by UTSAH alleging violation of several sections of the Indian Penal Code, Juvenile Justice Act and Persons with Disabilities Act.

Miquel Das Quesha of UTSAH also alleged in the FIR that Lanu A Aimol runs the organisation (SHED) incognitо despite being a staff of the Composite Regional Center for Persons with Disabilities under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

A special child hailing from Arunachal Pradesh was beaten black and blue by some employees of SHED located in Sonapur area, after which police arrested three persons on April 19.

GUWAHATI, April 24: The Department of English, University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya (USTM), observed William Shakespeare's 453rd birth anniversary on Saturday through a talk on William Shakespeare's dramatics.

The idea was to give impetus to literary discussions on Shakespeare's dramatics, his poems and above all, the literary tradition of the Elizabethan period, its histories, its marked shift from Greek Nemesis to individualism and freedom within.

USTM Techno City campus resonated with the dialogues from Shakespeare, starting from ancient Greek and Roman theatre to Italian Renaissance.

It also highlighted how this change of ethos was instrumental in the development of the new drama, apart from the old mystery and miracle plays of the Middle Ages, how William Shakespeare stands out in this period both as a playwright and a poet.

On the occasion, Dr Ashok Kothari Choudhury, Professor, Department of English, Gauhati University, also the chief guest of the programme, talked about how Shakespeare's plays were so relevant and have an overpower-

ing influence on the entire gamut of theatrical studies or any other performing arts.

Dr PG Rao, Vice Chancellor of USTM, delineated how theatre as the oldest form of art can be used as a mode of communication for disseminating messages to the audience or society as a whole.

Actor Kapil Bora enthralled the audience with his overwhelming rendition of a dialogue from *Romeo and Juliet*.

The students of the Department of English performed selected portions of *The Merchant of Venice*. The Association were felicitated for their services and contributions to the Association.



Popular singer Zubeen Garg arriving at the CJM Court in Guwahati on Monday. — UB Photos

Audi Guwahati



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Accounts Manager :- B.Com with 4-7 years experience in Key Account Management and managing Accounts Department.

Executive - Accounts :- B.Com Graduate with 2-3 Years experience, well versed with Tally, Accountancy and Taxation.

All candidates must have a proven track record at being result-oriented and possessing strong leadership skills with a passion to excel. Please email your CV on or before 28th April'2017 to hr@audiguwahati.com

North East Foodtech-2017 from April 28

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 24: India's premier exhibition for the food and hospitality sector – Foodtech India – will be held in the city for the first time. It will be held at the Maniram Dewan Trade Centre from April 28 to 30.

The three-day exhibition will be a platform for bakers, confectioners, hoteliers, restaurants, food chains, coffee parlours, caterers, banquets, dairy businesses, food processing and hospitality management students.

More than 60 reputed companies from across the country will display various technologies/products being used in the food and hospitality industry.

Gold, ganja seized at railway station

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 24: Government Railway Police today seized 3 kg gold from a person hauling from West Bengal.

Altogether 14 pieces of gold were seized from Sajid Kamal Mandla, who was scheduled to take the Saraghat Express to Howrah.

Earlier in the morning, about 14 kg ganja was found in the Rajdhani Express. One Lamoni Bewa (41) of Birbhum in West Bengal was carrying the ganja from Dimapur to NIPJ.

Yesterday, around 5 kg opium was seized from women – Jhangam Binashakali Lehima (48) and Jhangam Uma Devi (42) of Imphal East, Manipur. They were travelling by the Dn Bp Mail.

Pariskar Assam is a short documentary film of three min-

Govt appreciation to Pariskar Assam

STAFF REPORTER

utes' duration prepared by some students of NPS International School.

Elaborating on different issues relating to the garbage dumping in and around Guwahati city, the film also suggests various means to make Guwahati a clean and green city.

"We are very much thankful to the Government of India for selecting us for the coveted Certificate of Excellence. All the crew members, who are students of NPS International School only, tried their level best to complete this short film.

We would also like to thank IN Das, founder and chairman of the school, for giving us the opportunity to learn filmmaking apart from our regular studies in school," Sukanya Das, director of the film and a Class VIII student of the school, said.

Biennial meet of engineers' body

STAFF REPORTER



UNITED BANK OF INDIA
Guwahati Regional Office
Hem Baruah Road, Panbazar
Guwahati-781001

PREMISES REQUIRED

United Bank Of India requires immediately built / to be built well-constructed hall for office accommodation having Carpet Area of around 1200 sq feet on lease basis preferably in the ground / first floor with good frontage and all facilities including adequate power along with space for on-site ATMs (80-100 sq.ft) at Modhusoulini (Gourpur). Premises offered should have all clearance certificates from statutory authorities. Interested landlords / Power attorney Holders of such premises in the desired locality may send their offers in the prescribed format available on Banks' Web Site www.unitedbankofindia.com or the same may be obtained from the above address during office hours. The complete offer should reach the undersigned on or before 15.05.2017 at the above address.

No Brokerage. Bank reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers at its sole discretion without assigning any reasons therefore.

CHIEF REGIONAL MANAGER

CAUTION NOTICE

All the Manufacturer & Traders of NAMKEEN (SNACKS) are informed



M/S. KISHLAY SNACK PRODUCTS DEWAN SATRA, FANCY BAZAR, GUWAHATI, (ASSAM)

That our client are the sole and exclusive subsequent registered owner/Proprietor of the said Trade Mark and copyright/Artistic work including the distinctive packing material having a unique get-up, layout, color combination and arrangements under The Trade Marks Act, 1999 & The Copyright Act, 1957.

It has come to our client's notice that some Unscrupulous Manufacturer & Traders are misusing our client's aforesaid Trade Mark/Artistic work and are thus creating deception and confusion in the market and among the Public.

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that anyone using the same & similar Trade Mark/Artistic work or any other Trade Mark / Artistic work identical with and deceptively similar to it would render himself liable for legal proceedings for the infringement, Passing off and falsification as well as criminal Proceedings accompanied with Police raid for Search & Seizure.

P. K. ARORA, Advocate
Patent & Trade Mark Attorney
TAJ TRADE MARK PVT. LTD.
ISO 9001:2008 Certified Law House
Anand Vrindavan, Sanjay Place, Agra
Tel : 0522-4007024, 2855024, 8057500024
167, SEC-15A, Noida, Tel : 0120-4110024
E-mail : info@tajtrademark.com
Website : www.tajtrademark.com
TOLL FREE NO. 1800 270 5440



citizens' voice

Citizens are requested to express their Guwahati-specific views within 100 words and mail the same to citizenvoice06@gmail.com

take appropriate action for the relief of commuters.

– B. Sarma,
Bamunimaidan Traffic congestion

There is massive traffic congestion due to the railway crossing in the colony market near the Anuradha bus stop.

The situation worsens as city

buses halt for a long time at the stop, blocking the passage of vehicles moving to and from market. When the railway crossing is closed, a lot of vehicles are stranded in the area, affecting the smooth flow of traffic on the MRD Road from Bamunimaidan to Chandmari. This is the usual sight in the rush hours of the morning.

I hope the authorities concerned will take necessary steps to tackle this issue at the earliest.

– Kankana, New Guwahati Poor bus service

The bus service along the Kaliapura route is abysmal. City buses do not ply on the route after 7 pm, causing a great deal of hardship to passengers.

The stranded commuters have to take recourse to other modes of transport, which invariably leads to massive jams on the Kaliapura road.

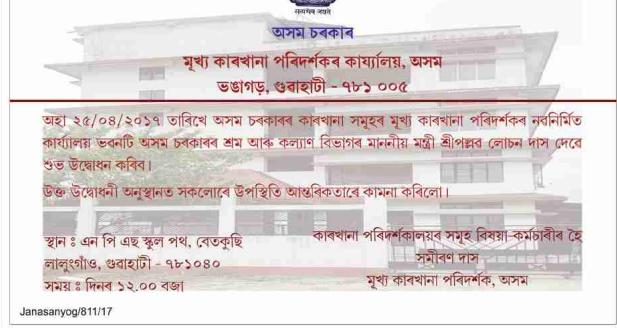
We request the authorities concerned to look into the issue and do the needful.

– Anandita Chakravarty, Kaliapura

Assam Charkarbari

মুখ্য কাবখানা পরিদর্শক কার্যালয়, অসম

তঙগড়, গুৱাহাটী - ৭৮১ ০০৫



MESSAGE FOR TODAY

We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope.

— MARTIN LUTHER KING

The Assam Tribune

Futile exercises

Over three decades ago, following a mass movement in Assam, the Congress Government at the Centre had inked an 'Accord' with the leadership of the anti-foreign infiltration agitation. By now it has become evident that Delhi, no matter which political entity was in power, had never seriously considered implementing the key clauses in the so-called Assam Accord. While bones were thrown by successive governments at the Centre as well as in Assam in the guise of implementing minor provisions like building a refinery or setting up an IIT, key provisions like sealing of the Assam-Bangladesh border, detection and deportation of illegal migrants, etc., have not been implemented. Particularly galling for the indigenous people of this State has been the continuous backtracking by the powers that be on implementing Clause VI of the Accord which stipulates that constitutional safeguards would be put in place to protect their language, culture and identity. However, since the signing of the Accord, one government after another had been assuring the people that they were committed to implementing the Accord in letter and spirit, but little progress has been made despite the passage of decades. The current NDA Government, time and again during the three years of its tenure, has assured the people that it is committed to the pledge it made before the elections to implement the Accord, but its actions so far have belied those assurances.

On the contrary, by bringing in the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, with its potential implication that Assam would be saddled with the burden of lakhs of migrants, the NDA Government appears to be bent on diluting the Assam Accord, if not totally rendering it irrelevant. At the same time, the abut slow down of the process of completing the National Register of Citizens makes the people of the State even more suspicious about the Centre's intentions both in regards to the illegal migrant issue as well as implementing Clause VI. To its credit, the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), despite the procrastinating tactics of governments at the Centre, has been nothing else but tenacious, and has doggedly pursued the goal of having the Accord implemented. Since the signing of the Accord, AASU representatives have had numerous tripartite meetings with the Central and State governments, the last being with the UPA Government in 2005, without being able to move Delhi into authentic action. Thus, naturally, there is scepticism in the minds of the Assamese people as to what tangible results would emerge from the tripartite meeting scheduled to be held tomorrow. The AASU leadership has reiterated its determination that it will not allow the dilution of the Assam Accord and would seek time-bound implementation of its clauses. However, going by past records, it is most what positive response it would be able to extract apart from futile assurances!

Witch-hunting

Notwithstanding awareness campaigns and existing legal frameworks, the despicable practice of so-called witch-hunting has shown little signs of abatement. Every now and then, we come across sordid incidents of witch-hunting involving torture and humiliation of innocents, often resulting in death. This needs to be stopped. For this, the foremost need is to add more teeth to the existing legal mechanism and enforce the law stringently. The biggest reason why the scourge of witch-hunting is having perpetual circulation in our society concerns the inability of the law to punish those behind the ghastly crimes committed under the pretext of witch-hunting. Therefore, fixing guilt and meting out severe punishment is a must to check the scourge. The spurt in incidents in which scores of people are being hounded and killed by murderous mobs is a blot on civilized society. The Government needs to treat witch-hunting-related offences as cognizable and special offences along with applying other provisions of IPC – something suggested by the Gauhati High Court long back. The mounting fatalities strongly point towards the inadequacy of the interventions made at government level. In most cases, persons or circles with vested interests are the actual conspirators behind the ghastly crime but as they get a superstitious and gullible public to actually commit the crime, it becomes difficult to fix responsibility in the absence of proper laws. Of late, land and property, and personal grudge, have often been the motives behind witch-hunting rather than superstition. Unless the perpetrators of this heinous crime are brought to book and punished under the law, there is little scope of any abatement in the scourge.

Alongside legal enforcement, raising awareness – particularly in backward societies still reeling under ignorance and superstition – needs urgent attention from both government authorities and non-government bodies. Activists like Birubala Rabha, herself a witch-hunting victim, have been doing a good job but the effort needs to be more sustained and focused. The Government should provide every assistance to the voluntary bodies engaged in the field and act in tandem. Witch-hunting has a noticeably higher incidence among certain tribes like the Bodos and the Adivasis. Illiteracy, poverty and lack of access to health care are some major factors contributing towards perpetuating the scourge. Disturbingly, even areas that had been brought under special focus of the administration due to their sinister reputation of witch-hunting have shown little improvement. Widespread illiteracy, ignorance and socio-economic backwardness form the breeding ground of superstition and perpetuate such heinous practices. Spreading literacy and expanding health care facilities to every nook and corner of the State is another imperative. Government efforts apart, society as a whole should wake up to this danger and launch a campaign through dissemination of information and creating awareness in the affected areas.

Menace of malaria in Assam

■ Dr Dharmakanta Kumbhakar

Malaria is endemic to Assam. It is one of the major public health problems of Assam for past many decades. Though Assam makes up only a small portion of India's total landmass and population, the State has the dubious distinction of contributing to a significant number of malaria cases in India. Assam, with 2.6% of India's total population, contributes more than 5% of the total malaria cases and over 20% of the total malaria deaths in the country. Malaria contributes nearly 30 to 40% of outdoor cases and 3.6 to 7.0% of all hospital admissions in Assam during the peak transmission period (May to September). Though both *Plasmodium falciparum* and *Plasmodium vivax* occur in abundance in Assam, *P. falciparum* is the predominant malaria parasite which accounts for more than 60% of malaria cases. As per a report, the total number of malaria cases, *P. falciparum* cases and death due to malaria in Assam were 2013 (19,542, 14,939, 7), 2014 (14,540, 11,210, 11) and 2015 (15,557, 11,675, 4). Malaria is responsible for high morbidity and mortality in Assam. It is one of the most important causes of direct or indirect infant, child, maternal and adult mortality in Assam. The prevalence of malaria and its ill effects among women, pregnant lady and children are quite high in Assam. Malaria constitutes one of the most important causes of economic misfortune, engendering poverty which lower the physical and intellectual standards of Assam and hamper prosperity and econ-

ic progress in every possible way. All the districts of Assam are malaria endemic and many pockets in forest, forest-fringe and foot-hill villages are vulnerable to focal outbreaks. Over 1.16 crore people in Assam are living in the malaria-prone areas. Among them, 15,147 villages, 2,144 sub-centres and 122 PHCs are identified as having a high malaria risk. As per reports, Karbi Anglong, Nagaon, Dima Hasao, Hailakandi, Kokrajhar, Goalpara, Darrang, Sonitpur, Odalguri and Baksa districts are highly malaria-vulnerable. Amongst these districts, the hill districts of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao, which are having more than one inter-state borders and a higher concentration of tribal aborigines (more than 50%) are the most vulnerable.

In a study conducted by this writer, the annual parasite incidence (API), a malariometric index to express malaria cases per thousand population, in the districts of Nagaon, Hailakandi, Kokrajhar, Goalpara, Darrang, Sonitpur, Odalguri and Baksa were more than five. Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao reported an API of more than 12. Comparatively, the districts of lower Assam partly Karbi Anglong, Darrang, Goalpara and Hailakandi were more malaria-prone with an API in the range of 4-11, while in upper Assam, the districts of Dibrugarh, Sivasagar,

Tinsukia and Jorhat reported the lowest API (0.02-0.1). Malaria is now establishing its foothold in the bordering districts of upper Assam previously free of the disease, such as Lakhimpur, Jorhat and Tinsukia owing to the deforestation and population migration/ new settlements in the reserve forest areas, promoting increased morbidity and mortality.

In Assam, the tribal and tea-garden populations are important risk

gardens and the tribal areas. In Assam, malaria transmission is perennial and persistent with the seasonal peak during April-September corresponding to the months of rainfall. The region is highly receptive to malaria transmission due to high rainfall and prolonged rainy season, promoting vector breeding and longevity due to high humidity and warmer climates.

garden and the tribal areas. sam more vulnerable for malaria infection. Lack of awareness about the threat posed by malaria makes the issue even complicated.

There is a need to intensify the anti-malarial drive in Assam to control the menace posed by malaria. The private sector should also be roped in for the effort. Accelerated economic and infrastructural development is urgently needed to control malaria in Assam. In the face of rapid population increase, there is a need to increase allocation of resources for control interventions. The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare should provide extra financial support for the anti-malarial drive in Assam. The State Government must make extra efforts to intensify rapid diagnostic tests, distribute artemisinin-based combination therapy and long-lasting insecticidal nets and indoor residual spraying. Health care facilities along with essential medicines for malaria treatment must be increased in the periphery where it is needed most. Until malaria vaccines become available, we have to rely on old, traditional interventions with emphasis on reducing man-mosquito contact. The authorities should launch a publicity campaign through different media to keep the people well-informed and proper information should reach the people on the dos and don'ts on malaria control. Only a sustained effort including health workers' training, financial support, increasing malaria surveillance, creating public awareness and involvement of local communities in malaria control will help the State to control the menace posed by malaria.

Will political lordship vanish with red beacon?

■ Dr Monprativ Barooah

In a "hugely democratic decision", the Government of India decided that come May 1, 2017 and no vehicle will be allowed to have a red beacon on its roof or front. That "there will be no exceptions". Our Prime Minister took to Twitter to pronounce the verdict: "Every Indian is special. Every Indian is a VIP." He further reiterated, "These symbols (red beacons) are out of touch with the spirit of new India. The culture of beacon should have gone long ago." So here we have yet another masterstroke from the "Pradhan Sevak" himself, played this time to pull down the offensive exclusivity and the privileges of the elitist (VIPs), the overlord politicians and the high government functionaries. The buzzing red beacon, the symbol of a gaudy dominance, which had deftly thrust the unwritten rule of veneration into the very psyche of the common Indian man, now finally, reluctantly submitted! But does this masterpiece really mean that every Indian will be a VIP from the very first day of May? With the red siren gone, will it now guarantee that the

chosen ones' will continue to exist – the face of new India will continue to shimmer and saunter while *netas* and *babus* will zoom past us without the blazing red beacon. In fact the fetish for official power and *feildjan* is so inherent in our *netas* that at a workshop for the first-time MPs held in 2009, one main demand was that the cars with red beacons be allotted to them. Such a mindset has been the norm, for it defty announces the superiority of the ruler over the masses and consolidates the same. Nevertheless, the symbol of the red beacon is just emblematic for the surreptitious image of being all-powerful along with a far-reaching clutch of symbols such as red lights is contrary to the constitutional ethos and basic feature of republicanism". The Bench advised the Centre and the States to amend the Central Motor Vehicles Rules 1989 thereby cut down on the list of people who can use the red beacons. However, the Bench was persuaded by the then Solicitor General stating that the term "high dignitaries" used in Rule 108 (1) of the Motor Vehicles Act was meant to respect the intention of the framers of the Constitution to treat those occupying constitutional positions as a special category and so there was no reason for the SC to exclude them from the ambit of the term "high dignitaries".

To this Justice Singhvi wrote, "The use of red light on the vehicles carrying holders of constitutional posts will in no manner compromise with the dignity of other citizens or embolden them to think that they are superior to other people, more so because its distinction would be available to them only while on duty and would be co-terminous with their tenure." The SC then took strong exception to the State governments expanding the list of "high dignitaries" thus allowing a large number of persons to sport red beacons atop their vehicles.

Come May 2017, do we see a silver lighting at the end of the horizon? Are the days of *netagiri* and *babugiri* nearing its end? Can we expect to see our elected representative standing in queue behind us for a railway ticket and choose to travel second class like us without the gun totting personal bodyguards in plain clothes guarding his back? The spirit of new India is alive and waiting with bated breath for palpable changes to happen – post May 1 – for we hope that along with the red beacon will vanish the phenomenon called 'political lordship'. Or is it just that the beacon will only change in colour or form, replaced by something subtle yet sinister? The seat of power is too alluring after all and the vanishing beacon may just be the perfect play to the gallery!

Letters to the EDITOR

Sir, — It refers to a recent news report published in this daily showing objection to the non-inclusion of stakeholders like the AREIDA in the building rules revision process. As a matter of fact, modern towns and cities have been facing a lot of problems like water logging, traffic and transportation, garbage disposal, water supply, laying of gas pipes, telephone cables, etc. As such all the concerning departments and NGOs should be consulted before finalizing the rules. In the 2014 rules, some of the provisions need to be revised and some should be made mandatory in the revision. The following should be made mandatory: deviation from layout only after sanction of authority; site verification before granting permission, presence of authority on the day of layout, rainwater harvesting and reuse of wastewater; suspension of architect/engineer from work for any violation; deviation up to 0.15m should be specified; the plinth height should be fixed by the authority concerned on the day of layout. Further, the definition of road/street is confusing in the existing building rules; road width

Revision of building rules

is confusing where there is no drain or drain with smaller size. The town planner should have the right to check the proposals before permission is given. We expect that the new rules should be free from defects. Yours etc., BHABHA CHETIA, Club Road, Jorhat.

SBI new rule

Sir, — The SBI has announced a rule that all account holders should maintain a minimum balance of Rs 5,000, Rs 3,000 and Rs 2,000 in metros, cities and rural areas respectively. I would like to draw the attention of the SBI authority to the fact that there are many students who are pursuing higher studies in metros like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, etc., far away from their hometowns. Some of them belong to rural areas and do not come from well-to-do families. Their parents barely manage to send enough money to them for fees, rent, food, transportation, etc. In such a scenario, providing an extra Rs 5,000 to their children only to maintain the account balance would be quite difficult for many of them.

Therefore, I would like to request the authority concerned to revisit this new rule and come to the aid of these students. The rule should exclude students as they are not earning and include only

salary accounts and businessmen. Otherwise, it would hamper the ambitions of students going for higher studies away from their native places. Yours etc., SURAJI BEGUM, Hatigom, Guwahati.

Teachers' services

Sir, — This is regarding the provincialization of venture educational institutions. Though the last session of the Assam Assembly passed a Bill for the provincialization of services of the teachers of the venture educational institutions, no step has been taken so far in this regard. The teachers of such institutions are passing their days in extreme anxiety. Hope the authority concerned will mark the task as a priority one for the betterment of the educational environment in the State. Yours etc., MANABENDRA SARMA, Pathsala.

Propaganda only

Sir, — Reports about China warning India of consequences of supporting the Dalai Lama appeared in your esteemed newspaper on April 20 and 21 last. From the reports, it appears that what China said has been covered in details, but what the Indian side said in response to the Chinese claims has not been covered adequately. As we all know, China is hostile towards India. It is a land

hungry nation and wants to grab land from every neighbouring countries including India. In such circumstances, our own media like *The Assam Tribune* should not fall into the propaganda campaign of such an enemy nation and give such elaborate coverage of their motivated assertions undermining our own national interest. Yours etc., HIMANGSHU GOSWAMI, Guwahati.

Grip of law

Sir, — The bail granted by the Gauhati High Court to the much-maligned arrested APSC chairman Rakesh Paul for the inability of the investigating officer to submit the charge-sheets within 90 days has dragged doubts in everyone's mind that the entire process of his arrest was just an eyewash to protect the high-profile names associated with the investigation process. The Government should take concrete steps to ensure that the prime accused doesn't get out of the grip of the law if the land or we shall be forced to think otherwise. Yours etc., A CIVIL SERVICE ASPIRANT.

Aadhaar card

Sir, — Assam is lagging behind in

case of the Aadhaar card, which

will be required in every walk of

life in near future. The negligence of

the previous State Government

is largely responsible for the sufferings of the people of Assam

due to the absence of Aadhaar

number. In some parts of the State, Aadhaar cards have been issued.

The staff of the State Secretariat have been issued with the same long back. It has been learnt that the NF Railway

authority has arranged for the issue of Aadhaar cards for its employees and the banks are also

arranging for the same for their employees. Is such partial issuance of the Aadhaar card legal? I would like to request the Government of Assam to take up the matter with the Government of India. Yours etc., KAILASH, Beltoila, Guwahati.

VIP culture

Sir, — It is a very good step taken

by our PM to discard the red

beacon atop the vehicles, one of

the most annoying VIP cultures of

our country. It is a small step taken

but we hope that it is only a

beginning and not the end. This

Government has shown the guts

to implement the right decisions.

In future too, we hope to see many

such other VIP cultures getting

discarded. Yours etc., S LASKAR, 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@assamtibune.com.

Drain debris dumped on footpaths

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 24: It is the road that leads to the headquarters of the ruling party Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and is used by some who's who of the State every day. And it is this road that the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC) has chosen to display its utter laxity.

Workers of the GMC and other agencies that undertook a drain-cleaning exercise on the Hengrabari Road, dumped the debris on the footpath, rendering most stretches unusable by pedestrians. Intermittent rains have compounded the problem, giving rise to accident risks.

Reportedly, the portions of the drain along the Hengrabari Road were manually cleaned a few days back.

"Instead of collecting the debris and taking it away, the workers dumped it over the footpaths. The entire purpose of the work has been defeated. In no time, most of the

mud, silt and garbage taken out of the drains leaked down to the drains again following intermittent showers. Unnecessarily, the GMC wasted public money by undertaking the drive," Manoj Jha, a small trader who owns a shop on the road and has been observing the activities, said.

"Wonder why the workers can't take away the debris as and when they are dug out from the drains," he added.

Pedestrians are unable to use most stretches of the footpath and are forced to take the main road.

"During rains, the portions where the debris is dumped become slippery and muddy. It is impossible to walk on those portions. One is forced to walk on the road, which has raised risks of accidents. Students and children are the worst sufferers," Amit Das, another local complained.

Chaotic traffic has become a regular feature on the Hengrabari Road, thanks to the unruly metro share-taxi,



is, e-rickshaws and haphazard parking of vehicles. Locals say there is absolutely no regulatory mechanism to control and regulate the traffic. "In such a situation if people cannot use the footpath, you can imagine their plight. It is a shame that this is happen-

ing in a place which is just stone's throw away from the seat of power Dispur," Migen Baisya, a senior citizen of the area said.

Most stretches where the debris has been dumped, have the semblance of a garbage dumping site.

Similar complaints of dumping debris on the footpath by GMC workers have been pouring in from other city areas like Pub Sarumatri. Road renovation and footpath construction in Pub Sarumatri's Golok Path area, which was a long standing demand of the locals, was only started in March on the eve of the rainy season. This led to a chaotic situation, with slush and mud everywhere. There is apprehension among the locals that the municipal water lines in the area may have got snapped due to use of excavators and other heavy equipment, because the flow of water to households has decreased substantially in the last few days causing severe inconvenience to residents.

The Kamrup Metro Deputy Commissioner had a few days back issued an order for clearing the city drains by April 30 next. If the agencies concerned intend to apply a similar modus operandi, there is unlikely to be any benefit from the exercise.

Ageing lions shifted from Zoo

GUWAHATI, April 24: Four ageing lions, seized from circuses way back in 2004 and kept at the State Zoo here, have been shifted to the rescue centre of the Central Zoo Authority located at Bhopal. Zoo DFO SK Seal Sharma said the seized lions cannot be displayed to the visitors. "The State Zoo is not a rescue centre. The animals were growing old and so they have been shifted to Bhopal at the expense of the Central Zoo Authority," he said. The lions are 12-14 years old. - Staff Reporter

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GUWAHATI
Guwahati - 781 039, Assam
Ph-0361-2582084, Fax- 0361-2692771

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tenders in single bid system are invited from experienced and competent contractors for "Repairing and renovation electrical works at Toilet Block of Core-I, II, III & IV of Academic Complex in IIT Guwahati Campus". For further details, visit ITTG website www.ittg.ac.in. Any further clarification including corrigendum, addendum, amendments, time extension etc, to the above tender will be posted in the website only. Bidders should therefore regularly visit the website.

HoS, Maintenance Section

Advt. No. ITTG/MAIN/NIT/17-18/2 Dated : 10.04.2017

BHARAT SANCHAR NIGAM LIMITED
(A Government of India Enterprise)

O/o Divisional Engineer, Telecom Project, NEFT

C.T.O. Building, 3rd Floor, Panbazar, Guwahati-781001

NOTICE INVITING TENDER FOR HIRING COMMERCIAL PERMIT VEHICLE

NIT No. DE/TP/GH/HVIT-04/2017 Date: 24-04-2017

Digital sealed tenders (e-tender) under single stage two-bid system are invited by the Divisional Engineer, Telecom Project, NEFT, Guwahati on behalf of BSNL for hiring 2 (two) number Motorcycles with valid permit for commercial use. **Date & time of submission of Bids:** Up to 1300 Hrs of 08-05-2017.

Date & time of opening of Technical Bid: At 1400 Hrs of 08-05-2017

To know details terms and conditions of the tender, bidder may visit website www.netf.bsnl.co.in.

Tender document can be obtained by downloading from the portal <http://www.tenderwizard.com/BSNL>

Sd/-, Divisional Engineer (TP), Guwahati

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited
Assam Asset, Nazira

GM-IC MM, ONGC, Assam Asset, Nazira invites e-bids under Two Bid system (ICB) through ONGC's E-procurement portal for the following item:

Tender No. R17AC17002, Description: Procurement of Flow Cell Improver (PFD) for Assam Asset, Tender fee: ₹12,000/- to be paid through Demand Draft or Payee Banker's Cheque drawn and cashed at 60 MT within 15 days of issuance of LOA (Refer tender document for detailed delivery period). Period of sale of tender document: 25-04-20170830 hrs. to 05-06-20171330 hrs. Techno-commercial bid closing / opening date & time 05-06-2017 at 1400 hrs. / 1500 hrs.

Note: In case of exigencies ONGC at its option may decide to extend tender sale/closing date which will be posted on the vendor website for information. Bidders should register at ONGC's vendor website for the latest information in this regard. New vendors should ensure to approach ONGC for issue of vendor code along with all the required documents minimum 5 working days prior to bid closing date.

For details of above tenders including corrigendum if any, please log on to website: tenders.ongc.co.in & etender.ongc.co.in

ASSAM POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY LTD.

NIT No:APDCL/CGM/PPAD)/NRP-109/2016-17/90/dtd.19/04/2017

APDCL invites sealed tenders in two parts (Technical & Financial), with validity upto 180 days from the date of opening of price bids, accompanied with requisite earnest money and all tender particulars, illustrated drawing and literature, delivery schedule, type test certificates, order executing details, users performance certificates, average quantity per year manufactured etc. from Energy Meter Manufacturers, for Supply of Grid Interactive Solar Cells 0.5 Accuracy CT-1 PT Operated HT Net Meters for recording import/export energy of Grid Interactive Solar Power Plant".

The complete Bidding Documents including technical specifications are available at APDCL's website www.apdcl.org. Interested bidders can download the Bidding Documents and commence preparation of bids to gain time.

-Sd/-

Chief General Manager (PP&D)
APDCL

SA/2017/30

ASSAM POWER GENERATION CORPORATION LIMITED

Corrigendum cum Extension Notice of

E-TENDER NO. APGCL/CGM/G/LTPS (O&M)INTAKE LWHRP/2017-18! The above E-tender for the work of "Engagement of service provider for operation & maintenance of raw water intake pump house of Lakwa Waste Heat Recovery Project", LTPS, APGCL, Maibella is hereby extended with the Corrigendum as under:

(a) Annexure-2(b) [Break up for Service Assistance Wages] corrected.

1. Last date of Receipt of E-Tender : Up to 1:30 P.M. of 29-04-2017

2. Technical Bid opening : At 2:00 P.M. of 29-04-2017

3. Price Bid opening : To be intimated later on.

4. For details of the E-tender, corrigendum cum extension, please visit our website <https://apgcl.tenders.in>

Sd/- Chief General Manager (Generation)
APGCL Bijilee Bhawan, Guwahati-1

EA/2017/70

Oil India Limited

A OIL INDIA LIMITED (OIL) invites Bids through its E-Procurement Portal "<https://tender.srm.ollindia.in/>

inirportal/ against IFB Nos. (i) CDI4423P18 - "Hiring Services for Maintenance of Source Water Systems for Water Treatment Station and Pump House at Sankarbari Water Treatment Station in and around Oil's NH9 and Moren Fields" &

(ii) CDI4491P18 - "Comprehensive Maintenance of 2 x 55 TR capacity Central Air Conditioning Plant at MTOC for a period of 03 years." The details of IFBs and procedures for applying & participation can be viewed using "Guest Login" provided in the E-Procurement portal and also in OIL's web site www.oil-india.com. The link to OIL's E-Procurement portal has also been provided through OIL's web site. All corrigenda, addenda, amendments, clarifications, changes to tenders etc. to be issued on the website are in the e-tender material and no separate notification shall be issued in the press.

Potential bidders are requested to regularly visit the website and e-portal to keep themselves updated.

Lecture on TS Eliot

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 24: To mark the occasion of the 100 years of publication of TS Eliot's first collection of poems, *Prufrock and Other Observations*, Alap, Cotton College, in association with the Ajit Barua Anuragi Samaj, is organising a lecture at the Sudhansu Hall of Cotton College here at 2 pm of April 29, a press release stated.

Prof Ranjit Kumar Dev Goswami, Srivanta Sankaradeva Chair Professor of the Tezpur University will deliver the lecture titled "Communication and Understanding" - Prufrock 1917.

TS Eliot and his works have had the most profound influence on the modern literary creations, not only in English language but in languages across the world.

Books released

GUWAHATI, April 24: Two books - *Porkikumar Seshat*, a collection of short-stories, and *Geetimalika*, a collection of songs, written by Robin Barua, were released by Lokesh Gossain, Minoti Barthakur and Sarat Rajkhowa, on April 27.

The fluid has generated considerable interest among the

Lawyers' body writes to Prasad over amendments to Advocates Act

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 24: Registering its protest against the proposed amendments to the Advocates Act, the Lawyers' Association, Guwahati (LAG) has written to the Union Minister for Law and Justice.

Earlier the LAG members had also set ablaze the copies of the proposed amendments registering their protest at the CJM court campus of Kamrup Metro.

Terming the proposals as a mere tool to gag the legal fraternity, the Association further stated that the Union Government must desist from such activities in future as well.

Workshop on use of natural ester oil in transformers

STAFF REPORTER

power engineers and consumers because natural ester oil is manufactured from sources like soya, sunflower seeds etc and hence renewable against the petroleum-based mineral oil normally used in transformers.

Moreover, this fluid is biodegradable. Apart from fulfilling all the criteria required for cooling and insulating transformers, this fluid eliminates the hazard of fire and explosion associated with trans-

formers filled with mineral oil.

Thus, from environmental considerations, it is more important for the fact that it eliminates fire and explosion hazard, the ester fluids have found wide acceptance in transformers in place of mineral oil globally.

In India also, many DISCOMs like Tata and GECO have already started using ester oil in transformers, said a statement.



Kamrup Metro DC Dr M Angamuthu with top officials of the district administration, police department and the GMC in a meeting on road safety at the Circuit House in Guwahati on Monday. - UB Photos

Prof M Taher memorial lecture delivered

CORRESPONDENT

JALUKBARI, April 24: The 2nd Professor M Taher Memorial Lecture on the occasion of the 86th birth anniversary of Late Dr Mohammed Taher, retired Head of the Department of Geography, Gauhati University was held at the Phandiar Datta Seminar Hall of Gauhati.

Dr Rana PB Singh, retired Head of the Department of Geography, Banaras Hindu University delivered the memorial lecture. Appraising the Indian Cultural Landscape: Envisioning Ecological Cosmology in the 21st Century'.

In his lecture he said, "The Indian cultural landscape is a holistic model of sustainability and inclusive heritage development and requires deeper and intimate understanding through realisation to revelation that lead to self-help action. Ironically, the stakeholders are attempting to implement many sustainable projects and a sustainable regeneration plan on a limited and compartmentalised knowledge base."

Because the heritage value stands under-recognised and most of such areas are not nominated as a cultural landscape, concerned administrative authorities tend to focus their energies on built heritage-centric secondary issues, rather than the issues concerning the inclusive cultural landscape and holistic-sustainable development."

He further added, "The concept of Indian cultural landscape refers to a complex cultural mosaic and network of spatiality of time, temporality of space and overall the encompassing manifestation of transcendence of man, who since time immemorial is trying to make a strong bridge between conscious mind and super-conscious divine. This way the interplay has been part of constant and continuous evolutionary drama between earthly Man and cosmic Nature, turning into various built-structures and traditions that maintained continuity-maintenance-transformation and changes, of course always keeping the essence of the past that procressed and get transferred from one generation to another."

This makes the aliveness in life-ways of the people and culture. Concept of cultural landscape has its roots in geographical thought and is commonly accepted as one of the best strategies to understand and project the vividness and commonality of landscape and culture.

This is an attempt on the line of critical appraisal of history of Indian cultural landscape, and its selected manifestations representations, e.g. cosmic rhythm and *mandala*, Bharat as Devi, the 'motherly' Ganga river and sacred sites, and intangible heritage."

The programme was attended by members from the Geography

fraternity, scholars in the name of Prof M Taher Innovate (Motivate)

Fellowship were awarded to Debashree Borah and Bijoy Kumar Mahato

Bhuyan, PG Semester IV students of Geography, GU for the year 2016-17

and carrying Rs 25,000 annually.

Meanwhile, scholarships in the name of Prof M Taher Innovate (Motivate)

Fellowship were awarded to Debashree

Borah and Bijoy Kumar Mahato

Bhuyan, PG Semester IV students of Geography, GU for the year 2016-17

and carrying Rs 25,000 annually.

Book on infiltration, genesis of Assam Movement released



A section of people attending the 'Festival of Peace and Harmony' organised by National Boro Christian Council, at Kokrajhar on Sunday – UB Photos

126th Khongjom Day observed

GUWAHATI, April 24: The 126th Khongjom Day, the day of Anglo Manipur War of 1891, was observed by the Manipuri National Council (MNC), Hojai district committee at Geta Mandir, Hojai on April 23, stated a press release.

The programme began with the flag hoisting and floral tributes at the statue of Major Phouma Brajabhash, the great martyr of Khongjom War, which was followed by a seminar on 'Rights and Movements of Manipuris in Assam'. The seminar was chaired by W Joykumar, associate professor of ADP College, Nagaon and Dr. Hawaheim Herajit, Dr Ahebham Rishikesh, Swapam Singh and Dijamani Sarma presented papers on the relevant issues. The programme concluded with an open session which was presided over by Lottongbam Biswajit, president, MNC, Hojai district committee and the keynote address was delivered by Kayenpaham Hrishikesh, secretary, MNC, Hojai district.

OBITUARY

Satish Kumar Nath

 Satish Kumar Nath passed away on April 16 due to prolonged age-related ailments. Born in Shillong, he was a graduate of the first batch from IIT Kharagpur. He joined Assam State Electricity Board and led the design and construction of the Barapani and Kopili hydroelectric projects. Focusing his entire career on water resource management of the Brahmaputra river and its tributaries, he retired as Commissioner Secretary to the Govt. of Assam, Flood Control Department and was earlier General Manager, Brahmaputra Board. He was 85 years old and leaves behind his wife, two children, two grandchildren, and a host of relatives.

Bires Chandra Sen: a tribute

 Late Bires Chandra Sen, a resident of Juri Path, Christian Basti, Guwahati, breathed his last at his residence on April 15 last following old-age ailments. He was 84.

He was an epitome of honesty, dedication, knowledge and a man of strict principles.

He received his education at Shillong and also began his professional career there. He served the government of Assam and retired as Registrar from the Social Welfare Department. In his professional life, he handled many important tasks and responsibilities and discharged them with utmost diligence.

He leaves behind his wife, two daughters and host of relatives.

Today on the day of his *adhyasabaddha*, we pray to the Almighty for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

– Kamala Rani Sen

Salaguri Satradhikar invites PM to Batadrava

CORRESPONDENT

Sankaradeva

NAOGAON, April 24: To project Batadrava, the birth place of Srimanta Sankaradeva, as a heritage and religious tourist spot of the region, Satradhikar of Salaguri Bastram Paramananda Dev Mahanta has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to pay a visit to this site.

He also demanded, among others, allotment of extra funds for the development of Batadrava Than, to meet the auspices of Nagao Zila Sahitya Sabha and centenary celebration committee of Nagao Sahitya Sabha through rail link, construction of a four lane from Naogaon to Batadrava, a 200-bed hospital at Batadrava, an educational institution like Santiniketan to propagate Vaishnavite culture, philosophy and religion, to bring back the Vrindavani Bazaar and preserve it as Batadrava and declare a national holiday on the Tithi of Srimanta

Naogaon Sahitya Sabha in the first session of Asam Sahitya Sabha held in 1917.

Ratna Kanta Borkakoti was the founder secretary of Naogaon Sahitya Sabha and was the president of Asam Sahitya Sabha in its Nazira session.

Former MLA Professor Girindra Kumar Borooah, secretary of the Zila Sabha Jatin Sut, executive member of Asam Sahitya Sabha Nitinanda Bora, writer Thagir Mahanta, singer Ranjan Bezborooah, Homeswar Deo Sharma, Minti Sarma and Samir Mahaanta also shed light on manifold personalities of the poet.

The programme, which was conducted by the secretary of the centenary celebration committee Papul Bora, started with lighting of the ceremonial lamp and offering of floral tributes at the portrait of Ratna Kanta Borkakoti.

The programme, which was conducted by the secretary of the centenary celebration committee Papul Bora, started with lighting of the ceremonial lamp and offering of floral tributes at the portrait of Ratna Kanta Borkakoti.

Departmental negligence in project implementation: Dutta

CORRESPONDENT

MANGALDAI, April 24:

State Irrigation Minister Ranjit Dutta himself admitted that there is a negligence on the part of the department in proper implementation of the projects, for which crores of public fund have been spent every year so that paddy fields of poor farmers get no timely supply of irrigated water for better productivity.

He was talking to the media during his long stay to Darrang district on Saturday where he visited a couple of major irrigation projects under Mangaldai Irrigation division including Nanon Flow Irrigation at village Chamatapara under Sipajhar LAC and Chandra Mal Dutta Flow Irrigation

scheme at village Bahiani under Kalaigaon LAC. In response to the queries raised by mediapersons regarding alleged anomalies in project implementation and corruption on the part of a section of officials and contractors, the Minister said, "There is negligence on the part of our department in proper implementation of the schemes but people of that area must be aware of it, so that the corrupt officials and contractors can't take any advantage."

The minister also urged the farmers to come forward for multiple cropping and thus make the best use of the irrigation facilities.

Regarding the completion of work of the Rs 29-crore Nanon Irrigation

Project which has remained incomplete since 2009, the minister stressed on the need of preparation of fresh estimate and to include it in the Centrally-sponsored PMKSY scheme for its early completion. Accordingly, he directed the concerned officials present.

However, he set aside some portion of any inquiry into the alleged rampant corruption in implementation of the schemes during the tenure of the last Congress-led State government.

The minister during his visit was accompanied by Binanda Kumar Saikia, MLA Sipajhar, Nilima Devi, president, Darrang district unit BJP and senior officials of the department, among others.

Burha Mayong becomes open defecation free village

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 24:

Burha Mayong, a Morigaon District village, about 26 km northeast of this capital city of the State, has now become an open defecation free (ODF) village, courtesy the initiatives taken by the Lions Club of Narangi. The voluntary organisation responded swiftly and work to make the village an ODF one started in November 2016. The project was fully funded by the IFCI Ltd, a major public sector unit, under its Healthy Living CSR (Community Social Responsibility) Project for the Rural Communities.

Within 15 weeks, rest of the Burha Mayong households were provided with sturdy, spacious, high-quality and aesthetically pleasing sanitary toilets. Thus the village has become a 100 per

around 75 per cent. Of its 165 households, only 41 had functional sanitary toilets then. The Lions Club approached the RGNV authorities in February 2016 with a request to extend support in making Burha Mayong, a 100 per cent ODF village.

The RGNV authorities responded swiftly and work to make the village an ODF one started in November 2016. The project was fully funded by the IFCI Ltd, a major public sector unit, under its Healthy Living CSR (Community Social Responsibility) Project for the Rural Communities.

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A sanitary toilet at Burha Mayong Janjati High School, Morigaon district provided by Lions Club of Narangi in collaboration with Rasiyatri Gramin Vikash Nidhi and IFCI Ltd under their CSR scheme, on Sunday – UB Photos

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 24: The xenophobia spread by certain circles in the State during the end 1970s led Assam to social turmoil. The immigrant Muslims were subjected to frequent persecutions as its result. And today also a vicious atmosphere is sought to be created in the State by certain circles, said noted critic and writer Dr Hirien Gohain.

He was releasing *Anupravesh: Assam Andolan Adi Kotha* (Infiltration: Genesis of Assam Movement) written by Prof Abdul Manan at the Konaklal Barooah Auditorium of the State Museum here yesterday

at a function presided over by Prof Chandra Sarma.

Dr Gohain observed that the book has been written by Prof Mannan by analysing the issue objectively, applying the theories of social science and statistics. This has thus become a scientific interpretation of the entire issue.

Referring to the Assam agitation, he said that it initially targeted the Bengali-speaking people. It made the immigrant Muslims its target at a later stage. The rumour that was spread during the process to the by-election to the Mangaldoi Lok Sabha Constituency that lakhs of foreigners' names were there in the electoral rolls of the State

was initially not believed by the common people. But later, with the circulation of the excerpts from the *Songs of the Soil* written by American author Myron Weiner an atmosphere was created which made the common Assamese people believe that one day they would be marginalised in their native place.

Against such a backdrop, the above book penned by Prof Mannan should be widely circulated to generate awareness among the people on the issue and also among the immigrant Muslims to generate awareness about their shortcomings, said Dr Gohain.

Prof Udayaditya Bharali, Dr Dilip Bora, Prof Manirul Husain, Prof Abu Nasir Said Ahmed, Prof Akhil Ranjan Dutta and Dr Jogenendra Nath, among others, also spoke on the occasion. The book has been published by city-based Ayna Prakashan and the function was organised by Nyay Aru Samiti, Dabi Samiti, Assam, said a press release here today.

Rangghar theatre festival from April 29

CORRESPONDENT

Sankardev Puppet Theatre

GUWAHATI, April 24: The Guwahati City Branch of Indian Society of Anaesthesiologists (ISA) is organising a day-long continuing medical education (CME) on paediatric anaesthesia in collaboration with Mission Smile, Assam in the premises of Mohan Choudhury Hospital, Panbari, Guwahati on May 6, stated a press release.

This year the festival has been dedicated to late Prasannamol Choudhury. This was informed through a press release issued by Pranab Kumar Baruah and Jimut Babel Das, chief director and coordinator of the festival respectively.

The programme will cover almost all important aspects of paediatric anaesthesia and help the anaesthesiologists of the region to get updated with all the recent advances in the subject worldwide. The academic programme will be addressed by four renowned specialists from Sweden, out of which two are paediatric anaesthesiologists, one paediatric cardiologist and one paediatric intensivist. It will also have among its faculty five renowned specialists from Assam working in both govt as well as private sectors. The organisers are doing all the arrangements according to the norms of MCI.

BARPETTA, April 24: The 28th edition of Rangghar National Theatre festival will be held here through a four-day programme from April 29 to May 2.

This year the festival has been dedicated to late Prasannamol Choudhury. This was informed through a press release issued by Pranab Kumar Baruah and Jimut Babel Das, chief director and coordinator of the festival respectively.

As per schedule, Nandikar from Kolkata will stage *Alfa Bap Ka Baap* on the last day of the festival on May 2. Noted film personalities like Asran and Padmar Kohlapuri will also act in this play.

The souvenir to be published on the occasion will be formally released by Thaneswar Malakar, Deputy Commissioner of Barpetta on the first day of the festival.

Katua Hyadi directed by Bhaskar Baruah will be staged by Jonak, an amateur group on the second day, that is, April 30. Dapon the Mirror from Tangla will be performed by Prasannamol Choudhury with his songs and poems in the evening.

It may be mentioned here that since its inception in 1979, Rangghar has been working hard to create an environment

of dramatic culture not only in Barpetta but in Assam as a whole. Apart from staging plays, it has been conducting competitions like one-act plays, mono-acting and other activities and has also conducted several workshops in this field.

Keeping its commitment towards the betterment of cultural field, it has been organising national level theatre festival for the last 29 years. Several known dramatic personalities like Kulabhushan Khanbandhu, Avtar Gil, Mohan Agase, Rakesh Bedi and Usha Ganguly have taken part in this national theatre festival.

The people of Barpetta in particular and the drama lovers of the State have been thronging the festival elevating the event to one of the most cherished cultural events of the State. The organisers expect a large turnout this year too and have requested the people of the State to cooperate during the event.

Talk on old age, mental problems organised

CORRESPONDENT

BISWANATH CHARIALI, April 24: A popular talk on 'Old Age and Mental Problems' was held recently at Binapani Natya Mandir here under the aegis of Biswanath Chariali Senior Citizens' Forum.

The programme was presided over by Forum's president Dr Nityananda Gogoi while proceedings of the programme were conducted by secretary Bijoy Goswami. Dr Abhijit Kalita, associate professor, Department of Mental Diseases and Gayatri Borah, psychiatrist, Gopinath Bordoloi Mental Health Institute, Tezpur took part in the seminar as resource persons. They were felicitated with joint certificates Alakan Hazarika and Hiren Borah. Highlighting memory loss during old age,

Dr Abhijit Kalita said that memory loss is a natural process, but when it increases, it turns into a disease. "Diabetes, heart disease, fever problem, thyroid, injury on head etc., may be the root cause of this problem," he added.

He further said that this problem is not purely curable,

but can be kept under control to some extent with proper treatment. He also called for proper diet in this respect.

Another resource person, Gayatri Borah underlined the importance of joint families while tackling the problems of depression and loneliness. She stressed upon the need of regular physical activities such as walking, yoga, pranayam, meditation etc., to get rid of growing mental disorder among people. She suggested preparing and following a daily routine.

Teachers and local people.

The programme commenced with flag hoisting by Ranjit Dutta, State Minister for Irrigation, Handloom and Textile and president of Silver Jubilee Celebration Committee followed by swahid tapan by working president Indrawar Kataki. Twenty-five saplings were planted on the occasion in the college premises at 9:30 am. A cultural procession was taken out on the occasion. The open session was inaugurated by Asitaksha Chakravarty, Deputy Commissioner of Biswanath, with Ranjit Dutta in the chair. Dr Dilip Borah, HoD, Modern Indian Language, GU, educationists Dr Anjan Kumar Ojha and Loknath Upadhyaya, Biswanath MLA Pramod Borthakur, among others, spoke a few words in the programme.

Silver jubilee: The year-long silver jubilee celebration of Behali College got underway at Borgang in Biswanath district on Thursday amidst much enthusiasm among students, teachers and local people.

It needs mention here that the RGNV was promoted by the IFCI Ltd, IDBI Ltd, NABARD and Tata Social Welfare Trust as a socio-economic development organisation in 1990.

Under the Healthy Living CSR Project for Rural Communities, funded by the IFCI Ltd, the Rasiyatri Gramin Vikash Nidhi (RGNV) has so far provided 383 sanitary toilets, five solar-powered drinking water supply systems and solar lights and fans to two schools and three community centres spread across six villages in Morigaon and Kamrup districts of the State.

CAPSULE**Vodafone rates**

MUMBAI, April 24: Vodafone today launched a new international roaming pack offering unlimited roaming for travellers to the US, the UAE and Singapore. Customers who opt for the new pack will be charged additionally for calls and data while roaming in these countries, the second largest telco said in a statement. — PTI

Extended trading

NEW DELHI, April 24: Leading stock exchanges BSE and NSE have extended trading hours for gold exchange traded funds (ETFs) and Sovereign Gold Bond till 1900 hrs on April 28, on account of Akshaya Tritiya. Occasions like Dhanteras, Diwali and Akshaya Tritiya are considered auspicious to buy valuables like gold in India. Trading in gold ETFs is usually higher on these days. — PTI

Deccan Odyssey

MUMBAI, April 24: Super luxury train Deccan Odyssey may soon come up with attractive short-tour packages for domestic tourists. "We do get domestic tourists, but we have planned and strategised to come up with short-tour packages for Indian tourists," Arup Sen, Director (Special Projects), Cox and Kings, which operates the train, told reporters. — PTI

Reliance Retail

NEW DELHI, April 24: Reliance Retail, the Reliance Industries' retail arm, reported a 29.6 per cent rise in pre-tax profit at Rs 366 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 31. The company had reported a PBDIT (profit before depreciation and income tax) of Rs 221 crore in the same period last fiscal. — PTI

CAIT conference

MUMBAI, April 24: Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) today said it is holding a two-day national conference of prominent trade leaders in New Delhi from 27-28 April. More than 150 trade leaders from across the country will participate in the conference. CAIT national president BC Bhartia said in a release issued here. — PTI

Ultratech Cement

NEW DELHI, April 24: Ultratech Cement today reported a decline of 11.31 per cent in its consolidated net profit to Rs 725.90 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2017 on account of higher expenses. The firm, a part of Aditya Birla Group, had clocked a net profit of Rs 818.56 crore in the January-March period a year ago. Ultratech said in a BSE filing. — PTI

TTK Prestige

NEW DELHI, April 24: Kitchen and home appliance maker TTK Prestige today said its board has declared an interim dividend of Rs 15 per share. "The Board of Directors of the company at a meeting held on April 24, 2017 have declared an interim dividend of Rs 15 per share," TTK Prestige said in a BSE filing. — PTI

RCom merger

NEW DELHI, April 24: Reliance Communications' (RCom) shareholders today approved the merger of its wireless division with RCom, in September last year, had announced it will merge its wireless telecom business with smaller rival Aircel to create the country's fourth-biggest mobile phone operator. — PTI

'Roomba 960'

NEW DELHI, April 24: PureSight Systems, the distributor of US-based iRobot products in India, today launched a new vacuuming robot 'Roomba 960' at Rs 64,900. 'Roomba 960' extends mapping, adaptive navigation, visual localisation and cloud-connected app control to a wider range of consumers, the company said in a statement. — IANS

NITI Aayog envisages houses, vehicles, ACs for all by 2032

NEW DELHI, April 24: Government think tank NITI Aayog has envisaged a new India in which all citizens in 15 years will have houses with toilets, two-wheelers or cars, power-air-conditioners and digital connectivity.

This is a glimpse of Vision 2031-32 presented by the NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Arvind Panagariya to the body's Governing Council, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at a meeting held yesterday in the presence of chief ministers.

The India 2031-32: Vision, Strategy and Action Agenda also visualises a fully literate society with universal access to health care.

It also calls for having a much larger and modern network of roads, railways, waterways and air connectivity and a clean India where citizens would have access to quality air and water.

It envisions that per capita income would increase three-fold to Rs 3.14 lakh in 2031-32 from Rs 1.06 lakh in 2015-16.

Besides, it states that the country's gross domestic product or economy would rise to Rs 469 lakh crore in 2031-32 from Rs 137 lakh crore level in 2015-16. The vision says that the Central and State expenditure will rise by Rs 92 lakh crore in 2031-32 to Rs 130 lakh crore from Rs 38 lakh crore in 2015-16.

The work on the Fifteen Year Vision and Seven Year Strategy document spanning 2017-18 to 2031-32 is in progress.

The Three Year Action Agenda cov-

ering 2017-18 to 2019-20 was circulated to the Governing Council Members yesterday and would be finalised shortly.

According to the vision presentation, all efforts had to be made to realize the Prime Minister's vision of a vibrant India by 2031-32.

"We must transform India into a prosperous, healthy, secure, corruption-free, energy-abundant, environmentally clean and globally influential nation," the presentation added. — PTI



Small cars may see a little hike in prices under GST

NEW DELHI, April 24: Small and mid-sized cars may see a small hike in prices after the Goods and Services Tax (GST) is rolled out from July 1, as different goods fit into the four-slab rate structure.

The GST will unify at least 10 Central and State taxes into one.

Goods and services will have to fall into one of the approved four rate categories of 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent, which is closest rate to the present incidence of taxation.

Small cars currently attract a 12.5 per cent Central excise duty. Another 14.5-15 per cent VAT is levied by States, taking the total tax incidence to 27-27.5 per cent.

The official said a cess of up to 15 per cent is provided in the GST Compensation Law and the final incidence of taxation would be arrived at adding the same to the peak rate.

The cess would be levied in a manner so as to keep the final incidence of taxation at close to current levels, he said.

For SUVs and bigger cars of more than 1500 cc, the current incidence of taxation is 41.5 per cent by the Central government and a 14.5 per cent VAT by State governments, taking the tax incidence to 38.5 per cent.

The official said this class of vehicles would be put in the 28 per cent tax bracket and maximum 15 per cent duty. — PTI

SBI, CREDAI ink MoU for concessional housing loan

NEW DELHI, April 24: State-owned SBI and realtors' body CREDAI have signed an agreement to provide loans at a concessional rate to builders as well as customers for affordable housing projects.

SBI and CREDAI have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to collaborate and work towards the development of the real estate sector, specifically through the affordable housing and green housing projects.

He said SBI is a major player in home loans segment with 25 per cent market share. — PTI

Jio plans to double network in coming months

NEW DELHI, April 24: New telecom operator Reliance Jio plans to double its network size by adding 1 lakh additional mobile sites in coming months.

The company said that in terms of data usage it "has become the largest network globally" and plans to add 1 lakh mobile sites in coming months to double the network size.

"Jio continues its rapid ramp-up of subscriber base and as of

Infosys, TCS accounted for only 8.8% of total H-1B visas: Nasscom

NEW DELHI, April 24: IT industry body Nasscom today came out in defence of its members TCS and Infosys, saying the two accounted for only 7,504 – 8.8 per cent – of the approved H-1B visas in 2014-15.

The US has accused top Indian IT firms TCS and Infosys of "unfairly" cornering the lion's share of the H-1B work visas by putting extra tickets in the lottery system.

Indian technology firms use H-1B visas to send their employees to work at customer sites in the US, which is the largest market for the over \$10-billion Indian IT export industry.

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The official said this class of vehicles would be put in the 28 per cent tax bracket and maximum 15 per cent duty. — PTI

SBI, CREDAI ink MoU for concessional housing loan

NEW DELHI, April 24: State-owned SBI and realtors' body CREDAI have signed an agreement to provide loans at a concessional rate to builders as well as customers for affordable housing projects.

SBI and CREDAI have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to collaborate and work towards the development of the real estate sector, specifically through the affordable housing and green housing projects.

He said SBI is a major player in home loans segment with 25 per cent market share. — PTI

Jio plans to double network in coming months

NEW DELHI, April 24: New telecom operator Reliance Jio plans to double its network size by adding 1 lakh additional mobile sites in coming months.

The company said that in terms of data usage it "has become the largest network globally" and plans to add 1 lakh mobile sites in coming months to double the network size.

"Jio continues its rapid ramp-up of subscriber base and as of

Over the past few weeks, it added.

There is a growing sentiment of protectionism across various markets, including the US, that are seeking to safeguard jobs for locals and raise the bar for foreign workers.

Nasscom would like to clarify on the statements made by the White House on Indian companies getting the lion's share of H-1B visas and highlight that in 2014-15, only six of the top 20 H-1B recipients were Indian companies," it said in a statement.

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In the US, the Trump administration wants to replace the current lottery system with a more merit-based immigration policy.

Any change in visa norms can affect the movement of labour as well as spike operational costs for IT players.

Nasscom highlighted that "every reputable data source" in the US has documented a growing shortfall between the supply and demand for computer science majors in the US workforce.

While the two software exporters have not issued a formal statement on the issue, they have stated that they ensure compliance with norms in the markets that they operate in. Every year, the US grants 65,000 H-1B visas while another 20,000 are set aside for those with US advanced degrees.

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Any change in visa norms can affect the movement of labour as well as spike operational costs for IT players.

Maruti aims to revive compact sedan segment with new Dzire

NEW DELHI, April 24: Car market leader Maruti Suzuki India (MSD) is seeking to revive growth in compact sedan segment in the country with the launch of its third generation Dzire next month.

The company, which has till date sold 13.81 lakh units of the model in India since its launch in March 2008, will roll out an all-new version of Dzire on May 16.

The half-four-metre compact sedan segment has witnessed decline in sales. In 2016-17, it clocked 4.02,608 units as against 4.04,735 units in 2015-16, down 8.65 per cent.

MSD's Dzire sales declined by 14.67 per cent at 1,99,878 units in financial year 2016-17 as against 2,34,242 units in the previous year. Despite the decline, the model accounted for 50 per cent of the total sales in the segment.

"Due to capacity constraints we had to adjust production of certain models, including Dzire, in order to reduce long waiting period of models like Baleno and Vitara Brezza," M&S Executive Director Sales and Marketing RS Kalsi told reporters here.

With additional capacity of 1.5 lakh units available for this fiscal from Suzuki's Gujarat plant, he said the pressure will ease and it will benefit models like Dzire.

"We have 50 per cent market share in the compact sedan segment where Dzire is present and with the launch of next generation edition we are looking to maintain the sales momentum," Kalsi said.

Last week, rival Hyundai Motors India had also launched an upgraded version of Xcent that competes with Dzire. Tata Motors has also introduced its Tigor. — PTI



Siemens CEO Joe Kaeser showing Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydlo and German Chancellor Angela Merkel a 3D printer at the Siemens booth during a media tour at the world's biggest industrial fair, 'Hannover Fair', in Hanover, Germany, on Monday. — UNI

Telecos to bleed in FY18 as well: CRISIL

MUMBAI, April 24: Telecos will continue to face difficulties in fiscal 2018 as well and two of the top three telcos are set to "bleed" due to intense competition triggered after the launch of Reliance Jio, a report said today.

"The price war in the Rs 1.5-trillion wireless telecom market will continue this fiscal year as well leaving bruised bottom lines," CRISIL said in a note today.

The report said two of the top three telcos will end last fiscal year with net losses, and this trend is expected to continue in the current fiscal year as well.

It attributed the difficulties faced

by the sector to the price war for data subscribers, but added that market leadership is crucial to the business and if anything, competition will only heat up this year.

The note explained that global experiences have shown that the market leader enjoys superior profitability.

The report said two of the top three telcos will end last fiscal year with net losses, and this trend is expected to continue in the current fiscal year as well.

It attributed the difficulties faced

growth for the top telcos, as they seek to protect their subscriber base, it said.

It said the picture on profitability is "grimmer" and pre-tax profit margins will drop further by 50-1 per cent, in addition to 6 percentage point fall seen for the past fiscal year.

It said the proposed merger between the second and the third biggest telcos – Vodafone and Idea Cellular – aimed at strengthening market position if not leadership, alongside lowering investment needs and costs. — PTI

PM amenable to talks: Mehbooba

NEW DELHI, April 24: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti today said that the Prime Minister appears amenable to holding talks with the stakeholders in a bid to arrest the deteriorating situation in the Valley.

However, she cautioned, that "an atmosphere needs to be created" for a dialogue.

"Talks cannot happen amid stone pelting and firing of bullets," she told reporters after a 20-minute meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at his residence.

At the meeting, she invoked former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's policy on Kashmir, and said the thread should be picked up from where he had left off – an apparent suggestion for talks with separatists.

"The Prime Minister has an intention of holding talks after the situation becomes normal," Mehbooba told reporters.

Kashmir is in the grip of increased violence since the April 9 by-poll for the Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency. The security forces are under intense pressure as they are faced with almost daily protests and stone-pelting.

The Army and the CRPF have received some praise for showing restraint under provocation, and also come under criticism, especially after a video showed a civilian tied to a jeep as a human shield as it drove through the streets to avoid being attacked.

"Talks are the only option," Mehbooba said. "How long can you have a confrontation?"

"Talks with Hurriyat (Conference) had taken place when Vajpayee ji was the Prime Minister and UK Advani ji was the Deputy Prime Minister. We need to start from where Vajpayee ji had left, otherwise there is no scope of



Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti calling on Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Monday. – UNI

the situation in Jammu and Kashmir improving," she said.

Modi said he is following the foot-steps of Vajpayee ji. Vajpayee ji's policy of reconciliation, not confrontation," Mehbooba added.

Referring to the increase in stone-pelting incidents in the Valley, she said there were some young people who were "dissatisfied" while some were being "instigated", often through the use of social media sites such as Facebook and WhatsApp.

Rising tensions between the coalition partners, the PDP and the BJP,

over the handling of the security situation in Kashmir also came up at the meeting.

The coalition also came under strain when the PDP lost a seat in the recently held MLC polls when an independent MLA voted in favour of BJP candidate Vikram Randhawa, leading to his victory.

"Whatever happened should not have taken place. But this is an internal matter and we will resolve it with the BJP," she said.

She also raised the Indus water treaty issue, saying it was causing a huge loss of Rs 20,000 crore to the State.

Mehbooba said that the Prime Minister assured her that efforts would be made to see how the state would be compensated for this.

The Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister said the situation in Kashmir would be discussed in a meeting of the Unified Command tomorrow.

The GOC-in-C Northern Command, GOC 16 Corps, GOC 15 Corps, DGP J&K, IG BSF, IG CRPF, senior officers of the IB and RAW and Deputy Chief Minister Nirmal Singh will also participate in the meeting in Srinagar. – PTI

Vice President leaves for Armenia, Poland

NEW DELHI, April 24: Vice President Hamid Ansari today embarked on a five-day visit to Armenia and Poland, during which he is expected to discuss with Polish leaders India's bid to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

Ansari is slated to hold talks with leaders of the two nations, besides attending a host of events. This is his first visit to Armenia and Poland.

The Vice President, who will be in Armenia till April 26, is accompanied by his wife, Sal-

ma Ansari, Union Minister of State for Small, Medium & Micro Industries Giriraj Singh, Members of Parliament Sitaram Yechury, D P Tripathi, Vivek Tankha and Thosar Chhewang and senior officials, besides media representatives.

He will reach Poland on April 26 and over the next two days meet the Polish President and the Prime Minister, who will host a banquet in the Vice President's honour. He will also meet the speaker of the Senate.

"Poland has been very sup-

tive of our bid for membership to the NSG and we have been very appreciative and thankful to them," MEA Secretary (East) Preet Saran said when asked about the possibility of a discussion on NSG in Poland.

"So certainly, when it comes up, it will provide the Vice President with an opportunity to thank Government of Poland for their support to India, not only in seeking membership of the NSG but also in other international forums," she told reporters on Thursday. – PTI



A water cannon salute being presented to mark the induction of SU-30 MKI into the recently resurrected squadron, 'The Valiants' in New Delhi on Monday. – UNI

Girl set ablaze for resisting rape bid, critical

ASHOK NAGAR (MP), April 24: A 15-year-old girl suffered critical burn injuries after she was allegedly set on fire by four men in Khetratal village in the district for resisting their attempts to rape her, an officer said today.

The incident took place on Saturday evening when the girl had stepped out of her house to answer nature's call in the open fields on Saturday evening. However, when she raised an alarm, her younger brother came there and she could escape from the spot, "Shadara police station in-charge Narenra Singh Yadav said.

"As per the complaint, the accused men, identified as Chandrabhan (20), Ravindra (20) and two others, tried to pull the victim and forcibly take her with them when she went to answer nature's call in the open fields on Saturday evening. However, when she raised an alarm, her younger brother came there and she could escape from the spot," Shadara police station in-charge Narenra Singh Yadav said.

"Later, the men then went to the girl's home and found her alone. There, they again tried to molest her and beat her up when she resisted. When she raised an alarm, they poured kerosene on her and set her ablaze," the officer said. – PTI

LUCKNAGAR, April 24: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath today set an ambitious target of making the State, including its 59,000 gram panchayats, open def-

ecation free (ODF) by October 2018.

"We have resolved to totally free the State of the habit of open defecation by October 2018," Adityanath said here.

Speaking at an event organised on the occasion of 'Pan-



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath with Union Minister of Panchayati Raj Narendra Singh Tomar (2nd L) launching several development apps during an award function of gram panchayats, on the occasion of Panchayati Raj Diwas in Lucknow on Monday. – UNI

Chhota Rajan, three others held guilty

NEW DELHI, April 24: A court today held gangster Chhota Rajan guilty of cheating the Government by obtaining a forged Indian passport, crimes which entail a maximum punishment of life imprisonment.

Special Judge Virender Kumar Goyal also convicted three retired public servants – Jayashree Dattatray Rahate, Deepak Narvaral Shah and Lalitha Lakshman – for help-

ing Rajan to obtain a fake passport by "entering into a criminal conspiracy".

Moments after the verdict was announced and the court ordered the police to take them in immediate custody, the three public servants, who were present in the courtroom, broke down. The three of them were so far out on bail.

55-year-old Rajan alias Rajendra Sadashiv Nikalje, who is currently in judicial custody and

lodged in Tihar Jail here, appeared before the court through video-conference due to security reasons. The court will hear arguments on the quantum of sentence tomorrow.

All the four were convicted of the same offences for which the punishment ranges from seven years to life term.

They were convicted of cheating, using as genuine a forged document, forgery for the purpose of cheating, forgery of valu-

able security or will, cheating by impersonation and criminal conspiracy under the Indian Penal Code and violating relevant provisions of the Passport Act.

The court noted in its order that Rajan had twice got passports issued in the name of Mohan Kumar and false and fabricated documents – first from Regional Passport Office, Bangalore and then from Consulate General of India, Sydney, Australia. – PTI

ISRO invites proposals for space experiments

BENGALURU, April 24: India has moved a step closer to its maiden mission to Venus with its space agency ISRO announcing that proposals have been sought for space-based experiments to study the planet.

The Announcement of Opportunity (AO) is for space experiments by institutions in the country, and the last date for receiving the proposals is May 19, 2017. The Bengaluru-headquartered Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said.

Those sending the proposals may be currently involved in planetary exploration studies, or development of science instruments for space, or willing to develop the experiments, the ISRO said in an announcement on its website.

Though no time-frame has been set by the ISRO for the ambitious

mission, indications are that the Indian Venus orbiter mission might not happen before 2020.

The maiden mission to Venus, the second planet of the Solar System named after the Roman goddess of love and beauty, is in all probability going to be a modest orbiter mission.

ISRO Chairman AS Kiran Kumar had earlier said that the mission to Venus is on the horizon and studies are under way.

"Beyond that, Mars second mission and Venus mission are all on the horizon, we have to go through the various studies and then formulate, get the approval and move. Right now, they are all in the study phase," he said, while referring to the two new bold inter-planetary sojourns to Earth's immediate neighbours.

Venus is often described as the

"twin sister" of the Earth because

of the similarities in size, mass, density, bulk composition and gravity.

It is believed that both planets share a common origin, forming at the same time out of a condensing nebulaosity around 4.5

billion years ago.

Stating that exploration of Venus began in the early 1960s, ISRO said the planet has been explored by fly-

Venus mission

by orbiter, a few lander missions and atmospheric probes.

The ISRO said that in spite of great progress made in exploring Venus, there still exist gaps in our basic understanding about surface/sub-surface features and processes, super-

rotation of Venusian atmosphere and its evolution and interaction with solar radiation/solar wind.

The planet is around 30 per cent closer to the sun compared to Earth resulting in much higher solar flux.

Pointing out that the payload capability of the proposed satellite is likely to be 175 kg with 500W of power, the space agency said these values are to be tuned based on the final configuration.

The proposed orbit is expected to be around 500 x 60,000 km around Venus, and the orbit is likely to be reduced gradually, over several months to a lower apoapsis, it said. The point on an orbit which is closest to the orbited body is called the periapsis and the furthest point is the apoapsis.

A mission to explore Venus was

first mentioned in the Department of Space demands for grants 2017-18.

Scripting space history, India on September 24, 2014, had successfully placed its low-cost Mars spacecraft in orbit around the Red Planet on its very first attempt.

ISRO is expected to launch its second lunar mission Chandrayaan 2 during the first quarter of 2018.

It will be another feather in the cap for India if ISRO's mission to Venus turns out to be successful. On a visit to India in February, Michael M Watkins, Director of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory of NASA, said a mission to Venus is very worthwhile as so little is understood about that planet and NASA would definitely be willing to partner in India's maiden voyage to the planet. – PTI





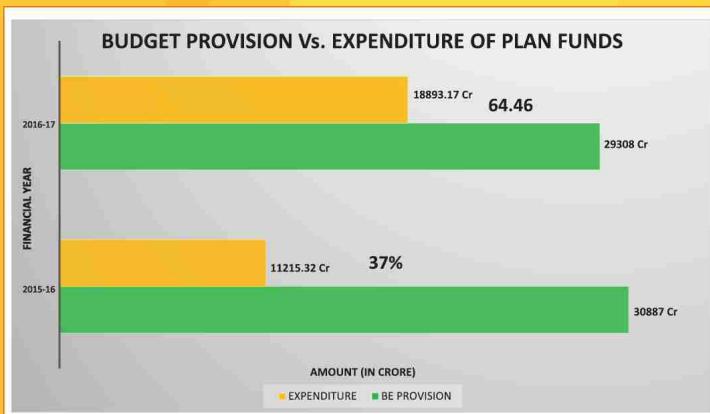
FIRST STEPS TOWARDS PROGRESSIVE ASSAM

A RECORD 34.56% GROWTH IN EXPENDITURE DURING 2016-17

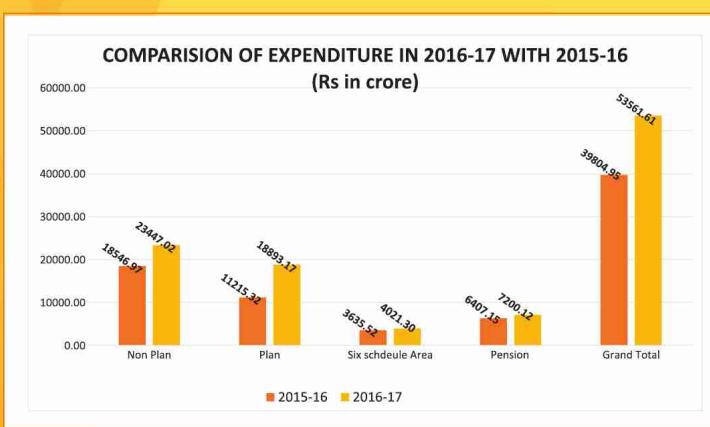


Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma
Hon'ble Minister, Finance
Government of Assam

₹52536 CRORE RELEASED FROM STATE EXCHEQUER



- We have achieved plan expenditure of 64.46% in 2016-17 against 37% of 2015-16.
- We have released ₹18893 crore under Plan in 2016-17 against ₹11215 crore in 2015-16.
- Total fund released from the State exchequer into the system in 2016-17 was ₹53562 crore against ₹39805 crore of 2015-16. It includes salary, pension, plan and non-plan amount.
- This is 34.56% more than previous year. This is a huge achievement.



We extend our sincere gratitude to—

- The citizens for their support in re-building Assam.
- All employees of the State Government.

Rededicating ourselves for welfare of the people

FINANCE DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM



'Bowlers wanted to show intent and pride'

KOLKATA, April 24: Skipper Gauram Gambar wanted his bowlers to show "intent and pride" which Chris Woakes feels went a long way in Kolkata Knight Riders dismissing RCB for 49 – the lowest ever total in history of Indian Premier League.

"The captain asked us to show some intent and some pride. The opening bowlers set the tone for us. From there on, it was just trying to put the ball in right areas," the 28-year-old Woakes said.

In an exceptional display of pace bowling up front, Nathan Coulter-Nile (3-0-21-3) and Umesh Yadav (3-0-15-1) ripped apart the vaunted RCB top- or-

der in Powerplay, before Woakes (2-0-6-3) and Colin de Grandhomme (1-4-0-4-3) sealed the issue.

Woakes said the strategy was to hit the top of the off-stump.

"Coupler-Nile and Umesh got to swing the ball up from When I came on, it did not swing but a little bit of movement off the length. If you hit the areas, more often than not it puts the batsmen under pressure especially when wickets are falling here at Eden Gardens," Woakes said.

Woakes termed the Eden Gardens pitch as a nice one. "The wicket was nice to bowl on. At the Eden Gardens, if you are off the area, you get punished because the outfield

is quick. It actually is a good bat-ting surface. As we have seen in previous games, 180 is par which is a good T20 score. But we bowled quite well on that pitch." – PTI

He admitted that the team was surprised by the result.

"I think I would be lying to say that we came at the half time saying that we would definitely win the game. Not often you defend 130 particularly here at Eden Gardens," Woakes said.

None of RCB's batters could reach a double digit as their respective runs resembled a mobile number – 70189820250 – to succumb to 10th overall low-

est in T20s. KKR's defence of 131 (or under) was also only the 10th time in IPL history.

"We speak about these bat-ting line-up, in terms of particular world class. We had a high

price on their wickets. The fact that we took those three early (Virat Kohli, AB de Villiers, Chris Gayle), it really made a big difference in us defending the total." – PTI

The batsmen were however confident.

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POINT TABLE

IPL		POINT TABLE			
Team	P	W	L	Pt	Net RR
1. MI	7	6	1	12	+0.617
2. KKR	7	5	2	10	+1.177
3. SRH	7	4	3	8	+0.481
4. KXIP	7	3	4	6	-0.319
5. RPS	6	3	3	6	-0.760
6. DD	6	2	4	4	+0.848
7. GL	7	2	5	4	-0.844
8. RCB	7	2	5	4	-1.210

Till April 23

Sarala Birla down Bongaigaon boys

SPORTS REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 24: Sarala Birla (ayan) Jyoti recorded a seven-wicket victory for CCB in the Chaitanya Contests Bongaigaon in today's match of the 7th Sitaram Agarwal U-17 Memorial Inter School Organisation Cricket Tournament.

In the low scoring match at the Assam Cricket Association's Baraspara stadium here, batfirsting the Bongaigaon team was all out for 94 in 34 overs. In reply the Sarala Birla batsmen took 25.2 overs for crossing the opponent's total losing three wickets. Subham Agarwala was declared man-of-the-match.

Brief scores CCC, Bongaigaon 98 (Shiva Saha 18, Subham Agarwala 21, Kaushal Tiwari 2/10, Pulin Jain 2/16). Sarala Birla 99/3 (Abinav Goswami 19, Jonali Saikia 17, Dibash Das 17, Ayushman Paul 16, Shishir Kr Nath 2/19).

Athlete Seema wins medals

SPORTS REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 24: Assam girl Seema Das won two medals in the 14th National Youth (U-18) Athletic Championship held at Hyderabad from April 21 to 23.

Seema won silver in 200m (21.05 sec) and a bronze in 100m (12.65 sec).

By virtue of these performance Seema now has every possibility to be selected for the Indian camp. State athletic body president Rohikil Hussian and secretary Pradip Nunes congratulated the athlete.

Boxing selection camp in city

GUWAHATI, April 24: Assam Amateur Boxing Association (AABA) will conduct a selection trial to pick up the State team for the Senior East Zone Boxing Championship to be held in Silvian from May 4 to 6.

The selection trial for the State team is scheduled to be held at the SAI complex, Paltanbazar here on May 1 from 10 am onwards, informed Hemanta Kumar Kalita, secretary AABA in a release.

Bodybuilding medals

GUWAHATI, April 24: Abhijit Das and Kushal Changma won silver medals in the 24th National Bodybuilding Championship held at Ahmedabad from April 21 to 23. Abhi won silver in the 100kg category while Kushtal secured a medal in the 95kg category. Both the Assam bodybuilders are selected to represent India in the Amateur Olympia to be held in Mumbai from October 13 to 16, informed former Mr India Bijit Gogoi in a release.



TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2017

Priyana gets US university scholarship

GUWAHATI, April 24: Miami University at Ohio, Oxford, United States has offered a Sports Scholarship (Tennis) to Assam girl Priyana Kalita for four years under graduation (Bachelor's programme) for her achievement in various junior international tennis tournaments played in the year 2016-17.

During the 4-year bachelors programme, Priyana will get a total amount of Rs 1 crore 35 lakh as academic scholarship money to complete her bachelors degree in Sports Leadership and Management. Apart from academic scholarship Priyana will be sponsored by Adidas to play tennis for the Miami University REDHAWK Women's Tennis Team. Stated a release issued by All Assam Tennis Association secretary Ankush Dutta.

Assam cricketers for EZ camp

GUWAHATI, April 24: Altogether five Assam cricketers have been selected to take part in the East Zone U-19 selection camp which will be held at Ranchi on May 1, informed Assam Cricket Association secretary Pradip Buragohain. The selected players are: Erik Row, Tumoni Kalita, Hrishikesh Baruah, Abhishek Thakuri, Muktar Hussain. – Sports Reporter

ASEB veterans emerge champs

CORRESPONDENT
SIVASAGAR, April 24: Sivash, Guwahati defeated ONGC, Assam Asset 3-0 in the final of 14th All Assam Veterans Inter Industry Football Tournament played here at ONGC colony field, here today.

Pubitra Langsing opened the account in the 10th minute while fitu Narzary struck twice after the break. Jitu was adjudged best player of the final. In the valedictory function, Buidin Deori, ED, ONGC, international footballer Tosen Borab, Ramesh Phukan, secretary AVFA gave away the trophies and cash awards of Rs 10,000 to the winners and Rs 5,000 to the runner up team respectively.

GUWAHATI, G. S. Road, 1st Floor, beside Black Diamond Tower, Guwahati - 781 005, Assam, Ph: (0361) 246 4069 / 9868 SILCHAR Central Tower, 1st Floor, Central Road, Silchar, Assam - 781 001, Ph: (03842) 231 063 DIBRUGARH Junction Mall, Ground Floor, R. K. B. Pathi, Dibrugarh - 786 001, Assam, Ph: (0373) 232 1740 TEZPUR Friends Plaza, 1st Floor, Main Road, Tezpur, Pin - 784 001, Assam, Ph: (03712) 222 444 JORHAT 345, K. B. Road, near HDFC bank, Jorhat - 785 001, Ph: (0376) 230 1122 NAGAON A. T. Road (beside Joysree Cinema Hall), Nagaon - 782 001, Assam, Ph: (03672) 232 046 SHILLONG Marba Hub, Store - 3, 2nd floor, Khynlald, Police Bazaar, Shillong - 793 001, Ph: (0364) 250 5116 ideaincIMPJIT