

NEWS CAPSULE

Golaghat alert

GUWAHATI, July 23: The Golaghat district administration has asked people not to panic after a NEFCO circular cited probability of releasing excess water from the Doyang dam. The dam authorities will inform the administration well ahead of any such move, a press release stated.

Hostage issue

NEW DELHI, July 23: External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj will hold talks with her Iraqi counterpart Ibrahim al-Jaafari tomorrow where focus is expected to be on 39 Indians kidnapped by ISIS in Mosul three years back — PTI

3 youths drown

SILCHAR, July 23: Three youths drowned in floodwaters at Binnankandi in Lakhipur subdivision of Cachar district today when a boat carrying nine people capsized. Six of them have been rescued. — Correspondent

Poll panel step

NEW DELHI, July 23: The Election Commission has found that some politicians sidestepped provisions of the model code while raking up religious issues and has written to political parties in this regard — PTI

Traffic violation

SRINAGAR, July 23: Pakistani troops violated ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Uri sector in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, but there was no loss of life, police said today — PTI

Poacher held

KAZIRANGA, July 23: A rhino poacher, Faruk Ahmed was arrested by police near Jhalakbandha today. The poacher was also arrested earlier but he managed to walk free. — Correspondent

*The Assam Tribune on Internet:
http://www.assamttribune.com &
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The Bogibeel bridge over the Brahmaputra river near Dibrugarh is nearing completion and is likely to be opened by the end of this year — UB Photos

Mukherjee cautions Govt against using ordinance route



President Pranab Mukherjee being presented a coffee-table book during his farewell function, at Central Hall of the Parliament, in New Delhi on Sunday

cal leaders and MPs.

Mukherjee said the ordinance route should not be taken on matters which are being considered or have been introduced in Parliament or pending before a House committee

If a matter is deemed urgent, the committee concerned should be made aware of the situation and should be mandated to present its report within a stipulated time," he said.

The President's remarks bear significance as after repeatedly failing to amend the Enemy Property Act, 1968 in last three years, the Modi government had promulgated five ordinances. The Bill was passed by Parliament in March.

Senior Union ministers were reportedly deputed to convince the President to sign the fourth and fifth enemy property ordinances as he was against prolonging them.

Mukherjee said he was "greatly benefited" from the advice and cooperation extended Modti at "every step".

"With passion and energy, he (Modi) is driving transformational changes in the country. I will carry with fond memories of our association and his warm and courteous behaviour," he said.

The outgoing President, who will demit office on Tues-

(See page 7)

Indian forces capable of defending territory: Expert

R DUTTA CHOWDHURY

GUWAHATI, July 23: Though India does not foresee a war with China in immediate future despite the Dokla La face-off, the Indian forces are fully capable of defending its own territory in case of any eventuality. Moreover, India should maintain a firm stand on the issue as China is trying to wage a psychological war on the issue. These are the views expressed by noted security expert Li Gen (Retd) DB Shekhatkar.

Talking to *The Assam Tribune*, Lt Gen Shekhatkar, who also headed a committee

formed by the government to suggest measures to enhance the combat capabilities of the defence forces, said India is not a war monger, but "if a war is thrust upon us, the armed forces are fully capable of defending the country's territory."

But at the same time, he expressed the view that both India and China do not want a war and the neighbouring country is only trying to indulge in a psychological war with India. He pointed out that China has been issuing statements through the state controlled media for the consumption of the people and so

far, no senior minister of the Chinese government has come out openly to issue a statement. On the other hand, India's External Affairs Minister gave a statement clarifying the country's position on the apex court.

Li Gen Shekhatkar, who is well versed with the international border with China as he had commanded the 4 Corps of the Indian Army, said that the Dokla La area, where the Chinese tried to construct a road, does not belong to China. He said that a team of the Indian Army was in the area as a part

(See page 7)

Army decides to go big on indigenisation

Critical spares

NEW DELHI, July 23: With delays in import of critical equipment severely affecting its combat readiness, the Army has decided to fast-track indigenisation of key components and spares for battle tanks and other military systems.

The Ordnance Factory (OFB), an umbrella body of 41 ordnance factories, has decided to bring down imports of spares and components from current 60 per cent annually to 30 per cent in the next three years, a senior Army official said.

The Master General of the Ordnance (MGO), responsible for artillery and other key military supplies to frontline bases, has also started extensive talks with leading Indian defence firms to evolve a strategy for indigenisation of key spares and components of tanks and other weapons systems.

port of spares and components from current 60 per cent annually to 30 per cent in the next three years, a senior Army official said.

It has been a long-standing grievance of armed forces that supply of critical spares and equipment from Russia takes a long-time, affecting maintenance of military systems procured from that country. Russia has been a major supplier of military platforms to India.

The decision to go for indigenisation of spares is part of the government's overall ap-

proach to enhance battle readiness of the 1.3 million strong Army after a thorough review eventually, the official said.

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Number of minors in conflict with law rising

SANJOY RAY

GUWAHATI, July 23: Over 800 minors, including nearly 80 girls, were found in conflict with law across the State in the last five years or so, a rising trend that has raised alarm, especially vis-a-vis they becoming repeat offenders.

Meanwhile, proposals for two new observation homes for underage children in Kokrajhar/Bongaigaon and Karbi Anglong/Dima Hasao are being prepared by agencies concerned, sources in the social welfare department told *The Assam Tribune*.

Assam Police records suggest that of the 775 juveniles caught in conflict with law between 2012 and 2016, 73 are girls. The number of such underage offenders sent to correction/observation home during the same period stood at 55, of which a majority of 44 such offenders are from Kokrajhar district.

Darrang recorded the highest number of juvenile crimes with 169 such minors found in conflict with law, followed by

(See page 7)

State to host Handloom Day function

Bid to promote Northeast crafts

GUWAHATI, July 23: For the first time, the city will play host to the National Handloom Day celebrations on August 7, as the Central government looks to accord due recognition to the Northeast by showcasing its rich art and craft culture.

The glittering ceremony will display handloom products crafted by artisans from the seven northeastern states through a fashion show and an exhibition.

A film made by *Umrao Jaan* fame director Muzaffar Ali showing the distinct handloom products from the region bearing Geographical Indication status will also be screened at the event, in the presence of Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani and Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, among others.

"The focus will be on the seven northeastern states so that each and every state is given due recognition by displaying their handloom and silk products," Development



Commissioner (Handlooms) Shantanu

TPL.

The Office of the Development Commissioner (Handlooms) under the Union Textiles Ministry is coordinating the event.

However, this time around, the Sant Kabir and National awards will not be presented to handloom workers, as the government has decided to club them with the Shilp Guru awards for handicraft artisans, which will be presented together at a function in the national capital New Delhi. — PTI

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BSP to launch stir against 'anti-Dalit' stand of BJP

NEW DELHI, July 23: Days after quitting Parliament, BSP chief Mayawati today said her party would launch a Statewide programme from September 18 to protest the "anti-Dalit" stand of the BJP.

She said as she had resigned from the Rajya Sabha on July 18 after "not being allowed to speak on anti-Dalit violence in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur", a conference of workers would be held on the 18th of every month beginning September.

Every month, party workers from two UP divisions would hold programmes in which she would also participate.

The agitational programme,

beginning from Meerut, would continue till June next "to expose the BJP".

She announced the programme after holding a strategy session with party MPs, legislators and other leaders here.

The September date was decided as the monsoon would be over by then.

BSP supremo Mayawati's resignation from the Rajya Sabha was accepted today by chairman Hamid Ansari, a senior official of the Upper House.

The 61-year-old had on Wednesday resigned from the RS, accusing the BJP and the Chair of not allowing her to raise the issue of "anti-Dalit

violence" in Uttar Pradesh in the House.

The move was seen as an attempt by Mayawati to consolidate her core Dalit support base and re-establish herself as the community's prominent leader after facing a massive defeat in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections earlier this year.

Her party could win only 18 seats while the BJP came to power by winning more than 300 of the 403 seats.

The BJP had termed her resignation as a "drama" and pointed out that her tenure in the House was anyway coming to an end in April next year. - PTI



Vehicles making their way through a flooded street after heavy rains in Ahmedabad, on Saturday. - UNI

Only way forward in J&K is through dialogue: PC

PUNE, July 23: The NDA Government's 'muscle flexing' strategy in Kashmir is wrong and the Congress believes the only way to find a 'political solution' to this 'political problem' is through talks, said former Union Home Minister P Chidambaram today.

Speaking to the media here on a slew of issues, the Congress stalwart said the situation in the Kashmir Valley has gone from bad to worse since the BJP-PDP coalition came to power.

"In the first six months of 2017 ... the number of civilians killed, number of jawans of security forces killed was much higher than that of 2016, and (figures of) 2016 was much higher than what it was in 2015," he said.

The NDA Government thinks there is a military solution and "flexing muscles" can bring normalcy in Kashmir, he said. "The Congress party rejects this approach, which is a completely wrong and counter-productive way of handling the things," he said. The Congress party believes that the only way forward is to recognise the problem is a political one. - PTI

Vaghela's exit may affect Gujarat politics

AHMEDABAD, July 23: The sudden move by Shankarsinh Vaghela to quit the Congress has the potential to alter political equations in Gujarat, where he is likely to pitch himself as a third alternative ahead of the Assembly polls, according to political observers.

While the former Chief Minister has not yet revealed his future plans, his exit from the Congress has worried both the Opposition party and the ruling BJP they say.

Speculation is rife in both parties about the 77-year-old veteran politician's next move and how it will impact their prospects in the crucial Assembly elections, in the home State of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

While the Congress is eyeing a return to power in Gujarat where it is in the Opposition for nearly two decades, the BJP is seeking to extend its good run in the State. - PTI

Batch of 1,002 pilgrims leave for Amarnath

JAMMU, July 23: A batch of 1,002

metre-high Amarnath cave shrine of Lord Shiva in south Kashmir Himalayas today where over two lakh devotees have paid obeisance this year.

According to an official, 1,002 is the lowest number of pilgrims in a single batch so far this year.

"A batch of 1,002 pilgrims today left Jammu in a convoy of 42 vehicles for twin base camps of Amarnath shrine. This is the lowest number so far, this year," a spokesman said.

Overall, with today's batch, a total of 65,483 pilgrims have left Jammu for Amarnath in 21 batches since the

yatra began from Jammu on June 28. As many as 2,36,515 pilgrims had paid obeisance at the cave shrine in south Kashmir Himalayas till last evening.

As many as 4,105 pilgrims left Jammu for Amarnath on July 14 followed by another batch of 3,398 pilgrims on July 15. On July 16, 3,603 pilgrims left Jammu for the shrine.

On July 17, the number of pilgrims visiting the cave shrine came down to 2,646 followed by 2,224 on July 18, 1,877 on July 19 and 1,782 on July 20.

On July 21, 1,180 and on July 22, 1,122 pilgrims left in batches for Amarnath from Jammu. The number of

pilgrims who left for the cave shrine today was 1,002.

On July 10, a bus carrying pilgrims in the Anantnag district of south Kashmir was attacked by terrorists. Eight devotees died and 32 were injured in the attack.

According to official figures, as many as 9,719 pilgrims paid obeisance at the Amarnath cave shrine on July 14, followed by 9,719 on July 15.

This figure dipped to 8,024 on July 17, 6,066 on July 18, 5,824 on July 19, 4,723 on July 20, 4,655 on July 21 and 4,518 on July 22, the data said.

The Government has mobilised a heavy security blanket of over 35,000

troops, including the police, the Army, the BSF and the CRPF for the yatra this year.

The annual yatra began this year amid a terror threat, with intelligence reports warning of a probable attack which prompted the authorities to mobilise the "highest level" of security, including satellite tracking system.

This year, the yatra will conclude on *Shrawan Purina* (Raksha Bandhan) on August 7.

Situated in a narrow gorge at the further end of Lidder Valley, the Amarnath shrine is 46 km from Pahalgam and 14 km from Baltal. - PTI

Court asks CBI to respond to Javadekar's plea in coal scam

NEW DELHI, July 23: A special court has directed the CBI to respond by September 6 to the objections of Union Ministers Prakash Javadekar and Hansraj Ahir against its

the probe, the CBI had filed a closure report in 2014, saying no incriminating evidence had come on record warranting prosecution of any accused.

The CBI leaders had alleged in their petition that the PIL had deliberately misrepresented facts to the 35th Screening Committee with the connivance of others to get the coal block in Chhattisgarh's Fatchepur allotted to it and the CBI had wrongly accepted the claims made by the accused.

The petition came in response to the court's earlier notice asking them whether they wanted to submit anything on the final report in the case.

The court had issued notices to both the ministers after CVC Director Sanjay Agarwal had informed it that the anti-graft watchdog was not a complainant in the matter and had no role to play in the case. It was these two leaders on whose complaint the CVC had started its proceedings, he said. - PTI



Union Minister for Finance, Corporate Affairs and Defence, Arun Jaitley speaking after inaugurating a Sainik Rest House at Naraina in New Delhi, on Sunday. - UNI

Keen to know reason behind Sunanda's death: Tharoor

BENGALURU, July 23: Congress MP Shashi Tharoor today said he was more anxious than anyone else to know the truth behind his wife Sunanda Pushkar's death.

He also said he would cooperate only with the probe agencies in investigation of the case and not with publicity seekers. "No one in this country can be more anxious than me to know the truth and to see a constructive and clear conclusion to this prolonged investigation," Tharoor told reporters here.

"My responsibility is to cooperate with the authorities and not with obstreperous, self-interested, publicity-seeking people ... I'm not going to cooperate with such people," the former Union Minister said.

Tharoor was speaking on the sidelines of a three-day international conference on Dr BR Ambedkar here.

Shashi Tharoor's son from her earlier marriage, Late Pushkar's son from her earlier marriage, has filed an application on his behalf in a pending plea filed by Swamy seeking probe in the death of Sunanda Pushkar.

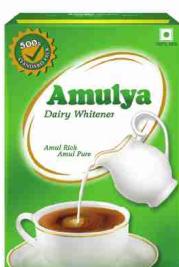
The counsel for Menon, Late Pushkar's son from her earlier marriage, has filed an application on his behalf in a pending plea filed by Swamy seeking probe in the death of Sunanda Pushkar. Sunanda's son from her earlier marriage, Late Pushkar's son from her earlier marriage, has filed an application on his behalf in a pending plea filed by Swamy seeking probe in the death of Sunanda Pushkar. The IAS officer has said that the entire loan of 36 lakh farmers will be waived while 89 lakh farmers will benefit from the scheme. I want to see the names and I have asked the party workers to find out those farmers as well," Tharoor said. - PTI

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'Transgender bill does not address important issues'

NEW DELHI, July 23: A BJP MP-headed parliamentary panel has criticised the Government's draft transgender Bill for not addressing important civil rights issues such as marriage and divorce among members of the community.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Justice And Empowerment in its report tabled in the Lok Sabha on Friday said transgenders "remain at risk of criminalisation under Section 377 of the IPC". The IPC section criminalises any "unnatural" sexual contact by a person, including acts of homosexuality.

The report comes at a time when the BJP-led NDA Government is under pressure to decriminalise homosexuality.

The draft Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill 2016 "does not refer to important civil rights like marriage and divorce, adoption among others, which are critical to transgender persons' lives, whereas many are engaged in marriage-like relations without any legal recognition from the State", it said.

The panel headed by BJP Lok Sabha member Ramesh Baig said the Bill is "silent" on granting reservation to transgenders under the socially and educationally backward classes category as directed by the Supreme Court.

It suggested that the proposed legislation "must at the very least" recognise transgenders' rights to partnership and marriage and that they should have the option to choose their gender independent of surgery or hormones. - PTI

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Hundreds of people offering Vavu Bali, a sacrificial ritual performed in memory of the departed souls of ancestors, on auspicious day of Karkidakam Vavu at Shanghumugham beach at Thiruvananthapuram, on Sunday. - UNI

3D holography may help spot alien life: study

WASHINGTON, July 23: Digital holograms - 3D images recorded using lasers - may be our best bet for finding alien life, scientists say.

No probe since NASA's Viking program in the late 1970s has explicitly searched for extraterrestrial life. Rather, the focus has been on finding water.

Saturn's icy moon Enceladus has a lot of water, but even if life does exist there in some microbial fashion, the difficulty for scientists on Earth is identifying those microbes from 790 million miles away.

"It's harder to distinguish between a microbe and a speck of dust than you'd think," said Jay Nadeau, research professor at California Institute of Technology in the US.

Enceladus has enormous geysers, venting water vapour through cracks in the moon's icy shell, regularly jet out into space.

When the Saturn probe Cassini flew by Enceladus in 2005, it spewed water vapour plumes in the south polar region blasting icy particles at nearly 2,000 kilometres per hour to an altitude of nearly 500 kilometres above the surface.

Scientists calculated that as much as 250 kilogrammes of water vapour were released every second in each plume.

Since those first observations, more than a hundred geyser spots have been spotted.

Water blasting out into space offers a rare opportunity, said Nadeau. While landing on a foreign body is difficult and costly, a cheaper and easier option might be to send a probe to Enceladus and pass it through the jets, where it would collect water samples that could possibly contain microbes.

Some strategies for demonstrating that a microscopic speck is actually a living microbe involve searching for patterns in its structure or studying its specific chemical composition. "Looking at patterns and chemistry is useful, but I think we need to take a step back and look for more general characteristics of living things, like the presence of motion," he said.

To study the motion of potential microbes from Enceladus's plumes, Nadeau proposed using an instrument called a digital holographic microscope that has been modified specifically for astrobiology.

In digital holographic microscopy, an object is illuminated with a laser and the light that bounces off the object and back to a detector is measured.

This scattered light contains information about the intensity of the scattered light and about its phase - a property that can be used to tell how far the light travelled.

With the two types of information, a computer can reconstruct a 3D image of the object - one that can show motion through all three dimensions. - PTI

William, Harry regret last rushed phone call with Diana



LONDON, July 23: Britain's Princes William and Harry have spoken for the first time of their regret of having a rushed telephonic conversation with their mother, Princess Diana before her fatal car crash in Paris in 1997.

In a television documentary to mark 20 years since their mother's death, the princes recall being at Balmoral Castle in Scotland when having what would turn out to be their last telephone call with their mother. They say they were desperate to rush off the telephone and get back to playing instead.

William and Harry, who were 15 and 12 at the time, said they had no notion that the short phone call would be their last with Diana.

"It was her speaking from Paris, I can't really necessarily remember what I said but all I do remember is probably regretting for the rest of my life how short the phone call was," Harry said.

Talking about the phone call, his elder brother William said the conversation still weighs on his mind "quite, quite heavily".

"Harry and I were in a des-



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (C) attends the weekly cabinet meeting at his office in Jerusalem on Sunday. - UNI

Erdogan says prolonging Gulf crisis 'not in anyone's interest'

ISTANBUL, July 23: Prolonging the crisis in the Gulf sparked by the isolation of Qatar is not in the interest of anyone, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said today as he embarked on a key visit to the region.

"No-one has any interest in prolonging this crisis any more," said Erdogan before leaving Istanbul airport on the two-day trip that will take him to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and then Qatar. He accused "enemies" of seeking to "fire up tensions between brothers" in the region.

On June 5, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt cut ties with Qatar accusing it of backing extremism and fostering ties with their Shiite rival Iran. Doha denies the claim and has been strongly backed by Ankara throughout the standoff.

The crisis with Qatar has put Turkey in a delicate position and Erdogan has repeatedly said he wants to see the end of the dispute as soon as possible.

Over the last years, Qatar has emerged as Turkey's number one ally in the Middle East, with Ankara and Doha closely coordinating their positions on a number of issues including the Syria conflict where both are staunch foes of President Bashar al-Assad.

Crucially, Turkey is in the throes of setting up a military base in Qatar, its only such outpost in the region. It has sped up the process since the crisis began and reportedly now has 150 troops at the base.

"From the first moments of the Qatar crisis, we have been on the side of peace, stability, solidarity and dialogue," said Erdogan.

But Turkey, which is also going through a turbulent time with the European Union and the United States, also does not want to wreck its own relations with regional kingpin Saudi Arabia.

"As the elder statesman in the Gulf region, Saudi Arabia has a big role to play in solving the crisis," said Erdogan, with explicitly criticising the kingdom.

Erdogan said he supported the mediation efforts of Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, a possible indication Ankara sees Kuwait as the key to solving the crisis.

Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani said Friday he was ready for talks to resolve the crisis so long as the emirate's sovereignty is respected. - AFP

Sharif rejects JIT charge of hiding UAE employment

ISLAMABAD, July 23: Pakistan's embattled Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has admitted before the Supreme Court, hearing a money laundering case against him, that he had obtained a permit to work in a company in the UAE while rejecting the allegation that he had concealed his employment.

In a written reply submitted in the apex court yesterday through his coun-

sels - Khawaja Haris, Anjum Pervaiz and Saad Hashmi - Sharif said his employment with the Capital FZE and obtaining of work permit for it had been mentioned in his nomination papers submitted to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) during the 2013 general election.

A Joint Investigation Team (JIT) constituted by the apex court to probe the offshore business dealings

of the Sharif family in 1990s in its report said that the prime minister was the chairman of Capital FZE and he had also obtained a work permit from the UAE government for the purpose.

The Prime Minister's lawyers had initially denied that Sharif was the chairman of any offshore company.

In his fresh reply, Sharif told the Supreme Court that his son, Hassan

Nawaz, was the "owner, director & secretary and the authorised signatory of the Capital FZE".

"Nawaz Sharif is not a shareholder, or director or secretary of Capital FZE," according to the reply.

The premier was only a "ceremonial office holder" in 2007 when he was in exile and had nothing to do with the running of the company or supervising its affairs, it said. - PTI

Sri Lanka cop hurt in Tamil judge's murder bid dies

COLOMBO, July 23: A personal protection officer of a prominent Sri Lankan Tamil high court judge died today after being shot by an unidentified man during a failed assassination bid on the judge, police said.

The officer was injured and hospitalised in Jaffna's Nallur area yesterday after the unidentified man snatched his revolver while attacking Justice Manickavasagar Illanchevian.

Justice Illanchevian was unharmed while the policeman had suffered injuries.

The wounded police officer who was admitted to a Jaffna hospital has died, police said.

"I saw a civilian approach my escort and trying to remove his pistol. He fought for several minutes to grab the weapon," Illanchevian told reporters. A fearless judge, Illanchevian had struck terror in the hearts of criminals in the Tamil-dominated Jaffna town.

"I am handling the most dangerous cases in Jaffna. I call on the authorities to ensure protection of judiciary," he said.

Illanchevian's car was caught in a traffic block in Nallur junction when the shooting took place. - PTI



Actors wearing traditional costumes perform during celebrations of Russian republic of North Ossetia Days in Krasnayarsk, Siberia, Russia on Saturday. Picture taken on Saturday. - UNI

Exercise may help prevent dementia: study



BERLIN, July 23: Exercising regularly not only enhances physical fitness but may also boosts brain metabolism, preventing cognitive impairment and dementia in old age, a study has found.

Numerous studies have shown that physical exercise seems beneficial in the prevention of cognitive impairment and dementia in old age.

In order to find more about the positive influence of physical activity on the brain, researchers at Goethe University Frankfurt in Germany have examined the effects of regular exercise on brain metabolism and memory of 60 participants aged between 65 and 85.

They found regular physical exercise not only enhances fitness but also has a positive impact on brain metabolism.

Researchers thoroughly examined all the participants by assessing movement-related parameters, cardiopulmonary fitness and cognitive performance.

In addition, magnetic resonance tomography (MRT) and magnetic resonance spectroscopy

(MRS) were used to measure brain metabolism and brain structure.

Following this examination, the participants mounted an exercise bike three times a week over a period of 12 weeks. The 30-minute training sessions were individually adapted to each participant's performance level.

The participants were examined again after the end of the programme in order to document the effects of this physical activity on brain metabolism, cognitive performance and brain structure.

The researchers also investigated to what extent exercise had led to an improvement in the participants' physical performance.

As expected,

physical activity had influenced brain metabolism; it prevented an increase in choline. The concentration of this metabolite often rises as a result of the increased loss of nerve cells, which typically occurs in the case of Alzheimer's disease.

Physical exercise led to stable cerebral choline concentrations in the training group, whereas choline levels increased in the control group.

The participants' physical fitness also improved; they showed increased cardiac efficiency after the training period. Overall, these findings suggest that physical exercise not only improves physical fitness but also protects cells.

The research was published in the journal *Translational Psychiatry*. - PTI



RECRUITING OF BPAC CARDS
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Sr.DSTE-MLG dtd: 20-07-2017 E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work. E-Tender No. & Date: N-2017-15-14-5-Dstt-MLG dtg: 20-07-2017-15-14-5-Dstt-MLG
Re: Supply of BPAC Cards in section NNG-E-DGU & KYQ-AGT section under Sr.DSTE/MLG of LMG division Tender Ref. No: T-15.07.17 Date and Time of closing of E-Tender at 15.00 hrs. on 28-08-2017. The complete information with the tender document for above e-tender can be obtained in website www.iieps.gov.in
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Engineer, Maitlam
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Wall collapses near Panbazar RBI branch

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, July 23: A roadside wall collapsed today near the Reserve Bank of India branch at Panbazar.

Around 10 feet length of the wall gave in. The incident took place around 10 am.

A sugarcane vendor, identified as Teju Yadav (35), was injured in the mishap. He was admitted at MMCH.

The wall is around 20 years old and it forms the boundary of a Kali Temple located in Panbazar.

Logs seized at Jorabat

CORRESPONDENT

JORABAT, July 23: In a joint operation conducted in the Jorabat area, six Segun logs were seized by the officials of the Khampana Wildlife Range yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, the team led by forest officials Jayanta Kalita, Jhantu Talukdar and Himangshu Talukdar raided the area and found six Segun logs at the spot near NH-37 around 4.30 am. The area falls under the Jorabat Forest Beat Office.

However, the miscreants fled the spot taking the advantage of darkness. Local residents alleged that no patrolling has been done in the area by the Forest Beat Office till date.

Flood relief

GUWAHATI, July 23: As part of its charitable activities, the Assam Forest Officers' Wives Welfare Society has donated an amount of Rs 25,000 as relief for the flood victims in Lakhimpur district, stated a release issued here.

Academic session

GUWAHATI, July 23: The North East Diocesan Social Service Society (NEDSS) inaugurated the second academic session of its civil service academy on its Kharguli premises here recently. – Staff Reporter



A UPSC rank holder being felicitated by Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal during an awards ceremony organised by the State level advisory committee for students and youth welfare, in Guwahati on Sunday. – UB Photos

Percentage of medically certified deaths up in State

PRANJAL BHUYAN

GUWAHATI, July 23: Even as the percentage of medically certified deaths among the total registered deaths in Assam have shown an upward trend in recent times, their overall proportion still remain at only around a quarter of the registered deaths.

As per the latest data from the Office of the Registrar General of India, there were 1,16,778 registered deaths in Assam during 2015, and of the total, 30,017 were medically certified deaths.

Thus the percentage of medically certified deaths to the total registered deaths stood at 25.7 per cent in 2015, the latest year for which the figures are available.

This is an increase from 2014 when the quantum of medically certified deaths had stood at 21.9 per cent. There were 1,14,877 registered deaths in the State in 2014, of which 25,123 were medically certified deaths.

However, in 2013 there were only 1,009 or a mere 0.9 per cent medically certified deaths in Assam as against a total of

1,06,810 registered deaths. During 2015, Goa ranked first with 100 per cent registered deaths as medically certified, followed by 86.9 per cent in Lakshadweep, 84.2 per cent in Daman & Diu, 74.4 per cent in Puducherry and 64.0 per cent in Tripura.

Amongst the bigger States, the highest level of medical certification of cause of death was observed in Tamil Nadu (40.5 per cent), Karnataka (37.2 per cent) and Maharashtra (34.5 per cent).

Assam's rank among all the states and Union Territories (UTs) was 18th during 2015.

According to the findings of the 'Report on Medical Certification of Cause of Death 2015' from the Office of the Registrar General of India, infectious and parasitic diseases accounted for 7,895 (or 26.3 per cent) of the medically certified deaths in Assam in 2015. Among other causes, 5,895 (or 19.6 per

cent) were due to neoplasms, 652 (2.2 per cent) due to diseases of blood and blood forming organs and certain disorders involving the immune system, 2,211 (7.4 per cent) due to 'endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases', 1,233 (4.1 per cent) due to mental and behavioural disorders, 1,794 (6 per cent) due to diseases of the nervous system, and 2,066 (6.9 per cent) due to diseases of the circulatory system.

Diseases of the respiratory system accounted for 2,130 (7.1 per cent), diseases of digestive system for 2,576 (8.6 per cent), diseases of genitourinary system for 1.7 (1.7 per cent), pregnancy and childbirth for 818 (2.7 per cent), conditions originating in the perinatal period for 474 (1.6 per cent), and 'injury, poisoning and certain other consequences of external cause' for 1,772 (or 5.8 per cent) of the medically certified deaths in Assam in 2015.

The medical certification of cause of

death under Civil Registration System has been implemented in the states and UTs in a phased manner to provide data on cause of death.

"However, it has so far been implemented in only certain hospitals, generally in urban areas which are selected by the Chief Registrar of Births and Deaths. Thus, the scheme covers mostly those deaths, which occur in medical institutions located in urban areas. The coverage under the scheme in terms of percentage level of medical certification as well as the type of hospitals covered has not been uniform across the states and UTs," it said.

It is evident from the fact that while overall medically certified deaths across Assam accounted for 25.7 per cent of the total registered deaths during 2015, in the urban areas of the State the proportion was as high as 82.2 per cent.

The report stated that some of the states have notified only teaching and specialised hospitals under it, whereas in others, only district hospitals and Primary Health Centres (PHCs) have been brought under its ambit.

Musical evening

GUWAHATI, July 23: At the initiative of Prism Production, a city-based socio-cultural organisation, a musical programme will be organised on July 30 at the Tirthanath Sarma auditorium at Chandmari here from 5.30 pm onwards. In the programme, some unsung and unpublished songs of Assam's two literary geniuses, Late Dr Birenra Kumar Bhattacharyya and Taifuzzul Ali, will be presented. The programme will be inaugurated by noted musician Ramen Baruah, stated a press release. – Staff Reporter

Maths Olympiad

GUWAHATI, July 23: The Pre-Regional Mathematics Olympiad will be held on August 20 from 10 am to 12.30 pm in certain registered centres all over India.

State entrepreneurs take part in training on fashion items

GUWAHATI, July 23: A training programme was conducted by the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Kolkata, with sponsorship of the office of the Commissioner of Industries and Commerce, Government of Assam. The 15-day training programme on Product Development on Home Fashion Items' was conducted for the women entrepreneurs of Assam, from July 7 to 21 at NIFT, Kolkata campus.

During the programme,

participants were trained in different areas like product development,

print and colour application, quality understanding, raw material knowledge, marketing and entrepreneurship inputs, drawing and illustrations, embroidery techniques, computer application, etc. The participants developed many products and samples in the field of fashion home.

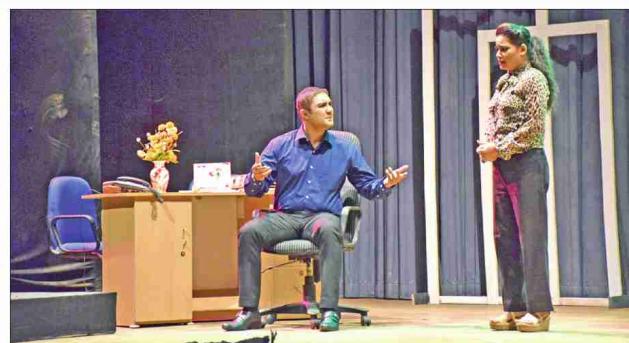
In the concluding session of the programme, NIFT Director Col Subroto Biswas (retired), Additional Director Manjula Saikia Bhuyan and Industries and Commerce Deputy Director (Training) Dr Minakshi Devi were present and they gave

valuable suggestions to the participants.

Meanwhile, 50 women entrepreneurs, who have been undergoing a three-month training course on block painting and jewellery at the Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE),

have been sent to Jaipur for a week-long market survey on the subject.

An exhibition-cum-sale of their products will be held after the programme's completion. This programme is also being organised and sponsored by the Women's Cell of the Commissioner of Industries and Commerce, Assam.



A scene from the play Siyor, written by eminent playwright Late Arun Sarma, at the ITA Centre for Performing Arts, Makhakhwa, in Guwahati on Saturday evening. – UB Photos

High-voltage power line at south Hengrabari

Heat and humidity

On July 18, 2017, Guwahati recorded the highest July day (maximum) temperature of 38.5 degree Celsius of the past 10 years, making life miserable for the city residents. But, due to high humidity, it felt like 47 to 48 degrees Celsius on that day.

As per some sources, a person even died of heatstroke. So, it is high time that we acted wisely and took some remedial steps, besides planting trees. Here are a few suggestions:

People should be encouraged to use solar panels so as to save electricity at the domestic level. The roads should be painted white as blacktopped roads trap sunlight and radiate more heat.

The power authorities are requested to take urgent steps to ensure safety of the residents of this thickly populated area before it is too late.

– N Ahmed,
Satgaon

making the temperature a lot higher than the usual. White roads will reflect sunlight instead of trapping it.

The State government should also encourage youngsters in the field of science and technology to give new and innovative ideas in order to deal with such conditions.

– Raju Bhattacharya,
Lachini Nagar

Poor drainage system

A fast growing city like Guwahati has a very poor drainage system. Rainfall for about 20 minutes causes severe water-logging in some

areas of the city and the main reason is improper drainage system. Now, this issue should be really given importance because water-logging or artificial flood poses a grave threat to the inhabitants of the city.

During artificial floods, people are not able to move out of their homes for work, students cannot go to their classes, and so on. In the recent artificial floods in the city, some people also lost their lives.

The State government must pay immediate attention to this issue. How will it be possible to usher in progress unless the city authorities

address this basic problem? How will Guwahati become a Smart City under such circumstances?

The people of not only Guwahati, but also the entire State, must raise their voices against such problems, which the city in particular and the State in general are currently facing. The government must make steps so that Assam can become one of the most developed states in the country.

– Akita Kakoti,
Cotton University

'Illegal' hike in fare

The recent withdrawal of old Trekkers and tempos from the city roads and introduction of metro share taxis is a good move on the part of the Government of Assam. But, one loophole still remains.

The fares of metro share taxis should remain the same as those of old Trekkers. The newly introduced metro share taxis charge a minimum fare of Rs 10 instead of Rs 7.50 charged by old Trekkers, particularly on the Bhalumukh-Garchuk route and the Paltan Bazaar-Lokhra route.

Due to the high fares illegally charged by these metro share taxis,

common people, particularly students, are suffering a lot. How can they increase the fares without the consent of the State government?

I, therefore, would like to ask the authorities concerned to take necessary action to contain such illegal hikes in fares.

– Jeetumoni Barman,
Ganeshpura

Parking woes

I would like to bring to the notice of the authorities concerned the fact that several places under the Ganeshguri, Bhangshuri and Ulubari flyovers have been lying unused and these places can be used for commercial parking of vehicles.

It is observed that at present, a little portion under the Ganeshguri flyover is being used for commercial parking of vehicles. However, it is not understood why the rest of such unused spaces under different flyovers in the city are not being used for commercial parking.

All such vacant spaces under the city flyovers are used for commercial parking, the State government can not only earn some revenue, but it will also minimise parking woes to some extent in the city.

– Sumanta Mukherjee,
Ulubari

Paltan Bazar traffic

Traffic movement in the Paltan Bazar area is very slow due to several bottlenecks. Slow movement of traffic makes it terribly annoying for drivers to pass through this area during busy hours.

On the western side of the Swahid Udayan opposite Paltan Bazar market, there is a transformer and a 'traffic island' which occupy almost 50 per cent of the width of the road. With the relocation of the transformer and dismantling of the 'traffic island', vehicles can move with certain speed. Then, the illegal vegetable market located along the wall of



Citizens are requested to express their Guwahati-specific views within 100 words and mail the same to citizensvoice365@gmail.com

the Swahid Udayan will also shut down automatically. Dismantling the 'traffic island' near Janata Hotel at Paltan Bazar will create more free space for faster movement of traffic.

– A citizen,
Guwahati

MESSAGE FOR TODAY

All glory comes from daring to begin.
— WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

The Assam Tribune

Resolution required

Even as our politicians fiddle, Kashmir continues to burn. From killing of pilgrims, lethal assaults by terrorists on our security forces as well as the local police, to shooting dead of stone-pelting protesters, sporadic acts of violence continue unabated. The latest bizarre incident has been the beating up of eight local policemen by armymen, allegedly because the former had tried to enforce the no vehicular movement at night rule! Given this scenario and the deepening alienation of a large swathe, in particular of young people of Kashmir, from the national mainstream, it is surprising to observe the inertia which has afflicted the State Government and the Centre. There has been no significant attempt to douse the simmering fire; on the contrary, a live-long stand by the Centre and its refusal to engage separatists in dialogue has only exacerbated the situation. Suggestions, naturally, have emerged from varying quarters. National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah has suggested third-party mediation to resolve the Kashmir issue, something that the Centre had been rejecting from the beginning. Now it is the turn of the Congress to put their views into the suggestion box. The party has formed a high-level policy-planning group for Jammu and Kashmir. Not surprisingly, the group at its meeting summarily rejected Abdullah's suggestion and stuck to the traditional line that there must be a bilateral solution to the Kashmir issue.

In the past, other countries had volunteered to step in to help solve the problem. The UK, US, Russia and even China had declared their willingness to don the mantle of peacemakers, but India had rightly rejected such overtures. However, something needs to be done and done quickly if the situation is not to deteriorate any further, which implies the compelling necessity to engage in dialogue with all the stakeholders, including Pakistan and the separatists. If the Centre believes that continued action by paramilitary forces will ultimately tire the protesters out, while economic compulsions would make Kashmiris long for normalcy, it is living in a fool's paradise. Inaction in other conflict hotspots across the globe has protracted and deepened problems rather than solving them and Kashmir forebodes to be no different. The Centre's inertia has provided an opportunity to Pakistan to carry on its subversive strategy in Kashmir, while militant Islamic groups are eyeing the region as a recruiting ground through radicalization. Opening up channels of dialogues at least offers hope to the saner elements in Kashmir that any attempt was being made to tackle the issue. No doubt those beyond redemption will try to scuttle any essay at dialogue since it might deprive them of a peg on which to hang their anti-Indian cloak upon. But there is an urgent requirement to at least take tentative steps to resolve a problem that has been festering for over six decades.

Arsenic threat

The presence of arsenic in the groundwater of the State is a problem which requires prompt attention and can no longer be swept under the carpet. The incidence of high concentrations of arsenic in drinking water has emerged as a major public health issue. The problem has now assumed serious proportions and it is high time effective strategies are evolved within the shortest possible time to tackle it. The gravity of the problem can be gauged by the fact that 19 districts of the State have arsenic contaminated groundwater. The districts are Sonitpur, Lakhimpur, Goalpara, Morigaon, Nagaon, Baksa, Nalbari, Barpeta, Hailakandi, Jorhat, Karinganj, Cachar, Golaghat, Darrang, Bongaigaon, Sivasagar, Dhubri, Dhemaji and Kamrup. The number of arsenic-affected habitations in the State stands at 3,726. Jorhat with 959 affected habitations and Baska with 821 affected habitations have been worst hit in terms of high arsenic levels in groundwater. And the distressing fact is that the arsenic levels present in groundwater in these districts is quite high. According to WHO, long-term exposure to arsenic through drinking water causes cancer of the skin, lungs, urinary bladder and kidney, as well as other skin changes such as pigmentation and thickening (hyperkeratosis). As people largely depend on groundwater for their needs, the risk due to use of arsenic-contaminated water goes up manifold in the districts where the contamination levels are quite high. Prompt steps should be initiated to minimize dependence on potentially toxic groundwater thereby preventing future health risks. Majority of sources are individual tube wells, deep tube wells and ring wells.

With arsenic contamination being detected in 19 districts of the State, an intensive study needs to be carried out to generate more and accurate data on this particular aspect. With arsenic contamination in the State being high, there is urgent requirement to create awareness among the vulnerable population on the adverse impact of consuming arsenic-contaminated water. The people in the affected areas should be motivated to test the groundwater before using it for drinking/cooking purposes. The Government needs to take up new water supply schemes in the arsenic-affected districts and the contaminated groundwater sources should be discarded. The authorities with the help of the experts should evolve low cost technologies to minimize the presence of arsenic in potable water in the affected areas. In this context it's heartening to note that the State's Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department is planning to install solar power pumps and an affordable nano technology-based water purifier developed by IIT Madras to provide safe drinking water in the affected areas. The project if implemented will help the people of the arsenic-affected areas in getting safe drinking water.

ULFA peace talks: a fettered issue

■ Indrajit Kalita

Since 1979, the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) has been an inseparable part of Assam's history, though not for the best of interests. Given the inception of the armed struggle at a critical juncture of the Assam Agitation with the detection and deportation of foreign nationals being the sole agenda, and thus safeguarding the interest of the native inhabitants, initially much public support was enjoyed by the outfit. Taking it as a blessing, the outfit inserted an added edge into the long-standing demand of sovereignty to the "colonial jugernaut", a debatable issue as such, of the Centre could be stopped. The assumed step-motherly attitude or neo-colonial machinery of the Centre was given circulation by the outfit, and the acute sense of deprivation made people give all-out support. However, the agenda of protecting due rights of natives turned questionable as incidents of extortion, kidnapping, bomb blast, etc., reigned supreme, the worst being the Dhemaji blast in 2004 and Guwahati serial blasts (though not an ULFA handiwork) in 2008.

It is true that the Indian Army's lethal crackdown, mention may be made of Operation Bajrang and Rhino, upon the ULFA incurred irreparable loss, and the outfit's stronghold of the 1980s came down drastically in the post-operation period. Though native civilians suffered a lot during the anti-insurgency campaign, moral support for the outfit did not dry out completely. But the attitude bore a wry face when the common people

were targeted by the outfit itself, and the act having frontline cadres hideouts in Bangladesh, a country from where incessant flow of illegal influx has posed a genuine threat to the people of the State. With the erosion of mass support and the Government's strong military measure, thanks to the neighbouring countries' cooperative stance, the romantic concept of sovereignty could not withstand the call of time, and there arose the need of negotiation with the Central Government. This was given further vent with the arrest of certain key members including Arbindra Rajkhowa, chairperson of the outfit. However, the peace initiative minus Pares Baruah, the commander-in-chief and vice-chairperson, is a matter of deep worry since he would never make compromise on the ideal of "Sneudhan Ason" (Independent Assam) and those who do not sustain this status quo are opposed in the strongest terms.

As most of the cadres have come for talks, Pares Baruah's indifference may not be an acceptable development, provided his close nexus with the Gan National Liberation Army (GNLA), National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang), and National Democratic Front of Bodoland (Songbijit). Their strong base in Myanmar is found engaging in scores of anti-national activities, and the drive for

new recruitment has been a powerful agenda. Easy access to arms smuggling, extortion of money and China's blessed support cannot be ruled out in terms of fomenting unrest that bears every possibility of derailing the peace process. Of course, the recent death of SS Khaplang seems to be a major loss as far as the collective effort of the separatist groups in the North-east is concerned. His proactive role in providing a solid platform under

talks and the Centre's receptive attitude towards them, though sterner in combating every conceivable challenge, Pares Baruah must have understood the abject impossibility of sovereignty. But he still sticks to it, which is nothing but the sustenance of pride and self-respect. The high voltage jingoism that gave rise to the outfit and its successful run in the 1980s seems missing in the present context since the fast erosion of mass support

has incurred the outfit

the difficulty in realizing the ideology.

Though the peace talk does not seem as effective unless Pares Baruah comes over-ground, extradition of Anup Chetia, general secretary, on November 11, 2015 was thought of making good the void created by the absence of the former. It was expected that Anup Chetia's handingover to the Government of India would enunciate a new chapter of peace talk, and the hardliners would also

grow interest in dialogue as a preferred measure to address their problems. However, nothing substantial as such has been gained, and the snail's pace of the talk is still reality. Although the present Central Government seems to have shown liberal attitude in continuing the dialogue process, the issue fails to cut ice in the political diplomacy of the country. It turns out to be more peripheral, which could be noticed in a variety of developments including the appointment of the new interlocutor, and utter disregard at making the

progress of talk public. When PC Halder's term as the interlocutor terminated, another official should have been appointed without much delay. It is good to see Dinesh Sharma, former Director of IB, being appointed to continue the talk process, but the time taken for this was too long. Till now, many rounds of talks have been commenced, but not publicizing the progress is quite disappointing. The Government diplomacy apart, fear of strict opposition to the course of talk might have prevented the concerned from making it public. This speculation is partially true, but it undermines the expectation of civil society that wants a lasting solution to the problem.

Indeed the loss the State has incurred centring the ULFA problem is still fresh in the psyche of people. Be it the loss of human resource, given the participation of a large number of educated youths in the armed struggle or the strong anti-insurgency measures by the security forces, the people have gone through traumatic experiences. Moreover, the stay of the cadres in the detention camps for more than eight years and their meager stipend of Rs 3000 a month is no less a serious matter. As they are in expectation of immediate solution, the need of the hour is to show respect and continue dialogue in a time bound manner. It would have been better, had Pares Baruah come to the table of negotiation with some compromise on the demand of sovereignty. Of course, the Government too should create a decent ground so as to convince the concerned at the seriousness being accorded to the peace talks with the outfit.

The paradox of jobless growth

■ Aditya Gogoi

Few can dispute with the fact that the first decade of the new millennium witnessed the fastest rate of growth for the Indian economy. Even fewer would question the other fact that this was also the period which saw an abnormally low rate of growth in job creation. Let's sum up the two together and what we have is a new monster called "jobless growth". Simple terminology defines "jobless growth" as proportionate growth in employment. If, somehow, India's growth data are assumed to be real, the economy in the recent times seems to see stupendous growth and macroeconomic expansion. Pertinent to mention that all this while, indices for base year growth measuring indicators have crafted been revised and upgraded to enhance better comparative performance. But the data on employment available in various sectors of the economy, which is a major indicator reflecting people's real state of economic prosperity, may offset the growth of the India Shining slogans. A close look at the trend of employment data will reveal the bitter fact that India has pushed itself into a tun-

nel of long-term joblessness. According to the Labour Ministry's 27th Quarterly Employment Survey of eight employment intensive industries – textile, leather, metals, automobiles, garment, transport, IT/BPO and handloom and power loom – there are 43,000 job losses in the financial year 2015-16. At the peak, this sector can absorb 1.1 million people, as it did in 2010. During the period 2001-11, the growth rate of employment (1.4%), which itself was manifold less than the GDP growth rate, was much lower than the growth rate of the labour force (2.23%). The Census data of 2011 shows that the average growth rate of the economy has been 7.7%, while it is only 1.8% for employment. The 66th round of NSSO data on employment in 2011 reveals that between 2004-05 and 2009-10, only one million jobs were added per year; in a period when the economy averaged a record 8.43% growth annually. Data published by the Indian Labour Bureau Survey shows that 2,000 companies of eight sampled industries generated all of one lakh jobs in 2013, a fall from the four lakh jobs generated in 2014, even though the growth rate in 2014 was lower

than that in 2015. A HDFC bank report states that "employment elasticity" of our economy is close to zero. For every one point rise in GDP jobs grow only by 0.15. Fifteen years ago, it was 0.39.

In India, the growth over the last few decades is attributed to the expansion of the service sector (owing to the post 1991 liberalization agenda). Thought the service sector-led growth contributed greatly to soaring GDP levels, it still confines to a narrow and upper segment of the society, employing less than 30% of the population. Tragedy for India is that the biggest source of employment for nearly half of the population still lies in the agriculture sector, but it contributes merely 16% of the GDP.

The manufacturing sector is considered as the most dynamic among all the sectors and has the highest potential of generating job and therefore absorbing labour. Since the inception of the economic reforms of 1991, the nature of Indian manufacturing seemed to have moved towards capital intensity to fulfill the corporate satisfaction by expanding production and productivity level. The consequence led to eating up only skilled people in the labour force. Therefore, growth of employment

opportunities fails to keep pace with the growth of output most of the time. In spite of having four-time higher growth potential, the MSME sector is still under-invested which not only bypasses the realization of full capacity of production, but also conceals the scope for employing more and more people. Worsening credit credibility becomes another blockade behind the under-performance of the sector.

Moreover, various State govern-

ments are also not interested to demonstrate timely reform of the labour market to increase wage incentive and have successfully failed to create incentive for the employers to hire more labours across sectors. Existence of some acts like Industrial Dispute Act, which according to a World Bank study lowers the employment in the organized manufacturing sector by 25%, only adds misery to joblessness. Though various government policies including programmes like Startup India, Skill India, Make in India, etc., have added few jobs into the circulation, most of them fail to address the prolonged unemployment issue in the rural and sub-urban areas.

The high time has arrived to make livelihood creation central among the development policies rather than just predicting as natural fallout of growth process. As the organized manufacturing sector no longer remains the guarantor of job creation, more and more attempt should be made in strengthening the informal/unorganized sector of the economy. Boosting entrepreneurial instinct among the youth and conscience investment along with other knowledge-based incentives can play a formidable role tackling joblessness. State intervention in the form of higher investment in education linked with industrial demand will expand the employment base alongside the development of entrepreneurial abilities. This can be supplemented by relative ease of official procedures in establishing enterprises within the organized sector. Contracting the gender gap in labour participation is another vital area to be addressed. As per World Bank data, labour participation in India among the women is only 27%. Bringing more and more females into the workforce will be the only way to mitigate the gender issue in the context.

As the nation is already facing numerous hardships, if not timely checked, the conundrum of jobless growth can paralyse the economy for a longer period.

Letters to the EDITOR

Sir: — When Mahatma Gandhi launched the Dandi March on April 6, 1930, the RSS also did not stay aloof from it. By then Dr Hedgewar was unanimously named as the "Sarsanghchalak" of the RSS. He volunteered to participate in this movement. This, when the Sangh was in its infancy, the Sangh started with only 10-15 members in its fold in 1925 and was hardly a force in 1930 having very few *shakhas* (units) and members, and yet Dr Hedgewar preferred to be jailed for nine months leaving the task of expanding the Sangh.

Vithalbhai Patel presided over the RSS function at Nagpur in 1928, Madan Mohan Malaviya visited the RSS *shakha* at Nagpur in 1929. Mahatma Gandhi himself visited a Sangh camp on December 25, 1934, at Wardha. He joined Appaji Joshi, a renowned Congress leader, in offering *pranam* to the RSS flag. He held a lengthy conversation with Dr Hedgewar the next day and was impressed by the vision of the RSS. Subhash Chandra Bose and Syama Prasad Mukherjee visited Dr Hedgewar

Freedom struggle and role of RSS

in 1940 and discussed plans for the struggle of Independence.

Many of the prominent underground leaders of the 1942 movement were provided safe shelters by the RSS activists. Aruna Asaf Ali and Jay Prakash Narayan were housed in Delhi by *Sanghchaklak* Lala Hansraj Gupta; Achyut Patwardhan and Sane Guruji were closeted at the residence of Punc *Sanghchaklak* Bhauabesh Deshmukh. Kranthiveer Narao Patil was sheltered at Aundi *Sanghchaklak* Pt SD Satavalekar's house.

In 1947, the RSS had played a major role in Kashmir's merger with India. The then RSS *pracharak* in Kashmir Balraj Madhok, had listened to Sheikh Abdulhaq's speech in Srinagar in October 1947 and had met Sardar Patel and many others and given them vital information. The then RSS chief MS Golwalkar had played a major role in convincing Maharaja Hari Singh to merge with India. Kedarnath Sahni also played a major role in this. The volunteers of the RSS also played a part; they defended the Srinagar airport until the Army arrived to begin recapturing Kashmir from Pakistani infiltrators. They helped

existing road quality will remain wreathed. Yours etc., RONJOY BORDOLOI, Guwahati.

Assam floods

Sir: — Assam annually bears the brunt of floods. Floods that occur during the rainy season in Assam are a curse for the people of the State. There are reports of loss of human life, damage to property and destruction of crops during the time of floods in Assam. Further, the Brahmaputra and its tributaries are causing massive erosion to the banks resulting in displacement of people. The major places that have been affected by the erosion of the Brahmaputra are Rongoria in Dibrugarh, Matmora in Dhaokukhna, Majuli and Neamatiagh, Lohorhat in Morigaon, Palashbari and Gumi in Kamrup district, South Salma and Manchari. Till now, anti-erosion measures taken by the Government have not proved 100% effective in stopping the damage caused by the Brahmaputra and its tributaries in Assam. Year after year, the Brahmaputra is eroding its banks ferociously and the same has swallowed people's dwelling places and cultivable lands. Foolproof anti-erosion measures need to be taken by the Government for the

protection of the riverbanks against erosion. Yours etc., MAHESWAR DEKA, Rangiya.

Ammo shortage

Sir: — The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India on Friday revealed the critical shortage of ammunition in the Indian Army. In its report that was tabled in Parliament, the CAG found deficiencies in the performance of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) and no improvement in the functioning of its factories in comparison to what it was in 2013. The report pointed out on two critical shortages in the artillery and tank ammunition and blamed the OFB for failing to deliver as per the roadmap that was set in 2013. Ammunition is a critical piece of operational preparedness and, therefore, the Government must assure that the minimum acceptable level of ammunition is always available. The Government should take steps to tackle the shortage of ammunition immediately. Yours etc., SUKANYA DAIMARI, Gauhati University.

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.

Health dept on the toes after H1N1 claims two lives

RITURAJ BORTHKAKUR

GUWAHATI, July 23: With two deaths resulting from H1N1 virus, popularly known as swine flu, in the State this year, the Health department has geared up to prevent a possible spurt in the number of cases.

This year, altogether 124 cases have been tested positive for H1N1, and two of the infected patients died recently – both at private hospitals in the city.

Sources in the Health department said while this is the lean season, there are apprehensions that there could be a spurt in cases during the peak season later from November to March.

So far this year, 12,500 people have been infected with

the influenza A (H1N1) virus in the country, of whom 600 have died. Maharashtra alone has registered 284 deaths, which by itself is much more than the total mortality figure of 265 in the country as a result of H1N1 in 2016.

In the first three months of 2017, the numbers of cases and of deaths were fairly high, at over 6,000 and 160 respectively.

BC Bhagawati of the State Health department told *The Assam Tribune* the Government has planned out a vaccination drive. Initially, the vaccination will target the high-risk groups, especially the health-care providers.

"Most of the cases which have been detected are outdoor patients. Only six of the cases were admitted. Normally, the mortality rate of the virus is low, but in case of category III – when there is high fever, respiratory problem coupled with fall in blood pressure, sputum mixed with blood, bluish discoloration of nails – the patient needs immediate hospitalisation," Dr Bhagawati said.

Since the 2009 pandemic, H1N1 has become a seasonal flu virus strain in India even during the peak of summer. In 2009, the mortality was quite high, but later it came down to below 1 per cent. The viral strain keeps mutating every year – the genetic components of the virus keeps changing.

This year there has been a sudden spurt of cases in South India.

According to experts, the situation no longer demands isolating H1N1-positive people as was done to contain the spread in 2009, when the virus was new to India and affected close to 50,000 people and killed more than 2,700.

Regional consultation seeks early fulfilment of Bodoland demand

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, July 23: A regional-level consultation was held at the Srimanta Sankaradeva Kalakshetra by All Bodoland Students' Union (NDFB (P)) and the People's Joint Action Committee for Bodoland Movement (PJACBM) to deliberate on the 'Challenges, Prospects and Perspectives of Ethnic Communities in North East India.'

The event titled 'Friends of Bodoland' was attended by leaders of all the major ethnic communities in the North East on July 21. The consultation was also attended by many renowned scholars, academicians and social activists.

Sansuma Kunjur Biswamitra, former MP while addressing the gathering, said: "Bodos as a community have faced historical subjugation and exploitation at the hands of the ruling clique. Despite

being the original autochthonous of the Brahmaputra Valley and the Barak Valley, the community has continuously faced attack on its history, civilisation, culture and land. Thus, it is the prerogative of the present Government to restore the dignity and self-respect of the great Bodo community, especially by giving them the State of Bodoland."

Swapanjit Sanjal, former president, Vidarbha Raja Agadip, representing the Vidarbha Statehood movement, said, "It is only in the interest of India that Bodoland is created at the earliest. While we firmly stand by the Bodoland demand, we urge all the leaders here to support the demand of Bodoland."

Jarum Ete, former chairperson of Arunachal Women's Commission, while supporting the cause of the Bodoland State, urged the Bodo leadership to ensure equal rights for

the Government to take immediate steps towards resolving the Bodoland imbroglio.

UG Brahma, former MP, said, "On behalf of the Bodo community, I extend my heartfelt thanks to the political and social leaders of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura for standing by us as and when we needed."

The event began with the welcome address by Gobinda Boru, secretary general of the NDFB (P), and keynote address by Pramod Boru, president, ABSU.

The consultation was attended by more than five hundred social activists, academics, writers and others including Berlus Karzze, Pratibha Brahma, Dr Motilal Nuaria, Stalini Ingri and others.

The meeting, which was chaired by Raju Narzary, came to an end with the vote of thanks by Rakesh Boru, chief convener, PJACBM.

The student unions' leaders representing the ARSU, Deori Sangram Samiti, JACAS, ATSU, Nyishi Elite Society, Assam, All Garo Students' Union and others were unanimous in supporting the demand of Bodoland and urged

the Government to take immediate steps towards resolving the Bodoland imbroglio.

On the same occasion, Bodoli Singh, co-convenor of the Tribal Intellectual Collectives of India, said, "The tribal movement in India so far has been reactive rather than being strategic," adding, "however, the Bodo movement has so far been a source of inspiration for other tribal movements in India, especially in the North East."

U Naha Kishore Sing, representing UNMM, Manipur, said, "Successive Governments both at the Centre and the States have committed crimes against humanity by killing hundreds of civilians by imposing AFSPA."

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Swadhin Nari Shakti office-bearers addressing a press conference on various issues at Guwahati Press Club on Sunday. — UB

'State leaders using influx issue to build their careers'

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, July 23: Hitlering out at the successive governments for failing to resolve the illegal migrants' problem, the convenor of Prajatantra Virodha Manch, Upamanya Hazarika, today accused the State's political leaders of using the vexed issue to build their careers."

"Thirty-eight years (since the beginning of the Assam Agitation) on, the issue continues to linger. Leaders have used the issue to become MLAs, MPs, Union ministers and build palatial houses, without bothering about the future of the indigenous people," he told media persons here.

"This has been a long-standing demand of the indigenous people. A similar recommendation was given in the Supreme Court by a committee led by me, but nothing has been done on the recommendation till date," he said. Hazarika said the land res-

ervation alone would not protect the indigenous people as corrupt officials were helping illegal Bangladeshi to encroach on land and get all benefits like housing, toilets, schools, health centres, etc.

"Such benefits, besides res-

ervation in government jobs, government contracts, educational institutions, etc., should also be granted only on the basis of the base year," he added.

Hazarika also expressed doubts over the political will of the present Government to address the illegal migrants' issue.

He also cited an instance from Sipajhar where a BJP leader was allegedly sheltering illegal migrants.

Rtdt college teachers' plea on floods

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, July 23: The Assam Retired College Teachers' Association has called upon the Government to take necessary steps to find a permanent solution to the recurring flood menace in the State.

Condoling the death of over

70 people in the recent wave of floods, the Association expressed concern over the acute suffering and loss of life and property of lakhs of people in the calamity.

The Association president, PC Chakravarty, urged the retired teachers to contribute to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund or provide assistance through local administrations and NGOs.

Indian forces capable of ...

(Contd from page 1) of the training exercise with the Bhutanese Army and that is how India first got involved with the matter.

He expressed the view that the Government of India must maintain a firm stand on the issue and if India backs out, it would encourage the Chinese. He also asserted that if India allows China to bully Bhutan, China would try to dominate the other neighbours, including Myanmar, Bangladesh, etc., to exercise its control over the region.

The former Army officer said that China respects power and firmness and if India maintains a firm stand on the issue, the neighbouring country would think twice before indulging in any such activity in future. He also said that the situation has changed a lot since 1962 and China also knows very well that the Indian Army today is much better prepared to defend its own territory in case of any eventualities.

Lt Gen Shekhatkar also ex-

pressed the view that the face-off would not last for a very long time. "During the Kangri war, the Chinese troops tried to intrude into the Indian territory ahead of Tawang, but the Indian Army stood firm and the face-off lasted for a couple of months before the Chinese retreated as soon as the snowfall started. I strongly believe that if India maintains a firm stand, the Chinese Army would retreat once the snowfall starts," he added.

Lt Gen Shekhatkar said that while the Chinese government is launching propaganda through the state-controlled media, the younger generation of China is not interested on the issue. The younger generation is not even discussing the issue on the social media, which is a clear indication that the youths of that country are not buying the arguments put forward by their government.

At the same time, he suggested that at this juncture, the people of India must keep their political differences aside and stay united in the interest of the nation. "If we show any difference of opinion, it would only encourage China and Pakistan," he added.

Lt Gen Shekhatkar suggested that the Government of India must use all diplomatic channels to ensure that the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean are kept free

from Chinese influence, while efforts should also be made to raise the Chinese actions in the United Nations. He pointed out that the positive for India is that apart from Pakistan, China does not have any neighbouring country, which can call very friend and it is an established fact that China's economy would suffer without economic cooperation with India.

Number of minors ...

(Contd from page 1) Jorhat and Dibrugarh at 68 and 62 such cases. As per records, almost 1,360 cases were pending with the juvenile justice boards for disposal as on March 30 this year.

Giving an overview, criminal lawyer Bijon Kumar Majahaz said that a juvenile in conflict stands vulnerable to becoming a repeat offender after coming out from an observation home due to lack of proper care and protection both at their residences and at observation centres.

"The infrastructure and facilities at juvenile homes in the State are inadequate to deal with their psychological and psychiatric disorders. Once released from such homes, care and protection at residential bodies act of 2008/10 should be prepared.

Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) should be developed for the city to provide an alternative to the direct channelling of surface water through networks of pipes and sewers to nearby watercourses, which will be effective in reducing pressure on the existing drains following heavy rainfall, it said.

It observed that the city lacks a formal local warning system for urban flooding. NESAC's Flood Early Warning System for riverine flooding is extremely useful for upstream information.

It has recommended establishment of an urban flood management cell/nodal committee within the ASDMA that has representatives from key departments and agencies as well as expert advisors, to be chaired by the Chief Secretary. This cell/nodal committee will be empowered to direct all activities pertaining to flood management and landslides.

Family atmosphere in such juvenile offender's house is very often not found to be conducive, which is also a matter of concern," Majahaz said.

Child rights activist and founder of UTSAH, Miguel Quiesh said that recurring natural calamities and conflicts compound the situation for children.

In Guwahati itself, contrary to the popular narrative of being a developed city, there are approximately 50,000 children living in resource-constrained slum settings. With family adults caught up with survival strategies, children are often neglected and they end up working as child labourers, mostly coming in contact with criminal gangs who push them into various crimes," Miguel opined.

Mukherjee cautions ...

(Contd from page 1) he was "mentored" by late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi whose "steely determination, clarity of thought and decisive action made her a towering personality." He said she never hesitated to call a spade a spade.

Mukherjee recalled during a visit to London with Gandhi after the Emergency, she had told journalists, "In those 21 months, we comprehensively managed to alienate all sections of Indian people."

Recalling his days as a member of Parliament which he entered in 1969 as a Rajya Sabha member, Mukherjee said by listening to stalwarts in the Treasury and Opposition benches, he understood the real value of debate, discussion and dissent.

"I realised how disruption hurts the Opposition more than the Government as it denies it the opportunity to raise the concerns of the people," he said.

Mukherjee said Mukherjee is respected for his impeccable knowledge of Constitutional and parliamentary rules and procedures and exemplary memory of events and precedents.

"You have been a guru from whose generations of parliamentarians have received lessons on the operational dynamics of our parliamentary polity," she said.

Lauding Mukherjee's contributions, Rajya Sabha Chairman Ansari said his views and pronouncements on issues of national and international importance have enhanced the stature of the high offices held by him. — PTI



A residential training programme on 'Leadership, motivation, communication skills and soft skills' being conducted by the Royal Global University for the State Industries and Commerce Department officials, in Guwahati on Sunday. — UB Photos

Preventive steps can reduce risks during flash floods

AJIT PATAKARY

GUWAHATI, July 23: The report prepared by the CGSD, Earth Institute of Columbia University, New York, in association with the Sustainable Urbanism International, Bangalore, and the Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi, on Guwahati's flash flood problem, has laid more emphasis on preventive measures to reduce the risk of disaster rather than the actions during flood emergencies or post-flood relief activities.

The report was prepared by the Columbia University team on behalf of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) in 2015.

It has also called for steps to develop a 'One Drain Plan of Action' for Guwahati for government funding.

It has focused on some key areas of intervention. These include urban planning and development, natural resources (hills and water bodies), data, information and decisions, natural and artificial drainage, community and institutions.

It said risk factors behind urban flooding in Guwahati are integrally connected to increasing risk of extreme rainfall due to climate change. Hence, both short-term and long-

term interventions need to be undertaken to reduce the risk of disaster for Guwahati from flooding and mitigate its impacts. It has laid emphasis on practical recommendations towards preventive actions to reduce the risk of disasters from urban flooding.

It said given the increasing floods/increasing proscribed zones in terms of landslides, flood and erosion-prone areas should be clearly demarcated to help control urban development and to further minimise the risk by developing and enforcing bylaws.

Hill and forest areas that have been designated as eco-sensitive zones under the city's Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) should not be developed.

Maps of Guwahati that clearly show flood and erosion-prone areas, and soils unsuitable for percolation and zones that are proscribed for existing buildings by using available sophisticated high resolution remote-sensed information and technically sophisticated staff and faculty of NRSA, IIT and Assam Engineering College, amongst others, should also be made available, said the report.

Moreover, a plan for three new

towns and for enhancing density of the existing residential areas in the new master plan should also be implemented. It also underlined the need to re-examine the CMP to enhance land allocation for residential use.

It stated that road levels should be assessed, rationalised and modified to allow water to flow naturally. Road levels should be matched to other road/drain levels and to the levels of the houses in the areas (since many road levels are higher than the house levels).

The roads that are frequently flooded should be identified and alternative routes should also be identified. An underground sewerage system is urgently necessary for the city. The absence of sewage segregation is a major health hazard during floods, it said. No sewage connections should be permitted with runoff onto open storm water drains, added the report.

It further stated that a plan for enhanced number of affordable houses for lower income families (to take pressure off the hills and forests surrounding Guwahati) should also be installed as backups in these areas.

A series of public consultation on

"why are we destroying Guwahati's wetlands and water bodies" should be held and detailed maps of Deepor Beel, Silsila Beel, Bongajai Beel, Borsola Beel and Sarasola Beel (that are protected by the Guwahati Water Bodies Act of 2008/10) should be prepared.

Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) should be developed for the city to provide an alternative to the direct channelling of surface water through networks of pipes and sewers to nearby watercourses, which will be effective in reducing pressure on the existing drains following heavy rainfall, it said.

It observed that the city lacks a formal local warning system for urban flooding. NESAC's Flood Early Warning System for riverine flooding is extremely useful for upstream information.

It has recommended establishment of an urban flood management cell/nodal committee within the ASDMA that has representatives from key departments and agencies as well as expert advisors, to be chaired by the Chief Secretary. This cell/nodal committee will be empowered to direct all activities pertaining to flood management and landslides.

Recalling his days as a member of Parliament which he entered in 1969 as a Rajya Sabha member, Mukherjee said by listening to stalwarts in the Treasury and Opposition benches, he understood the real value of debate, discussion and dissent.



Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal speaking at the foundation stone-laying programme of three roads at Dibrugarh, on Saturday. - UB Photos

Mangaldai to host four-day State session of Asom Natya Sammilan

CORRESPONDENT

MANGALDAI, July 23: Mangaldai is going to host the 56th biennial State session of Asom Natya Sammilan, the oldest body of the amateur theatre in the State founded by cultural icons like Kalaguru Prasad Rabha and Tafajul Ali among others.

The four-day-long programme with a variety of events with cultural, social and academic interest is scheduled to be organised in the first week of January, 2018 under the aegis of the Darrang district unit of the Asom Natya Sammilan.

Briefing the media about the initial preparations, Dulal Roy, the president of the Sammilan and an eminent drama activist of the country assured to present around 20 selected quality dramas from groups

across the State and even from the NSD and the Sangeet Natak Academy. "We know unlike the commercial mobile theatres, we don't have a wide range of audience. We have a distinct targeted audience who are socially and culturally conscious and have their own choice. So, we are very much careful about the taste of our audience and hope we can fulfil their thirst for good quality dramas during our celebration."

Regarding three awards to be presented in memory of legendary playwright, dramatist Mahendra Borthakur, Brjna Nath Sharma and Dr Tarin Kanta Ray, Dulal Roy explained that the awards have been presented to recognise the sincere and hard work of the selected artists serving in the field of amateur theatre in the State as well as at the national and international levels. "We introduced the Dr Tarin Kanta Ray award especially to offer our honour to people already established at the national and international level and Seema Biswas, Adil Hussain and Dr Triprupari Sarma, faculty in NSD, Delhi are among the recipients. This has made a good impact on the people outside the State about our organisation," Roy maintained. He expected the participation of around 500 people from different fields of amateur theatre all over India at the four-day mega drama event.

It will also feature many other theatre-related programmes including a couple of academic seminars. Meanwhile, a 51-member main reception committee and 22 sub-committees have been formed for the smooth functioning of the proposed session.

Flood relief by Ramakrishna Mission

Over 50 villages hit by floods in Kamrup district

ANN Service

MIRZA, July 23: The current wave of flood has affected over 50 villages under Palashbari, Gorjorai, Chamarai, Nagarbera and Hajo revenue circles in Kamrup district, besides damaging standing crops.

All these areas are known for paddy and jute cultivation. However, this year the devastating flood has already damaged several hectares of crops.

The poor farmers are now eagerly waiting for help from the State Agriculture department. "The flash flood has washed way the entire paddy crops and is threatening to dislodge us. However,

the State Government seems to be aloof about our problems. The need of the hour is to provide more help to the farmers," said a group of farmers in the locality.

Not only, livestock in several parts of the district

is facing threat from the flood as the grassland areas have been inundated.

"The grassland areas in many parts of the flood-affected villages have been submerged for which over 30,000 cattle are now in great danger. The Government must provide us adequate fodder for the survival of our cattle," said Moho Ali, a progressive cattle farmer of Bardia village in Palashbari LAC in South Kamrup.

Hundreds of roads have also been destroyed leading to disruption of surface communication in the affected villages of Kamrup district. What is more unfortunate is that power supply in several villages of the district has remained cut off till date.

"Several schools and Government offices have also been damaged by flood. Paschim Bhatkhawadia NC

Anganwadi Centre and Bhatkhawadia Anganwadi Centre located at Bhatkhawadia in Palashbari LAC have been washed away by flood. Besides, Ghunpara Anganwadi Centre located at Bhatkhawadia village, Pagladia ME Madrasa, Hengnaturi LP School, Bardia Anchialka LP School, Bardia Chaporai LP School, Uttar Bhatkhawadia LP School under Palashbari Revenue circle in the Kamrup district are on the verge of being eroded by the Brahmaputra," said Abus Salam, headmaster of Bhatkhawadia ME Madrasa of Palashbari LAC.

Kuriharani Mini PHC, which is said to be the lifeline of 20 villages, is also facing a serious threat from the floods. The problem is aggravated further as people in many parts of the flood-affected areas are suffering from water-borne diseases.

Regular classes at Rajiv Gandhi Petroleum Institute from September

ANN Service

SIVASAGAR, July 23: Come September and the educational scenario in Assam will adorn a new chapter with the beginning of the regular classes for the first batch of 90 students at the national-level institute – the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology (RGIFT) on a 100-acre plot at Palasbari, Sivasagar.

Announcing this, Narayan Melang Konwar, DC, Sivasagar told mediapersons recently that Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal has taken special initiative to fulfil the long-standing dream of the people of Sivasagar following a stalemate halting the project since the then Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and the then Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi had the foundation stone on February 19, 2011. The Directorate of Technical Education, Assam has accorded permission to introduce Petroleum Engineering (30 seats), Chemical Engineering (30 seats) and Pipeline Engineering (30 seats) at the RGIFT Sivasagar campus from September 10 next.

Construction work of the temporary campus of the RGIFT began from January last and after some initial disturbances

es from some antisocial elements, work on the temporary administrative-cum-classroom building is progressing smoothly. Sivasagar Deputy Commissioner in a meeting held in his office told leading citizens that a monitoring public committee with members of the local society, senior citizens, organizations and administration will be constituted soon to supervise the progress of the project and coordinate with ONGC which had contributed over Rs 300 crore for implementing the project.

With the formal inauguration of classes at RGIFT along with other ongoing projects like the Assam Rajiv Gandhi Cooperative University and the ONGC Super Speciality Hospital, Sivasagar is all set to become an important centre for education and healthcare in Assam.

CBI probe demanded: The All Tai Ahom Students' Union, Brihatbar Asomia Yuva Parishad, Sangram Yuva Chatra Parishad, Ujoni Asom Muslim Kalyan Parishad, All Assam Koch Rajbanshi Students' Union and the joint action committee of the six ethnic organisations took out a three-hour sit-in demonstration in front of the Sivasagar Deputy Commissioner's office recently demanding a CBI probe into the alleged Rs 300-crore

anomaly in compensation and rehabilitation works in the four-laning of NH 37 in Sivasagar district. The agitators later submitted memoranda to the Prime Minister, Governor and the Chief Minister through the Deputy Commissioner to press home their demands.

Ram Raja Singha birth centenary: The birth Centenary of a noted social worker, public speaker and president of Rongpur Sahitya Sabha, Late Ram Raja Singha will be observed by Rongpur Sahitya Sabha with a day-long programme on July 27 in association with Singha's family at Sivasagar.

Dr Nagen Saikia, noted litterateur and former president, Asam Sahitya Sabha, will deliver the memorial lecture on 'Science and Spirituality' in the open meeting at Sivasagar Yuva Dib Auditorium while Naheendra Padan, former secretary, Asam Sahitya Sabha will release the souvenir. Dr Bharati Dutta, writer and Dr Kamlesh Dutta, Prof (retired), Dibrugarh University, Sonaram Baruah, former president, Sivasagar district Sahitya Sabha will attend the centenary function. A subdivisional level painting competition will also be held among school children, Uzzal Thakur, secretary, Rongpur Sahitya Sabha informed.

AASAA's indefinite hunger strike on ST status continues

SHAMBHU BORO

DHEKIAJULLI, July 23: The indefinite hunger strike by the All Adivasi Students' Association of Assam (AASAA), supported by the Dhekiajulli unit of the Adivasi body in Dhekiajulli town in protest against the non-fulfillment of the long-pending demand to grant ST status to the community entered its fourth day today.

Expressing total annoyance over the Government's apathy towards the community, the general secretary of the AASAA, Deben Urang said that the indefinite hunger strike was organised to protest against the shabby treatment met out to the tea garden populace despite its tremendous contribution to social harmony, economic progress, political stability, cultural enrichment and language promotion and preservation in Assam. "It is ironical that till date they have been treated shabbily in their own home State and lag behind in all development parameters." He alleged that the BJP Governments both at the Centre

and the State during the election campaign had pledged that they would grant ST status to Adivasis if elected to power. "But in spite of repeated demands, nothing has been done. Ahead of the Assembly elections of 2016 in Assam, the Centre had constituted a ST monitoring committee which supposedly had to come out with its report in three months. But due to elections in Assam, the committee said that it was not able to complete its work. The committee sought an additional three months to complete the modalities. The extension period ended on September 22, 2016. But even then nothing has progressed."

The general secretary of the central committee students body warned the Government not to further deceive the people and keep the community backward and deprive it of its constitutional and legal rights. He said that Adivasis have also historically been denied justice. "The tea industry which employs more than a million people pays a bare Rs 137 as cash wages to its

workers in total and blatant violation of Minimum Wages Act of 1948. This is far below the minimum wages for unskilled workers in Assam which stands at Rs 250. The Commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during her recent visit to the State had said that wages in the tea gardens of Assam were critically low and that steps would be taken in this regard. The Prime Minister had announced that the minimum wages for unskilled workers should be Rs 350. But nothing has happened so far and the State Government has not shown any political or administrative will. AASAA therefore demands that the minimum wages to be paid to the workers should be Rs 350."

He reiterated that the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 be immediately amended so that workers are able to enjoy other benefits to climb up the socio-economic ladder and live a dignified life. Deben Urang also stated that the Adivasi body would continue with its fast-unto-death and intensify other forms of democratic protest all over Assam to meet its demand.

Expert favours scientific study of siltation problem at KNP

DEBASISH BARUAH

KAZIRANGA, July 23: The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) – India chapter has underscored the need for carrying out a comprehensive scientific study on the silt deposited in the famous Kaziranga National Park (KNP). "The need of the hour is to conduct a comprehensive study to find out the actual siltation problem faced by the animals in the national park and remedial measures as well," Dr Anupam Sharma, a senior member of the WWF (India chapter), told this correspondent during an interview here. He further added that the perennial siltation problem has posed a serious threat to flora and fauna of the World Heritage Site. "As the siltation problem has been aggravating, remedial measures should be taken at the earliest," he said, adding

that to overcome the problem, the water retention capacity of the existing water bodies should be enhanced inside the park area.

The WWF is an international non-governmental organisation which was founded in 1961 and since then it has been working in the field of wildlife across the North-east.

Sharma, who is an expert and closely associated with the various wildlife sanctuaries across the country, opined that the KNP needs a scientific data base about the siltation areas that will help take remedial measures. "We are closely monitoring the siltation problem of the park, and we feel that remedial measures should be taken urgently."

While giving a slew of suggestions in this regard, the wildlife expert appealed to the authorities concerned to conduct a

comprehensive study on the siltation pockets, besides raising highland areas in the greater interest of the animals. Professor Brij Gopal, who is also a technical advisor to the WWF, has already made an assessment on the siltation and the wetlands after the flood. He will submit the report soon which will be suitable for carrying out long-term strategies in containing the perennial problem," Sharma claimed.

On the erosion problem, he said, "Erosion is a natural process and not much human intervention is needed to control it. Wild animals generally adjust themselves by migrating to the highland areas during the flood. But, while making those highlands one should not obstruct the existing natural water flow otherwise it would adversely affect the smaller rivers or streams inside the park."

Awareness camp on environment

STAFF REPORTER

programme along with the representatives of Aaranyak.

The summer camp was also held at Barkhagra ME School and Subankhata High School.

Plantation by Eva Gross was done at Bishnupur ME School along with a documentary screening on the Manas landscape, debate on conservation issues and later on an oath-taking ceremony was conducted. Many interactive activities and games were organised to make the students understand the importance of the natural environment and conservation.

The summer camp started at Bishnupur ME School in Chirang district and was inaugurated by DPO, TT, Gopinath Narayan of Chirang district. Eva Gross, Programme Director of Aawely, members of the school management committee (SMC), mothers' group, teachers, students and staff were present in the

Memorial lecture

A CORRESPONDENT

TIHU, July 23: The 9th and 10th Dr Pares Ch Dev Sarma memorial lecture will be delivered by Dr Nur Jamal, HoD, Hindi, Langangia College and Karuna Ki Kalita, retired professor of Tihu College at a function to be held at Tihu college auditorium hall from 10 am on July 25.

The lecture programme has been organised by the Rashtra Bhasa Prasara Mancha, Nahari, Karuna Kakati, president, Gobha Ch Bhagawati and Gauri Sankar Talukdar, secretaries of the reception committee have sought the whole-hearted participation of the public in this function.

Road blockade

JAGIROAD, July 23: Local people of Palguri near here on Saturday afternoon blocked the Jagiroad-Morigaon road at Tarongaperi here in protest against the murder of one Dipak Roy (38), a manager of a medicine company, by an unidentified persons at Mumari char in Darrang district on Wednesday and demanded immediate arrest of the culprits. – Correspondent



State Forest Minister Pramila Rani Brahma, during her visit to the flood-affected areas of Lakhimpur, on Saturday. - UB Photos



**WEATHER
NORTHEAST**
Forecast for North Eastern States: Moderate rain/thundershower may be likely to occur at many places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura on July 24.

Warning: Heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura on July 24.

Temperatures:

	Max (°C)	Min (°C)
Dibrugarh	34.6	24.1
Tezpur	33.7	24.7
Silchar	35.1	26.7
Dhubri	31.4	26.6
Jorhat	33.8	23.6
N Lakhimpur	35.0	21.2
Shillong	24.0	16.8
Imphal	29.8	22.4
Itanagar	36.0	22.6
Aizawl	29.1	19.1
Agartala	30.2	26.3
Kohima	26.2	18.6
Pasighat	35.9	26.1
Cherrapunjee	23.6	19.9

HN-29 in Nagaland being restored

DIMAPUR, July 23: National Highway-29 which was completely cut off by recent landslide at Viswema village in Kohima district is being restored gradually. The highway not only connects Southern Angami villages but also the neighbouring States of Manipur with Nagaland.

Viswema Youth Organisation president Visakho Kiso said that travellers and other public, on Saturday, were seen commuting through the newly repaired road on foot. Earlier officials from PWD and BRO inspected the site and expressed hope that by today evening, light vehicles will be able to pass through.

Kiso also said that right after the landslide along the highway on July 15, altogether 400 volunteers from Viswema Village Council, Viswema Women Organisation, Viswema Youth Organisation and Viswema Students Union swung into action by helping travellers in carrying their luggage and also helped the old and sick persons in their onward journey. Till July 17, continuous landslide occurred due to which a new footpath had to be dug and 300 volunteers helped in digging it, he said.

During the landslide, the worst affected were students as in Viswema villages alone, four government primary schools, two higher secondary schools, two high schools, one middle school and two colleges are located. On Saturday, MLA Er Kropol Vitsu visited the landslide-affected area. He thanked the PWD, Kohima district administration, police, BRO and others for their selfless service in repairing the road.

The Viswema Youth Organisation president also thanked the youth organisations from Khuazana, Kidima, Jakhama, SAYO, SASU, Viswema Baptist Khrishei Krotho, St Joseph students from Viswema and Khuazana and those who volunteered to help in restoring the road. — Correspondent

Manipur Cong chief's photo in BJP billboards triggers rumour

SOBHAPATI SAMOM

IMPHAL, July 23: The alleged rumour of Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) president TN Haokip joining the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) following the appearance of his photograph in BJP billboards which went viral in the social media has been rejected by sitting congress MLA on Sunday.

"This looks like a larger conspiracy as it not only targets me but the Congress party too," said MPCC president and sitting Congress MLA Haokip while addressing a press conference here this afternoon. "I will be with the Congress party. I have my personal integrity," he added.

"As the matter was circulated in the social media, I'm compelled to



This looks like a larger conspiracy as it not only targets me but the Congress party too, said TN Haokip

move court as well as cyber crime authority for necessary steps," he said. Besides, the party will also take up further course of action in this regard, he added.

The MPCC president's reaction came after his photograph appeared on BJP billboards which were erected

in the road median of Imphal town for the daylong BJP State executive meeting on Sunday. Later, the billboards having Haokip's photograph have been replaced.

Though one Imphal-based agency — Sharma Enterprises — which was engaged for printing and erection of the billboards, clarified for the mistakes, the general secretary of BJP Manipur Pradesh, K Saratkumar Singh, cancelled their contract with the party.

"For reasons of false printing and erection of hoarding, your contract with the BJP Manipur Pradesh stands cancelled," said Saratkumar in a letter to the agency. "Any resultant consequences regarding the matter shall be solely borne by your firm, and the BJP Manipur Pradesh will not be responsible for it," he added.



Students taking part in a rehearsal ahead of the launching programme of 'Mission Football' in Shillong on Saturday. — UB Photos

NFSA scam exposed in Meghalaya village

RAJU DAS

SHILLONG, July 23: Collusion between village heads and State government officials in denying food grains to poor villagers under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) has once again come out in the open in Meghalaya.

In one such instance from the remote village of Mawsingai near Indo-Bangla border in Shella, East Khasi Hills, villagers are allegedly extorted by the village heads Rs 7 for each kg of rice they lift under NFSA.

Under NFSA, Priority House Hold (PHH) or Below Pov-

erity families have to Pay Rs 3 for a kg of rice. Each member of the family is allotted 5 kg of rice every month.

However, the Village Dorbar of Mawsingai is not only charging Rs 7 extra on the actual price, but is also alloting just four kg of rice to each member of the family. One of the beneficiaries, Dran Krongphai from the village has said when the complaint of the extortion by the village heads and less allotment was taken to the Supply Inspector, Sohra, Z Kharkongor, the villagers were threatened by the official.

According to the beneficiary, the official said instead coerced the villagers to sign a "peace agreement" with the village heads and dealers.

Khonghai didn't sign the agreement but instead complained the matter to the Civil Society Women's Organisation (CSWO). He further narrated that the Supply Inspector has chided the villagers to become dealers if they want proper allotments.

Moreover, the villagers have alleged that the dealer in the village under the direction of the village council distributes the PDS items for just a day. According to norms the PDS items must be available throughout the month and not on any specific date. The CSWO, meanwhile, has said that it would be compelled to file criminal charges against the State Government official for not taking action against the village heads and also threatening the villagers.

Rijiju bats for all-round development in NE

CORRESPONDENT



his speech, while calling for preservation of cultural heritage, informed that as per UNESCO report there are 32 languages in Arunachal Pradesh which are on the verge of extinction. He added that the government is initiating programme and policies to revive those languages of minor and major tribes.

Among others, Rajya Sabha MP Mukti Mithi, Parliamentary Secretary Gurnayak Singh, local MLA Mutchu Mithi, Lower Dibang Valley Deputy Commissioner Deepak Shinde, SP Sanjay Kr Sain, ex-MLA Laeta Umfrey and ZPC Sipri Elapara were also present on the occasion.

Later, the Union Minister inaugurated the 235.8 metres long Chimari bridge along the Roing-Tezu road. The bridge has been constructed by BRO, Udayak/752TF/1446 BCC at an estimated cost of Rs 12,895 lakh.

Rijiju said that the RIWATCH museum is a live museum where culture of various tribes of the state and North East region can be exchanged and one can do further documentation and research on it for preservation of age-old cultural heritage.

Arunachal's Art and Culture Minister Dr Molesh Chai, in

Mizoram-HPC (D) talks likely to be deferred

NEWMAI NEWS

work" for the proposed talks.

The next round of peace talks is likely to be held in August and is believed to be the last official level talks after which the ongoing parleys would be elevated to "political level", the officials said.

The peace talks between the Mizoram government and the HPC (D) was revived in August last year after it had ended in a deadlock over extension of period of Suspension of Operation (SoO) in 2013. So far, both sides had held talks on four occasions with the first round of

talks being held in Aizawl on August 10 last year. This was followed by another two rounds of talks in 2016 (October 5 and December 16).

The fourth round of peace talks ended on April 28 this year which ended in a "positive note".

The Mizoram Home department officials had stated earlier that four rounds of talks held since August 10 last year were held under cordial atmosphere and mutual trust.

Both sides were optimistic in finding an amicable solution to the Hmar political imbroglio.

Further, the NPAF president

said the NPAF is not against Hinduism,

but asserted that it will not allow the saffron party to

create disturbance to Naga poli-

cies. He went on alleged that Governor PB Acharya, who is also a hardcore RSS prachar-ak, violated all the constitutional provisions and established laws to bring down his govern-ment.

Liezietsu opined that Acharya will never achieve his dream to install a BJP govern-

Nagas in Arunachal seek surrender and rehabilitation policy

ITANAGAR/NEW DELHI, July 23: Nagas students' outfit in Arunachal Pradesh has urged Chief Minister Pema Khandu to come up with a surrender and rehabilitation policy now find themselves trapped.

The scheme should also ensure that the militants who have surrendered do not stray back into insurgent groups, the ANSF said.

"Tirap, Changlang and Longding are all development deprived districts of Arunachal Pradesh. Youths, mostly out of frustration from outlawed groups and find themselves trapped. This needs to be ended," said ANSF President Nochek Boham.

"We want the state government to come up with a surrender and rehabilitation policy so that they can come back to civilian life," Boham said.

The ANSF leaders have said they would meet Defence Minister Arun Jaitley and Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh to press for their demands.

The organisation, which has also revived the demand for autonomous council for the three districts, has sought a Sainik school for the region so that teenagers from early age are motivated to join the Indian defence forces. — IANS

Only faithful leaders are in NPF now: Liezietsu

CORRESPONDENT

DIMAPUR, July 23: NPF president and former Nagaland Chief Minister Dr Shurhozelie Liezietsu considers the present political crisis in the NPF party a blessing in disguise and a God-given opportunity to screen out the grain from the chaff.

"We have identified the poli-led leaders and had filtered them from the party for good. Only the faithful leaders are now in the party. The party can work peacefully and conveniently for the welfare of the party and the Naga people since corrupt and polluted leaders have been removed from the party," Liezietsu said, while addressing party functionaries at his private residence this afternoon.

Calling the 11 MLAs who voted against the trust motion moved by Chief Minister TR Zeliang in the State Assembly on July 21 and stood firm with the party as "the seeds of NPF party", he urged party leaders and workers to stand firm on their conviction and principles.

Border trade disrupted after girl's killing in Moreh

IMPHAL, July 23: A Class 10 student was killed in Moreh, a Manipur town located on the India-Myanmar border, early on Sunday sparking an indefinite shutdown of the area, police said.

When the police tried to take the suspect to Imphal for further investigation, they were prevented from doing so by women activists.

Protesting the killing, the Kuki Students' Organisation has announced a shutdown, disrupting trade at the border town.

All shops and business establis-

hements pulled down shutters and while hundreds of vehicles turned back towards Imphal, many others were stranded in Moreh.

Three months ago, a middle-aged woman, A Shanti, was gunned down in broad daylight in Moreh, a crime that hasn't been solved yet. — IANS

Tripura to get four new NHs

CORRESPONDENT

"Currently, the State is having six national highways which cover around 545 km out of that development works on 621 km are entrusted with NHIDCL while the remaining portion is with the PWD," he said.

"Four roads covering 229 km have been approved in principle by the MoRTH. Work of preparation of the McRTH, Work of Report (DPR) on these stretches is under process and actual work will start after approval of their DPRs," he said. The Centre has taken major initiative in highway construction sector.

"During the last three years, eight NH works of the State covering 131 km have been sanctioned with a total cost of Rs 1523 crore," he said, adding that it has been targeted to award a length of 67 km with estimated cost of Rs 500 crore during the current financial year.

According to Mandavia, development of the 198 km Agartala-Churahua, considered lifeline of the State, has made good progress. The work is expected to be completed by next year.

To a query, the Minister said that all the NHs will be double lane with pavements. On the inland waterway, he said that there is a plan to connect Kolkata with Bangladesh via Assam and if the plan is implemented, barge on the chicken neck will be reduced.

The CM expressed surprise that a hydro project of mega magnitude was implemented and commissioned in the State without signing any MoU and is running for more than 15 years!

The only legal (and official) document available on its inception and existence is a 'Minutes of the Meeting' held under the then CM Gengow Apang and signed by then Chief Secretary Martin Dai and then CMD of NEEPCO.

Admitting that the grievances of the people are 'genuine', Khandu announced 1 per cent share for development of affected villages in a tripartite

meeting he had summoned at his office premises today to resolve the impasse.

The meeting was attended by NEEPCO CMD AG West Kharangon, RHEP MoU Demand Committee chairman Taba Tachi and Secretary Tao Tana, Chief Secretary-in-charge Satya Gopal, Power Commissioner Ashish Kundra and others.

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Khandu regretted that due to the 'unsavoury' beginning (RHEP is the first and only commissioned mega hydro power project of the State) people today are apprehensive of hydro power projects elsewhere in the State, which needs to be dealt sensitively and therefore emphasised on 'correcting' the 'wrongs' in this project to set a

positive precedent.

He directed the NEEPCO authorities to compile a comprehensive report on the demands placed by the MoU Demand Committee including actions to be taken within a time frame and submit it to the State Government by August 5 next.

He informed, besides the 1 per cent share for local area development, the Cabinet is scheduled to meet on August 12 will decide a way forward to redress all the grievances of the local people.

"After August 15, I along with NEEPCO authorities shall seek audience with the Union Power Minister and strongly push for a relook into its policy vis-a-vis RHEP for welfare of the affected local areas including change of project nomenclature from Ranganadi to Pan-yar and establishment of NEEPCO office within the State," Khandu said.

Khandu announces 1 pc share for dam-affected areas

CORRESPONDENT

ITANAGAR, July 23: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu announced one per cent of the State share of free electricity for the affected people of the 405 MW Ranganadi project at Yatali and adjoining villages.

He said that the affected area had been in loggerheads with North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd (NEEPCO) under the banner of RHEP MoU Demand Committee alleging non-fulfilment of the rights of the locals. The Committee has been on agitation and closed down NEEPCO establishments at Yatali at least on two occasions.

Admitting that the grievances of the people are 'genuine', Khandu announced 1 per cent share for development of affected villages in a tripartite

CAPSULE**Bajaj Auto exports**

NEW DELHI, July 23: Two-wheeler major Bajaj Auto plans to begin shipments of its bikes and three-wheelers to Thailand in the next couple of months as part of its plans to consolidate its position in the Southeast Asian market. The two-wheeler major has also started exporting to various markets in the region including the Philippines, Singapore and Myanmar. The firm has also started exporting GST bikes to the Malaysian market recently. — PTI

Ola investment

NEW DELHI, July 23: Cab aggregator Ola has invested Rs 100 crore in its car leasing subsidiary Ola Fleet Technologies. The investment comes at a time when the home-grown firm is locked in an intense battle with US-based Uber for leadership in the Indian market. The proposal for Ola investing Rs 100 crore into Ola Fleet Technologies was accepted by the board of the car leasing arm last month, as per documents filed with the Corporate Affairs Ministry. — PTI

Tata Housing

MUMBAI, July 23: Tata Housing is planning to add 8-10 projects to its portfolio in 2017-18. The company's investment of up to Rs 800 crore, a top company official said. They will be a combination of greenfield and brownfield projects. Tata Housing Managing Director and CEO Brotin Banerjee told PTI here. The implementation of Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA) and GST is likely to spur consolidation in the sector, which presents a good opportunity for Tata Housing to expand its portfolio, he added. — PTI

Blackberry's target

NEW DELHI, July 23: Menswear brand Blackberry is aiming 25 per cent growth in turnover at Rs 800 crore this fiscal on the back of retail and portfolio expansion. "We are looking at clocking Rs 900-crore turnover and growth of 25-30 per cent in the current fiscal. We plan to open 70 new stores by the end of this financial year," Mohan Clothe, Founder-Director, Mohan Mohan said. Mohan Clothing is the owner of the Blackberry brand. — PTI

EIL share buyback

NEW DELHI, July 23: State-owned Engineers India Ltd's (EIL) Rs 650.80-crore share buyback will open on July 25 and close on August 7. According to a regulatory notice by lead manager IDBI Capital Markets & Securities Ltd, EIL plans to acquire 4.19 crore shares at a price of Rs 157 through the share buyback offer. EIL shares closed at Rs 164.95 on BSE on Friday. — PTI

Axis Mutual Fund

GUWAHATI, July 23: Axis Mutual Fund, one of country's premier asset management companies, has announced the launch of Axis Dynamic Equity Fund, an open-ended equity scheme. The key feature of the fund is that it does not have a fixed allocation to equity but instead uses a systematic rules-based model to dynamically adjust its equity allocation over time, a press release said.

Salary cut lesser evil than layoffs in aviation space: HR experts

NEW DELHI, July 23: Slashing salaries is a "lesser evil" than pink slips in the domestic aviation sector, feel HR experts against the backdrop of a leading airline asking junior pilots to take ten days off every month as part of cost balancing effort.

While the domestic aviation sector has been registering double-digit growth continuously for over two years, Jet Airways' move to reduce junior pilots' pay and disinvestment proposal of Air India have thrown the spotlight on the prevailing tough business conditions amid stiff competition.

The sector might be one of the fastest growing in the world but most airlines have wafer-thin margins as deeply discounted fares and rise in aviation fuel prices along with staff costs take a toll on their overall prof-

Cases of undue profit worth over Rs 1 cr to come under scrutiny

NEW DELHI, July 23: The proposed anti-profiteering authority under the new GST regime will take up for scrutiny only those cases that have mass impact and those where undue profit of more than Rs 1 crore has been earned, a senior government official said.

A five-member National Anti-Profiteering Authority, headed by a Secretary-level officer, will be set up soon to keep a tab on businesses that have not passed on to consumers the benefit of lower tax rates under the goods and services tax (GST) regime.

"It will take two-three months' time to gauge whether the benefits of GST are being passed on to consumers. By then, the authority would put in place," the official told PTI.

As per the three-tier structure, the GST Implementation Committee

(GIC) will receive complaints and those which are State-specific and involve smaller amounts will be transferred to the State screening committee," the official said.

ADG Safeguards will act as Secretary to the National Anti-Profiteering Authority and will coordinate between the authority and the DG Safeguards office, the official added.

The Central Board of Excise and

Upcoming anti-profiteering authority

protection authority, which will pass an order in another three months' time.

"The issues which have a national or mass impact will be taken up by the authority. There may be many small cases which would be coming to the GIC, but only those cases where the financial implication is more than

Rs 1 crore would be taken up by the authority. Rest would be transferred

Customs (CBEC) last week appointed Sanjana Das as the Additional Director General (ADG) Safeguards in the Directorate General of Safeguards.

Das was ADG in the Directorate General of Central Excise Intelligence (DGCEI).

In the three-tier structure for monitoring anti-profiteering, the GST Implementation Committee, including four of

funders each from the Centre and States and one officer from the GST Council, will first receive the complaints.

Thereafter, DGS, which has the power to issue summons, will conduct an investigation and give its findings to the authority.

The anti-profiteering authority, if it finds that a company has not passed on the GST benefits, will either direct it to pass on the benefits to consumers or if the beneficiary cannot be identified, will ask the company to transfer the amount to the "consumer welfare fund" within a specified timeline.

The authority will have the power to cancel registration of any entity or business if it fails to pass on to consumers the benefit of lower taxes under the GST regime, but it would probably be the last step against any violator. — PTI



Minister of State for Power, Coal, and New and Renewable Energy and Mines (In Charge) Piyush Goyal interacting with the Electricity Regulators and representatives of State governments, in New Delhi on Sunday. — PTI

CAG urges Railways to improve parcel service

NEW DELHI, July 23: Highlighting the lapses in parcel services, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has urged the Railways to improve the quality of services being provided so as to minimise complaints from customers.

The CAG in its report, which was tabled in Parliament on Friday, said the Indian Railways should recognise the need to augment its parcel business and reposition it as a separate line of business rather than an extension of its passenger transportation services.

"However, they did not undertake adequate steps to put in place the infrastructure and other institutional arrangements for improvement in parcel services," the CAG said.

It also noted that parcel services continued to be a non-core activity without any specific emphasis on augmentation and improvement in the capacity of infrastructure or the quality of service.

The auditor also rapped the Railways, saying that the "commodification of parcel services, which was started in 2005-06, was still not complete on a large number of locations".

The CAG said that adequate measures for security monitoring and screening of the parcels were not available as seen at the selected parcel depots.

The auditor in its report also said that adequate weightage (weighing bridge) arrangements were not made or ensured by the Railways for weighing of leased parcel traffic.

"On the other hand, rules were framed for termination of contracts after default of overloading. These were, however, not a deterrent as weightage was not being done as a regular measure to check overloading despite laid-down norms," the CAG said.

The auditor pointed out that response for booking of leased parcel traffic through SLRs (seating-cum-luggage rack) as well as parcel vans was inadequate. "The offers received were far less than space offered for leases... The Railways did not allot space in 65 per cent of cases," it said.

According to the report, for leasing of parcel space, there were delays of up to 240 days in finalisation of tenders by zonal railways.

"Customers had to cancel indents for VPs due to non-supply by the railway administration and in many cases parcel vans were declared sick after being loaded," the CAG said.

"For non-leased traffic, zonal railways carried parcels beyond intended destination in a significant number of cases," the CAG said. — IANS

Testing high-end fuel, gas India launches first R&D facility

NEW DELHI, July 23: India has launched its first petroleum research & development (R&D) facility for testing high-end BS-VI quality fuel and its emission level, according to an official here.

Operated by state-run Indian Oil Corp (IOC), the R&D facility is designed to test all types of fuel including petro-diesel, ethanol-blended petrol, bio-diesel, CNG, LNG, hydrogen-CNG and 2G-ethanol blends to ensure they meet the superior BS-VI norms that are to be implemented across the

country by April 2020, a Petroleum Ministry statement said.

This "first-of-its-kind" facility was inaugurated by Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in Faridabad in the National Capital Region (NCR) on Saturday.

"In addition to generating emission data, the facility will also evaluate the fuel blends for energy-efficiency and engine durability," it said.

On the occasion, Pradhan complimented the IOC scientists for developing a "nano-

additised battery for use in e-cycles, with better efficiency and longer life than commercially available batteries."

"The minister also lauded the efforts of Indian Oil R&D in commercialising Indane Nanocut—the industrial version of LPG for the metal-cutting industry."

Pradhan hoped IOC would take a "quantum leap" in alternative and renewable fuel research arenas in the next 3-4 years, the statement added. — PTI

Mercedes calls for lower taxes on luxury cars

NEW DELHI, July 23: German carmaker Mercedes-Benz has pitched for lower taxes on luxury cars in India, saying the move will help in job creation as well as increase tax collection from the segment.

The company reasoned that "better treatment" in terms of taxation could lead to growth of the luxury car segment in the country.

"We auto industry are 7-8 per cent of the GDP and we can have a bigger share in the growth of the country but we also need some better treatment as far as taxation is concerned because there are few countries in the world which have higher taxes than what

we see in India," Folger said. Incidentally, overall tax incidence on locally-assembled luxury cars has come down from around 55 per cent earlier to 43 per cent in the GST regime.

Several luxury car-makers, including Mercedes, Audi and Jaguar Land Rover, have already reduced prices to pass on the benefit to customers.

Elaborating on the need to have a standard tax structure across various auto segments, he said: "If you give same tax base as other car segments, we have to pay 28 per cent instead of 43 per cent and we can double our volume." — PTI



every month, a move that would result in up to 30 per cent pay cut, saying the move is aimed at "balancing our cost structure".

"As an interim measure, we shall

be offering you a Lifestyle Work Pattern which entails 10 days block off per month with the appropriate remuneration... This will be effective from August 1, 2017," the airline said in a letter to many junior pilots.

Executive search organisation Global Hunt's Managing Director Sunil Goel said the number of jobs may not get impacted much in the aviation sector as it is currently growing but "compensation and benefits will (see) an impact".

"Since government is also talking about privatising the government control in Air India that will also bring

a lot of job opportunities and realignment of work force," he added.

Professional services firm Judge Group's Senior Vice-President (Global Delivery) Abhishek Agarwal said slowdown in the industry is due to various macroeconomic factors. It is not the choice of employers because "they know that reduction in salaries may affect the performance of both employees and the business," he added.

HR experts also believe that job scenario in the aviation sector would be good but there might not too many jobs at high premium.

In June, domestic air traffic grew 20 per cent as carriers ferried 95,86 lakh passengers. Many local carriers have also prepared ambitious expansion plans, as reflected in aircraft orders. — PTI

TRAI to start consultation on data privacy, security

NEW DELHI, July 23: Mobile apps seeking blanket access to phone users' information – even if irrelevant to their functions – may come under the lens of TRAI, which will start consultation on data privacy and security in the telecom sector, according to a top official.

"There should be a link between what the application does and information the application is asking for... You will see a consultation paper... We are working on the issue," Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRA) Chairman RS Sharma told PTI.

The Centre told the Supreme Court on Friday that data of users are "integral" to the right of life and personal liberty guaranteed under the Constitution and it would come out with regulations to protect the same.

The submission by the Centre was made before a five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice Dipak Misra. — PTI

Room AC market to grow at 13% CAGR for next 5-6 years: Report

courtesy report said.

It noted that within the room AC market, the share of inverter ACs is expected to rise as consumers would prefer the energy-efficient option.

"Relatively higher energy consumption of room AC compared to other household electrical appliances will prompt consumers and government towards energy efficiency. We expect the contribution of inverter ACs to grow at a faster rate compared to fixed-speed compressors," the report said.

The room AC market at present is estimated to be worth around Rs 11,600 crore.

"Given the growth in disposable income, better availability of electricity, higher propensity to spend coupled with hot and humid climatic conditions, we believe the room AC segment will continue to grow at 12-13 per cent CAGR for the next 5-6 years," it said.

"Government spending towards urban infrastructure and transportation coupled with the expected recovery in the commercial real estate market will support project segment growth," an ICICI Se-
pcoitalty said.

Social media changing reading, viewing habits: Assocham

NEW DELHI, July 23: Social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and others are rapidly changing the reading and viewing habits of an increasing number of people, mostly youngsters, according to Assocham.

Based on an analysis of responses from just 235 families in major cities including Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Pune and Bengaluru, with nearly 80 per cent of the respondents saying their morning routine of newspaper(s) with tea has undergone a sea change.

"Ironically, some of the unverified stuff passes as truth (on social media platforms) which remains an area of concern. However, as the new media evolves into maturity, hopefully the users would become much more discerning in the way they would consume the information from the internet," Assocham Secretary General DS Rawat said. — PTI



As per the latest auction sale (No 29) held at Guwahati Tea Auction Centre (GTAC) on July 19-20, the total tea offering was 1,41,193 packages, out of which 76 per cent were sold. Prices for brighter Assam teas were steady and remaining teas were irregular in line with quality. Major packeters lent fair support along with western Indian buyers.

The auction average price for this week stood at Rs 148.18, up by Rs 1.32 from last year.

BOP	Price	BOPSM/BP	Price	OF/PF	Price
HALMARI	415	SOTAI	360	SOTAI	281
SOOKLATINGA	289	BANAMALIE	290	BANAMALIE	256
DULATINGA	278	MACHUPUR	287	SOOKLATINGA	261
MACHUPUR	261	DEHA	281	HOOKHIMOL	250
MACKHEYORE	260	LUKWAH	267	LUKWAH	250

Secretary, Guwahati Tea Auction Buyers Association (GTABA)



Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje with BJP national president Amit Shah having lunch at a Dalit family's home on the last day of their three-day visit to Rajasthan's Sushipura area, on Sunday. — UNI

Inform people about rights prior to arrest: HC to Govts

NEW DELHI, July 23: The Delhi High Court has directed the Centre and the AAP Government to run an awareness campaign informing the general public about their rights in the event of arrest or detention by the police in criminal cases.

A Bench of Acting Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice Charan Shankar observed that there were Supreme Court judgements stating that no automatic arrest or detention can be made by the police, even in non-bailable and cognizable offences.

It noted that pursuant to the apex court's direction, the police has also issued standing orders in this regard, but the public appeared to be ignorant of their rights in the event of an arrest.

The Supreme Court, in its ruling, had emphasised on the need of caution while exercising the drastic power of arrest, which has for years, been treated as a tool of harassment, oppression in the hands of the police authorities and greatly contributed to police corruption in India.

"Respondents (Centre and Delhi Government) shall ensure that steps are taken forth-

with to disseminate information about the standing order (issued in October 2008 by the Delhi Police) setting up guidelines for arrest.

"The same should be published in the vernacular languages and circulated amongst the members of the public. A copy thereof be made available to every person upon their arrest," the Bench said.

It added: "The Delhi Police Commissioner shall also examine the possibility of creating of a helpline number from where information regarding a person's arrest or detention could be made available to the family, relatives and friends. "This consideration shall be effected within four weeks and report in this regard shall be submitted before this court," it said.

The court's direction came on a plea by Subhash Vijayan, who had alleged that the governments were violating the mandate of Article 22(2) of the Constitution, taking advantage of the ignorance regarding the rights of the citizens.

The public interest litigation (PIL) said that as per the Arti-

cle and Section 57 of the CrPC,

an accused must be produced before the magistrate without unnecessary delay and in no circumstances beyond 24 hours, excluding the time necessary for the journey.

An accused may be kept in detention beyond 24 hours if his arrest is only when authorised by the magistrate, it added.

Citing statistics to demonstrate the misuse of the power of arrest by the police authorities, the Supreme Court had in one of its verdicts proceeded to set out certain objective criteria to be applied before making an arrest under the CrPC.

The apex court had held that no arrest should be made only because the offence is non-bailable and cognizable.

"Neither should arrest be made in a routine, casual and cavalier manner or on a mere allegation of commission of an offence made against a person."

"Arrest should only be made after reasonable satisfaction reached after due investigation as to the genuineness of the allegation," the apex court had said. — PTI

Piped drinking water at remote BoPs soon

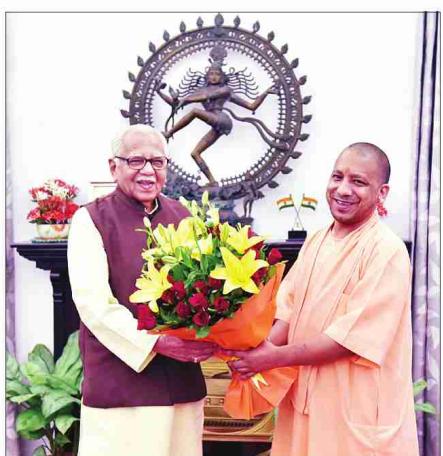
NEW DELHI, July 23: The border guarding posts located on the icy heights of the Himalayas, in the Thar desert or in the remote North East will soon get piped drinking water as the Centre is planning an ambitious project to provide potable water to the men on duty.

The project will be implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) with the help of the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MDWS), according to papers accessed by this news agency.

The expected cost of the project is around Rs 6,000 crore.

While the MHA will provide the funds, the MDWS will offer technical assistance and the State governments will implement it in their areas through their respective agencies.

Under the project, piped drinking water will be provided to Border Out Posts (BoPs) along Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Bhutan, Nepal and Myanmar. These borders are guarded by forces like the Border Security Force, the Indo Tibetan Border Police and the Sashastra Seema Bal. — PTI



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath calling on State Governor Ram Naik in Lucknow, on Saturday. — UNI

Call to make Home Science mandatory for boys in school

NEW DELHI, July 23: Boys may have to compulsorily study Home Science at school if a draft proposal prepared by the Women and Child Development Ministry is approved by the Union Cabinet.

The draft National Policy for Women, 2017, approved recently by a group of ministers has been sent to the Cabinet, according to a ministry spokesperson.

The draft makes several recommendations seemingly aimed at redefining gender roles starting at a young age,

creating new employment opportunities for women as well as providing tax relief to them.

The draft policy proposes that the HRD Ministry redesign school curriculum to promote gender sensitivity as well as make Home Science and physical education compulsory for both girls and boys.

It also seeks to encourage working women and proposes pay parity, tax exemption for women-only organisations, mandatory daycare centres in corporates and commercial zones as

well as housing complexes.

The proposal also offers tax relief to widows and divorced women.

The draft policy also recommends promoting women drivers for school buses, a move that is not only likely to generate employment opportunities for women, but also expected to curb sexual crimes against school students.

The policy is being revised after a gap of more than 15 years. The last policy came in 2001. — PTI

GJM preparing for armed struggle with Maoist help

DARJEELING (West Bengal), July 23: The Gorkha Janamukti Morcha (GJM) is preparing for a prolonged underground armed movement for a separate State and has hired Maoists from neighbouring countries as mercenaries to train its cadres, according to senior West Bengal Government officials.

"We have inputs from intelligence agencies that Maoists from neighbouring countries have been hired by the GJM. And it may target Government properties and senior police and administrative officials so as to further aggravate the situation," ADG (Law and order) Anuj Sharma told this news agency.

The GJM leadership has, however, refuted as "completely baseless" the allegations that was taking help from Maoists.

"These are completely baseless statements. These statements are being made to malign us and derail the democratic movement," GJM general secretary Roshan Giri said.

A senior official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the GJM has hired 25-30 Maoist mercenaries to train its cadres.

"The GJM has a huge cache of arms and ammunition. They have stockpiled arms for the last few years. And we have intelligence reports that they are preparing for underground armed

movement in the hills," said the official.

Another senior official said the Government is "prepared for any situation and steps are being taken to tackle any sort of armed struggle".

In the last 38 days of the indefinite shutdown, there has been several instances of attack on police stations

who has vast experience in countering Maoists insurgency in West Midnapore district from 2009-2011 and later on in counter-insurgency force, has been posted as IG Darjeeling. Several other mid-level officers of the counter-insurgency force have also been sent to the hills to tackle the situation.

According to police, the GJM is training its cadres in the guise of its "peacekeeping" outfit Gorkhaland Personnel (GLP).

In the meantime, the situation in Darjeeling remained tense today, i.e., on the 39th day of the GJM-sponsored indefinite shutdown, though there was no fresh violence or arson anywhere in the hills.

The police and security forces patrolled the streets in the hills as shops, except pharmacy stores, restaurants, hotels, schools and colleges remained closed.

The GJM held rallies in various parts of the hills in support of its demand for Gorkhaland.

In the morning, some political activists, dressed in traditional Nepali attire, took out rallies. They were heard shouting slogans in support of Gorkhaland.

Amid a severely hit food supply in the hills due to its ongoing shutdown, the GJM activists and NGOs of the hills were seen distributing food to the local people at many places. — PTI

NEET Q-paper to be same for all languages

KOLKATA, July 23: Union Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar has said vernacular question papers for the NEET will be mere translation of the question paper in English.

"The vernacular question papers for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) – the all-India entrance examination for entrance to medical colleges – will just be translation of the question paper in English," he told reporters here yesterday.

Javadekar was replying to a question about the West Bengal Education Minister recently complaining that this year the students appearing for all medical entrance examination in vernacular languages had faced tougher questions than the ones set in English and Hindi.

The apex court had held that no arrest should be made only because the offence is non-bailable and cognizable.

"Neither should arrest be made in a routine, casual and cavalier manner or on a mere allegation of commission of an offence made against a person."

"Arrest should only be made after reasonable satisfaction reached after due investigation as to the genuineness of the allegation," the apex court had said. — PTI

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Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

Foundation Stone Laying of Barak Hostel For North-East Students

Jawaharlal Nehru University

by

Dr. Jitendra Singh

Union Minister of State (I/C) Ministry of DoNER & Chairman, NEC

In the Presence of

Naveen Verma, IAS
Secretary, Ministry of DoNER

Ram Muivah, IAS
Secretary, NEC

Prof. M. Jagadesh Kumar
VC, Jawaharlal Nehru University

at
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
on

24th July, 2017 | Time: 1:00 PM

NORTH EASTERN COUNCIL

Government of India, Nongrim Hills, Shillong, Meghalaya

Website: www.necouncil.gov.in

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GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM
SPORTS & YOUTH WELFARE DEPARTMENT



CEREMONIAL DISTRIBUTION OF PLAQUES TO RECIPIENTS OF ONE TIME FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS & SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS

CHIEF GUEST

Sjt. NABA KUMAR DOLEY

HONBLE MINISTER OF SPORTS & YOUTH WELFARE, ASSAM

VENUE:

CONVENTION AND TRAINING CENTRE OF PWD, DISPUR, GUWAHATI-06

TIME: 11:30 AM

DATE: 24/07/17

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US President Donald Trump, flanked by Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe, sings the national anthem as he participates in the commissioning ceremony of the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R Ford at Naval Station Norfolk in Norfolk, Virginia, US on Saturday. — UNI

Around the WORLD

Heavy breakfast

LOS ANGELES, July 23: People who start their day with a heavy meal are more likely to be less, according to scientists who confirm the age-old adage that you should break fast like a king and dine like a pauper.

A study of 50,000 people found that those who made breakfast their largest meal of the day have a lower Body Mass Index (BMI) than people who waited until supper, even when they ate a similar number of calories.

Researchers from Loma Linda University School of Public Health in the US also found that extending the time between the food of the day and breakfast was also associated with lower BMI.

"Eating a large breakfast reduces hunger cravings, especially for sweets and fats thus countering weight gain," said Hana Kahleova, lead author of the study published in the Journal of Nutrition.

"Regular breakfast consumption seems to increase satiety, reduce total energy intake, improve overall dietary quality, reduce blood lipid and improve insulin sensitivity and glucose tolerance," Kahleova told The Telegraph.

"On the other hand, eating meals in the evening generally has the opposite effect," she said.

Scientists suggest maintaining a healthy weight people should eat breakfast and lunch, skip dinner, avoid snacks, make breakfast the largest meal of the day and fast for up to 18 hours a night. — PTI

World's oldest emoji

LONDON, July 23: Archaeologists have discovered what may be the world's oldest emoji - a smiley face painted on an 3,700-year-old piece of pottery.

During an excavation at an ancient city whose remains are

modern-day Turkey near the Syrian border, archaeologists found the ancient

pitcher with three visible point strokes on it - two dots for eyes and a curve for a smile.

The pitcher, which dates to about 1700 BC, was found in a burial site beneath a house in Karkemish, said Nikolò Marchetti, associate professor at the University of Bologna in Italy.

The pitcher was usually used to drink sherbet, a sweet beverage, Marchetti was quoted as saying by Live Science.

The archaeologists also found other vases and pots, as well as metal goods in the ancient city.

The Karkemish civilization is a deity popular at that time in northern Syria.

The city was inhabited from the sixth millennium BC, until the late Middle Ages when it was abandoned, and populated by a string of different cultures, including the Hittites, Neo Assyrians and Romans, researchers said.

It was used once more in 1920 as a Turkish military outpost, they said. — PTI

Shoot drug traffickers resisting arrest: Indonesian Prez



JAKARTA, July 23: Indonesia's President Joko Widodo has ordered the police to shoot drug traffickers who resist arrest in the latest effort to eradicate drug use in the country.

In a speech to one of Indonesia's political parties late Friday, Widodo urged law enforcers to crack down on drug dealers in Indonesia.

"Be firm. Especially to foreign drug dealers who enter the country. If they resist even the slightest,

just shoot them," Widodo said.

The Indonesian Narcotics Agency recorded there are 6 million drug users in the archipelago out of its 255 million people, a situation the president labelled "drug emergency".

But Widodo's remarks prompted criticism from human rights activists.

Andreas Harsono, Indonesia's researcher from Human Rights Watch condemned the order.

"A president statement like that can seem like a green light to shoot without

the correct procedure," Harsono told AFP today, adding that law enforcers should be cautious and follow the law.

Indonesia imposes a tough punishment for drug trafficking, with smugglers who carry five or more grammes given the death penalty.

In the last two years, it has executed about 18 drug traffickers, including foreigners such as Australian Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran, which sparked diplomatic outrage and a call to abolish the death penalty. — AFP

Muslim woman assaulted, hijab pulled off in UK

LONDON, July 23: A Muslim woman's hijab was pulled off allegedly by a man in a vicious assault in London, amid a spike in hate crime incidents following a series of terror attacks by Islamists in the UK.

Aniso Abdulkadir was waiting for a tube at Baker Street station on July 16 when she says the man grabbed her headscarf before lashing out with his fists and pinning one of her friends up against a wall, the BBC reported.



"This man at Baker Street station forcefully attempted to pull my hijab off and when I instinctively grabbed hold of my scarf he hit me," Abdulkadir tweeted and posted a picture of the man who allegedly attacked her.

"He proceeded to verbally abuse my friends and I, pinning one of them against the wall and spitting in her face," the tweet read. Abdulkadir added that a woman who was present was also threatening and verbally abusive, the report said.

A British Transport Police spokesman said it was being investigated as a hate crime.

"Behaviour like this is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated... This incident has been reported to us and we're investigating," the official said. However, a man claiming to be the man in the image tweeted on July 17 to protest his innocence, claiming he had been defending his partner from what he called a "racist attack", the Guardian reported.

He said the allegation against him was "completely false". "I would like to confirm I never hit or attacked anyone. I simply defused the situation by separating them," Pawel Czajkowski wrote. "The police is fully cooperating with me and will be able to obtain CCTV footage showing the three women attempting to attack my partner because we are in an interracial relationship," he claimed.

The assault comes amid a spike in hate crime incidents in the UK following a suicide bombing at a concert in Manchester that claimed 22 lives and an attack in London by three terrorists, who drove a van into pedestrians and then went on a stabbing spree, killing eight persons before being shot dead. — PTI



Scriptwriter Andres Duprat, director Gaston Duprat, actor Oscar Martinez and director Mariano Cohn pose with their trophies after winning the Best Film Award for El Ciudadano Ilustre at the end of the Platino Awards in Madrid, Spain, early on Sunday. — UNI

Tehran seeks release of detained Iranian citizens in US

TEHRAN, July 23: Iran has demanded that the United States release all detained Iranian citizens, the semi-official Tasnim news agency has reported.

The report yesterday quotes Iran's deputy foreign minister Abbas Araghchi as saying he raised the issue Friday during a meeting with an American delegation in Vienna, on the sidelines of a meeting on 2015 nuclear deal.

"We raised the issue of the release of Iranians who are detained under the meaningless accusation of bypassing sanctions," on Iran, Araghchi was quoted as saying. He did not elaborate.

Earlier on Friday the White House threatened "new and serious consequences" for Iran unless it releases all US citizens who are detained there.

The White House says President Donald Trump is prepared to act in an attempt to end Iran's practice of using detentions and hostage taking as state policy, but it provides no specifics about

potential consequences.

Washington is urging the return of former FBI agent Robert Levinson, who disappeared in Iran in 2007 and Princeton graduate student Xiyue Wang, who

reported.

Ghasemi said Iran's judiciary and judges are "independent" and such statements would not deter the judiciary from punishing "violators of Iranian law and

national security."

However he added that Levinson left Iran after visiting Iran and Tehran has no information about him.

Ghasemi also reiterated the demand for the "quick" release of Iranian detainees in the US, and said one of the wanted Iranian in the US has already died abroad. He did not elaborate. — AFP

We raised the issue of the release of Iranians who are detained under the meaningless accusation of bypassing sanctions



Netanyahu faces pressure over holy site after violence kills 8

Jerusalem, July 23: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faced mounting pressure today over new security measures at a sensitive Jerusalem holy site after a weekend of violence left eight people dead, with fears more unrest could follow.

Israeli officials signalled they may be open to changing the measures at the Harari al-Sharif mosque compound, known to Jews as the Temple Mount, after the installation of metal detectors at entrances following an attack that killed two policemen stoked Palestinian anger.

The metal detectors remained in place today morning, though cameras had already been mounted near at least one entrance to the compound in Jerusalem's Old City – a possible indication of an alternative to the detectors.

Netanyahu was also holding a cabinet meeting and was due to meet with his security cabinet later in the day.

"We are examining other options and alternatives that will ensure security," Mordechai said in an interview with Al-Jazeera.

Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan said he would continue to support the metal detectors remaining in place unless police provide a satisfactory alternative.

The crisis has resonated internationally.

The UN Security Council

prayed in the streets outside.

Israeli authorities say the July 14 attackers smuggled guns into the holy site and emerged from it to shoot the policemen. — AFP



Afghan police launch search operation for kidnapped villagers

KANDAHAR (Afghanistan), July 23: Afghan police today launched a search and rescue operation two days after at least 70 villagers were kidnapped by suspected Taliban militants in the southern Afghan province of Kandahar.

At least 7 of the kidnapped villagers were found dead yesterday, along the highway that runs from Kandahar, the largest city in southern Afghanistan, to Tarin Kot, capital of Uruzgan province, a poppy-growing area where the Taliban has a heavy presence.

The police blamed the Taliban for the deaths.

Around 30 people were released, while

30 others were still missing, Kandahar police spokesman Zia Durrani told AFP.



No groups has claimed responsibility for the kidnapping, and it was also not clear why

the villagers were seized, though some government officials have suggested the villagers might have been kidnapped on suspicion of cooperation with the Afghan government.

Civilians are increasingly caught in the crosshairs of Afghanistan's worsening conflict as the Taliban step up their annual spring offensive, launched in April against the Western-backed Kabul government.

Highways around Afghanistan passing through insurgency-prone areas have become exceedingly dangerous, with the Taliban and other armed groups frequently kidnapping or killing travellers. — AFP

New WH communications boss deletes tweets Trump would not love

WASHINGTON, July 23: Donald Trump's new communications chief has deleted tweets in which he shared views contrary to the US president's own, saying they were a distraction.

The day after he started his new job on Friday, Anthony Scaramucci, a New York financier, cleared up his Twitter trail of remarks in which he differs from Trump on illegal immigration, climate change, Islam and even gun control.

"Full transparency: I'm deleting old tweets. Past views evolved & shouldn't be a distraction. I serve @POTUS agenda & that's all that matters," the new man on the White House job announced on Twitter.

A bit later, Scaramucci followed up with: "The politics of 'gotcha' are over. I have thick skin and we're moving on to @POTUS agenda serving the American people."

In a 2012 comment he tweeted, he appeared to back many causes long championed by Democrats, describing himself as "for Gay Marriage, against the death penalty, and Pro Choice."

White House press secretary Sean Spicer abruptly resigned Friday in protest at Scaramucci's hiring.

In a written statement, Trump said he was "grateful" for Spicer's work and praised his "great television ratings" – a reference to Spicer's keenly watched, combative and often satirical news briefings.

Spicer's departure marked rising tensions in an administration that has seen its legislative agenda falter at the same time it has been buffeted by an investigation into alleged collusion with Russia. — AFP



Anthony Scaramucci

Neymar dazzles as Barcelona down Juventus

EAST RUTHERFORD (United States), July 23: Neymar gave Barcelona fans a dazzling reminder of what they could be about to lose on Saturday, scoring twice as the Spanish giants defeated Juventus 2-1 in a pre-season friendly.

The 25-year-old Brazilian superstar is at the centre of frenzied speculation linking him to a guaranteed world record 225-million-euro (\$256.8 million) transfer to Paris Saint-Germain.

Neymar had kept the guessing game about his future bubbling away after posting a picture of himself looking pensive on Instagram on Friday.

But there was little to suggest that the charismatic striker is overwhelmed by the transfer saga as he produced a bewitching performance in front of a sell-out 82,104 crowd at the MetLife Stadium in New Jersey.

The Brazilian broke clear after only four minutes but saw a tame shot from near the edge of the area drift away from the goal. Barcelona, with Lionel Messi starting, looked by far the more threatening of the two teams with Alex Vidal and Messi both drawing early blocks from the Juventus defence.

At the other end, Mario Mandzukic might have given Juventus the lead on 14 minutes but his header from a Stevan Sturaro cross went wide.

The Italians were made to rue Mandzukic's



Neymar jumps in celebration after scoring Barcelona's first goal during the International Champions Cup match against Juventus at the MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, on Saturday.

After magical ton, Railway promotion for star batswoman Harmanpreet

MUMBAI, July 23: Promotion and felicitations are on the cards for batswoman Harmanpreet Kaur, who hit a scintillating century to help India defeat mighty Australia and enter the final of the ICC Women's World Cup.

The 28-year-old right-handed batter hit an unbeaten 171 off just 115 balls in the semifinal match to knock out the reigning champions from the tournament being played in England.

The Mumbai division of Western Railway (WR), which has employed her, said Kaur has shown extraordinary talent, and therefore, it would recommend to the Railway Board to promote her.

"Certainly, we would recommend her name to the Railway Ministry for promotion. We will also felicitate her when she comes back home," said Ravinder Bhakar, chief PRO of WR, yesterday.

Kaur is currently employed



as Chief Office Superintendent in Mumbai, he said.

"Whenever, our players show excellence or perform outstandingly in international events, we recommend their names for promotion," he said.

A senior official of Central Railway, Sunil Udas, said the State-run transport undertak-

ing takes a good care of its players and provides them proper training.

Udas, who heads the committee that selects members of Railways' women cricket team, said the PSU has always promoted women.

"Railways women cricketers have always been in the forefront and the current national team is no exception. As many as 10 players from the current 15-member team (taking part in the World Cup) are from Railways."

"This is due to the robust domestic schedule and facilities such as 330 days special leave for dedicated training being provided by the Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB)," he said.

Udas, who is also chief PRO of Central Railway, said the RSPB has undertaken various initiatives to impart regular training to players and prepare them for international events. - PTI

Set up 24x7 helpline for athletes: Gopichand on doping

NEW DELHI, July 23: Concerned about the rise in doping violations, chief national badminton coach Pullela Gopichand today suggested setting up of a 24x7 medical helpline so that sportspersons don't use over-the-counter drugs.

The former All England champion came up with the suggestion during the sixth meeting of the All India Council of Sports (AICS) chaired by Vijay Kumar Malhotra.

"Shri Gopichand mentioned that most of the sportspersons take off the counter medicines like Corex and get caught in dope. In the recent case of won-an-athlete also, it is doubted that she took medicine for stomach upset and got caught in dope," the AICS said in a statement.



Gopichand
sportspersons to seek advice before taking any medicine."

Sprint queen PT Usha pointed out that only two dope collecting officials are deployed for

a large number of sportspersons.

"During this time, there are chances of interchanging the dope samples."

Sports Authority of India's director general Injeti Srinivas said that it would be better if each federation appoints an expert director for each discipline, one who should be available to give advice to their respective sportspersons.

The SAI DG also mentioned that as a precautionary measure, the dope collecting officers should regularly be changed to avoid any vested interest.

Malhotra expressed his anguish over the rampant cases of dope and the recent media coverage "furnishing the image of not only sports but also the image of the country". - PTI

Chappell backs Kohli in coach controversy

NEW DELHI, July 23: Australian legend Ian Chappell has backed India skipper Virat Kohli in the controversy that erupted after his fallow with former coach Anil Kumble, saying "If a coach is to be inflicted on a captain, "it should be someone with whom he is comfortable."

In his column for ESPN-Cricinfo, Chappell played down the role of a coach in any team.

"Kohli doesn't have the same harmonious relationship with Anil Kumble as he enjoyed with Ravi Shastri when he was director. The fact that India have now reverted to Shastri as coach prompt the question: 'Why change something that isn't broken?'" he asked.

"If a coach is to be inflicted on a captain then at least it should be someone with whom he is comfortable," he added.

Kumble resigned from the position after the Champions Trophy last month and admitted that his relationship with Kohli had become "untenable". Kohli, on his part, has not yet given any comment on the rift. - PTI

Silver for Sharad, bronze for Bhati

LONDON, July 23: India's Sharad Kumar and Varun Bhati won silver and bronze respectively in the High Jump event at the World Para Athletics Championships.

Sharad and Bhati participated in the T-42 category of men's high jump event.

Sharad cleared a personal best of 1.84m to win the silver while Bhati – a Rio Paralympics medalist leaped 1.77m to earn a podium finish.

The gold medal was won by United States' Sam Grewie, who leaped a height 1.86m.

India now have five medals with a gold, two silver and two bronze medals. India are currently 29th in the medal standings. - PTI

Kashyap meets Prannoy in summit clash of US Open Grand Prix

ANAHEIM (California), July 23: The Indian juggernaut in men's badminton continued to roll with former Commonwealth Games gold medalist Parupalli Kashyap setting up a title date with HS Prannoy at the USD 120,000 US Open Grand Prix Gold here.

After limping out of the court with a calf injury in October in 2015, it was the first final for Kashyap in 21 months, while Prannoy, who has always been plagued by injuries, also reached his first summit clash after clinching the Swiss Open last year.

Kashyap eked out a hard-fought 21-21, 21-15, 21-16 win over Korean Kwang Hee Heo in the second



semifinal which lasted an hour and six minutes.

Prannoy, on the other hand, notched up a 21-14, 21-19 win over Vietnam's Tien Minh Nguyen in the first semifinal.

It will be the second time this season that two Indians will fight it out for the title at international badminton.

In April, K Srikanth and B Sai Praneeth had played in the finals of Singapore Open with the latter claiming his maiden Super Series title.

Men's doubles pair of Manu Attri and B Sumeeth Reddy fought hard before going down 12-21, 21-12, 22-22 to top seeds Lu Ching Yao and



Yang Po Han.

"It is good to reach a final after a long time. It was a tough match against the Korean. He had started really well and I took time to adjust to the conditions today as it was little slow. He was really patient and he was hitting hard smashes. But slowly I got a good rhythm and eventually I could pull off," Kashyap told PTI.

"I think it was a difficult tournament to start with as the opening round was also against a player I had always had close matches. I had played him 5-6 times and I was good to win in the first round. Also playing against Sameer was tough. He is a tricky player and it has always been close matches with him. Really looking forward to the final," he added.

It will be the third Grand Prix Gold title for Indian men's shuttlers after Sameer and Praneeth clinched the Syed Modi International and Thailand Open respectively. Indian men also won three super series titles with Srikanth clinching the Indonesia and Australia Open and Praneeth winning at Singapore. - PTI

Never sought Shiva Thapa's removal from TOP scheme: Mary Kom

NEW DELHI, July 23: Olympic bronze-medalist and five-time world champion MC Mary Kom today denied reports that she had sought top men's boxer Shiva Thapa's ouster from the Target Olympic Podium (TOP) scheme during a meeting of the national observers here.

Reacting to a report that she had sought Thapa's removal from the TOP scheme, Mary Kom issued a statement to deny having made any such remark at the meeting which took place on Friday.

Shiva Thapa's removal from the TOP scheme was reported by the Indian Express.

Shiva Thapa's removal from the TOP scheme was reported by the Indian Express.

"Let me put this on record, I have

never said anything like Shiva's career being over and he should be dropped from the TOP scheme," she added.

"Playing with the reputation of a working boxer using falsehood is not acceptable to me."

The 23-year-old Thapa is currently preparing for the World Championships, where he won a bronze medal in 2015, at a training trip in France. He recently

won a silver medal at the Asian Championships in Tashkent.

Mary Kom also denied saying that former Commonwealth Games Manoj Kumar was past his prime. The 30-year-old Manoj has also qualified for the World

Championships to be held from September 25 in Hamburg.

"I would categorically like to state that I have never used the term 'overage' for Manoj Kumar as he has been stated by the unnamed source quoted," she stated.

"This kind of stories without proper verification of facts is tantamount to playing with my reputation," she added.

Mary Kom is one of the two national observers appointed by the Sports Ministry for boxing, other being former CWG gold medallist Akhil Kumar. - PTI

Ronaldo will remain Real player for another 2-3 years: Zidane



LOS ANGELES, July 23: Cristiano Ronaldo will remain a Real Madrid player for "the next 2-3 years", coach Zinedine Zidane said on Saturday, ending talk that the Bernabeu superstar might depart for Manchester United.

On the eve of Real's pre-season friendly against United at Santa Clara, California, Zidane spoke in Los Angeles about the 32-year-old Portuguese forward who is currently on vacation.

"There has been a lot of talk surrounding Cristiano, that he wanted to go," Zidane acknowledged. "I only believe in one thing – whenever I've spoken to him, he has been very relaxed.

"He's on holiday and he will be back with us on the fifth of August). I listen, just like everyone else, but the only thing I am concerned with is what he wants to do with Real Madrid.

"He'll be here with us on the fifth and I think he'll stay for the next 2 or 3 years he's got left with us."

Ronaldo will also play US tune-up matches on Wednesday against Manchester City at Los Angeles and next Saturday against bitter rivals Barcelona in Miami before next month's scheduled return for Ronaldo.

"He's on a very well-deserved holiday after the year we've had," Zidane said. "He has to come

back in and we'll look at when he will get some playing time. I'm sure he'll be ready in no time."

After Real's title runs in La Liga and for a second consecutive year in the Champions League, Zidane is confident that his club will be ready when the time comes to defend those crowns.

"We know what we achieved was incredible and now there are trophies to be played for already on the eighth and we're preparing for that date to start in the best possible fashion," he said in reference to the European Super Cup clash, also against Man United, in Skopje on August 8.

"As always, we want to try and win everything we play for. That won't change. This club has the history, we know that winning trophies is what motivates us and we're going to try and do the same this year."

However, Zidane confirmed Brazilian right-back Dani Alves would be leaving the club, with the 26-year-old expected to sign for Manchester City.

"Dani Alves has gone and (Alvaro) Morata too," Zidane said, a day after Spain striker Morata completed a move to Chelsea in a deal that could be worth up to 80 million euros (\$92.2 million). - AFP

SU DO KU

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Indian eves lose WC final by 9 runs against England



England bowler Anya Shrubsole celebrates after picking up a wicket during the ICC Women's World Cup final against England at Lord's, on Sunday.

Pool c'ship concludes

GUWAHATI, July 23: The 2nd All Assam 8 Ball and 9 Ball Open Pool Championship organised by Star Sporting concluded at the Deshbhakta Tarun Ram Phukan Indoor Stadium here today.

In the 8 Ball championship, Mridul Das walked away with the champion trophy while Rajesh Kumar had to be content with the runner-up title. In the 9 Ball event, Mridul Das clinched the title while Ankit Bortha finished runners-up. Rajesh Kumar was adjudged the player of the tournament in the 8 Ball event while Mridul Das was the best player in the 9 Ball championship. Altogether 64 players participated in the events.

Deputy Inspector General of Police (CID), Assam, Raunak Ali Hazarika was the chief guest in the closing ceremony along with Mrs United Nation 2017 Roshni Hassan, international footballer Holicharan Narzary and president of All Assam Billiards and Snooker Association, Rajib Saikia.

Trisha clinches double crown

SPORTS REPORTER

GUWAHATI, July 23: Trisha Gogoi clinched double crown in the 9th All Assam Major Ranking Championship organised by the Don Bosco Alumni, Guwahati at the Nihal Singh Thakur TT Hall at the Don Bosco school premises here.

Results: Girls' Winner: Trisha Gogoi (Guwahati). Runners-up: Adria Sarma (OIL), 3rd position: Ganesh Goswami (Borali); Boys' Winner: Sharibek Gudam Baruah (OIL). Runners-up: Zubair Ashraf Baruah (Guwahati), 3rd position: Zidav Gogoi (Dibrugarh); Girls' Runner-up: Kritika Gogoi (Guwahati), 3rd position: Gargen Goswami (Ghat) and Adrijit Sarma (OIL). Boys' Runner-up: Md. Zulfiqar (OIL), 3rd position: Sharibek Gudam Baruah (OIL), 3rd position: Bhasker Samir (Golaghat) and Agniv Bhasker Gohain (Dibrugarh).

Only sports can create a peaceful atmosphere: Sonowal

SPORTS REPORTER

GUWAHATI, July 23: Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal is determined to set up a true sports environment in the State as he sincerely believes only sports can create a peaceful and ideal atmosphere in the society.

Attending the Chief Minister's Sports Award, Grant-in-aid Distribution and Felicitation ceremony of the successful UPSC candidates here today, Sonowal vowed to prepare 500 playgrounds in the rural areas so that talent hunt process could be started in every nook and corner of the State.

He also said that young talents in the rural areas will be picked so that they can be provided training in the State Sports Academy which will be started in the Saraswati Sports Complex here in the name of Arjuna Awardee Bhoegowar Baruah.

"Sports is a way of life and to produce good human beings we have to put stress in drawing youngsters towards the playground," said the Chief Minister.

He also made an appeal to the parents and teachers to encourage their children and students to take sports seriously.

Finance, Education and Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who was also present on the occasion, said that the State

Government is planning to reserve sports quota in the government jobs in order to encourage the talented sports persons. He also revealed that a plan has been prepared through which in 50 selected colleges in the State skill developing centres will be set up where students can prepare for various competitive examinations. Sports minister Naba Kumar Doley; PHE Minister

Rihan Daimary; Commissioner and Secretary, Sports, Ashutosh Agnihotri, Secretary Sports Sanjib Gohain Baruah, Janardan Deva Goswami, Satradhikar of Uttar Kamalabari Satra and Queen Ojha, vice chairman, Sports Authority of Assam also were present on the occasion.

The function was organised jointly by the Directorate of Sports and State Level Advisor-

ry Committee (SLAC) for Students and Youth Welfare. Thirty sportspersons of the State who won medals at various international sports events in Olympic sports disciplines were given cash incentives and mementos to assist them in their coaching and training.

Doley announced a cash award of Rs 1 lakh

for Hima Das who recently came fifth in the girls 200m of the World U-18 Athletic Cham-

pionship in Nairobi.

Member secretary of the SLAC Lakhya Konwar welcomed the gathering and explained in details about the scheme. He said that the SLAC is focusing on providing financial assistance to sportspersons, organisations and students so that the scenario of sports and education could be improved in the State.

Altogether 25 district sports associations and 35 State sports associations were provided financial assistance of Rs 30,000 and Rs 36,000 respectively in the function.

Noted sportspersons including the likes of Bhoegowar Baruah, Shiva Thapa, Gilbertson Sangma, Tansen Baru, Talben Nesa, Swadhin Debaraj, among others were also honoured in the function.

The 13 successful UPSC candidates were also felicitated by the Chief Minister on the occasion today.

Players receiving cash incentive: Hima Das, Lopamudra Gohain Doley, Brisklongana Gogoi, Ngathem John Singh, L' Thoini Charu, D Basumatary, Bangla Hazarika, Kishore Gogoi, Dibyendu Baru, Birdu Baru, Sanjay Baru, Hiranta Baru, Poccha Baru, Biju Baru, Biju Baru, Rancharay, Nirman Rupam Kashyap, Bhupen Hazarika, Nitaphum Kabitia Devi, Asmita Chaita, Hollchand Narzary, Arman Chetri, Jamuna Baru, Shilpi Baru, Rupam Baru, Rupam Baru, Dibyendu Baru, Rupam Baru, Neog, Hridoy Hazarika, Rakesh Rai, Rina Neog, Hridoy Hazarika, Arun Chaita, Bishnu Tapan Boddi, Rajni Devi.

Stallings' 19-under 194 is a new 54-hole tournament record. Stallings, who has won three tournaments on the PGA TOUR, is in search of his first win since the 2014 Farmers Insurance Open. -PTI

Riyam unbeaten on 61

SPORTS REPORTER

GUWAHATI, July 23: Assam boy Riyam Parag was unbeaten on 61 off 118 balls with 10 hits to the fence in the first four-day match between India U-19 and England U-19 at Chesterfield in England today.

Punjab's 19-year-old batsman Put in to bat, India were 325 for 5 at the time of filing of this report. Manoj Karla (122) and Parthiv Shaw (86) were the other leading scorers for India.

Edathodika, Lyngdoh become the most expensive buys at ISL Draft



Football Sports Development Limited (FSDL) chairperson Nita Ambani with the newly-drafted players at the Indian Super League (ISL) domestic players draft in Mumbai, on Sunday.

with Lyngdoh in its ranks.

The team also chose India striker Robin Singh for Rs 65 lakh, enabling a reunion with Westwood, under whom he played for Bengaluru FC in the I-League.

Steve Coppel, Jamshedpur FC's head coach, said, "Picking Indian players is a priority and

we will try and match the skeleton of the team. A decision on choosing foreign players will be taken soon. We have some foreign players in the mind. We had terrific and solid players in the pick. Now our job is to cement the team."

He supported the expansion of league to 10 teams and by two

more months. "There is more responsibility and it's a step in the right direction," he said.

On Mehtab Hussain's pick he said, "He is very much the devil and will be determined to make an impact. He has been playing for a long time. I am very pleased to get him."

Football Sports Development

Limited (FSDL) chairperson Nita Ambani said that ISL is inspiring youth to take up football as a career.

"It is going to be an exciting new journey, a longer season, kicking off this November. Both in terms of number of matches moving from 61 to 85 and the

duration from two and a half months to five months.

"The longer season will ensure sufficient rest for players between the matches and will help in the quality of play getting better," Ambani said during the opening address of the players' draft.

Surbata Paul said, "I am happy to be associated with Tatas (owners of Jamshedpur FC)," he said.

Asked whether he was surprised being picked so early, Paul said,

"It's a tricky question, but I was confident. I will try and give my best to the club." India's star striker Sunil Chhetri, who was among those retained by his club ahead of the draft, said that he will miss the presence of Lyngdoh alongside him.

"I will miss him and wish him all the luck," said Chhetri who used to forge a fine combination with Lyngdoh in I-league for Bengaluru FC. -PTI

Man City sign Danilo on five-year contract

MANCHESTER, July 23: Manchester City have signed defender Danilo from Spanish champions Real Madrid on a five-year contract for an undisclosed fee, the Premier League club said on Sunday.

The 26-year-old joined Madrid in 2015 and played 24 matches for Zinedine Zidane's side last season as they won the Spanish league title, sealed their second consecutive Champions League trophy and won the Club World Cup.

City, who previously won two league titles in four years at Portuguese club FC Porto, will join his new team mates in their pre-season tour and face City play Madrid on Wednesday (manitycom).

"There has been strong interest from other clubs, but it has always been my ambition to play for Pep Guardiola. As soon as I

heard of his interest, I knew immediately I wanted to be a City player. I can't wait to get started and I'm looking forward to getting to know my new teammates over the coming weeks."

British media reports claimed the Brazilian joined City for a fee of around 26 million pounds (\$33.78 million), making him manager Guardiola's second major defensive signing in the current window following Kyle Walker's arrival earlier this month. Danilo, who previously won two league titles in four years at Portuguese club FC Porto, will join his new team mates in their pre-season tour and face City play Madrid on Wednesday (Agencies)

Chelsea apologise to Chinese people

LONDON, July 23: Chelsea apologised "to Chinese people" today after their Brazilian full-back Kenedy posted two videos on Instagram insulting the Asian powerhouse which is also one of the club's biggest markets.

Kenedy, 21, has been discredited and reprimanded by the Premier League champions after posting the videos, one of which contained a profanity and the other featured a sleeping security guard accompanied by the words: "Wake up China. You idiot".

The posts were later deleted from his account.

Chelsea said they had been warmly received at the Bird's Nest stadium in Beijing where they had enjoyed a 3-0 win over Arsenal on Saturday and had been shocked by Kenedy's posts.

"Chelsea football club apology to Chinese people for player's offensive social media posts," said a club statement which appeared in English and Chinese.

"Kenedy's actions were a mistake that he will learn greatly from. His behaviour does not represent the entire team and does not align with the club's high expectations and strict requirements of its young players. He has been strongly reprimanded and disciplined." - AFP

Punjab CM announces Rs 5 lakh reward for Harmanpreet

CHANDIGARH, July 23: Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh today announced a cash reward of Rs 5 lakh for Harmanpreet Kaur for her performance that steered India to the final of ICC Women's World Cup.

The chief minister conveyed this to Harmanpreet's father, Harmander Singh, whom he called up to congratulate, an official spokesman said here.

The CM also told Harmander if his daughter was still keen on a government job, he would look into a change in the sports policy of the State to provide the same to her.

The previous Parkash Singh Badal government had denied a job to Harmanpreet, Amritpal Singh alleged.

Playing the Akali government's blunt dismissal of Harmanpreet's request for a police job when she was just starting her career, the chief minister told Harmander that he would look into the matter.

The Chief Minister lauded Harmanpreet's score of 171 not out of 115 balls in the semi-final against Australia. - PTII

Atwal moves up top 20 with a round of 64

OPELIKA (US), July 23: Arjun Atwal made a sharp upward move in the third round with a fine seven-under 64 that saw him climb to tied-20th at the end of the third round at the Barbasol Championships here.

Arwal had shot 69 and 70 in the first two rounds.

Arwal's third round was error-free as he had five birdies on the front nine, including three in a row from seventh to ninth. He added two more on 16th and 18th for a glorious day.

Meanwhile, a day after Chad Collins shot a course-record 60 in the Barbasol Championship, Scott Stallings did the same to take the lead heading into the final round.

Stallings' 19-under 194 is a new 54-hole tournament record.

Stallings, who has won three tournaments on the PGA TOUR, is in search of his first win since the 2014 Farmers Insurance Open. - PTI

Riyam unbeaten on 61

SPORTS REPORTER

GUWAHATI, July 23: Assam boy Riyam Parag was unbeaten on 61 off 118 balls with 10 hits to the fence in the first four-day match between India U-19 and England U-19 at Chesterfield in England today.

Punjab's 19-year-old batsman Put in to bat, India were 325 for 5 at the time of filing of this report. Manoj Karla (122) and Parthiv Shaw (86) were the other leading scorers for India.

London, July 23: Indian eves

defeated England by 9 runs

in the final of the ICC Women's

World Cup at Lord's in London

on Sunday.

England's Anya Shrubsole

celebrated after picking up a

wicket during the final.

India's captain Mithali Raj

celebrated after winning the

final.

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