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NEWS CAPSULE

Militant killed

DOOMDOOMA, April 18: Troops of the 7th Bn of Madras Regiment stationed at Dirak Chirali under Kakapahar PS in Tinsukia killed a hardcore ULFA(I) cadre thus making the militant, who was occupying a vehicle he was travelling in. The militant, identified as Pulin Dutta, tried to flee while firing at the troops, but was chased down and shot dead in a nearby tea garden. — Correspondent

Agri scam

GUWAHATI, April 18: Three Golaghat-based contractors – Dipul Barman, Gautam Bhattacharya and Kamalchandra Agarwalla – were today arrested by CID in the Rs 700-crore agriculture scam and sent to judicial custody by a court. — Staff Reporter

Nepal Prez

NEW DELHI, April 18: External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj today discussed bilateral ties with visiting Nepal President Bidhya Devi Bhandari. Bhandari arrived here yesterday on a five-day visit. — PTI

Monsoon

NEW DELHI, April 18: The southwest monsoon will "be very strong, a normal year which will also be well for the farming community and the economy. India Meteorological Department Director General KJ Ramesh said there would be good distribution of rainfall across India. — PTI

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

Vijay Mallya arrested in UK, gets bail

LONDON, April 18: Embattled Indian tycoon Vijay Mallya, who has been declared a proclaimed offender, was today arrested in London by Scotland Yard on India's request for his extradition on fraud charges.

Senior Indian officials described his arrest as the first salvo in the case, which will now involve a legal process in the UK to determine if Mallya can be extradited to India to face charges in Indian courts.

The arrest comes weeks after Indian Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had indicated that Mallya's extradition would feature in his talks during his visit to the UK.

The 61-year-old liquor baron, wanted in India for defaulting on loans, was arrested after he appeared at a central London police station this morning.

The flamboyant businessman, who once called himself 'The King of Good Times', was released on bail a few hours later.



"Officers from the Metropolitan Police's Extradition Unit this morning arrested a man on an extradition warrant. Vijay Mallya was arrested on behalf of the Indian authorities in relation to accusations of fraud," Scotland Yard told PTI.

The Metropolitan Police said Mallya was arrested after attending a central London police station. He appeared at Westminster Magistrates' Court in London and was seen walking out with his legal team a few hours later after being granted bail.

"It was a voluntary action. He will be out in a few minutes," said a member of Mallya's team at the court, without giving any further details of the bail conditions.

"Usual Indian media hype. Extradition hearing in Court started today as expected," Mallya tweeted soon after getting the bail.

In New Delhi, Minister of State for Finance Santosh Kumar Gangwar said, "We

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Govt must withdraw Bill to amend Citizenship Act: AASU

R DUTTA CHOWDHURY

dents' Union (AASU).

Talking to *The Assam Tribune*, Chief adviser of the AASU, Samujal Bhattacharya said that if the Government respects democratic norms, it should immediately withdraw the Citizenship Amendment Bill as no indigenous person of Assam supports the idea of providing citizenship to Bangladeshi nationals, who came to Assam after the midnight of March 24, 1971. This is the view of the All Assam Stu-

Bhattacharya said that the AASU and 29 organizations representing different ethnic groups of the State have already launched a mass movement against the Centre's move and efforts are on to involve all sections of indigenous people of the State in the movement. He said that the AASU would also make efforts to take genuine Indian citizens, who are permanent citizens of Assam.

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Urmimala Dowaara of Sivasagar, Bihu Samragi (M), Nimisha Dikhang from Moran, Bihu Kuwari (L) and Rajashree Nath from Sivasagar, Bihu Rani (R) pose for a photo after they were crowned with the respective titles in Latahsil Bihu Sammilan in Guwahati on Tuesday. — UB Photos

Land rights

Govt panel to interact with stakeholders

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 18: The committee formed by the State Government for suggesting measures for ensuring protection of land rights of indigenous people of Assam will visit various districts of Upper Assam, Central Assam and the North Bank later this month to interact with various stakeholders.

As part of the field visit programme, the committee members will hold meetings with the stakeholders in the conference hall of the Deputy

(See page 7)

Ceasefire with 2 NSCN groups extended

SPL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, April 18: The Centre on Tuesday extended the ceasefires with two NSCN factions. Official sources said that the ceasefire that is in operation between the Government of India and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-R) and the one with the NSCN-NK have been extended by a year, with effect from April 28, 2017.

The ceasefire was signed by Joint Secretary (Northeast) Satyendra Garg on behalf of the Government of India and Toshi Longkumer and Imlongkui Chang on behalf of the NSCN-R and Jack Jimomi, supervisor, GPRN-NSCN, on behalf of the NSCN-NK.

Small growers bringing change in State tea sector

AJIT PATOWARY

GUWAHATI, April 18: Around 500 small tea growers are silently working to bring about a revolution in the State's tea sector for the past about 11 years. About three years back, they formed the Organic Small Tea Growers' Association, Assam (OST-GA) with the aim at bringing about a far-reaching change in the small tea growers sector and around 125 of them are now engaged in manufacturing organic tea in their own factories.

Significantly, they exported around 6,000 kilograms (kg) of green tea and around 2,000 kgs of black orthodox tea to Canada in 2016. Though Canada dominated the other countries in matters of buying teas from these producers, the United States (1,000 to 1,500 kg of green and black teas), the United Kingdom (around 2,000 kg, mostly black), Australia (around 1,500 kg, mostly black) and New Zealand (around 500 kg of black tea)

(See page 7)

US reaffirms Major Defence Partner status to India

NEW DELHI, April 18: The Trump Administration today reaffirmed the Major Defence Partner status granted to India as its National Security Adviser H R McMaster met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and held talks with his counterpart Ajit Doval here.

During the meeting between Modi and McMaster, views were exchanged on how India and the US can work together to effectively address the challenge of terrorism and to advance regional peace, security and stability, a PMO statement said.

McMaster, whose trip here marks the first visit by a top official of the Trump Administration, shared his perspective with the Prime Minister on the security situation in the extended region, including Afghanistan, West Asia and North Korea.

The US NSA conveyed the greetings of President Donald Trump to the Prime Minister, the PMO statement said about the meeting in which Doval, Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar and some other key officials were present.

"NSA McMaster emphasized the importance of the US-India strategic relationship and reaffirmed India's designation as a Major Defence Partner," said a statement issued by the US Embassy here. — PTI

JOCOSERIOUS



Sir, this time for a change we can promote flood tourism!

Implementation of schemes in NE not up to mark: Naidu

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 18: Union Minister for Urban Development and Housing M Venkaiah Naidu today said that progress in many schemes under his ministry in the Northeastern states, including Assam, is not "up to the mark" and asked these states to introduce reforms so that they can catch up with the rest of the country.

Naidu, who reviewed the progress of four major missions of the Central government — AMRUT, Swachh Bharat Mission, Smart Cities and PMAY in the Northeastern states, blamed the previous Congress government in Assam for "neglecting urban development issues."

In other states, there are issues related to community ownership of land and transportation bottlenecks in interiors, due to which the implementation of schemes has been poor, he observed.

Coverage of water supply was as low as 30 per cent in Nagaland, 38 per cent in Manipur and 67 per cent in Assam, he said, noting that the states had the potential to vastly improve in the sector and provide piped water supply round the clock.

Under AMRUT, the minister said that plans worth Rs 1,502 crore have been approved for the NE states, of which Rs 170 crore has been released as first instalments. "Work has started on 90 per cent of the projects in Mizoram and 75 per cent in Sikkim. Other states need to take action," he said.

Naidu said while most states are competing with each other to reach Open Defecation Free (ODF) status, the

(See page 7)

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MESSAGE FOR TODAY

Put your heart, mind, and soul into even your smallest acts. This is the secret of success.

— SWAMI SIVANANDA

The Assam Tribune**The great dictator**

The biggest contradiction in the 'democratic' system is that the will of the 'majority' prevails, even if that is so by the slenderest of margins. This was proven by Brexit; in the case of the US, Donald Trump actually won the Presidency even though he did not win the popular votes! In another game-changing development, the strategically located and sharply polarized nation of Turkey has once again proved the truth of such a contradiction. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who had usurped dictatorial powers since an abortive coup against him some time back, has succeeded in 'legalizing' his authoritarian status in the eyes of the world through a referendum on whether to change the Constitution or not. It may be recalled that on the pretext of protecting his country against the ISIS, Kurd rebels as well as the 'enemies' of Turkey, Erdogan had declared a state of emergency and already assumed sweeping powers. He had used these to arrest thousands of his opponents. Prior to the referendum he had employed every trick in the book to quash any overt opposition, thus trying to ensure that he emerge victorious in the referendum. However, the tiny nature of his 'win' shows that almost half of the population is against investing him with unlimited authority. Yet Erdogan and his supporters have claimed victory and he is all set to become the Great Dictator.

By doing so he is now in a position to downplay the Turkish Parliament, abolish the post of Prime Minister and transfer all executive powers to himself. He can now make his own decisions, appoint key officials to carry these out, and judges to give judicial backing no matter how unconstitutional these might be. In a nutshell he has removed all checks and balances which had once made Turkey one of the most vibrant democracies and liberal societies. This is a matter of concern to the international community, since Turkey is an important ally not only of Russia, but the European Union and the US. Its role is crucial in resolving the Syrian imbroglio and getting a fair deal for the millions of migrants who are now pouring out of the Middle-east. This precisely is the reason why the free world is so powerless to prevent his authoritarian moves and, even if he continues his repression against his opponents, can do almost nothing. The so-called Opposition has challenged the results of the referendum, on which international observers have rightly put a question mark, but appears to be helpless to reverse them. Their only card is Turkey's application for membership of the European Union, of essence if the nation is to retain its economic progress. But, considering the stakes involved *vis-a-vis* the terrorism and migrant issues, it is most whether this would be of any avail.

Tackling floods

The State's perennial problem of floods needs a rethink. This is because the existing flood protection mechanism in the form of embankments on riverbanks has proved itself to be inadequate to withstand the growing fury of the floods. Rather, it can be argued that the existing network of embankments is adding to the severity of the recurring floods. While proponents of the traditional method of preventing floods through embankments reason that embankments are the cheapest means to achieve effective flood control, the fact is that even well-constructed riverside embankments that can be relatively effective in stopping water spilling over into adjacent land, invariably isolates the natural floodplain from the river. In doing so, flood storage capacity for the catchment area is also reduced, and invaluable biodiversity habitat is lost. Then, embankments that are crudely made from spoil excavated from the river are often unstable and washed away by the first major flood. Embankments also lead to abnormal accumulation of sediments on riverbeds, reducing their water carrying capacity. Any breach in an embankment is bound to trigger severe flash floods that are responsible for the worst damages. A wiser course of action would have been to construct embankments leaving a reasonable distance from the watercourses. Such arrangements would have been far more effective in reducing the severity of floods while allowing at the same time development of a semi-natural floodplain that could be used for grazing or seasonal agriculture.

While the phenomenon of floods is largely attributable to biophysical factors, unwarranted human actions have rendered floods an extremely complicated affair. By constructing a huge network of embankments, we have drastically altered our river systems. Then, allowing thickly populated human settlements come up very close to riverbanks, we have added manifold to the damaging impact of the floods. All this now calls for evolving a fool-proof flood protection mechanism with thrust on the required environmental aspects. A complete overhaul of the Brahmaputra Board which is entrusted with the job of preparing flood and erosion control projects is a must, as it lacks the technical expertise to deal with what is essentially a very complex problem of flood and erosion in the State. The feasibility of bringing in the best practices from outside also needs to be explored. Also imperative is to have a comprehensive scientific study on the entire Brahmaputra system for addressing the peculiarities of the recurring floods and erosion. The Brahmaputra largely accounts for the region's freshwater biodiversity which in turn is an important source of food, income, and livelihood for millions. Studies have estimated the economic value of river basins in the billions of dollars that cannot be undermined by unwarranted interventions under any circumstances. The convenient practice of persisting with ad-hoc measures should be abandoned forthwith and replaced by an integrated approach with due emphasis on the environmental aspects.

Educating voters for good governance

■ Sudhansu R Das

Poverty, illiteracy, backwardness and non-participation of a large number of educated people in the election process are the main reasons why democratic India has not produced quality public representatives in large numbers. The educated and conscious citizens can elect quality public representatives who can improve the governance mechanism. Quality governance can percolate the growth benefit and improve the quality of life. India's 74.4% people are literate, which means nearly 97 crore people can read and write. Only reading and writing does not make a conscious voter. Unless the voter is properly educated, he will not be able to elect the political representative. As per the Census 2011, only 8.15% Indians are graduates. This is a dismal situation for any democratic country. Only 2 to 3% of the graduates have the opportunity to get quality education. As per the National Employability Report on employability of the three-year bachelor's degree graduates, close to 84% graduates were found to lack the right levels in cognitive ability and 90% graduates did not have the required proficiency in English communication. With a huge mass of nearly 91.85% undergraduates and a large number of people who can read vernacular letters and write a few lines, India cannot improve its economy, polity or social life.

The United Nations has projected that India would be the most populous nation in the world in 2028 with 1.45 billion people. Unless the country educates minimum half of its people, it won't have the core to loan waivers. Labourers have disappeared from the farm fields due to distribution of free food and other freebies. Massive influx into urban centres has crumbled the rural infrastructures. From time to time the government waives farm loan keeping in view of the agrarian distress. The new UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has waived Rs 36,359 crore loans of farmers in the State. It is very difficult to know who is a wilful defaulter and who is in distress. Loan waiver discourages those farmers who sincerely repay loans. Arundhati Bhattacharya, chairman, SBI has reportedly said loan waiver creates a moral hazard.

Instead of waiving loan, leaders can search for permanent solutions to the farm yard crisis. With dedicated monitoring, a State can im-

prove irrigation facility, repair soil, groundwater, improve governance, revamp extension services, weed out corrupt NGOs and bring transparency in marketing network. There is no need for loan waiver if politicians improve governance; it will let people earn with self-respect.

Had the farmers in UP been educated, they would have asked Yogi to repair their soil, water table and rivers instead of loan waiver. They would have told Yogi to remove politicians and middlemen from cooperatives and bring transparency in supply chain. They would have asked Yogi to protect their fertile agriculture fields from land sharks and delist the corrupt NGOs.

In fact, political parties are not responsible for the aggressive growth of populism. Majority of the intelligentia, educated and conscious people of this country remain aloof from various social and economic problems at grassroots level. Look at our electronic media, how they buzz around on one subject for hours together. A few of them cover the social and economic problems in remote part of the country. The majority of districts in the country are out of the coverage area of the electronic media. Electronic media should do their core functions: educating, informing and reforming the society instead of sensationalising issues with special edit effects.

After 69 years of Independence, the country is yet to have a uniform CBSE syllabus for all schools in the country. This results into knowledge gap among children of Indian voters.

different regions across the country. The majority of the children in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana read a syllabus that focuses on mathematics and science. It ignores study of literature, history, fine art, geography, environmental science and political science which are very much required to groom future citizens. Telangana has witnessed the maximum number of horrific domestic violence cases. The root of good governance and good social behaviour lies in the study of art and literature.

In Pune, one public school teacher refused to give admission to a child who belonged to Kalimpong. The teacher said Kalimpong is in England and the child has to submit the required documents for admission. When asked who the President of India is, one Class VIII student of Warangal in Telangana answered that the President is some Reddy. As per the Census data, 25% of Indians do not have formal education. One out of five of seven-year-old kids in India are yet to go to school.

How to create educated and conscious citizens is the biggest challenge before all educational institutions, responsible politicians, academics and educated people of this country. The government should encourage young talents to choose teaching as career. Both government and private schools should have free evening classes for poor students who cannot afford to pay the tuition fees. Even religious places should be utilized to educate people. Retired government employees should be given incentive to teach. Media houses can also start free teaching classes. This is high time to educate, inform and reform the Indian voters.

Green Gold: realizing the potential

■ Rakshit Das

From a 'poor man's timber' to 'green gold', bamboo is fast emerging as the super material of the 21st century. It is one of the fastest growing and highest yielding renewable natural resources making it a good substitute to wood in mitigating pressure on natural forests. Bamboo is a family of grass; it matures in as little as three to five years, much faster than hardwood trees. It sends out new shoots after each harvest. Bamboo has unrivaled capacity to capture carbon.

Bamboo has immense economic potential. Bamboo flooring is a hot trend now. It is uniquely attractive, strong, resilient, moisture and stain resistant and environmentally friendly. Bamboo is also increasingly used for making panels and cabinets. Bamboo charcoal has found extensive use in personal and health products. Many nutritious and active minerals can be extracted from bamboo – these have anti-oxidation, anti-aging, anti-bacterial and anti-viral properties. Bamboo toothbrushes and bamboo charcoal toothpaste are finding extensive use across the world.

From super deluxe eco-homes in modern eco-villages to afforda-

Promoting the use of bamboo as a construction material can kick-start the growth of this sector in Assam.

Bamboo has always been popular as a building material, especially in house-building in every nook and corner of Assam. By embracing the emerging bamboo technology, we can give bamboo its due place as an environment-friendly, natural and stronger than most hardwood alternative. Bamboo offers the sheen, durability and luxurious finish of hardwood – but without the ecological damage. Its beauty and finish lend it an aura of opulence to any residence, office space or recreation arena. Bamboowood can be used to build flooring, electrical wire coverings, interior walls, ceiling, doors and windows for home interior. External use of bamboo as a construction material could be for bamboo cultivation and bamboo furniture design.

India has the second largest reserves of bamboo in the world. Leveraging this can spur gainful employment and income generation, especially in States like Assam and the rest of North-East India which has substantial bamboo resources and where bamboo is an intrinsic part of the local culture.

Technology-enabled contemporary bamboo furniture and home-living products can be the next growth driver of the future of bamboo in Assam. With modern technology which we can see being widely used in China, bamboo furniture can have the same structure-

al integrity and look and design as hardwood home furniture. Being a grass, it is much lighter and more versatile. Ikea, the world's largest furniture retailer, plans to make India its global sourcing hub for bamboo products as part of its strategy to increase bamboo product portfolio across its stores. The company believes that India can be the game changer in the bamboo furniture industry. Handcrafted, lightweight, durable bamboo home wares and modern home living gadgets are the eco-friendly way to complement modern homes. These products are in great demand in global markets. Assam with its intrinsic bamboo culture spread across its villages has the potential to leverage this emerging opportunity.

Bamboo handicraft of Assam with the adequate enabling ecosystem have the potential to take a big leap. Bamboo and cane handicraft have carved for itself an important place among the handicraft of Assam. It is perhaps the most universal of all the crafts practised by a large number of artisans scattered throughout the State. It is practised as a household industry and sometimes a mechanical device is used. That's the opportunity one has tap into. With raw skill available across the State,

all that one has to do is build the necessary ecosystem to skill the existing bamboo handicraft artisans and create necessary financial and marketing linkages. Bamboo artisans should be introduced to new modern technology and trained keeping in mind emerging trends in home living products. Adequate credit facilitation backed by initiatives that build empowering market linkages can provide the much-needed impetus and encouragement to artisans of Assam to produce bamboo handicraft not only for the domestic market, but also to export to the global markets where the demand for eco-friendly bamboo products is very high.

Guwahati is all set to host the Green Gold Bamboo Summit on April 28-29, 2017. It will be a thought leadership platform that will bring together relevant stakeholders to deliberate and discuss new ideas, new opportunities and new collaborations to enable the bamboo industry take the big leap.

The bamboo catchment area is exceptional in the sense that it brings under its ambit a whole swathe of artisans, micro, small and medium enterprises with a potential to position Assam as the business leader in the space.

Letters to the EDITOR

Sir, — Apropos the Noontami Bill Committee disallowing Zubeen Garg to sing Hindi songs, I would like to say that Zubeen is one of the most celebrated artists of Assam and he deserved such rude behaviour at any cost. I believe that an artist performing a Hindi song or songs of any language cannot hurt the sentiments of the Assamese people. An artist cannot be chained to any language, caste or religion. It is utmost important that we start respecting each artist from the region if we actually wish to prosper. Art is to be appreciated in every form.

Assamese songs. It is a festival of celebrating love and togetherness. Bihu or Assamese songs 'only' is not a parameter that can measure the sentiments related to Bihu. It is the time when we all stand together as a community and respect each other equally. It calls for enjoyment and feast, not

Bohag Bihu and Hindi songs

for arguments and fights. I believe it is time for all the organizers and managers of Bihu functions to be Assamese in the real sense and not bar any artiste from performing in any language. Yours etc., PRATEEKSHA DARADHARA, Bengaluru.

(II)

Sir, — I feel pained by the arrogance shown by Zubeen Garg. Assam's various languages and cultures are followed by a very small population which is constantly under pressure from the Hindi-speaking mainland, which has been working 24x7 to gobble up smaller nationalities with the tremendous support of the media and the overpowering influence of Bollywood. While the South Indian States with their strong roots have successfully withstood its onslaught, the same is not true in case of Assam. Young people, especially of Guwahati, today cannot talk in Assamese for more than a minute without using English or Hindi words in their sentences. The state of Assamese movies is a clear indicator as to where we

are progressing. Assam should learn from its tribal neighbours as to how to preserve its language. While we are busy organizing Suhita Sabhas, the Mizo people have learnt and used technology to document the folk songs of the Mizo language. The Shah Rahuk and Salmans do speak Mizo on their cable network in Aizawl. They ensure that all private companies are forced to hire local guys as they will not encourage outsiders by speaking in Hindi or English. So the issue is not about a singer's personal freedom of expression but it is about whether we should allow the Hindi empire a free run to further dilute our language. There are ample scope to enjoy Hindi songs (which we all do) but as long as possible, we should keep our resolve strong and let Bihu be a platform for the ethnic cultures of Assam as well as the rest of India. Yours etc., MONJIT DUTTA, Guwahati.

(III)

Sir, — The Rongali Bihu is to celebrate the advent of the

nutrition. Trees bear a great impact on the climate. If we destroy trees at random, one day the country will turn into a desert. Trees keep the soil strong. It is needless to speak of the importance of trees. Our government should embark on a massive and ambitious tree plantation programme. Yours etc., ANUP DAS, Karimganj.

Travesty of justice

Sir, — This refers to your editorial, 'Travesty of justice' (AT, April 14). The United Nations must intervene in the case of Kulbhushan Jadhav and force Pakistan to furnish proof of his alleged 'spying' activities. Pakistan should release Kulbhushan if it cannot provide such evidence. It will amount to cold-blooded and pre-planned murder if Pakistan carries out Jadhav's death penalty without having sufficient evidence. Yours etc., SUJIT DE, Sodepur, Kolkata.

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

State fire service force will be modernised: Sonowal

STAFF REPORTER



A mock fire fighting drill during the Fire Service Week 2017 held at 4th AP Bn in Guwahati on Tuesday. - UB Photos

GUWAHATI, April 18: Asserting that the fire servicemen have set an example of selfless service to society and saved countless lives and property by dedicatedly performing their duties at great risk to their own lives, Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal today said the government is going to take all necessary steps to modernise the force.

Taking part in the Fire Service Week 2017 at the 4th AP Bn here as the chief guest, Sonowal said fire fighters through their hard work and

dedication have set a high standard in commitment to the cause of society.

"Starting with the first Fire Station at Silchar in 1956, State Fire & Emergency Services has undergone great transformation both in organisational and technical capabilities. At present, it has 124 sanctioned and six ad-hoc Fire & Emergency Services stations," Sonowal said.

Stating that the present government has sanctioned 42 Fire and Emergency Services stations in this year itself, the Chief Minister said Assam has more fire stations than

some of the bigger states in the country and the force is fully equipped to handle any exigency.

Informing that the fire service personnel had attended to 2,946 fire calls and saved properties worth Rs 291 crore in 2016-2017, Sonowal said that the Fire and Emergency Services Organisation has made great strides through the last one year by being the first organisation of the Government of Assam to issue online approval certificates through the single window agency portal under 'Ease of Doing Business'.

Appreciating the role of the State

Disaster Response Force (SDRF) in rescuing 6,583 people and 47 animals in flood, landslide etc., in 2016,

the Chief Minister informed that the State government is expediting recruitment of the third company (of SDRF) to augment the strength of the already existing two companies.

Informing that the State government has made a budgetary provision of Rs 58 crore to immediately construct and complete 19 Fire & Emergency Services station buildings during the current financial year, Sonowal assured of taking all steps

for modernising the force.

Presenting the Chief Minister's Medal for Outstanding Service to selected Fire Service officials for their sterling performance during duty, he said people have taken the fire service into confidence for delivering commendable service during crisis.

Media Adviser to the Chief Minister Hirshikesh Goswami, Legal Adviser to Chief Minister Shantanu Bhattacharji, Chief Secretary Bipin Puri, DGP Fire & Emergency Services AP Rout and other top officials were present on the occasion.

Skill development in NE a priority: Naidu

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 18: Minister for Information & Broadcasting M Venkaiah Naidu has said that skill development would be a priority area for the Ministry of I&B in the overall communication approach for the north-eastern region. This would complement the government's 'Act East Policy' launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last year as it would facilitate the nurturing of talent in the fields of media and entertainment.

The proposed Film & Television Institute of India in Arunachal Pradesh and the setting up of a permanent campus of Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) at Aizawl would provide quality training to the young population catering to their needs and aspirations, thereby acting as talent creators and talent hubs in the region.

The Minister stated that at a review meeting of programmes and policies in the North East with officers of the Ministry in Guwahati today, Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, senior officials of the Ministry and officers of the NE region were present on the occasion.

Naidu further mentioned that the Film & Television Institute of India in Arunachal Pradesh would be set up on a plot of land measuring more than 50 acres and at a cost of Rs 200 crore, as an extended campus of the Jayanta Ray Film & Television Institute, Kolkata. This would complement the government's 'Act East Policy' launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last year as it would facilitate the nurturing of talent in the fields of media and entertainment.

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Naidu asserted that it is es-

sential to develop programmes in local dialects and languages in order to reach out to diverse sections of society. He disclosed that at present AIR broadcasts programmes in 28 dialects of the NE region in order to connect better with the people.

The Minister, while talking about community radio, said that recently the Minister increased the subsidy level to 90 per cent for setting up community radio stations in the NE region. Community radio stations broadcast programmes on issues which are of immediate relevance to the community and thereby facilitate development by disseminating information regarding education, rural development, agriculture, health, nutrition, environment, social welfare, Panchayati Raj issues and cultural needs.

Highlighting the various film festivals that his Ministry has organised in the North East, Naidu said the medium of Hindi is powerful to send across the message of peace and development in the region.

His Ministry, Naidu said, would be launching a dedicated Doordarshan channel – Arun-Prabha – from Arunachal Pradesh by August this year.

Naidu asserted that it is es-

An artiste has right to sing in any language'

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 18: Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting M Venkaiah Naidu today asserted that an artiste has the right to perform in any Indian language.

The minister was responding to a query from journalists over the recent controversy involving popular singer Zubeen Garg at a Bihu function at Noomati.

Though he was unaware about the incident, Naidu said "a singer has the right to sing in any Indian language. No one can stop him. However, if there are any local issues, it should be handled by the administration."

"The government is not imposing Hindi on anyone. We are only creating awareness and we have a constitutional mandate to promote the Rashtra-bhasha," he said.

Meanwhile, Naidu said Hindi is an important tool and language for the development of nation. The Union Government is using more and more Hindi language in the government



Zubeen Garg performing during the Rongali Bihu celebration at a Bihuola in Guwahati on Monday evening. - UB Photos

lani over performing a Hindi number at the Bihu programme.

"We have to make a habit of using Rastrabhasha in day-to-day life along with regional language. The emotions of a human being can be easily and effectively shared with others in our mother tongue as well as in Hindi," he said.

programmes and policies.

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IDBI BANK
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TENDER FOR SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, TESTING & COMMISSIONING OF 500 KGS FREIGHT ELEVATOR AT IDBI CURRENCY CHEST, GUWAHATI, ASSAM
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DGM -IMD

North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Limited
(A Mini Ratna Category-I, Government of India Enterprise)
CIN : U46161ML1976G01001450
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (CONTRACTS & PROCUREMENT)
BROAD AND COMPACT POWER NEED COLONY
SHILLONG 793002, MEghALAYA
Website: <http://neepco.co.in> Email: contract_neepco@neepco.in Ph: 91-384-222568 Fax: 91-384-222576
SHORT NOTICE INVITING BID
NIB No. 238 DATED 18.04.2017
North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd (NEEPCO Ltd) invites e-tender for "Supply of New Desktop PC and Printers". For details, interested bidders may visit <http://neepco.co.in>, <https://neepco.abprocure.com> and <http://www.eprocure.gov.in>. Any subsequent changes/modifications/notifications to this tender shall be updated on these websites.

General Manager

North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Limited
(A Mini Ratna Category-I, Government of India Enterprise)
CIN : U46161ML1976G01001450
Brookland Compound : Lower Assam Colony, Sivasagar - 783 003, Meghalaya
website: [www.neepco.co.in](http://neepco.co.in); E-mail: contact@neepco.co.in
Fax: 91 364-222578

SHORT NOTICE INVITING BID (e-tender)
(Domestic Competitive Bidding)
N.I.B. No. 237 Dated: 18/04/2017
North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd invites e-tender for "Supply, installation, commissioning and comprehensive warranty and maintenance of DAM SAFETY MONITORING SYSTEM for NEEPCO's existing Dams". For details, visit <https://neepco.abprocure.com>, <http://neepco.co.in> and <http://www.eprocure.gov.in>. Further subsequent changes/modifications/notifications, if any, shall be updated on the above websites only.

Sd/- General Manager
v/c Contracts & Procurement

North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Limited
(A Mini Ratna Category-I, Government of India Enterprise)
CIN : U46161ML1976G01001450
COORDINATION MEETING
NEEPCO Bhawani, R.C. Road, Rongali, Assam-781 005 (Assam)
SHORT NOTICE INVITING BID

NEEPCO Ltd invites online electronic bids through e-tendering process from reputed and experienced Contractors through Domestic Competitive Bidding under (Single-Stage-Two-Envelope Bidding System) for the following works :

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Group No.	NIB No.	EMD	Cost of Bid
1.	Renovation of the toilets at GF and 3rd floor of NEEPCO Guest House, Guwahati.	Gr-I	NIB No. 08 Dtd. 18-04-2017	₹ 9000/-	₹ 1000/-
2.	Renovation of the toilets at 2nd floor of NEEPCO Guest House, Guwahati.	Gr-II	NIB No. 09 Dtd. 18-04-2017	₹ 8000/-	₹ 1000/-

Intending bidders are requested to visit NEEPCO website <https://www.neepco.co.in> and <https://neepco.abprocure.com> or CPP Portal w.e.f. 19-04-2017.
The last date of submission of Bid for Gr-I is 12.00 Hrs on 16-05-2017 and Gr-II is 12.00 Hrs on 17-05-2017.
Sr. Manager (C)

BHARAT SANCHAR NIGAM LIMITED
(A Govt. of India Enterprise)
O/o The General Manager Telecom District
Dibrugarh - 786001
Notice Inviting Tender

No: MM-682/GMTD-DR/Tender/CMTS bill form/2017-18
Date at DR the 06/04/2017
On behalf of BSNL, Dibrugarh -Tender are hereby invited from reputed and experienced Printer/Suppliers having own printing press for "Printing & Supply of Pre-Printed CMTS bill form" for the use of Dibrugarh SSA.

SL. No. **Name of the work** **Approximate quantity of work** **Estimated Cost** **Amount of EMD**

1 Supply of Pre-printed CMTS bill Form 11,00,000 nos. Rs. 5,17,000/- 12, Rs. 250/-

The tender is invited through e-tendering process, hence physical copy of tender will not be available for sale.

• Tender site will be available for downloading from 11:00 hrs of 19-04-2017 up to 17:30 hrs of 05-2017.

• Date of opening on 09.05.2017 at 15.30 hrs.

• Validity of Tender 150 days from the date of opening of tender.

• Tender can be downloaded from website: <http://tender.bsnl.in> and can be viewed in our website [www.assam.tsnigam.com](http://assam.tsnigam.com).

• To participate in the e-tendering submission, it is mandatory for the applicants to get registered their firm/joint venture with the e-tendering portal of BSNL <http://tenderwizard.com> BSNL to have user ID & Password from M/s ITI Ltd.

• It is mandatory for all the applicants to have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate (in the name of person who will sign the bid document) from any of the licensed certifying Agency.

• The tender document, Bid and Financial Bid will be submitted concurrently duly digitally signed in the website <http://tenderwizard.com>.

• Only those firms having registration with State Govt. Department of Printing / DIC should apply for the tender.

• The GMTD, Dibrugarh reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

For any technical help regarding filling up of e-tender : call 9706501633

Asst. Genl. Manager (Plg),
O/o the GMTD; BSNL/Dibrugarh

Physics body celebrates foundation day

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 18: The Physics Academy of North-East (PANE) celebrated its foundation day at ITI Guwahati with a daylong programme recently.

Prof Bipul Bhuyan, general secretary PANE, mentioned various programmes to be undertaken by PANE with the commitment to provide a common platform for the physics community of the North East for collaborative research and dissemination of scientific knowledge through discussions, workshops and conferences.

The foundation day lecture was delivered by Prof Wadia on the topic 'Quantum Mechanics and the Hidden Structure of Space-time'.

Prof Wadia, an internationally acclaimed theoretical physicist who has made significant contributions in high energy physics, string theory and quantum field theory, explained the chronological development of the ideas of space-time from Newton to Einstein. He also discussed the philosophical motivation of Einstein's General Theory of Relativity and its significance.

He also put forward the idea of the string theory as a framework for a quantum theory of gravity. He said that this was a new paradigm in theoretical physics that goes beyond relativistic quantum field theory.

He also pointed out how gravitational waves could propagate through the fabric of space-time when a pair of super-massive black holes collided violently with each other, located about 1.3 billion light years away from Earth.

There were also several talks delivered by well-known speakers including Prof Dhruba SARKAR, Vice Chancellor of Tezpur University, of whom was established in 1964, will organise the closing ceremony of the golden jubilee celebration on April 29. The golden jubilee celebration was started from October 2013. The event will start with an awareness motorcycle rally. Later, an alumni meet will be organised on the occasion.

Correspondent

Accident victim succumbs to injuries

JALUKPUR, April 18: One Promod Bejarah (35) of Nawkata Goreswar succumbed to his injuries at GMCH today. He was seriously injured when a bus hit him on the road near the new Sarighat Bridge around 5.30 am yesterday. He was rushed to the hospital in a critical condition. — Correspondent

Golden jubilee

JALUKPUR, April 18: Rupkonwar Jyotiprasad Agarwalla AT-8, Boys' Hall of Guahati University, which was established in 1964, will organise the closing ceremony of the golden jubilee celebration on April 29. The golden jubilee celebration was started from October 2013. The event will start with an awareness motorcycle rally. Later, an alumni meet will be organised on the occasion. — Correspondent

Meditation

GUWAHATI, April 18: The Osho Gyandayi Dhyani Kendra, Sadhu Mandir is organising meditation camps on April 23 and April 30 at Taraphant Bhowan, Fancy Bazar, Various techniques given by Osho will be offered under the guidance of Ma Prema Arpitा, Blubanawar, a press release stated. — Staff Reporter

Govt panel ...

(Contd from page 1)

Commissioner's office of Tinsukia on April 24, Dibrugarh and Sivasagar districts on April 25, Jorhat and Morigaon on April 26, Dhemaji and Lakhimpur on April 27, Sonitpur on April 28 and Nagaon and Morigaon districts on April 29. The stakeholders include citizens, government *gaonbarsas, mouzas, MPs, MLAs, and social workers.*

The government had on February 6 constituted a committee under the chairmanship of Hari Sankar Brahma, former Chief Election Commissioner of India, for suggesting measures, including modification in the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886, other land laws, government circulars issued from time to time, and the land policy of the State, for ensuring protection of land rights of the indigenous people of Assam.

Implementation of ...

(Contd from page 1)

Northeast also needs to catch up.

"Mizoram and Manipur have 20 per cent urban local bodies declared as ODF while Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh have shown good progress in toilet construction, meeting 60 per cent of the targets. Other states need to speed up implementation," the minister told a press conference after the review meeting.

He also expressed dissatisfaction at the progress of the Smart City project in Guwahati. "States and selected smart cities need to expedite the pace of putting in place the institutional arrangements and project preparation," he said.

Govt must ...

(Contd from page 1)

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Vijay Mallya ...

(Contd from page 1)

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A dance being performed during a Rongali Bihu function organised by the Uttar Bongaigaon Rongali Bihu Sammilan, at Bongaigaon on Monday. — UB Photos

Talk on Geography and its prospects

NAGAON, April 18: The BKB College, Purangudam is celebrating its golden jubilee this year. To mark the celebration, the Geography department will be holding an annual meet on April 25 next. On the occasion, an eminent geographer Dr Phani Deka will deliver a popular talk on the topic, 'Geography and its Prospects'. Besides, departmental magazine *Oasis* also will be released.

All the past students of the department have been invited to make the meet a success. For details they may contact the HoD.

Spl package: A meeting of the vision plan committee to attract tourists from the nation as well as abroad to Batadra, the birth place of Srimanta Sankaradeva was held on April 17 at Batadra under the chairmanship of Dr Rabin Dechoudury. The meeting discussed means and ways to preserve Akashganga, Shantian, Hartabha, Doul Mandir, Silhka tree, Sati Radhikarn memorial place and other heritage spots of the holy site.

Besides this, the meeting also proposed to propagate the cultural heritage of Batadra, Narua and Haloguri Satras of the locality. The team visited different historical sites of Batadra and stressed to free the Satra from encroachment.

Satraddhikar Paramandala Devmahantha and Devananda Devgowsami, MLAs Angurika Deka, Dimbeswar Das and Rupok Sarma, DC Shamsher Singh, SP Devraj Upadhyaya and other officials as well as members of their family participated in the meet. — Correspondent

Fratricide

DIBRUGARH, April 18: In a case of fratricide, one Pinto Kharia of 1 No Dighalha village near Teenali TE under Tingkhong PS was killed by his younger brother Raju Kharia on Sunday night over a reported family feud, police informed.

Raju hit his elder brother's head with a bamboo piece. The injured Pinto was rushed for medical aid but succumbed to his injuries. A case has been registered at the Tingkhong PS. — Staff Correspondent

Monomati Das: a tribute

My mother Monomati Das was a kind hearted, simple and generous person who left for her heavenly abode on April 7 last. She was a very strong person who was always concerned with how we were doing. She was a very pious and religious lady who loved going to the naamghar. She not only nurtured me but also nurtured her grand children and taught us the lessons of life.

Today on the day of her *ayashraaddha*, I pray to the Almighty to grant eternal peace to the departed soul.

— Gitanjali Das

3-day cancer screening drive in North Lakhimpur from April 21

CORRESPONDENT

NORTH LAKHIMPUR, April 18: The Marwari Yuva Manch (MYM) in association with its sister organisation Pragati Sakhya here is organizing a three-day free cancer awareness-cum-screening test programme from April 21.

This was stated by MYM president Monoj Bhattacharyya, convener Raj Choudhury and adviser Narenjini Dimodanya at a press meet held at the North Lakhimpur Press Club on Monday.

Addressing the media, the MYM leaders said that the cancer awareness and screening programme will be organised as a part of the Mission Jagriti drive in which several tests and screenings would be conducted on a cancer in a mobile state-of-the-art facility which would

arrive here on April 21 and remain till April 23.

The MYM intends to conduct screening tests like blood sugar, throat endoscopy, oral check-up, mammogram, pap smear test, X-ray, CA-125 and PSA for oral, breast, prostate, lung, cervical and throat cancer. The free programme has been organised with the objective of providing easy healthcare services to the weaker section of the society and poor women who face growing number of cancer cases.

The MYM leaders also said that tests reports, except the pap smear test would be made available on the second half of each day's programme to the registered patients at the North Lakhimpur Government HS School playground, which is the venue of the three-day programme. The all the beneficiaries would be examined and treated by a well-trained and experienced medical team equipped with sophisticated machines. On a single day, 200 patients would be examined. The organisation has appealed to the beneficiaries to contact it immediately.

Mukoli Bihu celebrated by AASU at Dergaon

CORRESPONDENT

DERGAON, April 18: As Assam is presently passing through a critical phase, an economic and cultural renaissance are the need of the times. And importantly, these agitations, if any, should be guided by Dr Manoj AASU adviser Dr Samujjal Bhattacharya, while addressing an open meeting of the day-long Mukoli Bihu organised by Dergaon unit of AASU at the Naga Sarmath Memorial Field here on Sunday.

He urged the gathering to closely follow the word 'Maa', which means mother, mother tongue and motherland. Relegating the souvenir titled *Borgas*, which was edited by Prasanta Madhab Barua, Dr Bhattacharya expressed his satisfaction over the quality of the booklet. He was hopeful that the Assamese new year would herald good tidings for the local people, even as he urged those present not to forget their roots.

Earlier, Utpal Baruah was accorded a warm felicitation by several organisations and individuals. The Mukoli Bihu function was inaugurated by the Editor of *Dainik Jonamabhumi*, Utpal Baruah. A meeting held on the occasion was chaired by the president of the organising committee, Dr Nagen Thakur and moderated by Avibhoron Goswami. Deep Barthakur and Prasanta Madhab Baruah.

In his speech, Dr Bhattacharya claimed that a section of people in the State were neglecting the Assamese language, which is not a good sign for the Assamese nation. He also opined that a 'neutral class' in our society was another negative factor in our overall development process.

Earlier, Utpal Baruah was accorded a warm felicitation by several organisations. Replying to the felicitations, he said that after being published, a newspaper becomes a public property and the readers have full right to put forward their opinions etc. He further assured that his newspaper will work for the collective interest of the indigenous people.

Earlier, he was accorded a warm felicitation by several

organisations and individuals. The Mukoli Bihu function was addressed by noted writer Dr Pradip Neog as a distinguished guest and attended by several AASU leaders, including Manuwar Hussain, Raju Phukan, Mrijanwa Mayor Garg, Milon Rai, Naba Rai, Diganta Nath, Jitumoni Boru, Mridul Hazarika, Janardan Goswami, Mridul Saikia, Ratul Dutta, Indumadhu Hussain etc.

As part of the Mukoli Bihu, several cultural programmes were presented by ethnic groups from across the State like Barongthuri Husori troupe of Naoholia, Maidamori Husori troupe of Pulibor, Enjori Bihu troupe of Angmo, Bodoland Cultural Centre of Kokrajhar, Chereng Culrami camp in 2010 at Gossagaim area in Kokrajhar district.

Kanhu is still at large, while Ratan is trying to regain the leadership of the outfit by creating division allegedly with the help of police, claimed the cadres. At present the outfit has 853 cadres at Jadhunam (Kokrajhar) designated camp and three non-designated camps in Balpara, Nagdabbari and Deorsi in Chirang district. — Correspondent

Rongali Bihu celebrated in London with fun and gaiety

GUWAHATI, April 18: Assamese people from all over the UK gathered recently with their families and friends in Hornchurch, Greater London to celebrate Rongali Bihu, a press release stated.

The sound of Bihu songs and the aroma of Assamese foods filled the air. Bornali Kalita, a renowned singer from Assam added glitter to the occasion. The dancing *bihuwas* brought the Bihu spirit in full to the London Bihutoli. The young and not so young, Assamese and non-Assamese alike joined in the fun, making it a truly vibrant evening.

The day began with a Bihu *jolpan* of *pitha-pona, laru* and *doi*.

Popular Assamese



Concern over threat to local handloom products

CORRESPONDENT

MANGALDAI April 18: Padma Nath Das, the new Director of the State Handloom and Textile Department is very much concerned over the growing threats generated to the local handloom products by the commercially viable machine made products flooding the market from outside the State. Das who joined the post only last week visited Mangaldai on Wednesday afternoon to take stock of the functioning of the Assistant Director of Darrang office of the department. On the sidelines of his visit, while talking to the media, Das expressed his concern on the issue and stressed the need of protection and development of the handloom industry in exercise of the powers conferred by sub section (1) of the Handlooms Act 1985.

He said that he has already directed all his district level officials to carry out a thorough vigilance on the illegal sale of machine made *gamoss* in the market and also conduct drives with the help of the local administration. At the same time, he instructed his officers to make necessary arrangements for commercial sale of handloom made *gamoss* and make the customers aware about its quality during this festive season. Earlier, the Director held discussions with the local members of weavers' society regarding exploring the potential of the local weavers.

Livelihood for mentally ill patients: Considering it as a Rongali Bihu gift, 'Satra', a leading NGO of Darrang, which has been working in the field of providing free medical consultation, medi-

cines and livelihood support to the mentally ill patients has launched a new livelihood programme for twenty selected patients. The programme called *Lysaa* started with a total cost of Rs 2 lakh under the CSR scheme of *UB*. The producer of popular health nutrients *Fructa Ltd* has already recovered or quickly going to be recovered from their illness. He also pointed out that it is very important to engage them in certain livelihood activity which is also a line of treatment. The programme thus undertaken will provide financial assistance to each of the beneficiaries to run their livelihood through scientific goat rearing apart from necessary expert training to the beneficiaries, Saikia added.

Many prominent persons including MLA, Sipahar Binanda Kr Saikia, Rajib Kr Deka, one of the Directors of SRD Group of companies, the local collaborator of *Fructa Ltd*, Dr Prasanna Kr Nath, chairman, Satra, Dr Bazrul Islam, Senior veterinary official, retired teachers Lohit Ch Kalita and Rajani Kant Nath attended the function besides all the beneficiary pa-

Couple tortured by mob at Dhakuakhana

CORRESPONDENT

NORTH LAKHIMPUR, April 18: A middle-aged couple was tortured by a mob at Dhakuakhana in Lakhimpur district recently.

The incident took place at Belimora village of Dimorguri Gaon, Pancharayat at Dhakuakhana Police Station on Tuesday night when a group of villagers armed with sticks and sharp weapons surrounded the house of Brajen Doley alias

Dharmendra and his wife Durgeswari Doley and dragged them out from their beds. The mob accused them of practicing witchcraft in the village and forcibly took them to an isolated area named Khomen Jaan.

The couple were subsequently buried upto their necks on the ground and tortured with kicks and slaps on their faces. After that, the mob dragged the couple back to the village for further punishment in the wee hours.

Meanwhile, police arrived on the spot and rescued the tortured couple from the mob. They were admitted to hospital for treatment.

Another tortured woman named Amiya Doley was also rescued by the police in that same operation. The victims have in the meantime lodged FIR at Dhakuakhana Police Station against 16 persons of the village. The couple alleged that all the 16 accused attacked them over a personal matter.

Gautam Roy rules out joining BJP

CORRESPONDENT

HAILAKANDI, April 18: Former minister and Congress leader Gautam Roy has ruled out joining the ruling BJP. Talking to this correspondent, Roy said, "I am very happy with Congress and there is no need to join any other party."

Arjun Tudu, the outfit's 'commandant' of Chirang district unit, expressed this desire along with his cadres at Balpara (Bhutanpar) on Monday, where some cadres stay in a small non-designated camp comprising two thatched houses which are located 17 kms away from district headquarters Kajalgaon, after signing a ceasefire pact with the Government in 2012.

The outfit had sacked its 'commander-in-chief' Kanhu Murmu, 'deputy commander-in-chief' Ratan Tudu and cadre Sujit Soren after a Central investigative agency accused them of being involved in the killing of All Advaidi Students' Association (AASA) leader Bosko Charmano in 2010 at Gossagaim area in Kokrajhar district.

Kanhu is still at large, while Ratan is trying to regain the leadership of the outfit by creating division allegedly with the help of police, claimed the cadres.

In a programme held on Wednesday last, Paul had commented that BJP doesn't require a leader like Gautam Roy as the party.

Roy, a six-time MLA from Kachura Assembly constituency, while reacting on his joining the BJP said that the Con-

gress has given him a lot. His father late Santosh Kumar Roy was a Congress MLA, his wife Mandira Roy and son Rahul Roy were also Congress MLAs.

Gautam Roy said that the talk of his joining the BJP is not much gossip. He, however, said that joining another party is not an offence. He refuted the allegation that he had maintained relations with State and Barak valley's top BJP leaders. He clearly said that no leaders have contacted him to join BJP.

When asked as to what his decision would be if the BJP leaders contacted him to joined the party, Roy kept mute and smiled seriously. His joining the BJP came to light after the BJP said that the Com-

mittee made by Dilip Paul in Hailakandi. Roy said that he will work for people in need without party affiliation and said his motto of life is public service.

Roy, however, praised the developmental steps taken by the BJP throughout the nation and said that the party is doing "well".

When pointed out that BJP may ask a leader like him to join its fold before the Lok Sabha poll in 2019 in order to win, Roy said that this was nothing but speculation.

On the rise of AUUDF in all the three Assembly segments of Hailakandi district despite his presence, Roy said that the people have the answer regarding AUUDF's rise here and he has no comment to make.

Doctor shortage hits Bezera CHC

ANN Service

BAIHATA CHARIALI, April 18: The shortage of doctors at Bezera CHC under Jaikharti of Cachar for a long period of time has created problems for the patients.

Though during the first phase, the hospital was running with a good number of doctors and other para-medical staff but now only seven doctors are providing service to the patients. The conscious section of the locality here feels that the

hospital needs at least 10 to 12 doctors. A few days back the people here witnessed a number of patients visiting the hospital. Only two or three doctors were in the hospital then. The OPD ward counter of Dr Pranab Kumar Das witnessed maximum number of patients standing in the queue. Patients also feel that the hospital needs some more doctors since patients visiting the hospital is increasing.

The public of the area have demanded the authorities

concern and the State Health minister to engage at least one surgeon, one MD and two medical officers in the hospital besides the existing staff.

They also said that though four medical officers for NCD cell were provided in the hospital but they did not join. Moreover, the public have demanded construction of a waiting shed, bicycle and motorcycle parking place, running water facility, removal of electrical wiring, repairing of the verandah of male ward etc.

songs and Bihu dances were performed by various local artists before Bornali Kalita walked on to the stage to captivate the audience with her hit songs. Mamoni (Gita) Sarmanah as the general secretary of the LBC presented a gift to Bornali Kalita on behalf of the LBC and also offered the vote of thanks.

Rishi Kakati, Sanjay Sikdar and Jay Borkakoti compered the event. Zaved Choudhury and Manas Borah took charge of publicising the event and they were supported by Javed Rahman, Pilibatta Borah and Afrreen Rasul. Dinesh Kakati, Apurba Baruah, Jayanta Baruah, Amit Sarmanah, Khageswar Lahton, Sasha Sik-

dar, Bornali Baruah, Neeta Borkakoti, Susannah Kakati and Jibon Gorai helped in the efficient running of the day. A raffle held at the end of the day added an extra helping of joy to the already fun-filled evening.

The evening ended with a delicious Indian dinner and the audience left happy promising to themselves to meet again at the next year's Bihu. The members of the LBC were extremely happy to see the level of satisfaction and committed themselves enthusiastically to keep the tradition of holding a Rongali Bihu every year in London alive, the release by Dr Amit Sarmanah added.

Bihu, Satriya dances deserve global exposure: Nagen Saikia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

DIBRUGARH, April 18: Eminent writer and former president of Assam Sahitya Sabha, Dr Nagen Saikia today said that efforts must be made to take the unique Bihu and Satriya dances of Assam to the international audience.

The society is witnessing rapid changes in all spheres with the advancement of science and technology. This change is also having an impact on people's mind, their thinking and human behaviour as a whole, he said.

Despite all these challenges, we have to keep our identity intact by clinging to our roots, preserving our culture and traditions, besides promoting it, Dr Saikia as he declared the mega four-day central Bihu festival open at the Chowkidhingee ground here. He called upon the audience to popularise the State's culture, Dr Saikia was the chief guest at the inaugural function.

The Bribhutar Dibrugarh Rongali Bihu Utsav under a giant marquee at Chowkidhingee ground is being organised centrally under the initiative of the Dibrugarh public led by the district unit of All Assam Students' Union (AASU).



Veteran cine actor Bishnu Khargoria, Dr Tapan Saikia and dhol exponents Tulsi Ojha and Golap Ojha, who were felicitated at Dibrugarh, on Tuesday - UB Photos

CM orders probe into carrying of body on cycle

GUWAHATI, April 18: Taking a strong view of an incident where a dead body was carried on a bicycle on the way to the village of the deceased at Luit-Khabali in Majuli, Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal

directed the Director of Health Services to take stock of the circumstances leading to the incident.

Expressing concern, Sonowal asked the concerned Director to immediately conduct an inquiry into the incident, an official release stated.

Cancer camp

GUWAHATI, April 18: Taking a strong view of an incident where a dead body was carried on a bicycle on the way to the village of the deceased at Luit-Khabali in Majuli, Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal

asked the concerned Director to immediately conduct an inquiry into the incident, an official release stated.

Memo submitted to Suresh Prabhu

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 18: A six-member team from the Dhurbi-Phulbari Rail-cum-Road Bridge Sangram Committee recently met Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu in New Delhi.

The delegation submitted a memorandum to the Railway Minister requesting him to

consider construction of a rail-cum-road bridge to connect Dhubri with Phulbari in Meghalaya, instead of the proposed road bridge over the Brahmaputra.

Appreciating the delegation for bringing up the matter, Prabhu said that he will consider it. This was stated in a press statement issued by the

Dhubri-Phulbari Rail-cum-Road Bridge Sangram Committee.

No. C/ER/REC/920/14
CORRESPONDENCE WITH MODIFI
CATION

It is for general information that the quantity of Item No. 89 of Bidding Document of Project Name: "Dhurbi-Phulbari Rail-cum-Road Bridge Sangram Committee" dated 28.03.2017 for the work (1) Installation of Inbuilt Fire hydrant system of District & Session Court, (2) Installation of Inbuilt Fire hydrant system of KVA Substation in the District, (3) Session Judge Complex at Manganjoli (Civil Works) and (2) Installation of Inbuilt Fire hydrant system and KVA Substation in the District, Session Judge Complex at Manganjoli (Electrical Works) should be read as 1.00 Nos.

The document shall be used as per guidelines which is available in the office of the undersigned on all working days upto 18.05.2017 from 10.00 AM to 4.00 PM through concerned Executive Engineer(PHE) for renewal & up-gradation.

The revised document shall be made as per guidelines which is available in the office of the undersigned as well as the Divisional Offices.

The prescribed form may be obtained from concerned Divisional Offices by paying requisite amount as per guidelines (Rs. 300/- for General and Rs. 150/- for SCST/OFC/MOB) in the form of IPO pledged to the concerned Executive Engineer (PHE).

The application must be accompanied with the following documents in variety or absence of which the application will not be considered for renewal.

THE ASSAM TRIBUNE, GUWAHATI 9

exponents - Tulsi Ojha and Golap Ojha, Dr Shristidhar Dutta, former Dean of Social Sciences of Rajiv Gandhi Central University, Itanagar also attended the inaugural function.

After the inaugural function, several ethnic groups displayed their traditional dances as part of the Muholi Bihu. Cultural troupes from both tribal and non-tribal communities staged their dances. A troupe

from the Sikh community also performed on the occasion. The Mukoli Bihu was introduced to the audience with a prolific performance by Dhol exponent Tulsi Ojha and his team. Sisoni community Bihu functions are also being organised at different places of the city here. The George School Rongali Bihu Utsav is the oldest community Bihu festival in the region.

Notice - Request for Proposal

Chief Executive Officer, Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) invites Request for Proposal (RFP) from reputed Web development Firm for Design, Develop and Maintain a Web based Management Information System on Disaster Management.

RFP shall be available in the office of Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) Ancillary Block, Assam Secretariat, Dispur, Guwahati: 781006.

Complete RFP documents are also available on official website of ASDMA at http://asdma.gov.in/notice_detail.html

Date of Commencement of issue of RFP : 19th April, 2017

Last date and time for submission of RFP : 18th May, 2017 (4:00 PM)

Sd/- Addl. Secretary & SPC
Assam State Disaster Management Authority
Janasanayog/17/17

NOTICE

Application in prescribed form affixing non-refundable court fee stamp of Rs. 2.25 (Rupees two and half paisa) only will be accepted from concerned Firm to renew & up-gradation of their registration under Class-I category for the year 2017-18 and will be received in the office of the undersigned on all working days upto 18.05.2017 from 10.00 AM to 4.00 PM through concerned Executive Engineer(PHE) for renewal & up-gradation.

The revised document shall be made as per guidelines which is available in the office of the undersigned as well as the Divisional Offices.

The prescribed form may be obtained from concerned Divisional Offices by paying requisite amount as per guidelines (Rs. 300/- for General and Rs. 150/- for SCST/OFC/MOB) in the form of IPO pledged to the concerned Executive Engineer (PHE).

The application must be accompanied with the following documents in variety or absence of which the application will not be considered for renewal.

DOCUMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED

1. PAN Card
2. Up-to - date I/T clearance certificate or return.
3. Up-to - date VAT clearance certificate
4. Renewal copy of Labour license
5. Last year registration copy etc.
6. IPO application copy etc.
7. Performance report from concerned Executive Engineer (PHE)

The undersigned reserved the right to reject any application without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/-SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (PHE)
Janasanayog/617/17
NAGAON CIRCLE, NAGAON

No. DME/09/2017

INVITATION FOR E-BID (IFB)

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING

e-Tenders are inviting the interested parties to bid online through website www.asamtenders.gov.in from the intending manufacturer/Accredited Dealers for supply & installation of various equipments for IFB (Medical Education, Assam, Siomile, Kharapara, Guwahati: 781026) Important dates of the e-Tender:

Sl. No.	Description	Tender Date	End Date	End Time
1.	e- Tender Publishing	20-04-2017	11.00 AM	
2.	e- Tender Download	20-04-2017	11.00 AM	25-05-2017 12.00 Noon
3.	Pre-Bid Meetin	02-05-2017	11.30 AM	
4.	Bid Submission	03-05-2017	12.00 Noon	25-05-2017 1.00 PM

Bid Schedule

SI. No. Description Bid Security (E.M.D.) Delivery/ Installation schedule/ completion period Tender fees in Rs. Eligibility

1.	Supply & installation of various equipments for IFB Centre at GMCH, Guwahati. (Details see in Annexure-I)	Rs. 3.00 Lakhs	30 days	Rs. 5000/-	Manufact er/ accredited Dealers
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The detailed instructions of bidding documents are available online through e-procurement system i.e. through website www.asamtenders.gov.in. The bidders would be required to register in the website for submission of the bids. The bidders are required to have Digital Signature (DSC) from any of the Certifying Authorities. Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-procurement should obtain the same by registering in the website www.asamtenders.gov.in. The requirements to register with the e-procurement portal are available on the website indicated above. The tender fees is non refundable and payable in favour of the "Director of Medical Education, Assam, Siomile, Kharapara, Guwahati: 781022, at SBI-Dispur (Guwahati) Branch".

Sd/- Director of Medical Education, Assam, Janasanayog/23/17

NOTICE INVITING BID

No. TCT/NPM/2017/01 - 00017

The undersigned Engineer (PHE), Circle Sikkim on behalf of Governor of Assam, invites sealed bids from approved and eligible contractors registered with Assam PWD (Roads) or Contractors registered with other State Central Government Despatch, Institutions and authorities for the following Work of Construction of Rural Roads & Bridges including routine maintenance of the works for five years under the scheme of the State under the following conditions.

If the offeror refuses any or all of the terms and conditions of the tender documents, the offer or bid will be rejected.

The offeror reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders.

The tender documents and all other information relating to the work will be available in the office of the Superintendent Engineer, Sikkim, Gangtok.

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**WEATHER
NORTHEAST**

Forecast for NE: Light to moderate rain/thundershowers is very likely to occur at a few places over Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura and light rains are likely to occur at isolated places over Assam and Meghalaya and weather is most likely to remain dry over Arunachal Pradesh.

Warning: 1) Thunder squall with wind speed exceeding 50-60 KMPH is likely to occur at isolated places on April 20 and 21, also accompanied with hail at isolated places on April 19 over Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. 2) Wind will very likely to occur at isolated places on April 20 and 21 over Assam and Meghalaya and Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura.

Temperatures	
Max (°C)	Min (°C)
Dibrugarh	20.2
Tezpur	19.9
Silchar	21.8
Dhubri	21.2
Jorhat	19.7
N Lakhimpur	17.5
Shillong	13.8
Imphal	14.6
Itanagar	14.4
Aizawl	7.5
Agartala	23.9
Kohima	13.9
Pasighat	21.0
Cherrapunjee	15.4

Manipur
Congress MLA defects to BJP

RESPONDENT

IMPHAL, April 18: In a new political development, one more Congress MLA Ginsunhau has defected to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Earlier, Th Shyamkumar, who was elected from Andro constituency, defected to the BJP even before the newly elected MLAs of the 11th Manipur Legislative Assembly were sworn in to the Cabinet in the coalition government.

Chief Minister Nongthombam Biren Singh and State BJP president K Bhabananda, party ministers and leaders welcomed Ginsunhau, a sitting Congress MLA from Singhat constituency in Manipur's Churachandpur district, during a brief reception gathering at the party office here on Monday evening.

Apart from Ginsunhau, 14 Members of the Chandel Autonomous District Council, including its Chairman have also joined the BJP in yesterday's gathering.

Student drowns in Pare River

RESPONDENT

ITANAGAR, April 18: In a tragic incident, a teenaged school boy has drowned in Pare River near Doimukh in Pampum Pan district of Arunachal Pradesh last afternoon.

The deceased has been identified as Nabam Abe, 16, a class-X student and son of Nabam Ishwar of Parang village under Sagalei ADC headquarters, who was residing at Kholo Camp near Doimukh.

Reportedly, the deceased, along with some of his friends, had gone to the river when the incident occurred at around 1 pm. His body was fished out at around 3.30 pm. The body was later handed over to the family.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Pema Khandu condoled the demise of the schoolboy and announced ex-gratia of Rs 4 lakh to the next of kin.

Left Front confident of securing 51 seats**RESPONDENT**

AGARTALA, April 18: Amidst the growing influence of the BJP following of stunning victories in five States, CPI(M) State secretary Bijan Dhar asserted that the Left Front would romp home to power in the next Assembly elections, slated for early next year, with higher number of seats.

Asked to assess the Left Front's chances in the upcoming elections, a smiling Dhar replied confidently "why not 51? Of course we can't secure more than 60?"

The Left Front government would do whatever possible within the parameters set by the Supreme Court to protect the

Centre sanctions 8 railway projects in Arunachal**CORRESPONDENT**

ITANAGAR, April 18: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu today welcomed the sanctioning of eight new railway lines connecting several locations in the foothills of the strategically-located mountainous State by the Centre, including the three proposed railway lines extending to Tawang, Aalo and the one connecting Pasighat-Roing-Tezu.

On insistence from the Chief Minister, the eight new railway lines - Rokhola to Sejosa (18 km),

A dream come true, says Khandu

Doomdooma-Namsai-Wakro (96 km), Dangri-Roing (60 km) Naharkata-Deomali (20 km), Lekhapani-Nampong-New Khamlang-Dehen (75 km) and Tinsukia to Pasighat via Kanuhari (300 km) were sanctioned by the Ministry of Railways, informed a press release issued by WRD Minister Kamling Mossang.

Terming it as "a dream come true", the Chief Minister expressed that ultimately things have started to move when the General Manager of Northeast Frontier Railway (Construction), HK Jaggi along with his officials called on

Khandu at his office here today. The Chief Minister thanked the Prime Minister and the Railway Ministry for sanctioning of these projects in a meeting attended by WRD Minister Kamling Mossang.

"I have to complement the Railway Ministry for the decision. The Centre has been kind in accepting our proposals," he said and added that it was a very courageous decision by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to extend

railway network till Tawang. Preliminary survey for the three railway lines - Bhalukpong-Tenga-Tawang (378 km), North Lakhimpur-Bame-Aalo-Silapathar (247.85 km) and Pasighat-Roing-Tezu-Par-

The Chief Minister requested the Railway officials for posting of a dedicated Chief Engineer (Survey) for Arunachal to monitor the ongoing survey works to which they agreed.

Of the three railway lines, the Bhalukpong-Tenga-Tawang route, is the most ambitious project proposed to be constructed at a cost of about Rs 40,000 crore, which will involve construction of 21 bridges and 145 kms of tunnels. The Indian Railways proposes to construct a 29-km tunnel between Dirang and Tawang. It is estimated that the

entire railway route, when completed, will cut down the existing road distance of 285 km to 166 km, informed the Railway official.

The survey of Pasighat-Tezu-Parashuram Kund-Rupai line is expected to complete early as the area is plain land with no high steep mountains to cut through, informed the Railway officials.

The Railway officials also gave presentation on the status of the 26-km Murkongsele-Pasighat rail line for which the land to be acquired has been identified and is on the process of acquisition.



Roadside stalls ravaged by cyclone at Belasing C&RD Block in South West Garo Hills on Tuesday. — UB Photos

Oil tankers attacked in Manipur

IMPHAL, April 18: Unidentified gunmen, suspected to be Kuki tribal militants, opened fire at oil tankers on Tuesday morning in Manipur's Kangpokpi district. The attack caused no casualty, police said.

The police officials suspect that it could be an extortion threat to the oil transporters.

Some trucks and tankers coming from Assam towards Imphal were ambushed by the militants using automatic rifles. The CRPF personnel escorting the convoy opened fire in retaliation. The exchange of fire took place at 5.45 am along National Highway 37, about 60 km from here, the police said.

"A few jeep-loads of CRPF personnel cannot ensure safety to over 600 vehicles along

militants' bullets.

Police units were rushed to the spot after the information about the ambush was received. However, the militants managed to escape.

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"A few jeep-loads of CRPF personnel cannot ensure safety to over 600 vehicles along

the mountain highway. We had welcomed the government's plan to deploy Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) and police commandos along the vulnerable spots of the two National Highways," Laishram Chinglana, a driver, said.

Officials said that the government plan has been staved off.

In the past, police commandos and IRB personnel had to be recalled from Ukhrul and some other tribal dominated districts.

ANSAM and other Naga groups say that they object to the government plan to "militarise the lands of the Nagas".

The United Naga Council

(UN) had imposed an economic blockade for more than four months along the two highways which are the lifelines of Manipur. The UN was protesting the creation of seven new districts on the "lands of the Nagas" without consulting the stakeholders.

Chief Minister N Biren

Singh held a meeting with his Cabinet colleagues this morning to review the situation.

Official sources said that security along the highways would be beefed up. The IRB personnel and police commandos may be deployed shortly. — IANS

Shirui Fest preparation begins

Chief Minister N Biren Singh presiding over a State-level meeting on Shirui Festival, in Imphal on Tuesday. — Photo: Imphal Correspondent

CORRESPONDENT

IMPHAL, April 18: The Manipur government is preparing to organise the five-day Shirui Lily Festival 2017 at Shirui Village, home of Shirui Lily (*Lilium maculatum*) in Utkhril district from May 5 to 9.

Shirui Lily, discovered by Britisher Frank Kingdon Ward in 1948, grows only in the Shirui Peak and blooms in the month of May and June. The State declared Shirui Lily as State Flower in 1989.

An organising committee for the festival was also formed during a meeting chaired by Chief Minister N Biren Singh in Imphal on Tuesday.

In the organising committee, which was attended by all heads of departments concerned, besides State Chief Secretary and tour operators, the Chief Minister said, "We have three things in Manipur which are unique in the world – Sangai, Shirui and Manipuri Polo."

Various sub-committees were also constituted for a grand success of the festival.

The State government has already organised festivals in the name of Sangai and Manipuri Polo, but a festival for Shirui is yet to be organised.

And I felt that we must organise a grand festival in the name of the Shirui," he added.

The organising committee has also decided that the opening ceremony will be held at IFAD Ground, Shirui Village and the closing ceremony at Tangkhul Naga Long Ground, Utkhril.

Various sub-committees were also constituted for a

grand success of the festival.

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He, however, asserted that the Left Front is prepared for any eventuality and would win the Assembly polls hands down. He attributed the growth of BJP to the failure of Congress and regional parties, but said that BJP's politics of polarization would greatly harm the nation and its Constitution and values enshrined in it. He asserted that socialism is the solution to the problems facing the world under capitalism.

Fake notes flood Mizoram**CORRESPONDENT**

AIZAWL, April 18: With seizure of fake Rs 2,000 currency notes with a face value of Rs 54 lakh in recent times, the Mizoram government is worried over counterfeit notes being pumped into Mizoram.

Aizawl Superintendent of Police F Lalchuan said the police have made seven seizures of fake currencies, mainly in Rs 2,000 denomination.

"Most of the fake notes were of Rs 2000 denomination. A few of them were fake Rs 500 notes. The total face value of fake notes that have been seized during the last two months is Rs 54,01,000 lakh," he said.

The first seizure of fake currency during this year was made on March 24 when 252 fake notes in Rs 2,000 denomination and two Rs 500 fake notes were unearthed. On March 28, Rs 2,000 fake notes with a face value of Rs 1,98,000 was seized. The biggest catch was made on April 14, when 1,300 fake notes in Rs 2,000 denomination were seized at Bairabai near the Mizoram-Assam border. The face value of the fake notes was Rs 26 lakh. Altogether, 11 persons have been arrested in this connection.

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already organised festivals in the name of Sangai and Manipuri Polo, but a festival for Shirui is yet to be organised.

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CAPSULE**Timex smartwatches**

NEW DELHI, April 18: The US-based Timex expects 30 per cent of its sales to come from watches with smart features by 2020. "Consumers are evolving and their needs are changing... even from a traditional watch perspective, our customers will want a watch which is analog but has some smart features. By 2020, at least 30 per cent of sales will come from watches with smart features," Timex Group India Head for Sales and Marketing Anupam Mathur told PTI.

SBI Exclusif

AHMEDABAD, April 18: The State Bank of India plans to raise customer base of its wealth management service targeting HNIs (high net worth individuals) under SBI Exclusif to 35,000 by year end from the present 3,500, a senior official said today. This is the largest commercial bank to offer the service in January last year and has nine exclusive physical centres across the country. SBI's Managing Director (National Banking) Rajnish Kumar said: -PTI

ABB India

MUMBAI, April 18: ABB India today said it has bagged a contract worth Rs 178 crore from Power Grid Corporation of Bangladesh (PGCB) for setting up two new substations and upgrading two existing ones. "ABB India has won an order worth Rs 178 crore from PGCB to support the country's power infrastructure expansion and meet its growing electricity needs," the company said in a statement issued here. -PTI

Michelin

NEW DELHI, April 18: Tyre major Michelin today launched its co-branded Scorcher tyre range for Harley Davidson bikes in the Indian replacement market. The six Scorcher range tyres would be sold across the country through all Michelin authorised dealers, in addition to the Harley Davidson network in India. Michelin said in a statement issued here. -PTI

TCS profit

MUMBAI, April 18: Best market estimates, Indian IT major Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) today reported robust net profit and revenue growth for the fourth quarter of as well as fiscal 2016-17 in rupee and dollar terms with record operating margin and cash flow. The global software major posted Rs 6,600 crore net profit for Q4, registering a 4.2 per cent growth over previous year and 2.2 per cent over previous quarter in rupee terms. -IANS

Lenovo laptop

BENGALURU, April 18: Aiming to offer consumers new and meaningful ways to interact with technology, Lenovo India today launched its latest 'Milk 510' 2-in-1 laptop in India. Milk 510 is available exclusively on Amazon in two variants - i3 and i5 - at Rs 53,390 and Rs 79,990 (plus taxes), respectively. "The detachable form factor is doing very well as a category and has been identified as one of the top industry analysts as the device currently buying a supposedly stagnating PC market," said Bhaskar Choudhuri, Director, Marketing, Lenovo India, Lenovo India, in a statement. -IANS

Indian consumers feel most secure shopping online: Survey

NEW DELHI, April 18: Indian consumers feel most secure while shopping online across the Asia-Pacific, a new survey finds out.

According to the latest Mastercard Online Shopping Survey, more than four-fifths of Indian consumers access the internet for shopping while three-fourths tend to make online purchases using their mobile phones.

Consumers have cited convenience, ease of shopping-on-the-go and an increasing number of apps as the major reasons for buying online.

Govt allays concerns over mobile tower radiation

NEW DELHI, April 18: Telecom Minister Manoj Sinha today sought to allay concerns over radiation emitted from mobile towers, saying studies so far have revealed no health hazards.

The comments came in the wake of a Supreme Court order directing the deactivation of a BSNL tower in Gwalior on the plea of a 42-year-old cancer patient.

"This is not the final order

and it needs to be seen in that perspective. Let the final order come...

"Secondly, (given) the re-

search so far, including by World Health Organisation and even studies conducted in India today sought to allay concerns over radiation emitted from mobile towers, saying studies so far have revealed no health hazards.

After the telecom industry

body Cellular Operators Asso-

ciation of India had said mo-

bile towers emit a low level of

radiation within the pre-

scribed norms and are "com-

pletely safe".

"...Citizens have no reason

to panic as mobile towers emit

low-level radiation, which is

within the prescribed Depart-

ment of Telecom, Government

of India norms which makes

mobile towers completely

safe," COAI Director-General

Rajan Matthews had said in a statement last week.

Meanwhile, Sinha said that the government will take note of the findings of a Parliamentary panel on the issue of cell drops, but pointed out that the menace has reduced by nearly 60 per cent in the last four months.

"The situation is continuously improving. In the last six months, nearly 2.5 lakh BTSEs (Base Transceiver Stations, or mobile towers) have been in-

stalled and there is no scarcity

of spectrum. I feel that the sit-

uation will improve further in

the coming days," he said. -PTI



Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting, Col Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore at the Global Exhibition on Services at India Exposition Mart Ltd, at Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday. -PTI

Anti-dumping duty likely on chemical from 6 nations

NEW DELHI, April 18: India may impose anti-dumping duty of up to \$118 per tonne on import of a chemical used by industries in applications such as corrosion control and paper bleaching from six countries including Korea, Indonesia and Pakistan.

The move is aimed at guarding domestic players from cheap imports of 'hydrogen peroxide' from Bangladesh, Taiwan, Korea, Indonesia, Pakistan and Thailand.

The Commerce Ministry's investigating arm - Directorate General of Anti-dumping and Allied Duties (DGAD) - in its final findings has concluded that the chemical was dumped in India which has impacted the domestic industry.

The chemical is used by various industries for corrosion control, paper and pulp bleaching. It also has therapeutic uses

as an antiseptic and antibacterial agent. Countries initiate anti-dumping probes to determine if the domestic industry has been hurt by a surge in below-cost imports. As a counter-measure, they impose the duty.

These duties are in compliance to the rules of the global trade body World Trade Organisation.

The duties also ensure fair play by providing a playing field to the domestic industry. They are not a measure to restrict imports or cause an unjustified increase in the cost of products.

Unlike the safeguard duty, which is levied in a uniform way, anti-dumping duty varies from company to company and country to country. -PTI

Nepal urges India Inc to invest in hydropower, clean tech

NEW DELHI, April 18: Nepal President Bidya Devi Bhandari today asked captains of Indian industry to take full advantage of the improved investment climate and simplified tax regime of the Himalayan nation, especially in sectors like hydropower, clean technologies and agro-processing.

Addressing representatives of India Inc, she said Nepal is in the process of ratifying a Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement which will provide more comfort to investors, asserting that incentives offered by Nepal are not less attractive than many other countries.

"Our is a virgin land for investments. Location of Nepal in the middle of two thriving economies of the world (India and China) offers a great advantage to potential investors," Bhandari said at the conference organised by business chambers CII, FICCI and Assocham.

She said the Nepalese government was committed to providing a conducive environment for the Indo-Nepal border. -PTI

to investments and ensuring that processes have been streamlined and made business-friendly.

A prosperous Nepal will also be in the interest of our neighbourhood and beyond," the Nepalese President said.

Besides, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nepal Prakash Shah said the Himalayan nation has huge untapped potential in hydropower, agriculture and tourism.

"We want to see that trade between the two countries works very smoothly without any glitches," he said, pitching for improved infrastructure at the Indo-Nepal border. -PTI

Overall, a majority consumers in the Asia-Pacific (53.9 percent) feel secure when shopping online.

India leads the Asia-Pacific region, with 72.1 per cent surveyed feeling secure about shopping online. This is followed by Indonesia (66.4 percent), China (63.5 percent), Australia (62.2 percent) and New Zealand (59.8 percent).

On the other hand, consumers in Vietnam (34 percent), South Korea (34.6 percent), Japan (36.6 percent) and Hong Kong (37.4 percent) are more wary of online shopping security.

"It is very encouraging to see Indian consumers feel increasingly secure when shopping online. The Internet of Things is creating a more digitally-driven and digitally-connected world, with an estimated 300 million smartphones in use currently in India," said Porush Singh, Country Corporate Officer, India, and Division President, South Asia at Mastercard.

The top three categories in terms of relative share of online spends are airlines, home appliances, electronic products and clothing or accessories. -PTI

Across the Asia-Pacific, eight out of 10 consumers who shopped online last year intend to make at least one online purchase in the first half of 2017.

The survey was carried out across 14 markets in the Asia-Pacific and a total of 8,738 consumers were polled online in November 2016 on questions relating to the online shopping landscape, experience with e-commerce and m-commerce, reasons for shopping online, payment concerns, among others. -PTI

Rs 10-trillion umbrella road project to subsume NHDP

NEW DELHI, April 18: The ambitious Rs 10-lakh crore umbrella programme for roads, Bharatmala, will subsume the National Highways Development Project (NHDP), implemented by the then Atal Behari Vajpeyi government in 1998.

This may be one of the last mega projects of the BJP government before it seeks public mandate in 2019, besides being the second-largest highway project after the NHDP that saw development of about 50,000 km of NHs as per global standards.

The Prime Minister's Office, earlier this month, after going through a presentation of the ambitious Bharatmala project that meetings will be attended in normal course by the nominated minister personally and only in the most extraordinary circumstances, the next senior most officer could be nominated.

The first phase will be carried out at an estimated investment of Rs 5.35 lakh crore for developing 29,000 km of highways network that includes economic corridor schemes, coastal and other roads.

Another official in the know

SEBI may allow investors to buy MFs via digital wallet

NEW DELHI, April 18: Markets regulator SEBI is looking to allow investors to buy mutual funds (MFs) worth up to Rs 50,000 through digital wallets to make it easier for investors to purchase these instruments, especially by young generation.

The move would help in speedier and easy transactions, while reducing failures due to payment gateway issues.

Besides, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is expected to put in place regulations for instant withdrawal facility in liquid mutual fund. Also, asset management companies (AMCs) can tie up with payment banks to provide digital transaction to investors.

This multi-city programme is an on-ground initiative to help thousands of aspiring auto drivers partners to take the first step towards entrepreneurship and achieve their dreams, the company said.

The OLA Auto Mela will bring together a host of manufacturers, service providers, and financial institutions under one roof, to enable deep discounts and savings for their customers and build a large customer-base in return, it said in a release.

These new facilities will help in increasing the penetration of mutual funds and help in channelising household savings into capital markets. It would also

provide conveniences option to investors to diversify from traditional saving avenue.

Under the proposal, total subscription through e-wallet for an investor should be restricted up to Rs 50,000 per mutual fund in a financial year.

The regulator may ask AMCs to enter into an agreement with payment instruments for facilitating payment from e-wallets of the investors to mutual fund schemes.

AMCs will have to ensure that e-wallet issuers must not offer incentive such as cashback directly or indirectly for investing in MFs through them.

Further, e-wallet's balance loaded through cash, debit card and net banking, can only be used for subscriptions to mutual funds. However, balance loaded with credit card, cashback and promotional scheme should not be allowed for purchase of such products.

SEBI may come out with framework for instant access

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SEBI may come out with framework for instant access

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Fuel pumps in 8 States to be shut on Sundays from May 14'

CHENNAI, April 18: Beginning May 14, fuel outlets in eight states will be shut every Sunday following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to conserve oil, a fuel pump owners' body said here today.

"We had planned to shut our outlets on Sundays a few years back. But oil marketing companies had then requested us to reconsider our decision. Now we have decided to shut the outlets on Sundays," said Suresh Kumar, an executive committee member of the consortium of Indian petroleum dealers.

He said the association's decision was made in view of the Prime Minister's call during his recent 'Mann ki baat' programme to conserve oil for save the environment.

Kumar, also the vice-president of Tamil Nadu Petroleum Dealers Association, said nearly 20,000 outlets in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Puducherry, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra and Haryana would be shut for 24 hours on Sundays, starting May 14.

"In Tamil Nadu, we expect a business loss of Rs 150 crore if we do not operate on a Sunday. But we have been seeing a decline in sales on Sundays by upto 40 per cent," he said.

Asked if the association's decision was supported by the OMCs, he said, "We will communicate our decision to them shortly."

Kumar said the fuel outlets which normally have about 15 staff each would have one staff member on the holidays to provide fuel if there was an emergency situation.

On the issue of OMCs hiking the margins to petroleum outlets, he said the association was discussing it and would soon make an announcement in this regard.

"That struggle is going on. We are meeting our association members shortly. We will announce our decision soon," he said. — PTI

President, ministers may have to give speeches in Hindi

NEW DELHI, April 18: All dignitaries, including the President and ministers, may soon start giving speeches in Hindi if a parliamentary panel's recommendations accepted by President Pranab Mukherjee are implemented.

Mukherjee has accepted most of the recommendations made in the ninth report of the Committee of Parliament on Official Language. The report was submitted in 2011.

The panel's recommendation that all dignitaries including the President and ministers, especially those who can read and speak Hindi, may be requested to give their speech statement

in Hindi only, has been accepted, as per an official order.

The President has accepted many other recommendations, including making announcements on Indian aeroplanes in Hindi followed by English.

On flights, half of the reading material should consist of Hindi newspapers and magazines as "Hindi is grossly neglected by airlines," as per the panel's recommendation, accepted by President.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has been asked to ensure implementation of this recommendation.

Mukherjee has accepted another recommendation of the

Committee that maximum usage of Hindi should be ensured on all tickets of Air India and Pawan Hans helicopters.

The recommendation favouring cent percent availability of training material in bilingual at the Mussoorie-based Lal Bahadur Shastri National Administrative Academy, the premier institute to train civil servants including those in Indian Administrative Service (IAS), has also been accepted.

Another recommendation accepted by the President is that universities and higher educational institutes situated in non-Hindi speaking states, where the students are not given an option for Hindi to appear in exams/interviews, must be given an option to answer in Hindi. — PTI



President of Nepal Bidya Devi Bhandari being received by President Pranab Mukherjee and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a ceremonial reception at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Tuesday. — UNI

Over 500 railwaymen to be trained abroad on high-speed rail tech

NEW DELHI, April 18: Railways has undertaken a massive exercise of imparting training to over 500 railwaymen on high-speed rail technology in China and Japan, ahead of running trains at speeds ranging from 160 to 200 kmph in select corridors by the end of the year.

Railways has firm up plans for running trains at higher speed of 160 kmph on the busy trunk routes of Delhi-Howrah and Delhi-Mumbai section to reduce travel time between these metropoles.

Besides, the public transporter has asked SNCF, the French railways, to explore possibilities of running trains at 200 kmph on the Delhi-Chandigarh route.

The training programme in China is for two weeks and in Japan the study course is for 20 days.

They will learn the functioning of high-speed train service and its maintenance operations as part of their training module, the official said.

Railways is forging ahead to ensure 160 kmph speed on Delhi-Mumbai and Delhi-Kolkata routes and the contract for strengthening of the track, upgrading of signalling system and fencing off vulnerable sections along the route are to be awarded. — PTI

There will be about 550 railway officials from directorates concerned, including traffic and electrical, who will be trained in China and Japan as arrangements for such training has been put in place, the official said.

While the first batch of 40 railway officials are being trained in high-speed rail technology at Chengdu in China, 20 officers have already been trained in Japan and 38 more are undergoing the training programme there.

The training programme in India is for two weeks and in Japan the study course is for 20 days.

Formation of anti-Romeo squads, closure of illegal slaughter houses, electricity for all and decision to scrap the system of interview in group C and D government jobs have won hearts of the people in a short time, he claimed.

LUCKNOW, April 18: As the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh completed one month in office, the BJP today said the welfare schemes initiated by the new dispensation have started "showing positive impact".

The people of the state have started realising that finally, they have a government which is dedicated to their cause. In just 30 days, the positive works of the government have started showing results," the party's state unit spokesperson Shalabh Mani Tripathi said.

Adityanath took over the reins of the state on March 19 after the BJP stormed to power with a three-fourth majority in the 403-member Assembly.

Referring to the key decision of loan waiver for small and marginal farmers at the first Cabinet meeting, Tripathi said it showed "the BJP does what it says".

Formation of anti-Romeo squads, closure of illegal slaughter houses, electricity for all and decision to scrap the system of interview in group C and D government jobs have won hearts of the people in a short time, he claimed.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visiting people in Lucknow on Tuesday. — UNI

"By recognising the good work of officers during the previous SP dispensation, the Adityanath government showed that if there is commitment and leadership they can make bureaucrats work for people," Tripathi said and warned that the days ahead will be tough for those involved in corruption.

He said during the BSP and the SP rule, the trend was that after the government changes, officers were changed.

But the Yogi government

has stopped this negative tradition and sent out a message to the officers that their accountability should not be towards any political party or leader but towards the people of the state, Tripathi said.

By getting better output from the same officers, the Chief Minister has proved that if the leadership is honest and capable, the officers are bound to work for the welfare of the people, the state BJP spokesperson said. — PTI

Shanta Kumar hails Modi's support to generic drugs

NEW DELHI, April 18: BJP drugs," he said.

Kumar (82), said he met and often wrote to the then prime minister, health minister and chemical and fertiliser minister for accepting its recommendation but in vain.

"By making this announcement, Modi has proved that his government is dedicated to the poor. The Congress government could not take such a decision because it worked under the pressure of multi-national pharma companies while the Modi government works under the pressure of helping the poor," he said.

He said it is unfortunate that Indian pharma companies are a leading player in global generic drug manufacturing business and the US, the Europe and global bodies like UNICEF buy medicines from them but the Indian poor do not benefit from their products.

Calling the recommendation of the committee path-breaking, he said he was grateful to 30 other MPs, who were its members and belonged to different parties. — PTI



A woman drinking water from a public water facility at a roadside market on a hot day in Ahmedabad on Tuesday. — UNI

Mega conservation plan for main Rashtrapati Bhavan in offing

NEW DELHI, April 18: The iconic main building of the Rashtrapati Bhavan is soon expected to undergo a major conservation drive that will enhance its pristine and majestic glory.

The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) has undertaken a project to analyse the famed "main building" of the President's Estate and a report in this regard will be presented to President Pranab Mukherjee in the next two months time.

"The main building is fine and there are no big issues but there are some concerns. We will be carrying out an assessment of the entire main building that also houses the family wing. A report will be submitted to the President," Director (Projects) at INTACH Ajai Kumar told PTI.

INTACH is a non-profit heritage conservation body based in the national capi-

tal. The Rashtrapati Bhavan was the erstwhile residence of the British Viceroy and was made after it was decided in the Delhi Durbar of 1911 that the capital of India would be shifted from Calcutta to Delhi in the same year.

INTACH convener Swapna Liddle said the effort of the experts of the organisation and others is to prepare a comprehensive management plan and scientifically analyse the buildings' requirements so that they can be made liveable with the present times that require amenities like an air conditioner and mobile ports.

"The Rashtrapati Bhavan is a heritage building but is also a living building as people reside here. We have to conserve it in such a way that it functions as per today's needs," Liddle said.

The experts of INTACH, in collaboration with other conservationists, are using traditional materials and methods to conserve these buildings, she said. — PTI

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Brain 'gain'?

Brain games may not make you smarter, says a study

If you thought brain games could make you smarter, think again. In a study, researchers at Florida State University in the US found no evidence that such games increase overall cognitive abilities.

An increasing number of people believe brain training helps protect them against memory loss or cognitive disorders, said Neil Charness, Professor of Psychology.

"Our findings and previous studies confirm there's very little evidence these types of games can improve your life in a meaningful way," Associate Professor Wally Boot said.

The study focused on whether brain games could boost the "working memory" needed for a variety of tasks.

In their study, the researchers set up one group of people to play a specially designed brain-training video game called "Mind Frontiers", while another group of players performed crossword games or number puzzles.

All players were given lots of information they needed to juggle to solve problems.

Researchers tested whether the games enhanced players' working memory and consequently improved other mental abilities,

such as reasoning, memory and processing speed.

That is the theory behind many brain games: If you improve overall working memory, which is fundamental to so much of what we do every day, then you can enhance performance in many areas of your life.

The team examined whether improving working memory would translate to better performance on other tasks.

They found no such evidence, according to the study published in the journal *Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience*.

"It's possible to train people to become very good at tasks that you would normally consider general working memory tasks: memorising 70, 80, even 100 digits," Charness said.

"But these skills tend to be very specific and don't show a lot of transfer. The thing that seniors in particular should be concerned about is, if I can get very good at crossword puzzles, is that going to help me remember where my keys are? And the answer is probably 'no'."

Charness suggested that to improve cognitive function, people should better get some aerobic exercise rather than sitting in front of the computer playing these games. - IANS

Know your DAY

By JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Wednesday, April 19:

This year you play many different roles with different people. You can be a real go-getter as well. At times, you can be patient and understated. Other times, you can be calculating yet spontaneous. Others often feel as if they are getting enough from you without having to do anything for you. If you are not, you might be surprised to see how you meet in the middle. You know now: You are wise enough not to push a developing bond too fast. If you are attached, your relationship needs tending. Your sweetie might be entreated by the various facets of your personality: AQUARIUS likes you, but often judges you.

The kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-Average; 2-So-so; 1-Difficult

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

**** On the daylight hours, when you can accomplish more. Although there seems to be an element of misfortune to the day and others will intersect a meeting which is very important; schedule it as soon as possible. Tonight: Look over your budget first.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

**** Detach in the daytime, and try not to get caught up in your stuff! What you do today is how different you are in a day or so. Relax with a friend or two, and get away from a stressful situation. The outcome is likely to please you. Tonight: Note the change in your energy levels.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

**** One-on-one relations take you down a new path. Try to speak up and let others know what you are thinking. Your eyes will make any judgments about yourself or others. Look at your solutions, and your effectiveness will soar. Tonight: A discussion elicits a variety of ideas.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

**** You might feel a bit lost when dealing with a partner endorser. You might feel as if you are on the losing side of this situation, but you aren't. Speak up and remind others what you bring to the table; their responses might surprise you. Tonight: Catch up on a friend's news.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

**** A new opportunity to take care of others for your energy needs. You are a good person, and you'd rather have people come to you directly rather than get stuck in a manipulative situation. You'll be delighted how efficient a friend can be when not feeling pressured. Tonight: Cut off the town.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

**** Revisit old contacts at a distance. You might not hear back from them, but you will eventually. Your ability to accomplish a lot emerges. Make a point of scheduling an overdued appointment with the doctor. Tonight: A conversation starts on your perspective on several matters.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

**** You will be more or less at a distance. You might not hear back from them, but you will eventually. Your ability to accomplish a lot emerges. Make a point of scheduling an overdued appointment with the doctor. Tonight: A conversation starts on your perspective on several matters.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

**** A new beginning seems to be a high priority. You could be out of town, but you will want the matter is resolved or that you have become more frank in dealing with others. You might want to let someone else deal with it for the time being. Tonight: Enjoy a loved one.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

**** Pick up the phone and make calls and reach out to others. You might be surprised to find the back on the banner. Ask a loved one or close associate to help you realize this goal. Hopefully, you will receive the kind of support you need. Tonight: Meet a favorite person for some dinner.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

**** Your most possessive side emerges, especially if you experience some difficulty getting a personal matter settled. Let it go, and worry less. You will come up with a dynamic idea that is likely to resolve the issue given a day or two. Tonight: Meet up with some friends.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

**** Use your spontaneity to the max. As a result, you'll be ready to meet a friend and handle several other diverse matters. Your energy is rarely this high; use it. Make an important phone call that you have been putting off. Tonight: Be spontaneous, but don't stay out too late.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

**** You might take the day off and decide to get some time to relax. The situation happening around you might not look the way you would like it to. Given time, you might be surprised by how much is likely to change. Tonight: Make calls first, then run errands.

Thought for the day

When you reach the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hang on.

- FRANKLIN D ROOSEVELT

Kids

CN

Pogo

nick

Play

nick

British PM calls for snap polls on June 8

LONDON, April 18: British Prime Minister Theresa May today called for snap elections on June 8 in a surprise move that stunned her allies as well as opponents, asserting that it is the only way to guarantee political stability in the country for years after the UK leaves the European Union.

Prime Minister May, who had repeatedly denied that she would call an election before the next scheduled polls in 2020, indicated that the early general election would help unite the political corridors of the country.

There will be a House of Commons vote on the proposed election tomorrow and May will need Parliament's backing to hold a vote before 2020.

Explaining her change of heart on an early election, May said: "I have concluded the only way to guarantee certainty and security for years ahead is to hold this election."

Speaking outside her Downing Street residence in London, May (60) accused Britain's other political parties of "game playing," saying this risks

"our ability to make a success of Brexit and it will cause damaging uncertainty and instability to the country."

She said at this moment of enormous national significance there should be unity here in Westminster, but instead there is division. The country is coming together, but Westminster is not, she added.

"Our opponents believe because the government's majority is so small, that our resolve will weaken and that they can force us to change course. They are wrong. If we do not hold a general election now, their political game-playing will continue, and the negotiations with the European Union will reach their most difficult stage in the run-up to the next scheduled election," she added.

"So we need a general election and we need one now. We have at this moment a one-off chance to get this done. I have only recently and reluctantly come to this conclusion. Since I became Prime Minister, I've said there should be no election until 2020, but now I



have concluded that the only way to guarantee certainty and security for the years ahead is to hold this election and seek your support for the decisions we must take," she added.

May had phoned the Queen yesterday to inform her of her intention. Her decision came after a Cabinet meeting at Downing Street wherein she decided to go for early polls this year to win

a stronger mandate for her Brexit negotiations.

The dramatic move comes against the backdrop of the country's decision to leave the European Union in last year's referendum.

Britain's next election was due to have been held in 2020, according to a legislation but the law can be overruled if two-thirds of lawmakers in the

British Parliament vote in favour of early elections. The House of Commons is expected to dissolve on May 3 and a vote tomorrow requires 434 out of 650 MPs to vote for the early election for it to go ahead.

May threw a challenge to the Opposition to back her motion to be tabled tomorrow.

"I have a simple challenge to the Opposition parties, you have criticised the government's vision for Brexit, you have challenged our objectives, you have threatened to block the legislation we put before Parliament. This is your moment to show you mean it, to show you are not opposing the government for the sake of it, to show that you do not treat politics as a game," she said.

Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Opposition, welcomed May's decision to hold the snap election. "Labour will stand up for the people of Britain. I welcome the Prime Minister's decision to give the British people the chance to vote for a government that will put the

interests of the majority first," he said.

"Labour will be offering the country an effective alternative to a government that has failed to rebuild the economy, delivered failing living standards and damaging cuts to our schools and NHS," he said.

Other parties also backed the move, with the Liberal Democrats saying it would help take the UK away from a hard Brexit and into a different direction.

"If you want to avoid a disastrous Hard Brexit, if you want to keep Britain in the Single Market; if you want a Britain that is open, tolerant and united, this is your chance. Only the Liberal Democrats can prevent a Conservative majority," Lib Dem leader Tim Farron said.

The Scottish National Party (SNP), which has demanded a second independence referendum from the United Kingdom to have a stronger voice in the Brexit negotiations, described May's announcement as an "extraordinary U-turn." - PTI

Early UK poll call won't affect Brexit terms: EU

BRUSSELS, April 18: The EU said today it did not expect negotiating guidelines for Britain's exit from the bloc to be affected by the British government's call for an early general election. British Prime Minister Theresa May called today for snap polls in a surprising announcement as Britain prepares for delicate Brexit negotiations.

"The UK elections do not change our EU27 plans," said Stephan Aarnout, spokesman for Donald Tusk, president of the European Council.

"We expect to have the Brexit guidelines adopted by the European Council on April 29 and, following that, the Brexit negotiations directives will be ready on May 22," Aarnout told AFP.

Tusk issued a set of draft guidelines late last month, rejecting May's call for talks on the terms of the divorce bill and on a future trade deal in parallel during the two years of negotiations ahead of Britain's exit in March 2019.

The remaining 27 EU countries are set to rubber-stamp Tusk's guidelines at a summit on April 29, paving the way for chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier to begin formal negotiations with Britain at the end of May. - AFP

US-led air strikes kill 20 civilians in Syria

BEIRUT, April 18: Air strikes by the US-led coalition fighting the Islamic State group killed 20 civilians in Syria's eastern Deir Ezzor province, a monitor said today.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the deaths came in two separate incidents yesterday. It also reported 10 civilians, among them nine children, were killed in a suspected Russian air strike today on a town in the rebel-controlled province of Idlib.

The Observatory, which relies on a network of sources inside Syria for its information, said it determines whose planes carry out raids according to type, location, flight patterns and munitions used. The Britain-based monitor said a US strike on Monday night on the Deir Ezzor town of Abu Kamal had killed 13 civilians, among them five children.

The strike also killed three members of the IS, which controls the town by the Syria-Iraq border, the monitor said.

Earlier yesterday, a US-led coalition strike killed seven civilians, including a child, in the village of Huseinieh, the monitor said.

The US-led coalition has been carrying out air strikes against the IS in Syria since 2014 and is providing air support for a Kurdish-Arab alliance advancing on the jihadis bastion of Raqa.

Last month, the coalition said its campaign against the IS in Syria and Iraq had unintentionally killed at least 220 civilians, but monitors said the real number is far higher.

Most of the oil-rich province of Deir Ezzor, in Syria's east, is held by the IS, including parts of the provincial capital, Deir Ezzor city. The jihadis have besieged the remaining government-held parts of Deir Ezzor city, trapping civilians inside with limited access to supplies. - AFP

Australia urges China to rein in North Korea

SYDNEY, April 18: China has an obligation to use its "enormous leverage" to bring nuclear-armed North Korea back from the brink, Australia's Prime Minister said today, toughening Canberra's position on the escalating crisis.

Malcolm Turnbull's remarks came after the North's latest failed missile test and ahead of a visit to Australia by US Vice President Mike Pence, who is in Asia to signal Washington's commitment to regional security.

"The North Korean regime is a reckless and dangerous threat to peace and stability from our region and, indeed, in the world," Turnbull told reporters in Canberra. "The real obligation—the heaviest obligation—is on China."

Beijing has "enormous leverage over North Korea" and "the ability...to bring, to pull North Korea back into at least the position where it is not threatening to rain down devastation on its neighbours," Turnbull said.

"So what we are now looking forward to is action from China." A close US ally, Australia nonetheless enjoys a good relationship with China, its biggest trading partner. Beijing is under intense pressure, particularly from the US, to do more to rein in Pyongyang, which has defied international pressure over its quest to develop a nuclear-tipped ballistic missile capable of reaching the US mainland.

But China has long opposed

dramatic action against the North, fearing the regime's collapse would send a flood of refugees across its border and leave the US military on its doorstep.

Yet US threats to take unilateral action have rattled Chinese leaders, pushing them to pursue a tougher line against their neighbour, including suspending coal imports from the country for the remainder of the year. - AFP

China defends trade ties with North Korea

BEIJING, April 18: China is defending its trade practices with North Korea after Chinese-made vehicles were seen carrying ballistic missiles during a military parade despite international sanctions against sending military hardware to Pyongyang. Photos provided by the North Korean government showed the submarine-launched missiles loaded aboard trucks bearing the logo of Sinotruk, a Chinese company.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said on Tuesday that China conducts "normal business interactions" with its neighbour North Korea, but adheres to the United Nations sanctions.

A representative of a Sinotruk dealer said about 1,000 of its trucks are exported to North Korea annually under contracts that specify they are for civilian use. Saturday's parade in Pyongyang to honour the country's founder featured a senior North Korean official warning of a nuclear war if the country is attacked. - AP



US Vice President Michael Pence addressing members of the American Chamber of Commerce in Seoul on Tuesday. - UNI

Spanish PM called to testify in major graft trial

MADRID, April 18: One of Spain's top criminal courts today summoned Mariano Rajoy to testify as a witness in a major corruption trial, a first for the conservative Prime Minister.

"They have called him as witness," a spokesman for the National Court that deals with major corruption cases told AFP, adding no date had been set yet for the hearing.

Rajoy will take the stand as part of the so-called Gurtel trial, which centres on a vast network that allegedly saw companies shower former lawmakers and civil servants from his ruling Popular Party (PP) with bribes in exchange for contracts.



NATION TAX MARKET

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN HRS BEGUN...

GET GST READY

A nation is made, when taxes are paid

All Central Excise or Service Tax Assessee please enroll in GST immediately

Duty/Tax credits under existing laws cannot be carried forward in GST unless you enroll in GST Portal (www.gst.gov.in)

To help you enroll, Provisional ID & Password is made available in ACES Portal. Please enroll in GST Portal IMMEDIATELY to avoid any duty/tax credit loss!

In case you are still to enroll, you are required to first enroll on the GST portal before the return can be filed. Your enrollment in time would allow an easy transition to GST for your business entity.

In case you have enrolled on the GST portal, please provide your user name (as registered on the portal www.gst.gov.in) in ACES and proceed to file your tax return.

In case you don't want to migrate to GST, please confirm so in ACES and continue to file return. Your provisional ID and password would be cancelled and this may deny your credit migration to the GST regime.



Directorate General of Systems & Data Management
CENTRAL BOARD OF EXCISE & CUSTOMS
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Parents, take note! Inflatable toys and swimming aids, such as beach balls and arm bands, may have potentially hazardous substances that can put your child at the risk of cancer, a new study warns.

Researchers from Fraunhofer Institute for Process Engineering and Packaging IVV in

tense.

The majority of these odors were identified and among these were several fatty smelling mono- or di-unsaturated carbonyl compounds and their epoxidised derivatives, but also odouractive organic solvents such as cyclohexanone, isophorone and phenol.

Cyclohexanone can be harmful if inhaled, phenol is known to be acutely toxic and to presumably have mutagenic potential and isophorone is a category 2 carcinogen, which means that it is a suspect substance in the development of cancer in humans.

A panel of trained volunteers sniffed each product and ascribed common odour attributes to them. They also rated the intensity of each odour and had to guess whether these could be hazardous, researchers said. Three of the products reminded the panelists of almonds, plastic and rubber, while the fourth more pungent one reminded them of glue and nail polish.

"A range of these substances are not yet resolved in their chemical structures. Likewise, potential negative effects on humans, such as irritation, smell nuisance, or other physiological or pharmacokinetic effects still need to be resolved," said Christoph Wiedner of Fraunhofer Institute for Process Engineering and Packaging IVV. "Modern products, such as toys, and children's products are sourced from a wide variety of chemical and physical manufacturing processes, and this complexity often makes it difficult for us to identify those containing contaminants and unwanted substances, and to determine their causes," Wiedner said.

"However, we found that in a number of cases our noses can guide us to 'sniff out' problematic products," he said.

The study was published in the journal *Analytical and Bioanalytical Chemistry*.

(Source: PTT)

Germany conducted tests using an inflatable beach ball, a pair of swimming armbands and two bathing rings.

A small piece of material from each sample was analysed using a variety of material analysis techniques, including one that takes infrared measurements, and it was concluded that the inflatable objects were all made from polyvinyl chloride (PVC).

Researchers then investigated the molecular make-up of the distinctive smells arising from the pool toys.

They extracted detectable odours from each sample using solvent extraction and high vacuum distillation methods, and then identified the main odourants using a combination of sensory and common analytical approaches.

They detected between 32 and 46 odours in each sample, of which up to 13 were quite in-

Inflatable pool toys may put your kid at cancer risk, warns a study

Germany conducted tests using an inflatable beach ball, a pair of swimming armbands and two bathing rings.

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Know your DAY

By JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO FISH, April 14, 2017.

Fish are able to express their feelings with greater precision and more emotional expression. Others hear what you say loud and clear. The responses you receive will be equally dynamic. If you are single, you easily will meet someone of interest, if you have not already. You will learn how differences can be very attractive, and will come to respect them as a result. If the ones you are interested in, and you can swim, often surprise each other just by being themselves. You can learn to embrace and enjoy these unexpected moments. SAGITTARIUS tries to encourage you to be a wild thing.

The Stars Show That Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Possessive; 3-Adventurous; 2-Playful; 1-Difficult.

ARIES (Mar. 21-Apr. 19) You're thoughtful reveals a genuine compassion that is not missed by others. Surprises pop up throughout the day and your imagination speaks to you. Stay centered, despite all the adventurous suggestions coming from those around you. Tonight: TIGER!

Taurus (Apr. 20-May 19) Your thoughts reveal a special someone. This person will be so flattered that he or she might not know how to respond. Don't try to provoke a response that is not there. Let the cards fall where they may. Tonight: TIGER!

GEMINI (May 20-June 19) Despite all your energy, you'll want to focus only on a special someone. This person will be so flattered that he or she might not know how to respond. Don't try to provoke a response that is not there. Let the cards fall where they may. Tonight: TIGER!

CANCER (July 22-Aug. 10) You might not have enough time to respond to what is happening around you. In fact, someone's reactions could be so swift that you will likely catch to your guard. Ask more questions, and you will learn a lot about this person. Tonight: Go along for the ride.

LEO (Aug. 21-Sept. 19) Attempt to reign in the constant internal chatter. If you do, then you will learn a lot more about those around you, as they will reveal their authentic selves. Letting go of judgments and just living in the moment for a few hours could be enlightening. Tonight: Push yourself.

LIBRA (Sept. 20-Oct. 19) You are in the perfect space to take a leap of faith. You have weighed the pros and cons, and you finally can make a decision. News from a very knowledgeable friend proves you to break past a mental barrier that has been holding you back. Tonight: Let the night unfurl.

VIRGO (Oct. 20-Oct. 22) You might feel cornered by what is happening around you. You could experience some tension where you normally would not. Values are changing. Don't fight the inevitable. Decide to go with the flow, and you will bypass any hassles. Tonight: Dinner for two.

LIBRA (Sept. 20-Oct. 19) You are in the perfect space to take a leap of faith. You have weighed the pros and cons, and you finally can make a decision. News from a very knowledgeable friend proves you to break past a mental barrier that has been holding you back. Tonight: Let the night unfurl.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) You are in the perfect space to take a leap of faith. You have weighed the pros and cons, and you finally can make a decision. News from a very knowledgeable friend proves you to break past a mental barrier that has been holding you back. Tonight: Let the night unfurl.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) You enjoy others' spontaneity. It is as if you are shaking off the workweek, and are ready to rumble. What a way to start the weekend! Make sure your friends are up for the same type of celebration. A child or new friend might surprise you. Tonight: Go along with someone's idea.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) You might want to stand back some and observe more. Don't take someone else's comments personally. You will learn a lot about this person by listening to what he or she has to say. You don't need to comment on what they are saying. Tonight: Surprises happen.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) You are in a position of authority, and will want to be around those who handle power well. You enjoy watching and learning. A take-charge attitude goes far. Use care when taking a risk. You might opt to go on an impromptu shopping trip. Tonight: A force to be dealt with.

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pisces (Feb. 19-March 20) You might want to stand back some and observe more. Don't take someone else's comments personally. You will learn a lot about this person by listening to what he or she has to say. You don't need to comment on what they are saying. Tonight: Surprises happen.

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Diarrhoea kills over 500 in Somalia since Jan: UN

GENEVA, April 13: Cholera and acute diarrhoea have killed more than 500 people and left tens of thousands of others sick in drought-hit parts of Somalia since January, the United Nations said today.

The UN's health agency said the epidemic had left more than 25,000 people sick, warning that number was likely to double by the end of June.

WHO put the number of deaths since the beginning of the year from the epidemic at 524, while the UN humanitarian agency OCHA said 533 people had died.

The case fatality rate, which measures the severity of an epidemic by defining the proportion of fatal cases within a specific timeframe, is currently 2.1 per cent – more than double the emergency threshold of one per cent.

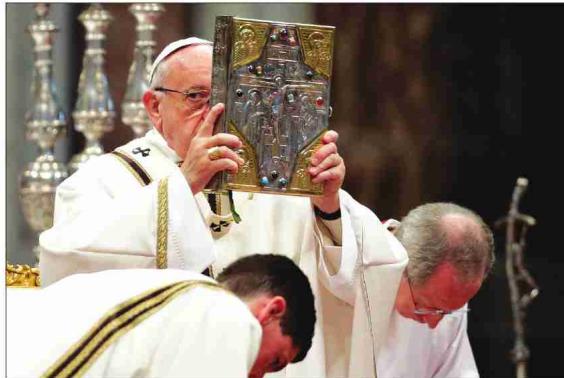
OCHA spokesman Jens Læsrke said the situation was particularly alarming in the Middle Juba and Bakool regions, where the case fatality rates have surged to 14.1 per cent and 5.1 per cent respectively.

The epidemic comes as the Horn of Africa country of 12 million people faces the threat of its third famine in 25 years of civil war and anarchy.

At least 260,000 people died in the 2011 famine in Somalia – half of them children under the age of five, according to the UN World Food Program.

Currently, 6.2 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian aid in Somalia, including 2.9 million who are facing "crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity", Læsrke told reporters. That means they are at levels three or four on a five-level scale, where level five is famine.

The dire drought and food crisis has forced more than 500,000 people to flee their homes since last November, in a country where 1.1 million people are already internally displaced. – AFP



Pope Francis holds Book of the Gospels as he leads the Chrism Mass in Saint Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, on Thursday. – UNI

Russia vetoes UNSC action condemning Syria

UNITED NATIONS, April 13: Russia vetoed a UN Security Council resolution that would have condemned the use of chemical weapons in Syria last week and called on the government there to cooperate with an investigation into the incident.

Russia, a permanent member of 15-nation Council, exercised the veto yesterday when a draft resolution drafted by France, the United Kingdom and the US was tabled here.

While 10 of the Council's 15 members voted in favour, Russia rejected the text, as permanent member China, as well as non-permanent members Ethiopia and Kazakhstan abstained.

"...With its veto, Russia said no to accountability. Russia said no to cooperation with the UN's independent investigation. And Russia said no to a resolution that would have helped promote peace in Syria," US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley said after the resolution was failed to be adopted.

Chemical weapons attack

condemned "the reported use of chemical weapons in [Syria], in particular the attack on Khan Shaykhun," the site of last week's incident that has drawn increasing global attention.

The measure would also have called on the Syrian government to comply with relevant recommendations of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons' (OPCW) Fact Finding Mission (FFM) and the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM).

"Russia once again has chosen to side with Assad even as the rest of the world – including the Arab world – overwhelmingly comes together to condemn this murderous regime," she said.

This was the 8th time during Syria's six-year-old civil war that Moscow used its veto power to block a resolution against Assad's government.

The resolution would have strongly

Before the vote, Russia's deputy UN envoy Vladimir Safronkov said in the course of negotiations between his country's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Moscow had suggested a joint communication asking the OPCW Director-General to immediately put together an international mission to visit Khan Shaykhun and the Shayrat air base.

The US Secretary of State was considering that proposal, he said, adding that the whole gamut of issues would be discussed by OPCW on April 13 at The Hague.

Putting the draft to a vote a day before that would serve no useful purpose, he emphasised.

He said Russia voted against the draft because of its "erroneous" contents, emphasising that his country's concerns and priorities had been pushed aside.

The main problem was that the "troika" of drafters had named a perpetrator before a proper investigation had been conducted, he said. – PTI

Trump offers trade deal to China for support over N Korea

WASHINGTON, April 13: Ditching his anti-China bombast, US President Donald Trump has said he would not label China a "currency manipulator" and offered a "good trade" deal in exchange for Beijing's help in dealing with the nuclear threat from North Korea.

Trump said he was confident that Chinese President Xi Jinping would support America to confront North Korea's nuclear ambitions, but cautioned that he was prepared to tackle the crisis alone if needed.

"President Xi wants to do the right thing. We had a very good bonding. I think we had a very good chemistry together. I think he wants to help us with North Korea. We talked trade. We talked a lot of things," Trump told reporters at a joint news conference yesterday with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the White House.

Trump had spent two days with Xi at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida last week. He also spoke to him over phone yesterday.

Tensions are escalating sharply over fears that North Korea may carry out another nuclear test on Saturday.

"I said, the way you're going to make a good trade deal is to help us with North Korea. Otherwise, we're just going to go it alone," Trump said referring to the latest telephonic conversation with the Chinese President.

"That'd be all right, too. But doing it alone means going with lots of their nations," he cautioned China.

Trump said he was "very impressed" with Xi.

"I think he means well, and I think he wants to help. We'll see whether or not he does," Trump said.

In an interview with "The Wall Street Journal", Trump said the US has "tremendous trade deficits" with everybody, but the big one is with China. – PTI

In no position to comment on Jadhav's death term: UN

UNITED NATIONS, April 13: The UN has asked India and Pakistan to engage in a dialogue to find a peaceful solution to their problems, but refrained from commenting on the death sentence given by a Pakistani military court to Indian national Kulbhushan Jadhav.

"We're not in a position to judge the process or to have a position on this, on this particular case," UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres' spokesman Stephane Dujarric said at the daily briefing here yesterday in response to a question by PTI on the death sentence awarded to Jadhav by military Field General Court Martial under the army act for his alleged involvement in terrorism and espionage.

Dujarric was asked that India is strongly disputing the sentence, saying that the due process of law and justice was not observed in this case and that it will consider the sentence as "a premeditated murder". – PTI

N Korea may be capable of gas-loaded missile attack: Japan

TOKYO, April 13: North Korea may have the capacity to launch a warhead loaded with sarin nerve gas, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said today, as tensions rise over the country's missile and nuclear programmes.

Sarin has been used in deadly domestic attacks in Japan, notably in 1995 when the Aum Supreme Truth cult released it in the Tokyo subway killing 13 people and sickening 6,000 others.

"There is a possibility that North Korea is already capable of delivering (via missile) a

warhead containing sarin,"

Abe told a parliamentary committee, referring to the poison nerve agent.

His remarks were reported by public broadcaster NHK and leading national newspapers. Abe did not elaborate or say where he obtained the information, according to the reports.

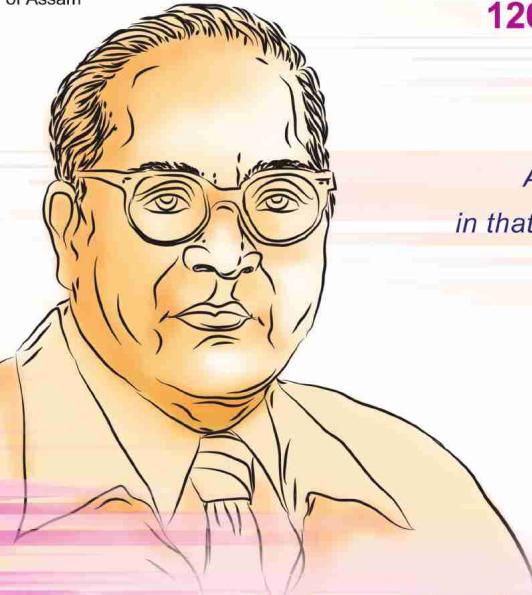
Tensions on the Korean peninsula have spiked in recent days amid concerns that Pyongyang could be on the verge of executing its sixth nuclear test and as a US air-

craft carrier-led strike group heads to the region.

Originally conceived as a pesticide, sarin was used by Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's regime to gas thousands of Kurds in the northern town of Halabja in 1988.

The US believes the Syrian government employed a sarin-like nerve agent in a deadly attack in the country's northwest last week.

The Aum Supreme Truth cult also used the nerve agent in a 1994 attack in the Japanese city of Matsumoto, killing seven. – AFP



Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar
126th Birth Anniversary
14th April, 2017

*A great man is different from an eminent one
in that he is ready to be the servant of the society.*
- B.R. Ambedkar

We pay our deep tribute to
Bharat Ratna awardee Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar
on his 126th Birth Anniversary.


Sarbananda Sonowal
Chief Minister, Assam

Govt. of Assam

Jansanyog/433/17

SPORTS

Ronaldo hits 100th European goal as Real win at Bayern

MUNICH, April 13: Cristiano Ronaldo netted his 100th European goal to give holders Real Madrid a 2-1 comeback win at 10-man Bayern Munich in the Champions League quarterfinal first-leg.

"I wanted to reach this record. To be able to reach this mark is an honour and against a team like Bayern it is even better," Ronaldo, who scored both goals, told BeIN Sport Spain.

Arturo Vidal headed Bayern into a first-half lead yesterday, but then skied a penalty attempt on the stroke of half-time before Ronaldo volleyed the defending champions' level.

Bayern played the last half an hour a man down after centre-back Javi Martinez was sent off for two fouls on Ronaldo within three minutes of each other.

Four-time world player of the year Ronaldo then slotted in the winner between goalkeeper Manuel Neuer's legs for a total of 13 minutes from time.

"We believe we can still do it,

we were the better team in the first half, could have made it 2-0 or 3-0," Neuer told ZDF.

But Bayern were outplayed in the second-half and most of Real's 23 shots on goal came after the break.

"We had everything under control in the first half, but didn't use the room consistently," said captain Philipp Lahm. "The tipping point was the red card."

Security was tight at the Allianz Arena in the wake of Tuesday's attacks on the Borussia Dortmund team bus and both teams arrived with a heavy police escort.

There was a large police presence and inside the stadium there was polite applause when the announced made reference to Dortmund's ordeal in the preceding 24 hours.

Bayern suffered a blow before kick-off when top-scorer Robert Lewandowski, who has netted 38 goals this season, dropped out with a bruised shoulder and Thomas Müller deputised as striker.

Bayern were also missing in-



Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates scoring during the UEFA Champions League quarterfinal first leg match against Bayern Munich in Munich, Germany, on Wednesday.

jured Germany defender Mats Hummels against Real's formidable BBC attack - Gareth Bale, Karim Benzema and Ronaldo.

Bayern went ahead on 25 minutes when playmaker Thiago Alcantara swung in a corner from the right which Vidal powered through Real goalkeeper Keylor Navas's hands.

The Chile midfielder could have added a second when he headed Arjen Robben's cross wide of the post soon after.

Real made a poor start, rarely threatening Germany's goalkeeper Neuer, back after minor foot surgery a fortnight ago.

A strong drive from Ronaldo on 41 minutes which Neuer blocked having palmed a Benzema header onto the woodwork with 15 minutes played were their best first-half chances.

Vidal could have finished with a first-half hat-trick when he stepped up to take a penalty after Dani Carvajal's handball from a Franck Ribery shot.

However, the Chilean

smashed the spot-kick high over the crossbar.

It was a miss Bayern were soon to regret.

Real were level two minutes after the break when Carvajal found space on the right and fired in a cross which Ronaldo volleyed past Neuer.

Bale, who has laboured with an ankle injury recently, came off on 58 minutes and Real raised the tempo after he trudged off.

Having already picked up a yellow card for pulling Ronaldo back on 58 minutes, Martinez was shown a red for again fouling the Portugal captain just three minutes later.

Real's superstar then hit the winner as substitute Marco Asensio, on for Bale, put in a low pass for Ronaldo to tap the ball home between Neuer's legs.

Real defender Sergio Ramos had the ball in the Bayen net with time running out, but the goal was ruled offside but the Spaniards have the upper hand for the second leg at home next Tuesday. - AFP

Juventus renews Dybala contract

TURIN, April 13: Argentine striker Paulo Dybala renewed his contract with Serie A side Juventus until 2022, the Turin club announced on Thursday.

The Bianconeri explained in a statement that Dybala's original contract, valid until June 2020, has been extended until June 30, 2022, reports Efe.

The striker, who scored twice in Juventus' 3-0 victory against Barcelona in the Champions League quarterfinals on Tuesday, arrived at the club in summer 2013 from Palermo for 32 million euros (\$34 million).

Even though the club did not reveal his salary, Italian media hinted his income could reach 7.5 million euros (\$7.9 million) a season.

Dybala has been referred to as Lionel Messi's possible successor, while the Barcelona star recognised him as the future of the Argentina national team. - IANS

Gayle, Pollard, KP marquee players

JOHANNESBURG, April 13: Dashing T20 players Chris Gayle, Kieron Pollard and Kevin Pietersen are among eight marquee internationals, who will be representing various franchises in the inaugural edition of Cricket South Africa's #T20 Global Destination League.

The other five marquee stars are Lasith Malinga, Jason Roy, Eoin Morgan, Dwayne Bravo and Brendon McCullum. All these players have a contract of two years.

The eight international marquee players will be entered into a mini-draft with the highest bidding franchise owner having first pick and the rest following the same process.

Franchise owners will be asked to consider the fact that some of these players, by virtue of having played for some years in South Africa, already hold strong ties to certain cities in South Africa. - PTI

Kohli returns for RCB ahead of IPL clash against MI

BENGALURU, April 13: India captain Virat Kohli will return to bolster Royal Challengers Bangalore's campaign when they take on arch-rivals Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League here tomorrow.

Kohli had undergone rehabilitation after sustaining an injury to his right shoulder while fielding during the third Test against Australia in Ranchi and has been missing in action ever since.

However, the Delhi batsman has been declared fit today

by BCCI Medical Team and will look to boost the confidence of RCB, who lost two out of the three matches that they have played so far in his absence.

Kohli, who had dropped hints of making a return after posting a video on his Instagram account of his gym session on April 11, did some fielding drills during the team's net session, yesterday.

Last year, Kohli had scored a staggering 973 runs in 16 matches with four centuries to guide RCB to the finals against Stevens Hyderabad and he would look to improve Bangalore's current sixth place standing on the points-table.

In Kohli's absence, AB de Vil-

liers made his presence felt as he smashed his way to an unbeaten 89 off just 46 balls to help RCB post a respectable 148-4 on his comeback match after recovering from an injury.

The single-handed show by the South African, however, couldn't save the blushes of his team as RCB went down by eight wickets to Kings XI Punjab in their last match.

The poor form of Chris Gayle is also a concern for RCB. The West Indian power-hitter has been struggling to carve out big scores, which is reflected in his failure to score even one half-century in his last 10 innings.

Gayle will be hoping to make a comeback in the team, especially after being dropped in the game against Punjab.

The talented Sarfaraz Khan too hurt himself on the field during a practice match ahead of the tournament. Kedar Jadhav, meanwhile, has showcased his utility by slamming a 37-ball 69 to help his side score 157 runs during a 15-run win over Delhi Daredevils. He also hit 31 in the opening match against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

RCB also lost India batsman Lokesh Rahul for the entire tournament owing to an injury and is

looking to turn their fortunes around in front of home fans at the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium here.

Gujarat Lions got a much-

Gujarat gets Jadeja boost in their quest for 1st win

RAJKOT, April 13: Struggling Gujarat Lions is set to receive a much-needed boost with the imminent return of all-round rounder Ravindra Jadeja during their clash against Rising Pune Super-Giant in the Indian Premier League here tomorrow.

Gujarat Lions, who finished as the surprise third in their maiden IPL appearance last year, did not have the best of starts in the ongoing edition of the tournament.

The Suresh Raina-led side suffered consecutive defeats against two-time champions Kolkata Knight Riders and title holder Sunrisers Hyderabad in their opening two matches.

And come tomorrow, Gujarat Lions will be desperate to turn their fortunes around in front of home fans at the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium here.

Jadeja has had a terrific home season with both bat and ball for India and his return will definitely boost Gujarat Lions morale.

TEAMS:
Gujarat Lions: Suresh Raina (capt), Akashdeep Nath, Shubham Agarwal, Basil Thampi, Dwiyane Bravo, Chirag Suri, James Faulkner, Aaron Finch, Manpreet Gony, Ishan Kishan, Ravindra Jadeja, Shadab Khan, Dhaval Kulkarni, Dinesh Karthik, Preveen Kumar, Shuvil Kaushik, Brandon McCullum, Shubman Gill, Patel Pratham Singh, Jason Roy, Pradeep Sangwan, Shreyas Sreesanth, Shreyas Suryakant, Shreyas Tendulkar, Tejas Baroda, Andre Tye.

Rising Pune Super-Giant: Steve Smith (capt), Fal du Plessis, Adam Zampa, Usman Khawaja, M S Dhoni, Ajinkya Rahane, Ashok Dinda, Ankit Chahar, Rajat Patidar, Arindam Shukla, Ishant Pandey, Jayasri Singh, Babu Aparajit, Deepak Chahar, Mayank Agarwal, Dinesh Christy, Tejas Baroda.

MATCH STARTS AT 8 PM

needed boost in the form of Jadeja, who is likely to play his first IPL match tomorrow.

Jadeja missed Gujarat Lions first two games after he was by the BCCI medical team soon after the India's fourth match Test series against Australia.

Gujarat Lions' strong point is the team's batting department.

With the likes of Brendon McCullum, Aaron Finch, Jason Roy, Raina and Dinesh Karthik up its rank, Gujarat Lions heavily depends on its batting unit.

But the likes of McCullum and Finch have failed to live up to their reputations so far, garnering just 40 and 18 runs respectively in the first two games. Opener Jason Roy started the innings well on both occasions against KKR and SRH but failed to convert the good starts into big knock.

Only skipper Raina, who struck unbeaten 68 against KKR at home and Karthik (47.30) have shouldered the responsibility in the middle-order. - PTI

CAMARO JEANS | TROUSERS | T-SHIRTS
CAMARO JEANS | TROUSERS | T-SHIRTS

Mumbai found a new star in Rana

The Mumbai Indians are on a roll. This is one of their best starts to the tournament and that's simply because not only have they found a new star in Nitish Rana and more crucially after their loss in the first game have made the changes that give them a more balanced attack. Harbhajan Singh has bowled superbly after being left out of the team for the opening game but Rana too is getting his yokers spot on. With Malinga also hitting his stride the toughest final started an innings will be against the Mumbai Indians. The Royal Challengers

players are struggling without their skipper Virat Kohli and if he is fit then it really will be a game to watch out for. Can you imagine the battle between Harbhajan, Malinga, Bumrah with Gayle, ABD and Virat Kohli? It's the stuff of dreams and what the mar-

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Mla Siddhartha Bhattacharya giving away the trophy.

Squash meet ends

GUWAHATI, April 13: Shubham Bafla of Guwahati FC emerged champion in the 1st All Guwahati Inter Club Squash Championship which came to an end yesterday.

In the final Shubham defeated Jit Amrit Baruah of River Rine 11-7, 16-14, 11-2. Ravi Panjwani of Navajyoti Club was the second runner up in the men's category. In the closing function Guwahati East MLA Siddhartha Bhattacharya, GSA president Munin Nobis, Blaskar Bhuyan, CEO of ATM Television along with a host of guests and sportspersons were present. The championship was organised by the Guwahati Squash Racket Association at the RG Baruah Squash Complex here where 12 clubs took part. — Sports Reporter

Zangam champions

SIVASAGAR, April 13: Zangam of Sivasagar clinched the title in the 1st All Assam Bir Lachit T20 Challenge Cricket Tournament played here at the Darbar field under the aegis of Cricket Club of Sivasagar. In the low scoring final Zangam beat Cricket Club of Dibrugarh (CCD) by 28 runs yesterday.

Opting to bat first Zangam team was all out for 88 runs. Wasikur Rahman 22 and Arpan Dutta 18 were the leading scorers. Phamindra Sonowal and Sandip Sharma of CCD picked 5 and 3 wicket respectively. In reply CCD bowled out for a paltry 60 runs. Arpan Dutta and Roshan Alam of Zangam took 3 wickets each.

The individual prize winners were: (Best batsman and Man of the Series) Samuk Das (Zangam), (Best Bowler) Sandip Samah (CCD), (Man of the Final) Arpan Dutta of Zangam. The winning team was awarded Rs 30,000 while the runners-up team got Rs 20,000 along with trophies. In the closing function Mugtabul Hussain, jt secy, ACA, Manoj Bhagawati, Bikash Borgohain, Biju Gogoi, Hakikat Rahman, Tapan Dutta, Babul Khan, Tapan Baruah and Kabir Borai gave away the prizes. — Correspondent

Bhuvi blames small score, dew for defeat

MUMBAI, April 13: Sunrisers Hyderabad seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar has blamed the dew factor and small total responsible for the title-holders' four-wicket defeat against hosts Mumbai Indians in last night's Indian Premier League game here.

In reply to Hyderabad's 158/8, Mumbai scored 159/6 in 18.4 overs.

"I don't think there was anything wrong with our batting. They tried their best. It was just one of those days when you play your shot and it goes to the field-

ers. We were 79 without loss in 10 overs which was a good start but 158 was not enough as dew was there," Bhuvneshwar said at the post-match press conference last night.

"It was difficult to defend. Although it's the average score in T20, but on this ground it was below average. It's very difficult to bowl when dew sets in. It's not an excuse. We needed to get 2-3 wickets in power play," said the swing bowler, who returned with impressive figures of 3 for 21 when most other bowlers of his team strug-

gled in the conditions.

Put in to bat, Sunrisers got off to a sluggish start, accelerated a bit, but then lost their way once opener and skipper David Warner got out, trying to repeat a reverse-sweep off Harbhajan Singh after having hit the offie for a six in the previous ball.

Sunrisers kept on losing wickets at regular intervals after Warner was dismissed to a stunning, two-handed diving catch by wicket keeper Parthiv Patel.

But Bhuvneshwar sought to downplay the shot, saying the attempt did not come as a surprise as Warner tries it in net sessions too.

"He bats for 20 minutes five minutes he bats right handed in nets. It was not surprising. It was an amazing shot. AB de Villiers plays these shots," said Bhuvneshwar.

on Pollard – did not score big. But other batsmen led by opener Parthiv Patel (49) and later Nitish Rana took Mumbai past the line.

Rana scored a 36-ball 45, thus narrowly missing his second successive half century in the tournament, hitting two sixes and three fours.

Bangladesh left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman, playing his first game, gave away plenty of runs (34) without completing his quota.

"He played, that means he is fit," Bhuvneshwar retorted. — PTI

NF Railway enter semifinals

SPORTS REPORTER
GUWAHATI, April 13: NF Railway stormed into the semifinals of the All India Railway Cricket Tournament.

In the two-day quarterfinal match, which ended at Kharagpur today, NF Railway defeated Northern Railway by virtue of their 111-run first innings lead.

NF Railway, after batting first yesterday, piled up 355 all out in 83.5 overs.

Today the NF Railway forced their opponent to fold their innings at 244 in 51.3 overs. For the NF Railway outfit Sarupam Purkayastha

top scored with 130 while Kunal Sharma added 112. Karan Saikia was the other notable contributor with 60.

Today, Abhilash Gogoi, Muri Singh and Arup Das were the leading wicket-takers for the winning team bagging four, three and two wickets respectively. For Northern Railway Ashish (53) and Akash Yadav (52) were the leading scorers.

In the semifinal NF Railway will square off against RWF at the same venue on April 15 and 16, informed NF Railway sports officer and former Assam Ranji captain Rajesh Bora.

Tezpur CA prevail over GCCC

SPORTS REPORTER
GUWAHATI, April 13: Tezpur Cricket Academy defeated Guwahati Cricket Coaching Centre by two wickets in today's match of the 13th Golap Hazarika Memorial Inter-District Coaching Centre Cricket Tournament at the Dispur Parade Ground.

Restricting the opponent to 124 in 35 overs, Tezpur CA hit up 127 for eight in 31.1 overs.

Brief scores: Guwahati CCC 124/9 (Vivek Saha 32, Deben Sharma 28, Rohit Singh 17, Ritam Roy 2/20). **Tezpur CA 127/8** (Abub Hussain not out 25, Naeem Islam 18, Rohit Singh 3/11, Kuldeep Roy 2/19).

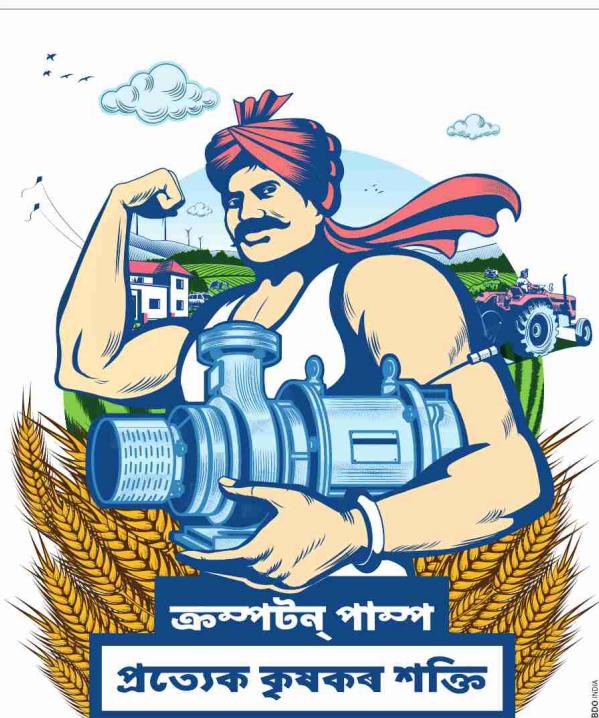
Next match on April 16 between CCC A and NF Railway CA.

Nishanta named U-19 team trainer

SPORTS REPORTER
GUWAHATI, April 13: Nishanta Bordoloi has been appointed as Strength and Conditioning Coach of the Indian U-19 team by the National Cricket Academy.

The camp for the Indian colts will be held at Bengaluru from April 20 to May 19.

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GRAPHICS DEBASISH SINHA

Of Bihu and *Bohag*

KC Bhattacharya unravels the astronomical origins of this spring festival.

As winter draws to an end, and spring announces its arrival, nature is also getting ready in its new attire. The raindrops sprinkled on the dry earth by the *Bordoloi* on her annual visit spreads an aroma of liveliness in the air. Everybody eagerly waits to welcome *Bohag*. Bihu. Astronomically, the first day of *Bohag* is the beginning of a solar or tropical year based on the apparent movement of the Sun as seen from the Earth.

Two days in a tropical year are known to have equal durations of sunshines (day) and darkness (night). The astronomers of ancient India had named them as *mashavishwa*, falling in spring, and *jala-vishwa*, falling in autumn. The western astronomers call them vernal equinox and autumnal equinox, respectively. *Vishwa* in Sanskrit means division into two equal parts. The imaginary line dividing the northern and southern hemispheres of the globe equally is called the *vishvarekha* (equator). The distinctiveness of the *mashavishwa* from the rest of the days, and also due to its occurrence in the clear weather of spring, led to count a tropical year from one *mashavishwa* or vernal equinox to the next.

Just as the tropical year was divided into 12 months, the apparent annual path of the sun in the sky was also divided into 12 sectors of 30 degree angles, each identified by a constellation of stars, and named as a *Rasi* (zodiac) – *Mesha*, *Brisha*, *Mithuna*, etc. These zodiac signs have close similarity with those of western astrology. On the *mashavishwa* day, the sun is exactly overhead at midday, at any place on the *vishvarekha*. The Sun enters the *Mesha rashi* on this day, hence the special status of *Mesha* as the *adhistari*. The first day of the year having such astronomical or astrological significances must have been celebrated with great pomp, and was probably named as *vishwa* festival.

The astrological tradition in India was to name a month by the *rakshatra* or star in whose vicinity a full moon occurs. In the first month, the full moon happened to occur near the star *Vishabha*, hence the name *Vaisakha*. In the next month,

was the *Jaitrhna nakshatra*, giving the name *Jaitrhya* and so on. From *Vaisakha* to *Bohag*, and from *Vishwa* to *Bihu* – this is the link we can trace back to ancient astronomy. In the Malayalam calendar of South India, this *tithi* is celebrated in present time as *Vishu*, while in Odisha, it is celebrated as '*maha-vishvavasankranti*'.

According to modern astronomy, the vernal equinox (*mashavishwa*) comes every year on March 20. If *Bihu* originated from *Vishwa*, then how is it that we celebrate it in April? This again is found explained in astronomy. Due to the 23.45 degree tilt of the rotational axis of the planet earth, the equatorial plane of the earth is also inclined at 23.45 degree angle with respect to the orbit plane. These two planes intersect at a line which meets the orbital path at two points, named in astronomy as vernal equinox and autumnal equinox, respectively. The rotational axis of the earth is generally said to be fixed towards the pole star. But in reality, it has a slow cyclic motion completing one round in 25,772 years.

Due to this slow cyclic movement of the spin axis, the angle between the equatorial plane of the earth and its orbit plane keeps on changing. As a result, the vernal equinox point keeps on drifting westward on the orbit of the earth around the sun. Accordingly, the tropical year will start about 20 minutes earlier every year compared to the previous year. The ancient astronomers of India knew about it and determined the cycle period to be about 25,500 years, as mentioned in the *Surya Siddhanta* by Bhaskara-II, the astronomer of 12th century CE.

In present days, we celebrate *Bihu* (*vishwa*) in April, but the actual *mashavishwa* has already taken place on March 20, that is 24 days earlier, according to modern astronomy. At the rate of 20 minutes a year, the drift of 24 days requires 1728 years. That is, the *vishwa* must have been celebrated in April during the 3rd century CE. The *mashavishwa* has since drifted to March 20, leaving behind the *vishwa* festival in April, probably due to the enchanting environ of spring. Thus *Bihu*

or *vishwa* has a heritage of at least 1700 years.

The Gregorian calendar, introduced in 1582 CE, was so adjusted as to have the vernal equinox to fall every year on March 21. According to the International Astronomy Union, in the present era, the sun resides in *Meen rashi* from April 19 to May 15. According to Vedic astrology also, the sun enters *Meen rashi* on April 15. Thus, the new solar year starts when the Sun enters *Meen*, but the *vishwa* happened 24 days earlier when the Sun was in *Meen rashi*.

The Gregorian year and the Vedic astrological year match with the tropical year very closely. Therefore, the Bohag *Bihu* will continue to visit us every spring in April. But there is a danger of a different kind, not very far away, threatening the Bohag so dear to us. Since the advent of the industrial revolution, millions of tonnes of fossil fuels are burnt every year to meet the energy demand of human civilisation. Forests are being cleared to set up new townships and industries, leaving no place for birds and animals to live. Rising concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to an unprecedented level is causing the planet to warm up. Within the next 100-150 years, the rising temperature may cause the climate system to change unpredictably. If such a day comes, there will not be any spring to welcome the *Bohag*. The heedless cooing of the cuckoo will be missing. *Bordoloi* may turn very violent, destroying everything on her way. Nobody will venture out for *Bihu* dance in the open due to the intense heat. And for all these, Nature is not to be blamed. We have to blame ourselves.

Time is now to desist from destroying the environment. If *Bohag* is lost, then our existence will be also a thing of the past.

Perhaps Sudakartha was right in his thinking, "*Bohag matron eti ritu nobo...*" *Bohag* is indeed a testament of creation, derived from the radiance of the sun. Our survival rests on its preservation.

(The writer was the Director (Reit), North Eastern Space Applications Centre, ISRO. He can be contacted at k_c_bhattacharya@rediffmail.com)

schemes and contrivances to everyday tasks, our Mr Bean – Rowan Atkinson.

Moving into Bollywood, we have Raj Kapoor who is considered the 'Charlie Chaplin of Indian Cinema'. *Shree 420*, *Mera Naam Joker* are often viewed as adaptations of Chaplin's *Limeight*. A scuffly boy and a boisterous boy made his *Mera poota hai Japani* an exact replica of Chaplin's style. Indian cinema had some comedians like Keshito Mukherjee, Mehmood, Johny Lever, Asrani, etc. And a special mention must be made of Paresh Rawal as Baburao Gantipatio Apte, who wore an untidy *dhobi* and a torn vest all through *Hera Pheri*.

Though comedy in India is not at its peak, the last few years have shown a great hike in the number of comedians. Shows like *The Great Indian Laughter Challenge*, *The Kapil Sharma Show* and the laughter shows on SAB TV provide us with the right amount of comic relief. Also stand-up comedy is fast finding its feet in India. People are more inclined towards comedy than any other topic as is evident from the increasing number of comedy shows on TV. Thus adding the much-needed spice of laughter into our lives.

rta25march@gmail.com



The funny men!

Ria Chakraborty

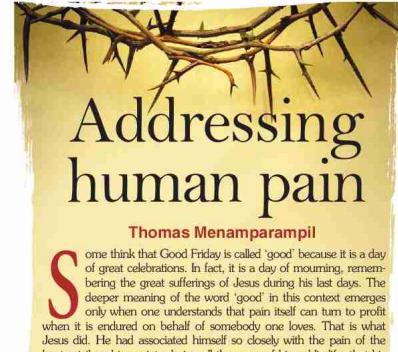
Charlie Chaplin once said that life is a tragedy when seen in close-up, but a comedy in long-shot. In our busy, over-committed world, laughter seems to have been lost along the way. We don't find much of it in our everyday lives. Laughter triggers the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals. Endorphins promote an overall sense of well-being and can even temporarily relieve pain.

When we talk about laughter, we instantly remember one of the greatest comedians of all time – Charlie Chaplin. He would take a serious subject, something you can relate to, and show you how funny life actually is. The king of the world of comedy who reigned in the 20th century is equally famous even today. Even today's generation, for whom silent, black-and-white comedy is anachronistic, if not alien, is

aware of Chaplin and his remarkable legacy. The variety of emotions that Chaplin could portray, even with a straight face, is what is still so riveting about him. He is dead serious, and yet the result is hilarious.

Two men, one's fat, while the other is lean and thin, one seems a little smart, and the other childlike; this contrasting duo can make you laugh until your stomach hurts – Laurel and Hardy, Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy's comic team is widely regarded as the greatest in film history. Before coming to comedy, the two were doing well in their individual acting careers, but as a duo their real magic became evident, with Laurel playing the bumbling innocent foil to the pompous Hardy.

For one reason the whole world will always be grateful to British Television – Mr Bean, the person who gets himself in trouble even while cleaning his nose. The man with an MSc in Electrical Engineering at The Queen's College, Oxford is the same childish buffoon who brings various unusual



Addressing human pain

Thomas Menampampil

Some think that Good Friday is called 'good' because it is a day of great celebrations. In fact, it is a day of mourning, remembering the great sufferings of Jesus during his last days. The deeper meaning of the word 'good' in this context emerges only when one understands that pain itself can turn to profit when it is endured on behalf of somebody one loves. That is what Jesus did. He had associated himself so closely with the pain of the least privileged in society during all the years of his public life, that his self-giving on the cross was nothing but its climax.

All his active life, Jesus kept moving from one village to another in Galilee, a Roman province known for its frequent uprisings against the rulers. The imperial authorities crushed the insurrection each time, and executed hundreds of dissidents mercilessly upon the cross. Unexplainable, the helper of the poor and the 'prophet of peace' would meet with the same fate.

The mission of Jesus had been to heal the sick, encourage the heartbroken, motivate people who had lost their sense of direction, and assure everyone that no effort of theirs was wasted. The crowds that flocked to him were the sick, the excluded, the desperately poor, the debt-ridden, grief-ridden, guilt-ridden. For everyone he had a word of encouragement. He never suggested rebellion or violent resistance. He planted courage and determination into their hearts. He asked them to have confidence in their own resourcefulness and look beyond. He sweat blood in the Garden of Gethsemane while praying to God in their behalf. His mind was in agony, thinking of their pains, and those like them.

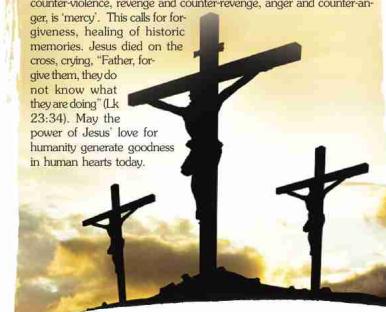
What proved his undoing was the fact that he was critical of injustice, unfairness to the poor, misuse of religion. He exposed hypocrisy. He emphasised the deeper dimension of religion: worshipping God "in spirit and in truth" (Jn 4:23). He was against excessive legalism, ritualism and superficiality in religion. No wonder he got into trouble with the Establishment, which first sought to marginalise him; then, later to eliminate him. Thus, he too dies on a cross placed between two violent men.

Despite the relevance of his words and works to the immediate context, his concern was for the whole of humankind. He says, "Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28). His message on the Mount, "Happy are the poor, who mourn, the humble, the merciful, those who work for peace, the persecuted," (Mt 5:3-10) touched the heart of Mahatma Gandhi profoundly. They have brought consolation to millions of people on every continent. Jesus' suffering was then a co-suffering with the human family: 'pro-suffering' in their behalf. He, thus, summarised his life-mission, "I have come in order that you might have life – life in all its fullness" (Jn 10:10). Good Friday is called good because people remember that Jesus died for the well-being of humankind, that all may have life in its 'fullness'.

Let us place Jesus' pain side by side with the pain of humanity in our times. Not a day passes without some group or other dying as victims of violence. It is heart-rending that horrendous human tragedies are reported today as though they were merely about names and numbers. When gruesome tales of violence come up in the media again and again one gets lost in incidentals, like in the case of the downing of the Russian Metrojet plane which killed 224 at Sinai; the bomb attack at Ankara; the suicide strike at Beirut butchering 46 innocent bystanders; the ghastly murder of four sisters of Mother Teresa's with 12 of their helpers in Yemen; the Istanbul Ataturk Airport blast, wiping out 44 lives; the violence in a restaurant in Dhaka annihilating 20 foreigners; and recently the use of chemical weapons in Syria. One fails to grasp the contextual significance of these hideous events and the human depth of the problem.

In the immediate excitement of the horror we forget that every victim is an individual with his/her own personal history, ideas, aspirations, dreams, and internal agonies; that he has a family whose future is thrown off the rails; that he belonged to a community in which he played a dynamic role, and possibly an entire society felt inspired by him. We fail to hear the sighs; the sobs, and the loud wailings of his/her dear ones. An inspiring voice silenced, amazing stamina extinguished, long-cherished hopes crushed, in each single case. When we keep hearing of similar mishaps overtaking dozens, hundreds, thousands of people, we wonder whether Thomas Hobbes was right in *Leviathan* that 'man is a wolf unto man'. No. But what is true is that a man, if he so chooses, can make himself a wolf to others.

In such contexts, we cry for help 'from on high'. Shakespeare wrote, "The quality of mercy is not strained. It droppeth as the gentle rain from 'heaven' upon the place beneath" (*The Merchant of Venice*). The saving word in the context of this terrible dialogue between violence and counter-violence, revenge and counter-revenge, anger and counter-anger, is 'mercy'. This calls for forgiveness, healing of historic memories. Jesus died on the cross, crying, "Father, forgive them, they do not know what they are doing" (Lk 23:34). May the power of Jesus' love for humanity generate goodness in human hearts today.





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HORIZON

THE ASSAM TRIBUNE
GUWAHATI, FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 2017

Branding Northeast

While browsing the internet, I came across a term called 'mango showers' or 'mango rains', which is a colloquial term to describe the occurrence of pre-monsoon rainfall. Sometimes these rains are referred to generically as 'April rains' or 'summer showers'.

The people of Assam are used to this spring time mango rain which is accompanied by wild gusty pre-monsoon wind referred to as *Bordoloi* that marks the incoming monsoon season causing widespread damage. But April also brings about a vibrant spring in the area as well as festivity, dance and merrymaking. Rose Bihu reverberates the hearts of the Assamese, cutting across religious and ethnic differences. Today Assam is well known for her cultural richness and endemic flora and fauna.

Over the years, every state in India has developed its own image and USP based on the available natural resources, socio-cultural profile, economic condition, historical heritage and the general behavioural aspects of the average domicile of the State. When we talk about the State of Punjab and its people, we easily think of qualities like hard working, industrious, generous, fun-loving, which are synonymous to the people of this State that had ushered in the Green Revolution in India. When we talk of Gujarat and Gujaratis, we can relate to attributes like sharp business acumen, enterprising, peace loving, industrial friendly and a State that led the White Revolution in India.

It takes a lot of years, collective will of the citizens, cultural heritage and general behavioural instincts of the populace to create the accepted public perception towards a region, a State and her people. I have taken the example of Punjab and Gujarat to illustrate my point, that knowingly and unknowingly, a state, a region, and a nation creates its own popular image and perception. Perhaps, when the *Udta Punjab* movie released, which focussed on the drug abuse by the youth population in Punjab and the various conspiracies surrounding it, the film annoyed the sensibilities of some sections of the people, as well as challenged the general notions about Punjab. In many ways it very well illustrated how one commercial film could also dent the typical image of a State that was built over decades.

Brain consultants have always been guided by the proven theory that what we see in the mirror can be different from what others perceive when they look at us. This is also applicable to a State or a region. Perhaps that is why despite the abundant natural resources, tourism hotspots, hospitable local populace, rich cultural heritage, references in epics and ancient literature, unique geographical positioning creating unlimited business possibilities, the overall public image of the Northeast is not what we would want it to be.

The truth remains that mainstream media had projected this region more for the banes of difficult law and order situation, lack of adequate infrastructure, geographical remoteness. While one can't dismiss these as entirely manufactured images, the fact remains that the other positive aspects to this region somehow fail to find a more dominating association in the minds of all those who look at our region from a distant place.

The onus will lie on each one of us to challenge the popular and stereotypical perceptions that have found space in people's mind over the last five-six decades. In order to superimpose the new images of a vibrant Northeast, we have to make good use of social media and all other channels of communication to make the much-needed image makeover of this region. The State governments also have to take up carefully designed campaigns that can project Northeast for all glory as the place where Gods holiday!

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Hindi film *Neerja* won two awards at the recently held 64th National Film Awards, including Best Feature Film in Hindi and Special Mention for Sonam Kapoor. *Neerja* is a biographical thriller film directed by Ram Madhvani and written by Sajron Quadras and Sanya Leha Chawla Shashi. It was produced by Atul Kasbekar's company, Bling Unplugged, alongside Vijay Singh's Fox Star Studios. The film features Sonam Kapoor as the title character, with Shabana Azmi, Yogenra Tikhi and Shekhar Ravjiani in supporting roles. The film has music by Vishal Khurana, with lyrics written by Praween Joshi. *Neerja* was released on February 19, 2016 to positive critical reception, with Praesoon Joshi.

The plot centres on the Libyan-backed Abu Nidal Organisation's hijacking of Pan American Flight 73 in Karachi, Pakistan, on September 5, 1986. The film is shown from the point of view of the flight's head purser, Neerja Bhutan, who thwarted the hijack attempt by alerting the pilots, thus grounding the plane. She was killed by the hijackers while helping to save 359 of the 379 passengers and crew on board. The government posthumously awarded her the Ashoka Chakra; she was the youngest person to receive it.

In today's Master's Choice section, do try out a set of questions related to Bihu compiled by yours truly. Wish you all a very Happy Bohag Rongali Bihu.

Meanwhile, keep writing to us with quiz requests, questions (with answers and full postal address) and interesting bits of information at: Quizone, Horizon, C/O The Assam Tribune, Mariram Dewan Road, Guwahati. SMS at: 98640-26322 and email at toselen@gmail.com or quizonesailen@gmail.com. To read Quizone online, you can log on to paper.assamttribune.com.

MASTER'S CHOICE

- According to the Ahom history written on the *sanchipat*, who is believed to be the creator of Bihu?
- The name of the Bihu flute used by the Bodos is called *Chifing*. What is the name of the flute used by the Mising people in their spring festival?
- He is believed to be the first person to bestow upon Bihu the title of *Bapoti Sahon*. Sources say that he was also the first to refer to Bihu as the State festival of the State of Assam. Name him.
- At the time of celebrating *Domahi* in Upper Assam, a particular festival is observed in Lower Assam. The main attraction of this festival is the marriage between two bamboos. Name the festival.
- A staff of the Assam Tribune Group of Publications designed the first Bihu flag in 1952.

That time of the year

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Nature displays its splendor yet again.
Amidst the hardships of colds and burns,
Has returned the soothing vistas again.
Tiding over the mango days,
Tiding over the flooded ways,
Tiding over the ripening crops,
Tiding over the burn *melli*,
Tiding over *phagun* and *sot's* winds.

And once again, we the people,
Born in the land of the *Burha Luit*,
Born in the land of the *deo hanti*,
Born in the land of the *Hollong*,
Born in the land of the *ek xingiwa gaur*,
Born in the land of the hanging *kopou*,
We the people of the Red River and Blue Hills say:
'Sotor hokhot notun bosor adon labor hol.'

And, but of course, we all are
People of the Bihu's land.
And again it's that time of the year,
To rejoice under the bound of nature,
To rejoice under the fresh beginning,
To rejoice under the soothing song of the *kuli*,
To rejoice at the rhythmic *dhol*,
To rejoice at the *pepa's* squeal,
To rejoice at the *gogona's* boings,
To rejoice at the *nasoni's* steps.

Again it's the time of freshness,
Again it's the time of brotherhood,
Again it's the time of love,
Again it's the time of revival,
Again it's the time of joy.

Now we, the Assamese brethren,
Will welcome *Bohag* with open arms,
Welcome *Bihu* with open arms,
Welcome the New Year with open arms,
Usher in the Spring with open arms,
And spread the colour of joy all around.

Chinmoy Gogoi,
Dibrugarh

FEELINGS

Nature

Nature yields, destroys and heals;
Man will have to bow to her;
The harbingers of man's future.

Shafeen Akhtar,
Guwahati

Spring

O Spring, welcome back!
Paint vermilion on the lake,
Let the greenery reflect,
Let the fragrance of blooming flowers spread,
Let new love stories take,
O Spring, welcome back!

Bhaswati Pathak,
Via email

O' Spring! Do not go away from me,
For you are my lover.

We're not the Easter Lilies, Nasturtiums and
Blood Red Poppies your mind's delight?
Wasn't the Spring breeze the sounds of the gardens?
That is why I say - Don't go!
A year will pass by before we meet again.
I shall wait by the poppies
But most of all, the *kopou* can hug you in the Spring breeze.
Don't forget to meet me by the *kopou* tree,
So that you can tie the orchid in a bun for me.
And I shall wait with the *gam kharu* and the *muga mukhela*
For centuries to come.

Madhulika Barooah,
Digboi

April rain

Cleansing my soul with your green life,
Enhancing my fragrances with your colourful nature,
Immersing my feelings in your blessed arms,
Oh! My beloved April rain,
I owe the spring of my soul to you...

Sangeeta Roy,
Guwahati

Come again,
Paint vermilion on the lake,
With the rhythm of the waves of our souls,
Sparkling bright as a clear blue spring;
And we promise,
Your love we shall forever behold!

Passionately to the tempest in our heart,
In trance we shall sing and dance
With the *husori* once more;
Think not twice even for a moment,
Your ornate favours,
We shall ever ignore!

The orchids now afresh with morning dew;
A renewed hope flowing elegantly in the free air,
The spring time birds,
Kulli and *keteki*
Although in numbers few,
Upon the green,
They make merry and sing without a care,
Lore have we waited too,
Now hasten to love us best,
With a kind and beautiful spirit,
Bless us also to enlarge our soul nest!

Swapnajyoti Bordoloi,
Dibrugarh

Plastic-eating microbes

SCIENCE ZONE

Violina Kalita



A team of scientists in Japan has recently discovered a species of microorganisms that may degrade a plastic known as PET

We find plastics or plastic merchandise all around us. Once they get into the surroundings as trash, they stay there for years, decades and even centuries. That is because most types of plastics are immune and inert to the enzymatic processes concerned in biodegradation.

The rising demand for plastic merchandise around the world is giving a lift to plastic trade; this is seen even in the state of Assam. According to a 2010 data (source-ANI), the per capita consumption of plastic in the entire Northeast is just one kilogram, whereas, in the rest of the country, the annual consumption remains five kilogram per annum.

Plastic goods are all around us and are a creating nuisance in the surroundings. To overcome this menace, various alternatives have been taken up, and the most important and newly found solution is plastic eating microbes.

Plastic-eating bacteria: A team of scientists in Japan, led by Shosuke Yoshida of Kyoto University has recently discovered a species of microorganisms that may degrade a plastic known as PET. PET stands for polyethylene terephthalate, i.e., a plastic with smart mechanical barrier and optical properties.

Water bottles and soft drink bottles are all PET bottles. PET is a polyester compound with a high aromatic content, which makes it chemically inert. So, it is generally thought to be immune to microbial degradation, though some fungi grow on mineral medium containing PETs.

Roughly 56 million loads of PET are created

every year, and a lot of it ends up in the surroundings. Dr Yoshida and his team screened 250 PET debris-contaminated environmental samples. These samples originated in everything from sediment to wastewater. The scientists explore for microorganisms that might use low crystallinity (1.9 percent) PET film as a serious carbon supply for growth. In order to spot the actual organism that was using PET as a carbon supply, the scientists diluted the microbial pool before growing it on PET.

The team isolated a unique microorganism species of the genus Ideonella, that they gave the name *Ideonella sakaiensis* 201-F6. When they discovered a sub association that lost the power to degrade PET, additional analysis disclosed that it lacked *Ideonella sakaiensis*.

Using the recently known bacteria, the team almost utterly degraded a PET film in only six weeks where the temperature was held at a steady 86 degrees Fahrenheit. It used two enzymes to break down the PET. After adhering to the PET surface, the microorganism secretes one enzyme onto the PET to come up with an intermediate chemical. That chemical is then taken up by the cell, where another enzyme breaks it down even further, providing the bacteria with carbon and energy to grow.

Dr Tracy Mincer, who studies plastics in the ocean at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts, said the study was impressive and did a good job showing that these organisms were eating the plastic pretty well.

This investigation has opened the likelihood for a viable remediation strategy for PET. Through further analysis and development, we may have bacteria that can efficiently clean PET waste.

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QUIZ ZONE

Sailen Baishya



ANSWERS

1. *Kesaikhaitor kolman*, 2. *Kunil and puli*, 3. Rajanikanta Bordoli, 4. *Votheli*, 5. *Nip Barua*, 6. *Jeng Bihu*, 7. *Randhon gagan* used by the males and *Lahori gagan* used by the females, 8. *Mayon*, 9. *Swargadeo Rudra Singha* (1696-1714), 10. *Dundum*, 11. *Oscar Wilde*, 12. *Quito*, the capital of Ecuador, 13. *Andy*, 14. *Golden Temple* in Amritsar, 15. *Annie Proulx*, 16. *Leonardo Da Vinci*, 17. *Oriente*, 18. *Depression*, 19. *Duan Yonping*, co-founder of Vivo and Oppo, 20. *Prof. Abdus Salam*.

Name the person.

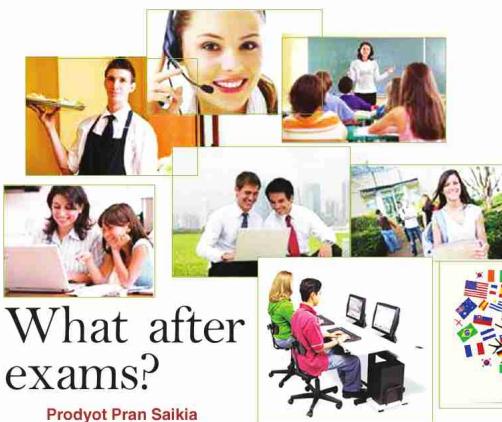
6. In upper Assam, there is a particular Bihu dance in which only females can participate. What is the name of this dance?
7. Name the two types of *gagan* used by the male and female Bihu dancers.
8. During the spring festival of Assam, the Bodos perform a dance similar to the *husori*. What is it called?
9. During the reign of which Ahom king was Bihu first accepted as the State festival of Assam?
10. The name of the *dhon* used by the Bodos is called *kham*; the Dimasa's called it *khamra*. Name the *dhon* used by the Misings.

READERS' CHOICE

11. Born in Dublin in 1854, this once hugely successful novelist and playwright died destitute in Paris at the age of 46 after being sentenced to two years of hard labour. (Pinki Dutta, Tezpur)
12. Which capital city in the world is known as 'The City of Eternal Spring'? (Manash Jyoti Borah, Guwahati)
13. What was the name of the boy whose toys came alive in the 'Toy Story' films? (Aparajita Borah, Nagaon)
14. What is the Hammandir Sahib, the Sikh spiritual/cultural centre, popularly known as in western media? (Rupan Saikia, via SMS)
15. Which American journalist and author wrote a short story titled *Brokeback Mountain*, which was later turned into an Oscar-winning film? (Seema Barman, Guwahati)
16. Which famous painter painted *The Battle of Anghiari*, a battle fought between Florence and Milan in 1440? (Adish Agarwalla, Morahan)
17. What is the national headquarters of the Palestinian people in Jerusalem called? (Nitumon Talukdar, via SMS)
18. What was the theme of this year's World Health Day, celebrated on April 7 every year? (Ayesha Masooma, Guwahati)

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

20. He was the first Nobel Laureate (Physics) of the Islamic world in 1979. He belonged to the religious minority - Ahmadiya sect of Pakistan. As this sect was not recognised or accepted in Pakistan during the 1970s, he was not offered any recognition by the Government of Pakistan. In 2016, Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, decided to rename the National Centre for Physics under Quaid-i-Azam University after him. Who was he? (Jayanta Topadar, Dhemaji)



What after exams?

Prodoyer Pran Saikia

Even doing absolutely nothing at times could be painful activity. For example, when one is ill and recuperating, then doing absolutely nothing helps one regain health. When a student finds his syllabus daunting and overwhelming, his psychotherapist may offer him a completed dissociation from textbooks for a brief period of time as a valued option. But doing absolutely nothing worthwhile for a longer period of time when one is at the threshold of facing the rigours of the world could not only be catastrophic but may also adversely affect one's future prospects.

Exams could be stressful. Board exams could be more stressful. Once the board exams are over, a brief 'cooling off' period should follow to de-stress oneself. This is the period when you can lounge about without feeling guilty. This is also the period to make up for the lost sleep. But worse are those students who, after their board exams, go into just a brief cooling-off period, and then pick up skill development activities to gainfully utilise this period (till the results are out) instead of whiling away their time. Usually it takes about two months time for the boards to declare the results. This interim can

be used to pick up or develop a skill, prepare for competitive tests to enrol into higher courses, learn a trade, do a job, or learn a language among a plethora of other possibilities.

Two years ago, after completing his matric exams, Sagar (name changed) took up a part-time job in a shoe retail franchisee of an international brand. In addition to earning a hefty monthly sum for pocket money, he also gained first-hand work experience. The money he earned helped him pay for the college enrollment fees. And, in that brief period, he also learnt a lot about life, human behaviour, customer care and above all, he learnt about discipline, punctuality, time management, and the economics of life.

But not everyone will be equally inclined to get into a part-time job. Learning a language or strengthening the existing language skills could be useful areas. Say for example, the English language. The board exams had given you enough opportunities to assess how good you are in English (or, the medium of your education). If you had struggled to construct sentences to express your

thoughts, then it will be appropriate for you to enrol yourself into a course to brush up the basics of English grammar and writing skills. The same will be true for any other language. Irrespective of whether you are aiming to pursue higher studies in science, arts or commerce streams, a good grasp in the language of the medium of instruction and learning is must if you wish to earn good grades.

Or, maybe you always wanted to be an actor. Why not get into it by enrolling for a short term course in acting? If you live in bigger towns or cities then you may be privileged to find institutions that offer basic courses in acting. In the absence of such institutions, you may reach up to a noted actor in your locality and request him to guide you. If you always wanted to learn some musical instruments then just get into it. There are bound to be a few musical instrument training centres that charge nominal fees, in addition to providing access to the instruments too. Just ask around. Or you wanted to be a painter? Find a guru and seek guidance. If your budget is a constraint, you don't need to go shopping for costly wares. Start with pencil sketching and crayons.

Skill development in Computer Science is always going to be a huge bonus. Learning the basics of Desktop Publishing software and Tally could help you earn, while you later pursue your higher studies. Learning programming languages like C, C++, and Java can bring out the software engineer in you. If you are aiming to work abroad, a serious programming course could be your work visa. Picking up the basics of the trade, even if only as a hobby, could stand you in good stead any time.

Your biology teacher may have introduced you to the Darwinian theory of the survival of the fittest. Your parents, relatives and well-wishers may have been constantly bombarding you with the fact that it is becoming increasingly difficult to earn a living. They are not wrong. In 1947, the population of India was only around 30 crores. It stands at more than 120 crores now. You may have read news items like 70 per cent of engineering degree holders are unemployed; doctorate holders are applying for menial jobs. In such contexts, any additional skills will help you move ahead in the queue. And remember that time and tide waits for none. The one who stiches in time, indeed, saves nine.

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Indrajit Kaitla

There is hardly any individual, who does not like to scale the success ladder. Indeed, success is an inseparable entity everybody aspires for. It goes without saying that there is no short cut to success. It does not come overnight. Success involves hard labour, perseverance, devotion, time management, patience, and an indomitable spirit. Often a person might not attain the desired goal even after waging relentless effort. We call them unsuccessful, which is too simple an observation. We fail to acknowledge the effort made, and considering the dignity of this, it carries little significance, whether the package of success is pocketed or not. In fact, real beauty lies in the way one tries to attain success, and not in success itself.

Success carries much more meaning once it entails concern for the betterment of society, and not simply for individuals. If the success of an individual is confined to personal interest, it is partial in nature, and fails to come to real help to the larger spectrum of society. Blessings of science and technology, achievements in arts, etc., no longer remain in the custody of those who have taken painstaking measures in realising them. They surpass petty boundaries and enter the domain of wider interest. The recognition they get because of serving people is far higher than the success confined to a select few.

Most people think that

success brings stability in life. The ups and downs that people usually experience come to an immediate halt, and life goes along a positive frame. But this is partially true since it cannot say that successful persons always lead a decent life with no trace of instability. Success is not an end in itself; rather a consolidated move towards an unexplored territory.

Success is not to be measured in terms of material gain, which is narrow and limited in nature. One's material affluence may bring happiness, but only till a certain point. Success and its consequence should be long-lasting and directed towards the betterment of society.

It is sad to see people becoming disheartened once they fail to scale the desired height in pursuit of success. Indeed, failure may be looked at as something very natural. The end of failure should not necessarily

Scaling success

ly lead to disappointment or despondency. On the contrary, it warrants a positive frame of mind and an indomitable spirit to navigate one towards the right direction. The most important thing is to try our best and undo the wrong course of action so that success may find its way to us.

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Autism and Northeast India

When it comes to dealing with autism in the Northeast region of India, resources, including skilled manpower, are at the minimum. Do the children from this region vary from the rest of the country and the world in terms of care and rehabilitation from parents?

We attempted to study the above in our research work by assessing parental stress, social support, coping mechanisms, as well as resilience in the face of the challenges faced by the parents of the children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) attending a multi-specialty centre – Astiwa – located in Guwahati. Children with ASD are among the service users in this centre. Astiwa is one of the few such centres in Northeast India.

The outcome, presented in the research paper, titled 'Impact of stress, coping, social support, and resilience of families having children with autism: A North East India-based study' by Shyamanta Das, Bornali Das, Kokil Nath Arunima Dutta, Priyanka Bora, and Mythili Hazarika has been published in the Asian Journal of Psychiatry. Some of the highlights are: definite stress and time constraint, discontinuation of jobs held earlier, coping well in spite of problems, mixed social support, religiosity and spirituality as the resorted avenues.

Our research throws light on pertinent issues regarding families having children with ASD from a region where specialty centres are a rarity. This work also has future implications as far as these children's future, rehabilitation, and care from the parental perspective are concerned in Northeast India.



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MIND MATTERS

Dr Shyamanta Das

The top two topics doing the round now are the Windows 10 Creators Update and Samsung's Bixby. However, for me, the most interesting topic is the unique single speaker surround system. Imagine a sound base that acts like a home theatre in a box! Here is the Playbase by Sonos Inc, an American consumer electronics company known for its smart speakers.

The Sonos Trueplay tuning software processes adapt the speaker to the layout of your room. You can also manually tweak the output in the Sonos app. With window-jarring bass, crisp mid-range and a surprisingly wide soundstage, the Playbase is kind of a surround sound setup with a single speaker.

Apart from being very slim, almost like our JioFi set, Playbase is a breeze to set up. Put it in, download app, tap a few buttons, and you are ready. If you already own Sonos products, it is even simpler. Since it is so small, it will fit underneath almost any TV. The Playbase works great even when the TV is off, since it is still part of the Sonos system. Want one? It is available online.

More Windows!

This column will do great injustice to its nomenclature, if I fail to mention the latest Windows update, launched

The strong fragrance of the *keteki* and the flowering of *kopou* are harbingers of spring, signalling the dawn of a new year in the Brahmaputra Valley. *Kopou phul* is the most sought after orchid in Assam during the New Year festivities in April. Assamese women adorn the pink flowers as ornamentation on their head during the celebration of Rongali Bihu. Found in the Northeast and South India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia, Java and Philippines, the *Kopou phul* or *Seeta pushpa* in Sanskrit, *Rhyncostylis retusa* is commonly named Fox Tail. Declared the State flower of Assam, the *Rhyncostylis retusa* is intrinsically associated with the mosaic of tradition and culture of the State's diverse ethnic groups. The cultural symbolism of orchids

– that have long been a symbol of love and beauty – could be traced to many tropical and subtropical countries where they enjoy the status of national flower. Orchids are found in almost every habitat, except for Antarctica. The term 'orchid' was introduced by John Lindley in 1845 as a shortened form of *Orchidaceae* – the largest and diverse family of the flowering plants (Angiospermae). The Royal Botanical Gardens of Kew lists 800 genera and nearly 22,000 accepted species of orchids, while thousands more remain unknown or unclassified.

Of some 1,300 species (140 genera) of orchids found in India, the Northeast alone hosts 800 species. Jharkhand has more than 500 species. Meghalaya too has some undisturbed areas providing

on Tuesday.

Microsoft, which has been testing its latest Windows 10 Creators Update in recent months, says that it is now ready to roll out to existing machines. The Creators Update includes some small and welcome additions, like...

Cortana: In this update you will notice Cortana guiding you through the set-up process. Cortana will use the microphone and speakers to listen to commands, including setting up a Wi-Fi network and keyboard layout.

Game Mode: The new Game Mode in the Xbox app prioritises CPU and GPU resources for a game by reducing unnecessary usage of system resources so that games run as best as they can.

Dynamic Lock: This new feature lets you automatically lock a PC when you are away from it. You can pair Bluetooth devices like a phone or wearable, and Windows 10 will sense once the Bluetooth connection is too far away and lock the PC.

Microsoft Edge: The new feature in the Edge browser lets you set tabs aside and save them for use later on. Microsoft has added e-book support and the ability to view 360 videos to Edge. The update includes some more features. However, this is as much update for you now.

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habitat for wild orchids. Silvian's floral wealth has a treasure chest of some 600 orchids. About 300 species of orchids are reported in Assam that represents 44.39 per cent of the Northeastern species and 24.42 per cent of species occurring in India. *Ranenatha insignis* or Red Vanda is one of the most rare and beautiful orchids in Northeast India. The Blue Vanda is equally cherished. There are many other rare varieties found in the Lakhimpur district and Dibrugarh. Of them *Rhyncostylis retusa Alba* is one of the most unique and rare genus of fragrant flower.

Many orchids are highly valued for their medicinal properties. In traditional medicine they are used as a cure for many diseases and ailments and an important ingredient in herbal remedies. The dried seed pods of *Vanilla planifolia* are commercially used as flavouring agent in bakeries, for perfumery and aromatherapy. Orchids are cultivated on a commercial basis through intervention from biotechnology. Horticulturists created over 100,000 hybrids for commercialisation, as wild orchids are protected under various conservation laws. While government plans for conservation and propagation of orchids, and development of gene bank for endangered species found in this part of the country are yet to be implemented,

the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) has come up with a sprawling three hectare Kaziranga National Orchid and Bio Diversity Park. It houses almost all the wild orchids found in the region.

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Orchids: ornaments of nature

SEEDS OF CHANGE

Mubina Akhter

the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) has come up with a sprawling three hectare Kaziranga National Orchid and Bio Diversity Park. It houses almost all the wild orchids found in the region.

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Jarring windows

TECH TRENDS

Devol Kumar Nath



TITANIC

AS legend goes – Titans were Gods – the children of Uranus (heaven) and Gaia (earth). Cronus was their leader and, Zeus his son. Zeus possessed immense strength and power, and rose up against the Gods, defeated convincingly and became the chief God. Backed by this story, the word titanic came to use since the early 18th century with the meaning 'of exceptional strength, size and power'. So, the huge British passenger liner was named titanic considering her size and expected durability. The expression 'rearranging the deck chairs on the titanic' is used to refer to futile actions against inevitable disaster.



VETO

In Rome, a tribune was an elected representative of the common people. In order to protect their interests, the representatives opposed measures of the Senate or actions of magistrates, they uttered 'veto', that meant 'I forbid', in Latin. This word found its use in English in the early 17th century to express opposition against a proposed Act, especially one made by a law-making body.

TRUANT

THE word came from old French, but is thought to be of Celtic origin. The use of this word has been traced to the 13th century and was used to denote a beggar who was averse to work, and begged out of choice rather than necessity. The idea of self-imposed idleness ultimately found application in the later medieval period to children staying away from school without permission. It is used to mean anyone shying away from one's duties using all plausible pretenses.



WORDSPAKE

The story behind words

Bibekananda Choudhury



The cult of the face

Facial expressions are a very important part of communication. Though nothing is said verbally, there is much to be understood about the messages we send and receive through the use of non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions. Facial communication has become an area of utmost importance during the present times. A little bit of self-introspection would really help us get better at communicating better with our facial expressions.

A face that stands out in a crowd gathers optimum accolades. But how to stand out in a crowd of numerous faces? Out of all the facial expressions – frowning, eye rolling, making eye contact, scowling, and appearing bored or interested, looking shocked – the one which always seems to exude warmth and speak of an amiable nature is the smile. It makes you look friendly and approachable.

When it comes to facial language, one of the most important aspects is the tilt of the face. A face that tilts towards the right or the left indicates aggression. While engaging in a conversation, need to keep the face straight, and maintain eye contact with the other person. Eye contact and facial expressions provide important social and emotional information to the one on the other side. Ideally, we suggest you keep a neutral face, devoid of a broad smile. Smile or laugh if the situation demands. Else, keep a neutral expression.

Eye gestures complementing your face will let the other person know that you are interested in the conversation. We would advise you to draw an imaginary straight line from the right eye to the left and back again, dragging it to the tip of your nose. An imaginary 'T' will make the speaker feel that you are being attentive.

Words, as per their meanings, also need a comprehensive modulation of the voice, and matching facial expressions.

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CHARISMA CHRONICLE

Anjan Chowdhury

WEST SIDE STORY

Junior Cowell's charms

IT appears Simon Cowell's 3-year-old son Eric is following in his father's footsteps, having bagged himself five girlfriends already. Cowell was known for being a ladies' man in his heyday, boasting an impressive host of exes.

The media mogul, 57, said this about his only child with Lauren Silverman, 39: "I think he has my charm with the ladies."

I asked him how many girlfriends he has got and I think he has five currently, so he's doing okay... Eric is absolutely incredible and so funny. It's the best thing that ever happened to me."

Sienna spotted with ex

SIENNA Miller was spotted in New York with her former fiance Tom Sturridge earlier this week. The British actress, 35, looked deep in conversation with Tom, who she shares four-year-old daughter Marlow with. Speaking to *Harper's Bazaar* recently about Tom, who she split with in 2015, she described him as her 'best friend in the world'.

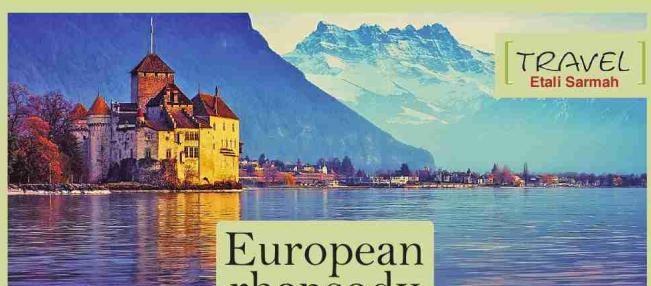
Meanwhile, Brad Pitt, 53, was reportedly seen getting flirty with Sienna, the star of his new film, in Los Angeles, according to *Page Six*.

Sheryl is 'losing faith'

LAST year, Sheryl Crow started a petition on Change.org to shorten the US presidential election cycle. The Grammy-winning singer-songwriter said she was exhausted by the mudslinging and divisive language that had dominated the discussions.

"I felt like it was becoming so hateful that I had to watch to make sure my lads didn't pick up the remote and turn the TV on... Now we have this forum for haters to come out and say the worst thing you could possibly say to someone without having the experience of the reaction. We've learned to be a society without empathy and without compassion."

AGENCIES



European rhapsody

After completing all the shopping, packing and planning, finally the most awaited holiday of the year began. Though (me, my husband and our toddler) had taken short trips to UAE and Egypt earlier this year, this holiday was special – five countries, 18 days and some major relief from the scorching summer heat of Kuwait where we stay.

Our first destination was Geneva, and the bird's eye view of Lake Geneva and the mountains from our Emirates flight added to our excitement. Without wasting much time, we rushed to our hotel and after some rest, started exploring the city. Throughout the trip, we kept our travel style common, we bought Euro rail passes for travel between countries, and respective city passes for local transport with access to some places of touristic importance. We hopped on to a train and reached our first destination the Palais des Nations. Close to this building is a structure called the Broken Chair by Daniel Berset, which was built as a symbol of fragility and strength, precariousness and stability; a desperate cry of war-torn civilian population.

Next morning, we started early, accompanied by a light drizzle to see the spectacular Lake Geneva, one of the largest lakes in Western Europe. We sat in a cafe and enjoyed the sight of the Jet d'Eau, a fountain which is the city's landmark attraction. As we sipped our morning cup of coffee, along with our breakfast, our happy toddler was hopping all around with joy at the sight of the swans enjoying the rain.

Our second destination was Bern. We covered the beautiful Zytglogge, an ancient clock tower belonging to the 13th

century and a UNESCO world heritage site with an astronomical clock belonging to the 15th century. We had to tailormake our travel plan taking into account our little fellow passenger's requirements. So next we decided to go to the Bear Park. I had assumed it to be a zoo. But I was wrong, it was located along the banks of the river Aar, next to the Nydeggbrücke (a bridge), with the bears in the lower section and beautiful walkways for tourists on the top and bottom. Our girl saw three big bears from the top. It made me very happy.

Next day, after a city tour on a tram, we came back, checked out of the hotel and boarded the train to Lucerne, a small city from where we based up to go to Mount Titlis and the Rhine Falls. Our guide explained to us about Swiss cheese and chocolate making and showed us some of the oldest houses along the way in the Engelberg area. We were taken to the mountains to see the glaciers by Gondola, ice fly and revolving aerial cable car. We also walked over Europe's highest suspension bridge, while marveling at the extensive panoramic views.

We soon bid adieu to Switzerland, as we still had four countries to explore. We sat in a morning train to Innsbruck, where we spent two days. This small and beautiful Austrian town is known for its Swarovski Kristallwelten. I especially liked the mechanical theater inside with no human performers, but only some stylish machines doing musical moves. We went to the mountains on the Hungerburgbahn, a futuristic vehicle to see the Alpine zoo which is considered to be the highest zoo in Europe.

By the time we reached Vienna, we were a little tired and so decided to take the bus tours. Vienna is a big city to explore, so choosing this mode of transportation was convenient. We went to see the Schönbrunn Palace, Hofburg Palace, Prater, the Madame Tussauds museum, St Stephen's Cathedral, and many more museums and parks.

We had planned for a day trip to the Slovak city of Bratislava. Due to its proximity to Vienna we chose to keep Vienna as base. Bratislava was a beautiful experience. We were hungry and so chose to have a brunch first, we loved the pasta with goat cheese, pan cakes, herb chicken, rice and *halusky*. Then we walked the beautiful alleys and took a toy train ride. Lovely sculptures adorned the square. After limitless smiles, smiles, chatters, and souvenir shopping, we boarded the shuttle back to Vienna.

The fourth country in our route plan was Hungary. We chose a hop-on, hop-off ride for city exploration. Budapest is a beautiful city on the banks of Danube. There is a viewpoint on the top of the mountains with the Statue of Liberty overlooking the city. The Szchenyi Chain Bridge is a suspension bridge that spans the River Danube between Buda and Pest, the western and eastern sides of the city.

The last destination was Prague, Czech Republic. This serene and gorgeous city is well known for the historic astronomical clock, Charles Bridge and the Prague Castle. Live music, boat rides, Bohemian crystal shops, street performers and endless tourists flocking these attractions liven the spirit of the city. Standing on top of the towers, we stood praising the red roof tops and gorgeous settings of this beautiful city.

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Techno-time management!

Since school days, we have been hearing about the concepts of time management. 'A stitch in time saves nine' and 'time and tide wait for none' are two of the most famous proverbs on time. Our parents, teachers, seniors, colleagues have left no stone unturned teaching us about time.

In the advent of information boom, the digital era has taken a leaf out of time management and brought out some cool tech and tools relating to time management. Let us have a look at these techno-savvy, time-saving applications:

Rescue Time: If you have doubt that you are using your time wisely, this app will send you weekly reports to indicate your time thieves. You may be shocked to discover how much time you are wasting.

Togg: This tool tracks how much time you spend on different projects. Effective time management starts with being clear on exactly how much time you actually spend on your projects and tasks, and then analyse how you can manage them more effectively.

MANAGEMENT MOVES

Saurav Soman



Mind42: Mind42 is a free mind-mapping app. It helps you to get more organised by focussing your thoughts, thereby gaining clarity on what needs to be done.

MyLifeOrganised (MLO): This task management system helps you to target what you should be focusing on to reach your objectives. It automatically generates to-do lists with priority actions for your immediate attention so that you can track your progress systematically.

Universal Password Manager: This app allows you to keep all your passwords in one encrypted database, protected by one password. This saves your precious time when you forget your passwords and need to retrieve them, and also allows you to use various passwords so you don't compromise on security issues.

Focus booster: This app is designed for those individuals who procrastinate and feel overwhelmed by tasks. It is designed to enhance your focus and remove any anxiety you might have with time.

Syncback Freeware: This free software allows you to back up, restore and synchronise your files easily. It not only saves your time but enhances productivity. If you have never backed up your files before, you should certainly not overlook this pivotal tool.

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Articles for **Horizon** should carry the address and contact number of the contributor. Articles can also be e-mailed at - horizon@assamtribune.com



DIRECTOR: MANISH HARISHANKAR
STARRING: VIVIAN SHAH, AKSHARA HAASAN, GURMEET CHOUDHARY, SAURABH SHUKLA, DARSHAN JARIWALA, SANJAY MISHRA

AT THE THEATRES

Jitu Changmai



It the title of the movie does not put you off, the story that unfolds on the screen definitely will. Manish Harishankar's *Laali Ki Shaadi Mein Laaddoo Deewana* is a complete drivel right from the start. You get to know who the hubba-loo is all about in the first few scenes and then you have to sit for more than two hours to see how the zany details are worked out. Save for the picturesque locales captured beautifully and a fun moment or two, nothing really clicks in the overdone film. As the narrative moves back and forth in multiple flashbacks, it turns out to be a real test of patience.

Laaddoo (Vivian Shah), a small town boy from a modest family, arrives in Vadodara to work as a steward in a food joint owned by his father's friend, Kabir (Sanjay Mishra). There, he falls for the charms of Laali (Akshara Haasan) who is a frequent visitor to the restaurant. After a few meetings complete with the mandatory songs, Laali finds that she is pregnant. But Laaddoo ditched her as he

goes about making moolah. There triggers a bout of parent-swapping as Laaddoo's father (Darshan Jariwala) disowns him and treats Laali as his daughter and Laali's alcoholic father (Saurabh Shukla), on the other hand, considers Laaddoo a son despite all that he has done to his own daughter.

Meanwhile, a royal stud, Veer (Gurmeet Choudhary), appears on the scene who is advised by his family priest to marry a pregnant girl. Wow! When Laaddoo lands up in the marriage venue where Veer and Laali are going to tie the nuptial knot, the drama is set up.

Akshara Haasan, who made her debut carrying an atrocious hairstyle in *Sharmabhih* (2015), looks pretty in this one. But like her elder sister Shruti, she too has not inherited the acting genes from their famous father, Kamal Haasan. But Vivian Shah is more disappointing. With such meagre talent, it is hard to believe that he is the son of the thespians Naseeruddin Shah and Ratna Pathak Shah. Strangely, the gawky Gurmeet Choudhary is the better performer. Seasoned actors Saurabh Shukla and Sanjay Mishra are funny, but they are more or less wasted in inconsequential roles.

Vipin Patwa's music has no novelty value and may in fact turn off the listeners as the romantic numbers pop up one after the other.

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ARCHIE: OH OVER! I'VE GOT THE NEW 'CRUSHINATOR' DVD!
HENRY: SURE ANY POINT YOU COME OVER AND LET ME WATCH IT?
CRAIG: I'M GOING TO MATCH IT.
BOLDRMAN: THAT'S COOL.
VERONICA: THAT'S COOL.
VERONICA: THAT'S COOL.

ARCHIE: ANY POINT YOU COME OVER AND LET ME WATCH IT?
CRAIG: I'M GOING TO MATCH IT.
BOLDRMAN: THAT'S COOL.
VERONICA: THAT'S COOL.

MORT WALKER'S
beetle bailey

WHERE'S BEETLE?
I TOLD HIM TO BE HERE AT 10:00
I-15

I'LL BETHEE STILL IN BED



ARCHIE: OH OVER! I'VE GOT THE NEW 'CRUSHINATOR' DVD!
HENRY: SURE ANY POINT YOU COME OVER AND LET ME WATCH IT?
CRAIG: I'M GOING TO MATCH IT.
BOLDRMAN: THAT'S COOL.
VERONICA: THAT'S COOL.
VERONICA: THAT'S COOL.

ARCHIE: ANY POINT YOU COME OVER AND LET ME WATCH IT?
CRAIG: I'M GOING TO MATCH IT.
BOLDRMAN: THAT'S COOL.
VERONICA: THAT'S COOL.

MORT WALKER'S
beetle bailey

SORRY, I CAN'T WORK WITH YOU WHEN I WAS CALLED AWAY.

1-15

I'LL BE BACK

2-19

WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS SO SUSPICIOUS?

3-19

