







# Pak Army chief analysing Jadhav's plea

ISLAMABAD, July 16: Pakistan Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa is "analysing" the evidence against Indian national Kulbhushan Jadhav, sentenced to death by a military court, and will decide his appeal on merit, the Army said here today.

Jadhav (46) filed a mercy petition before Gen Bajwa last month, according to an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) statement issued on June 22. The statement said that the former Indian Navy officer had filed the petition after the Military Appellate Court rejected his appeal.

Pakistan Army spokesman Major Gen Asif Ghafoor told reporters that Gen Bajwa was "analysing the evidence against Jadhav. The Army chief will decide Jadhav's appeal on merit."

Jadhav is eligible to appeal for clemency to the Army chief under Pakistan's law, and if his plea is rejected,

he can subsequently appeal to the Pakistan President for the same.

He was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court in April for his alleged involvement in espionage and terrorist activities. The International Court of Justice in The Hague in May halted his execution on India's appeal.

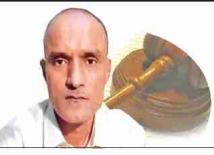
Pakistan has repeatedly denied India consular access to Jadhav in violation of the Vienna Convention. It has also sat on a request for a visa to Jadhav's mother, Avantika Jadhav, so that she can travel to Pakistan and meet her son.

On July 13, the Foreign Office said Pakistan was "considering" the request for visa.

Pakistan claims to have arrested Jadhav from Balochistan province on March 3 last year after he reportedly entered from Iran. However,

India maintains that he was kidnapped from Iran where he had business interests after retiring from the Indian Navy.

## DECISION ON MERIT



At the briefing today, the Army spokesman also accused India of ceasefire violations and targeting civilians along the LoC. "There were 580 ceasefire violations on the LoC so far in 2017, which is the highest number of violations in recent

years," he said, suggesting that India was "compelled" by the "domestic pressure" to do so.

Asked about the "role" of the military in the joint investigation team (JIT) report against Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and government allegations of a "conspiracy," the spokesman said that the Army was only focused on the "security of the country."

"JIT was formed by the Supreme Court which did its job honestly. Its report will be examined by the court. The Army has no role in the process," he said.

Maj Gen Ghafoor said the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was a project of national development and the Army would provide complete security to it and would not let it fall.

On a Bill passed by the US House

of Representatives toughening up conditions for aid to Pakistan, the spokesman conceded the "conditions were coercive, but it should not be interpreted as sanctions."

The spokesman also talked about the Army's operation against militants in Khyber tribal district near Afghanistan. "It would help us to secure the border with Afghanistan which is used by militants to sneak into Pakistan."

The northwestern tribal region has witnessed increasing terrorist attacks of late, some claimed by the Islamic State. Maj Gen Ghafoor rejected any "organised presence" of the terrorist group in Pakistan. He, however, expressed fears that the group was getting stronger in Afghanistan.

He said Afghanistan should look at the security situation with its own "lens" and not through the "lens of any other country." - PTI

## Typhoon threat looms over S China Sea; 48 tourists rescued

BEIJING, July 16: Forty-eight tourists who were stranded on an Island in the South China Sea were rescued as Typhoon *Talas* approached its coast in the country's south Guangdong province, officials here said today.

The tourists belonged to four camping groups visiting the uninhabited Nanping Island, some 35 km east of Zhaoqing city, according to the Ministry of Transport.

Due to Typhoon *Talas*, this year's fourth typhoon, the tourists, unable to return home themselves, had to be transferred safely to a rescue ship and a rescue helicopter dispatched by the Guangzhou-headquartered Nanhai Rescue Bureau of the Ministry of Transport. China's national observatory today renewed a blue alert for Typhoon *Talas*, which is expected to hit Hainan province and Beibu Gulf.

The eye of *Talas* was above the South China Sea, some 60 km to the southwest of Sanya city; packing winds of up to 23 metres per second, the National Meteorological Centre (NMC) said in a statement.

The NMC forecast that *Talas* would move north-westward at a speed of about 20 km per hour towards Beibu Gulf and make landfall on the northeast coast of Vietnam tomorrow.

From this afternoon to tomorrow afternoon, parts of the South China Sea, Beibu Gulf, Qiongzhou Strait, Hainan and coastal areas of Guangdong and Guangxi will experience strong winds, while storms with up to 140 mm of precipitation are expected to affect parts of Guangdong, Guangxi and Hainan. - PTI

## 4 militants of Neo-JMB surrender in Bangladesh after gunfight

DHAKA, July 16: Four militants of the banned Neo-JMB terror outfit today surrendered to Bangladesh's elite anti-terrorism force after a gunfight with security personnel on the outskirts of the capital city.

The team of Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), which draws personnel from military and police forces, surrounded the tin-shed house in suburban Savar around 1



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu places a wreath of flowers during a ceremony commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Vel d'Hiv roundup in Paris, France, on Sunday. - PTI

## Venezuelans cast votes in Opp-organised polls

CARACAS, July 16: Polls opened in Venezuela today in an Opposition-organised vote to measure public support for President Nicolas Maduro's plan to rewrite the Constitution against a backdrop of worsening political violence.

The Opposition is boycotting the Maduro-backed vote.

They hope a big turnout on Sunday would increase pressure for Maduro's removal from power, clearing the way for new Presidential elections before his term ends in January 2019.

The rival elections have given rise to international worries – voiced by the Catholic Church and UN Secretary General Antonio Gutierrez – that the chances of bringing both sides together for dialogue have become more remote.

That in turn is stoking fears of more protests and running street battles with police, clashes that have cost the lives of nearly 100 people since the beginning of April.

Maduro portrayed Sunday's vote as merely an "internal consultation by the

Opposition parties" with no electoral legitimacy.

But he also urged Venezuelans to "participate peacefully."

While Maduro is deeply unpopular – with 80 per cent of Venezuelans criticising his rule, according to the Datanalisis survey firm – he enjoys backing from some, mostly poor, parts of the population and, most importantly, from the military.

Many Venezuelans, though, are less focused on the political power play than they are on just getting by day to day under a crushing economic crisis that has led to shortages of food and medicine.

The Opposition accuses Maduro of attempting to assume dictatorial powers through the constitutional rewrite and other steps.

Opposition figure Maria Corina Machado predicted the vote would not only reject the constituent assembly but also "give a mandate for a change of the regime." - AFP

As 11 million of people to cast ballots anyway, voting to reject the President's controversial plan for a separate referendum on July 30 to elect a constituent assembly to rewrite the Constitution.

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## US Congresswomen demand 'right to bare arms'

WASHINGTON, July 16: In a unique protest, over 30 US Congresswomen on both sides of the aisle wore sleeveless dresses to support their "right to bare arms" in parts of Washington DC's Capitol building.

The lawmakers staged the protest on Friday against the dress code in the Speaker's Lobby, a room bordering the House chamber where lawmakers congregate between votes and where reporters conduct interviews.

The long-standing code for the room has required women – reporters and lawmakers – to wear dresses and blouses with sleeves if they want to enter. The rule also requires men to wear jackets and ties. CNN reported.

"It's 2017 and women vote, hold office, and choose their own style. Time to update House Rules to reflect the times!" tweeted Congress member

Chellie Pingree.

"The rules are kind of archaic – if we just went by tradition in this chamber then we wouldn't have a woman's bathroom off the floor," California Democrat Linda Sanchez said, referring to the lack of a women's bathroom off the floor until recent years.

A recent CBS news report about the uneven adherence to the dress code and the story of an unnamed young, female reporter barred from the room because her dress did not have sleeves kicked off an online debate, particularly among journalists.

On Wednesday, Martha McSally, a Republican lawmaker from Arizona, made reference to the strict dress code in the Speaker's Lobby at the end of remarks on the House floor about first responders in her state.

"Before I yield back, I want to point out I'm standing here in my professional attire, which happens to be a sleeveless dress and open-toe shoes," McSally said on the House floor. "With that, Mr Speaker, I yield back."

McSally's comments helped spark Friday's bipartisan response, which California Democratic Representative Jackie Speier promoted among the Democratic caucus.

New York Democratic Representative Kathleen Rice used the "sleeveless Friday" protest to make her case for more cooperation between female Democrats and Republicans in the House.

"Any issue like this that can bring people together I think is a good opportunity to remind us that we really are here to work together and there's more that unites us than divides us," Rice said.

"Women are such problem-solvers –

not that men aren't, but women just have such a different sensibility."

On Thursday, Speaker Paul Ryan's office responded to the controversy by agreeing that the dress code "could stand to be a bit modernized." Ryan said to "look for a change on that soon."

In a tweet, Ryan's national press secretary, AshLee Strong, urged members to "focus on substantive issues" after pointing to Ryan's announcement about a forthcoming policy change.

Ryan did not specifically detail what would change about the dress code.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi applauded Ryan's announcement about changing the rule.

"Glad to see @SpeakerRyan is updating the dress code for the House Floor. These runway rules are in desperate need of updates," she tweeted on Thursday.

In the UK, a similar debate recently erupted when House of Commons Speaker John Bercow said he was happy to relax the rules, the BBC reported.

In June, he accepted a question from a member of Parliament who was not wearing a tie.

He also said members should wear "businesslike attire."

Yet what constitutes in 2017 – especially with the rise of more casual media and tech companies – is not always clear, the report said. - PTI



## Citizenship Bill ...

(Cont'd from page 1)

member Satyapal Singh and it was approved by the House.

Interestingly, the JPC which was scheduled to visit Assam is yet to see the State. The panel has visited Rajasthan last and is learnt to have held several rounds of meeting here.

The Bill has generated much heat in Assam because of its proposal to grant citizenship to Hindu Bengalis of Bangladeshi origin.

Earlier, the JPC deliberated on various issues related to the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 and heard representations of a number of civil society groups. The committee took note of the representation and views of groups belonging to Sindh, Bengali and Gujarati communities on how to go about the proposed amendments in the legislation.

However, no decision has been taken by the committee yet, a source privy to the deliberations said.

## 16 Amarnath ...

(Cont'd from page 1)

Transport Corporation (JKSRTC) bus was part of a convoy carrying 3,603 pilgrims from Jammu to the twin base camps of Baltal and Pahalgam en route to the cave shrine of Amarnath in South Kashmir Himalayas, police officials said.

Nineteen injured pilgrims are being airlifted to Jammu for specialised treatment, while eight have been admitted to the district hospital in Banihal, they said.

Police, Army and CRPF with the help of locals, launched rescue operations and brought out the bodies and the injured persons from the nullahs they said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed pain at the loss of lives in the accident. "Extremely pained by the loss of lives of Amarnath Yatris due to a bus accident in JK&K. My thoughts are with the families of the deceased," Modi tweeted. - PTI

"Their surrender came as using megaphones we told them if they do not surrender by 1 pm, we will launch the assault with all our forces," the spokesperson said.

Witnesses said that officials had evacuated people in the neighbourhood to evade casualties as the militants responded with abusive language and opened fire and hurled homemade bombs on RAB personnel.

RAB officials earlier said that they had been searching for militants in the area for the last few days on the basis of a secret tip-off and cordoned off the militants' den. The owner of the building, Ibrahim, was detained.

RAB officials said that a man named Azad, who identified himself as a garment worker, had rented the house two months ago. The Neo-JMB is said to be inclined to the ISIS terror group. - PTI

## Border ...

(Cont'd from page 1)

"We will have to devise a detailed policy to give some sort of compensation to these departments like the marketing board. In case of excise, the government will have to reduce the State taxes to make the prices at par with other States so that illegal transportation stops. We will take a final decision tomorrow," the minister said.

For enforcement of transport laws and other checking, the government is likely to deploy flying squads.

The State government has also launched the trial of the e-way billing system which will ensure barrier-free movement of goods under the GST regime. According to Sarma, the system would be in place before August 1.



## VHP city unit formed

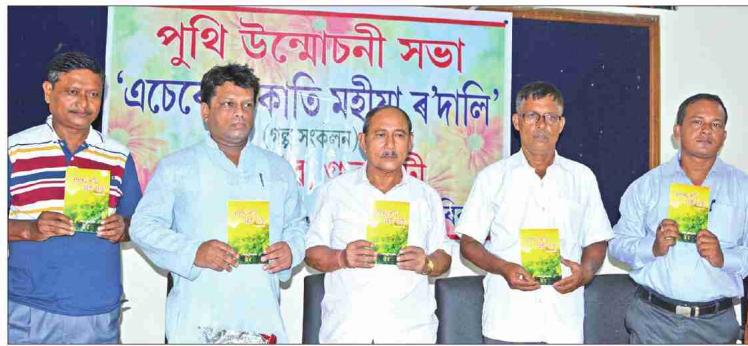
**GUWAHATI**, July 16: The new working committee of the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), Guwahati Mahanagar has been constituted with Dibakar Bora as president, Joykanta Barua as working president and Chandan Rakha as secretary, a press release stated.

### Relief items

**GUWAHATI**, July 16: The All Guwahati Students' Union today distributed relief materials among flood-affected people of Lakhimpur and Golbora. In a statement, the students' body stated that people willing to donate relief materials to the flood-affected people can give them at the Uzambazar AASU office. The collected items will be distributed among the affected people. - Staff Reporter

### World Snake Day

**GUWAHATI**, July 16: The State Zoo authorities observed the World Snake Day by organising an awareness show. Around 200 visitors participated in the programme in which experts explained how to identify poisonous and non-poisonous snakes. - Staff Reporter



Dignitaries releasing a book Acherenga Kati Mohiya Rodali written by Hemanta Kumar Das at Guwahati Press Club on Sunday. — UB Photos

## NFR assisting Govt in flood relief operations

### STAFF REPORTER

Officer (CPO) of NFR.

**GUWAHATI**, July 16: Maligaon-headquartered Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) is extending assistance to the State administration for flood relief measures, including deputing doctors and extending medical facilities to help the affected people.

However, train services in Assam have not been affected so far due to the rising water levels at various places.

"The Additional General Manager of NFR, along with other seniors, have already held discussions with the Commissioner and Secretary (Revenue and Disaster Management) of the Government of Assam, and offered all sorts of help from the Railways, including relief and restoration works, apart from food items, drinking water bottles and cattle feed. NFR Railway has also deputed doctors and medical staff with materials at Lakhimpur and Dhemaji," said Pranav Jyoti Sharma, Chief Public Relations

Another special train with 12 coaches will leave from Silchar at 6 pm on July 18 and July 20 and arrive at Guwahati on the following days at 7.45 am. It will depart from Guwahati at 5.30 pm on July 19 and July 21 and reach Silchar at 6.30 am on the following day. It will have stoppages at Katakhali, Badarpur, New Hailong, Matur, Malibong, Lumding, Hojai and Chaporimukh on both ways.

Sharma said that Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu has already spoken to the Chief Ministers of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh regarding the flood situation.

The Railway Minister has instructed officials to ensure that drinking water, foodgrains, medicines and health care facilities for the Northeast be given top priority. He has also directed the officials to extend possible assistance in repairing roads so that smooth connectivity may be provided for rescue and relief operations. He has also laid emphasis on good coordination with the

National Disaster Management teams working in Assam," said the NFR CPO.

Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) General Manager Chhabate Ram today met Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and had discussion with him on various aspects related to the unprecedented devastation caused by the current wave of floods.

The NFR General Manager had, earlier this week, met the Chief Minister to discuss the probable ways in which the Railway authorities can extend its help to assuage the suffering of the flood-affected people. During the discussion, Ram had informed Sonowal that Railways can provide relief materials to the flood victims.

He had stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has directed the Railways to stand behind the flood-affected people of Assam at this time of crisis.

Ram had assured Sonowal that NFR will also help the local administrations restore communication link snapped due to the devastating flood.

## Agri Dept asked not to grant leave to field-level officers

### STAFF REPORTER

places and large swathes of agricultural land have been submerged due to rising water levels. Farm land has also been affected by erosion.

Officials said that damage

### Flood control measures

are available in their respective places of posting in view of the alarming flood situation across various parts of the state.

Official sources said that an order in this regard was issued by the Secretary to the Government of Assam (Agriculture Department) on July 15.

The government has also directed that field-level officers should not be granted leave of any kind till the flood situation improves.

The ongoing floods have left a trail of destruction at many



A dancer performing during a State-level Sattriya dance competition organised by Satkara in association with the Directorate of Cultural Affairs, in Guwahati on Sunday. — UB

## Pitiable state of Narengi-Chandrapur road



vehicles on the road, which makes travelling a harrowing experience. Besides, the drivers of private vehicles have to drive in low gears through very long stretches because of the hazardous and pitiable condition of the road.

— Monteswar Rohang, Panikhaiti

the situation remains the same in these locations. Traffic police deployed in these areas get active mostly when some VIPs or VVIPs pass through these areas. The district administration must rein in these private bus operators so that they stop picking up passengers visiting traffic norms.

S. Talukdar, Guwahati  
Bamumimaidam bus stop

The bus stop at Bamumimaidam, opposite the East Point Tower, always remains clogged due to parking of two-wheelers, rickshaws and

bicycles, not to speak of the roadside vegetable vendors.

The two-fold layer created by the two-wheeler and rickshaws, right at the designated bus stop, leaves very little room for the commuters to pass through whenever a city bus stops there to drop and pick up passengers.

Mindless competition among city bus operators to take in as many passengers as they want also worsens the scenario. The authorities concerned are hereby requested to do the needful in this regard.

— Sagarika Bezbarua, New Guwahati

## Global tobacco survey findings hailed

### STAFF REPORTER

**GUWAHATI**, July 16: City-based Dr B Boron Cancer Institute (BBCI) has welcomed the recent findings of the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) which show that there has been a reduction in number of tobacco users in the country.

The GATS findings were recently released by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The major highlight of GATS is the reduction in point percentage of tobacco users in the country by six per cent — from 34.6 per cent in 2009-10 to 28 per cent in 2016-17.

There has also been an increase in the level of awareness of the harmful effects of smokeless tobacco from 89 per cent to 96 per cent.

As per GATS, there has been a 33 per cent relative reduction in the consumption of tobacco by the young population in the 15-24 years age group.

In India, 42.4 per cent of men, 14.2 per cent of women and 28.6 per cent of all adults currently use either smoking tobacco or smokeless tobacco.

A decline of 81 lakh tobacco users and prevention of two lakh deaths due to tobacco consumption has been also been estimated, as per the GATS findings.

Appreciating the findings, BBCI Director Dr Amal Chandra Kataki congratulated various organisations and civil societies that have contributed to such a decline in the tobacco consumption across the country.

"The steps towards tobacco control should be doubled in the State and in the Northeast

to bring down the tobacco consumption rates, as tobacco consumption in this part of the country is relatively higher than the rest of the country. For continuing improvement, the country needs further strengthening of tobacco control policies and existing law enforcement measures," Dr Kataki stated.

GATS is a global standard of systematically monitoring adult tobacco use, both smokeless and smoking, and tracking key parameters of tobacco control.

This was a household survey conducted among 74,037 persons above 15 years of age across 30 states and two Union Territories of the country.

The first round of GATS survey was conducted in 2009-10. The latest was the second round, which was conducted by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, in 2016-17.

It was conducted under the stewardship of the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, with technical assistance from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), USA.

"A major impact of the recent pictorial warning on tobacco packets is that, compared to 33 per cent of adults who thought of quitting tobacco in 2010, now almost 54 per cent adults have thought of quitting it. One of the major challenges in tobacco control efforts will now be to curb the use of *khaini*, which is the most commonly used tobacco product in the country, followed by *bidi*. As per the GATS 2, 10.4 crore and 7.2 crore adults in the country are addicted to *khaini* and *bidi*," Dr Kataki said.



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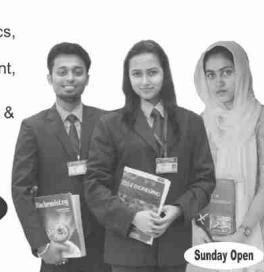
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**MESSAGE FOR TODAY**

*When we are unable to find tranquility within ourselves, it is useless to seek it elsewhere.*

— FRANCOIS DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD

**The Assam Tribune**

**Abnormal reach**

Technology has opened out the reach of individuals to abnormal proportions. The internet has ensured that knowledge is available literally at one's finger tips! It is moot whether the so-called 'data', which postures as 'knowledge', is authentic or spurious, but the heart of the matter is that it is easily accessible at the press of a cell phone or a computer button. To some extent such an abnormal reach has positive outcomes since it has revolutionized methods of teaching. For instance, today apps have been designed to make complicated subjects like mathematics simpler; similarly, a student can dip into archives and libraries to acquire material that she or he could never have done before. Unfortunately, the developments in information and communication technology have also had negative consequences, creating as they have almost an entire generation which is addicted to the virtual world of the internet. The children who today have access to mathematics have, simultaneously, access to unsavoury material such as pornography, and no amount of parental or other forms of supervision can keep these from staying beyond their reach. As revealed by the Centre's admission before the Supreme Court of India, such developments have prompted the Government to ask the Central Board of Secondary Education to consider installation of jammers in school in order to block access of pornographic sites by students!

However, the school is only one aspect of a child's life, and parents cannot always supervise what they watch on their mobiles. The problem has been aggravated by cheap availability of internet facilities which removed financial constraints earlier imposed upon youngsters. Previously, because the services provided by servers were relatively expensive, young people had less time to browse the internet since it was beyond their budget. But today the cut-throat competition between servers has resulted in almost free provision of internet, which in turn has made addicts out of the younger generation. It is a common complaint by parents that their children spend more time in video games or browsing than they do reading books or in studies. Research has proved that excessive use of the internet makes children lose touch with the real world, shackling them as it does to the virtual. In advanced nations where internet usage is widespread, psychologists have put excessive browsing to be a major cause for the deterioration of school education standards among pupils. There are other negative outcomes, one of these being exploitation of children for pornography — the Centre has told the Supreme Court that it had blocked around 3,500 child pornography sites last month alone! The abnormal reached provided by the internet has created the social media phenomenon, where trends such as cyber-bullying, trolling, posting of fake news, etc., are rampant. Unless humanity finds a way to tackle such issues, the cyber world might prove to be Frankenstein's monster!

**Bihar politics**

The honeymoon between the Nitish Kumar-led Janata Dal (United) or JD (U) and Lalu Prasad Yadav's Rashtra Janata Dal (RJD) in Bihar seems to be over. Just over a year-and-a-half after the JD(U)-RJD-Congress 'Grand Alliance' or 'Mahagathbandhan' swept to power in Patna, the two major partners of the ruling coalition have reached a stage where both have now got locked into a war of attrition. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, whom the Grand Alliance portrayed as its face to woo the electorate in the run-up to the 2015 Legislative Assembly polls, had over the recent months given out enough hints through his words and actions that he is no longer very comfortable doing business with the RJD. Nitish had even gone to the extent of the breaking ranks with the 18-party informal Opposition group at the Centre and extended his party support to the NDA nominee, Ram Nath Kovind, for the July 17 Presidential elections. Now, the latest corruption allegations against senior RJD leader and Bihar's Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav has widened the rift between the JD (U) and the RJD and brought the confrontation into the public domain. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has named Tejashwi, who also happens to be Lalu Yadav's younger son, an accused in its probe into the land-for-hotels scandal. While the RJD has termed the allegations and the probe as "witch hunt" and political vendetta by a vindictive NDA regime at the Centre, there has been growing clamour from the JD (U) that Tejashwi and other RJD leaders named in the scandal should come out with a substantive rejoinder to maintain the Grand Alliance's image. Meanwhile, Nitish has also subtly hinted many times during the past few days that he would want Tejashwi to resign and stay away from the Government till the matter is cleared up. However, the RJD seems in no mood to relent. In the 243-member Bihar Legislative Assembly, the RJD has 80 seats, the JD (U) has 71 and the Congress 27. The BJP has 53 MLAs.

Experts have hinted at a number of possibilities. There is likelihood that the RJD may withdraw all its ministers and support a JD (U) Government from outside, while remaining in the Grand Alliance. Secondly, the Grand Alliance may break up and Nitish may again join hands with the BJP; with which his party was allied for many years earlier. There is also a likelihood that Nitish himself may resign and call for snap polls. The entire situation is fluid and expected to clear up in the coming days. The BJP would no doubt be happy to have JD (U) back in the NDA fold. A JD (U)-BJP alliance in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls will help the saffron party to gain maximum leverage. At the same time, the break-up of the Grand Alliance will be a big setback to all the anti-NDA forces at the national level.

# Tackling floods in Guwahati

■ Pradip Kr Bhuyan

**M**any areas of the Guwahati city reel under artificial floods even after a small shower during monsoons. It appears that the Guwahatians will not get any respite from it in the near future because no plan has emerged to tackle the basic problem till now. It is obvious from the events of the recurring floods in the city that a change of direction and thrust is needed to moderate/ remove the flood situation of the city.

Keeping the city drains clean diverting Meghalaya waters to bypass the city along with other diversion schemes, planting of trees in the hills and its management, keeping Bharali and other natural outlets free-flowing, etc., are all important and necessary steps and these are being executed now. But rainwater flooding of the city any time during heavy downpours has become an all too familiar situation now. In this context, apart from the above steps which are required in the overall management of normal discharge of the city's water flow, something different needs to be added to control/moderate the flooding scenario.

The following specific points and measures may be studied urgently as steps required for mitigating the woes of the flooding situation of the city after every shower even of a small duration.

(a) We need to realize that the city's drainage system is meant only for normal drainage of the city water including light showers. It does not have the capacity and the necessary gradient to cater for fast evacuation of accumulated water due to heavy rainfall. In this context, a separate storm water system needs to be placed independent of the present normal drainage system.

All planned cities have such arrangements.

For the 'storm water system', the bed level of the Bharali and other natural streams cannot be a criterion for planning unlike the present 'normal drainage scheme', because the operation of storm water drainage system will need steep gradients for water to flow out immediately at a fast pace. For that 'collection wells' will have to be built area-wise on a planned integrated system.

These collection wells/sumps will have to be constructed like wells of bridge foundations — 20 feet-30 feet in diameter and 60 feet-80 feet deep, as needed, and the storm water of an area will discharge in such a sump at levels which may be 8 feet-10 feet (as needed) below the Bharali bed level. This is the most point — the storm water system to be effective will have to discharge below the Bharali bed level.

(b) These storm water collection wells/sumps, area-wise, will be inside a secured compound with matching electric pumping system for immediate discharge of the storm water as it will pour in the sums, to the Bharali and to the Brahmaputra via the Bharali. The Bharali pumping will have to be augmented accordingly.

The storm water and the pump house complex must have their own generator sets as full back-up power. Today's pumps are sophisticated and run smoothly on the press of a button only. The pump houses, their maintenance and proper operation need to be entrusted to the present normal drainage system.

competent firms. De-silting of the sumps will have to be undertaken in winter months along with other maintenance works.

Pumping is a logical solution. When we have a big volume of water flooding the city, the solution is to evacuate this water volume immediately. There cannot be any two ways about it. This can only be done by scientific pumping systems integrated with the storm water drainage system.

**Pumping to evacuate flooding of a city, whether by rainwater or river/ sea water, is the normal practice around the world. Compared to the major problems and consequent mega pumping resorted to by many cities, Guwahati's flooding problem is very small and can be easily mitigated/ removed by adequate pumping through a storm water evacuation system.**

of these two areas can be given permanent relief.

Cities around the world resort to pumping to evacuate flooding conditions on a mega scale. Flooding is not an isolated exclusive case of Guwahati. Many cities around the world suffer from this problem in massive scales. A few examples will illustrate this. The New Orleans City, USA was founded in the 18th century. The typical feature of the city is that the central portion of the metropolitan New Orleans is completely surrounded by water — two lakes and wetlands in the north, east, west and the river Mississippi in the south. Much of the land area between these water bodies are below the sea level and the city no longer has a natural outlet for flowing surface water. As such, rainwater occurring within this area must be removed through 'pumping' only. By 1980, the city boasted a system of 20 pumping stations with 89 pumps, with a combined capacity of 5,92,10,000 litres/minute of pumping. By 2005, the number of drainage pumps has been increased to 148 with a consequent increase of pumping capacity. A truly mind-boggling exercise indeed!

For this vibrant city, pumping effectively is the key to its life; it is like breathing out. People do not even feel that water is constantly being pumped out of the city!

Nearer to our country is Kuala Lumpur. The city experienced severe flooding due to the Klang and Gombak rivers up to 2003. The city has constructed a 9.74-km-long tunnel for holding one million cubic metre of floodwater and to release

it in the downstream of the city whenever possible. Twenty-three pump stations were installed to ensure that the floodwater inside the tunnel can be emptied quickly during very heavy flooding. A part of the tunnel, a three-km stretch, has a double motorway during the dry period, relieving the traffic on the highway!

The city of Venice is sinking slowly as the Adriatic Sea is swelling — it has been predicted that the sea level will rise by a foot by the end of the century. But the residents of this 1,500-year-old city are not going to abandon their beloved city. So they have come up with an incredible plan to pump 150 billion litres of sea water into the rock strata beneath the city over a period of 10 years through a series of wells installed all around the city. Injecting billions of gallons of sea water could inflate the porous sediments under the canal-crossing city, causing the city to rise by as much as a foot by the end of the decade. This shows to what length the people around the world can go to protect their cities. Needless to say that Venice resorts to regular massive pumping through a scientific pumping grid.

Cities like Singapore, Jakarta, Bangkok and others around the world resort to heavy pumping to avoid flooding and have placed other innovative measures to mitigate the problem and control flooding.

In conclusion it may be said that pumping to evacuate flooding of a city, whether by rainwater or river/ sea water, is the normal practice around the world. Compared to the major problems and consequent mega pumping resorted to by many cities, Guwahati's flooding problem is very small and can be easily mitigated/removed by adequate pumping through a storm water evacuation system. Only a planned beginning is needed.

## Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2016

■ AK Haloi, Trishna Barman, Evarani Kalita

**A**s surrogate is defined as a substitute or someone who takes the role of another person. According to the definition of surrogacy, it is a practice by which a woman becomes pregnant and gives birth to a baby which she has to give to someone who can't have children. Surrogacy can be called a hope for those couples who have been struggling with infertility. It is a great help for the couples who can't have their babies and gives them the opportunity to have the joy of parenthood. With the advancement of science and technology nowadays surrogacy has become a solution for infertility and it is considered as one of the successful achievements of modern science. Although surrogacy is very helpful, the legal and ethical issues associated with it have made the process controversial. Most of the time though the process is being carried out in a legal and safe manner some ethical issues are involved in it.

The ever-increasing prevalence of infertility all over the world has led to the advancement of Assisted Reproductive Techniques (ART). In

surrogacy, the mother bears and delivers a child for another couple or a person. When an embryo, fertilized by in-vitro fertilization is implanted into the uterus of a surrogate mother, it is gestational surrogacy. On the other hand, in traditional surrogacy, the surrogate mother is impregnated with the sperm of the intended father artificially. In this process the surrogate mother is also the genetic mother of the child. Surrogacy may be commercial or altruistic, depending upon whether the surrogate mother receives financial reward for her pregnancy. Commercial surrogacy is illegal in England and many States of the US, but in some countries like India, it is a legal process.

In surrogacy, the gestational mother carries the baby through her pregnancy and it becomes really a hard situation for the mother as she needs to detach herself from the child, both physically and emotionally after its birth. Moreover, there are some legal questions about what involvement the surrogate mother will have with the child. In this regard, we can mention about the case of Melissa Stern who was the subject of a highly publicized

wombs. Therefore, couples from abroad are attracted to India by some surrogacy agencies. It seems to be an attractive process as a poor surrogate mother gets the money and the infertile couple gets their long-desired biologically-related baby. But the real picture is quite different. Due to lack of proper legislation, most of the times, profit is earned by the commercial agencies, while the surrogate mothers and intended parents are somehow exploited. The guidelines for the process are repeatedly violated by the business agencies.

In this context, the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2016 was introduced in the Lok Sabha in November last. The Cabinet-approved Bill, however, has not been passed yet.

The Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2016 prohibits commercial surrogacy. The Bill only allows altruistic surrogacy, where the surrogate mother is a close relative of the commissioning parents. The couple also has to prove their infertility. Under the Bill, all surrogacy clinics will have to be registered, the surrogate mother cannot be paid directly and there will be national and state surrogacy boards which will be the regulating

authorities for the practice. In addition, all registered clinics will have to maintain records of surrogacy for 25 years. Surrogacy will not be allowed for single parents, homosexuals, foreigners and live in couples. The Bill also disallows childless unmarried women to be surrogate mothers. The Bill, of course, has no rules as to how much compensation a surrogate mother can get or should get.

Again, there are some religious issues that also make people uncertain to think about surrogacy. No doubt the process of surrogacy is a great help to establish a symbiotic relationship between the surrogate mother and the intended parents. But due to the socio-religious and ethical issues, it has become controversial. To make the process successful in real sense, there is an urgent need for formation and implementation of laws for the parents and surrogate mothers. And this can be a beautiful solution for making surrogacy as a reliable consideration for all those couples who want to be come parents. There is no doubt at all that the people of the country are very enthusiastically waiting for the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill coming into reality soon.

## Assam needs separate secretariats

Valley, frequent agitations are taken up by the people. The people of the districts like Kokrajhar, Chirang, etc., immensely suffer from such agitations.

It may be stated here that in Jammu and Kashmir, four separate secretariats have been constructed. For decentralization of power, the J&K and West Bengal governments have constructed or are constructing separate secretariats in these sensitive regions. The Assam Government too should consider establishing separate secretariats. In the vision document of the BJP and the party's election promises, a separate secretariat for the Barak Valley was mentioned. If such separate secretariats are established, the administration of these areas will get augmented. Yours etc., BIPUL KUMAR MAHANTA, Kalaboir, Nagaon.

### Substandard prog

Sir. — It is regarding the issue of the recently held examination all over Assam for the recruitment to the post of junior assistant in the State Forest Department. Being a

candidate and a responsible citizen, I want to ask the State Government whether they can place an All Assam Common Recruitment Board for all kinds of recruitment examinations in different departments of the State Government so that the departments concerned do not need to call any other organizations for setting question papers and the whole process is held smoothly. What I feel is that the State Education Department should create a process under which the different recruitment examinations would be held. This way, the examinations and the recruitment processes will go on in a very strict and transparent way. Yours etc., DEEPSHRIKA DAS, Sankar Mandir Road, Sivasagar.

### Minister's behaviour

Sir. — Recently, our Education Minister called a review meeting of the headmasters of schools which had zero pass percentage. The minister is a senior politician, but his behaviour towards the headmasters, who are the authority of their respective institutions, did not suggest good sense. The minister 'interrogated' them, especially asking the year of proviso-making and their present salary. It is understood that the results were not satisfactory in spite of receiving feedback from the Government. But

one should not forget that he has been the Education Minister of Assam for nearly one-and-a-half decade now and in that position nobody else but he should know the ground reality of primary education in Assam. Why did he not decide to form a committee to enquire into the process? Secondly, why was the electronic media allowed to record the event when everybody knew they were going to play the footage for 24x7? Had it been a closed-door event aiming to actually improve the system with the admission of the Education Department officials and media persons, it would have been much better. The same teachers, whom their students watched on television being ridiculed by the minister, have to take their classes again. After this, will these teachers be at ease with their students? Such 'review' meetings will not serve the main issue. Yours etc., ABHLASH BAPANASHA, Guwahati.

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

**Letters**

to the  
**EDITOR**

Sir. — The Chief Minister of West Bengal Mamata Banerjee on June 8, 2017, in a Cabinet meeting decided to establish a separate secretariat for Darjeeling, a hilly construction work of this secretariat for Darjeeling region will be started within six months and the name of the secretariat building will be the 'Tenzing Norgay Bhawan'. Assam is in a geographically sensitive region and like the West Bengal Government, the Assam Government too should construct separate secretariats for regions which have poor road connectivity and are underdeveloped.

It is mentioned that the distance between places like Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Sadiya, Dhemaji, etc., of upper Assam and the State capital Dispur is big. Many youths of these areas have taken up armed insurgency due to underdevelopment. Due to poor road connectivity to the Barak

## Flash floods: ASDMA report reveals underlying factors

R DUTTA CHOWDHURY

GUWAHATI, July 16: Proper management of water bodies, total ban on hill cutting, improvement of the drainage system are some of the basic needs to deal with flash floods in Guwahati city.

A report of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) on the problem of water logging and flash floods in the city reveals several underlying factors.

Flash floods are triggered by factors like inadequate infrastructure, population increase, degradation of natural wetlands and riparian zones, encroachment on hillocks, clogging of natural drains which used to carry off excess rainwater, and many more.

Sustainable long-term solutions may include wetland management

system, prohibition of construction related activity around ecologically sensitive zones like wetlands and forests, and to strengthen and upgrade physical infrastructure that can meet demands of increasing population.

Wetland degeneration is a big problem in Guwahati as there is shrinking of wetlands due to encroachment, natural siltation, earth filling and garbage dumping. All such activities result in less water retention capacity. Ultimately the degeneration of wetlands is leading to silting in wetlands and drains; flash floods; water logging and depletion of flora and fauna.

The major permanent wetlands known as beels, in the city include Deepor Beel, Halsora Beel, Narang Beel, Silsak Beel, Borsola Beel and Sarusola Beel.

Among these beels, Halsora,

Narengi and Silsak are located in the eastern part of the city while Sarusola and Borsola in the middle part and Deepor Beel in the western part. Because of increasing pressure on these wetlands, the drainage capacity of these natural water bodies has decreased alarmingly.

The wetland management system can include steps like identification and demarcation of natural water bodies, creating legislative frame work to preserve the integrity of these wetlands, etc. The report said the construction on the hills in Guwahati has resulted in the removal of vegetation cover in the forest area and exposed surface. The soil loss is 60 times more on the exposed slopes than on the vegetable-covered slopes. The problem of soil erosion is significant not only from

the view point of loss of soil fertility but also from many environmental issues like water logging, flash flood, decrease in ground water table and dusty environment on sunny days.

To deal with these conditions, forest areas need to be conserved with further development whatsoever. Similarly, massive afforestation programmes are needed in these areas. The overall situation of hills around the city needs to be improved in terms of removing encroachment, prohibiting new construction and enforcing laws to protect further degradation.

The report pointed out that increasing population in Guwahati needs safe shelter that can be done with the help of effective planning mechanism. Encroachment on hill slopes result in landslides and loss of valuable assets. The study reveals

that there is a need of strict guidelines on land use planning, structural stability of buildings in hilly areas and for the overall city.

Providing low cost accommodation to the people who are living in the slums and hazard prone zones of the city is a must and should be done on priority basis. As the Guwahati city had grown haphazardly, the ecologically sensitive zones have been an easy target for encroachers and these zones also have become sites for waste disposal. There is an urgent need to identify these zones and demarcate them as no activity areas. This target can be achieved through revised land use zoning in the upcoming master plan.

Development of satellite townships to ease the pressure of increasing population on the core areas of the city is the need of the hour.

GUWAHATI, July 16: Maria's Public School (MPS) sent a third delegation to the 9th Student Conservation Corps & Congress – Sc3 – organised by Green Schools Alliance (GSA) at Shepherdstown, West Virginia, USA.

The third delegation to the congress comprised Mriganka Borah and Pratishruti Barman, students of Class X; Sushmita Chakrabarty, science teacher, and Biswajit De, creative director, Maria's Public School.

Being the National Coordinator School for the Green Schools Alliance – India, MPS introduced two new schools to the GSA this time – Delhi Public School, Raigarh, represented by Ishan Saxena, student of Class IX, and Greenwood High International School, Bengaluru, represented by Aryan Kota, student of Class IX, who were part of the Indian delegation.

Sc3 is a week-long leadership training programme held annually at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC), US, the nation's top environmental and conservation training facility.

The participants, also known as Sc3 Fellows, spent a week

– from June 25 to July 1, learning from renowned experts, naturalists, scientists and conservationists as well as studying and discussing environmental, social and economic inter-connections to address biodiversity and natural resource conservation challenges affecting the changing world.

The team interacted with a recognised panel of speakers like Ian Cheney, documentary filmmaker; Pete Dominick, media personality; Susan Conaway – US conservationist and Rob Watson, entrepreneur and pioneer of Green Buildings.

### OBITUARY

#### BD Agarwal

GUWAHATI, July 16: Basudeb Bhattacharya Agarwal, a resident of Rehbari area here, passed away on Sunday.

He was 74.

A pious and kind-hearted personality, he was associated with various social causes.

He leaves behind his wife, two sons and two daughters.

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**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

On behalf of GMDT, BSNL, Tezpur, wax sealed Tenders are hereby invited from eligible experienced contractor/Firm for (i) House Keeping works like sweeping, Cleaning, etc in Tezpur (ii) Laying of UG Cable along with associated works in Tezpur District as per detail given below

- Date of issue of tender documents from 17/07/2017 to 07/08/2017 during working days.
- Last date of submission of documents is upto 1400 Hrs on 08/08/2017.
- Date of opening of tender is 08/08/2017 at 1530 hrs.
- Cost of tender document is Rs.500/- (Rupees Five hundred ninety) only.
- Details available in BSNL website [www.assam.bnsl.co.in](http://www.assam.bnsl.co.in)

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O/o the GMDT, BSNL, Tezpur

## Short films to motivate youths

RITURAJ BORTHAKUR

published through the social media and TV channels.

GUWAHATI, July 16: As part of its new mobilisation policy, the State Skill Development Mission is preparing short films to give a clearer understanding of various sectors and the prospects and opportunities in them.

Officials said the five/six-minute films are being made to cover some 40 sectors, including hospitality, apparel making, automobiles, agriculture, etc.

"Youths in rural areas do not have much knowledge about the various sectors. They do not know the future prospects and opportunities or if they are really interested in pursuing them. As a result, they tend to go in the wrong direction and later realise they are not meant for the job. For this reason, many of them drop out while pursuing such courses," said a senior official of the Mission.

Besides being copied in CDs for distribution in rural areas, the films will be also

available through the town committees, panchayats etc. The forms will also be available in the soft form.

To strengthen the initiative, the Mission will rope in a project management support group.

The Mission plans to train 1.5 lakh youths this year.

While the proposed "Skill City", to be set up in

collaboration with Singapore-based ITE Education Services is likely to start from a temporary location this year, the government is looking for a 100-hectare plot in and around Guwahati for its permanent location.

The Skill Development Mission will also set up nine centres of excellence in the State. Also, it has sought the abandoned buildings lying with various departments like industry, tea tribes welfare, WPT & BC, etc, to convert them into skill development centres.

## City school takes part in leadership training prog in US

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## Country's 'oldest' tiger in captivity dies

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, July 16: Swathi, probably the oldest living tiger in captive environment in the country, died today at the Assam State Zoo here, casting a pall of gloom in the facility. Swathi was over 20 years and six months.

Swathi was born in 1997 at a Mysore zoo and brought to Guwahati in 2005. Zoo DFO Jas Mariawamy told The Assam Tribune.

"She was not keeping well for some time. She died around 2 am this morning," the official said.

The average life span of a tiger varies between 14 to 16 years. "Crossing 20 years is only in exceptional cases," the official said.

Since the last two years, Swathi was kept away from public as she was unable to move. She was being nursed at a shelter.

Symptoms of senility, corneal opacity, weight-loss and muscular atrophy were apparent in the tigress.

However, the animal was very special to the zoo as even at this age she was re-



was 24-year-old Ramu, a male tiger at the Japur zoo, who died of cardiac arrest in September 2010.

Zoo officials here were enthusiastically waiting to celebrate Swathi's birthday in January next in a grand fashion. With Swathi's death, there are only two tigers left in the zoo now.

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DR SHILPI SAIKIA



Fellow from LVPEI, Hyderabad on Oculoplasty. Very high success rate in External DCR surgery. Oculoplasty & Orbit Department.

DR TRISHNA TAYE



Fellow in Retina & Vitreous from Sankar Eye Hospital, Chennai. Retina and Vitreous Department.

DR PRONOB KALITA



Pediatric Ophthalmologist. Trained at Aravind Eye Hospital, Madurai. Anesthesia Department.

3

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# Tea garden power fencing blocking wild elephant corridor

CORRESPONDENT

KALAIAGON, July 16: The construction of power fencing around wild elephant habitats and corridors in and around tea gardens in Udalguri district has been decried by wildlife activists and various organisations.

Recently, Paneri and Bhutiachang tea gardens under McLeod and Russel group have been erecting permanent power fencing in their respective tea gardens preventing movements of wild elephant herds numbering more than hundred in Udalguri district raised serious concern. Herds of wild elephants have started arriving at various places of the plains of Udalguri district following age-old traditional routes known as elephant corridors and shelters. Such a traditional elephant shelter is Gomari Bagan, located in between Bhutiachang and Paneri tea gardens under McLeod and Russel Ltd. near No.4 Bhutiachang village, where man and wild elephants have been living together for several decades without much conflict. The herds of wild elephants numbering more than hundred in a herd have been taking shelter in Gomari Bagan, a shady cool place full of Gomari trees. All the government and forest reserve lands had been encroached and forest cover destroyed by people leaving no option for wild elephants to take shelter, except tea gardens of Udalguri district. So the wild elephants like tall tea garden grasslands locally known as *Gudamada*. They like these tall grasses as it provides them good cover for delivering babies.

The 'Elephants on The Line' programme was launched in 2014-15 in Udalguri district to create awareness among people in order to minimise man-elephant conflict in the district. The programme was launched by a few wildlife activists of Assam namely— Muhina Akhtar, Jayanta Kumar Das, Dr KK Sarma, Dipen Boro, Dr Pramjali Bezbarua, Lisa Mills (USA)



Power fencing at Bhutiachang TE obstructing the movement of wild elephants. — Photo: Kalaiagon Correspondent

## Centre wants Ganga unfettered, silent on Brahmaputra

AJIT PATAWARY

sources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation while making its submission before the Apex Court in Civil Appeal No 6736 of 2013, stated that hydroelectric generation has been given priority on the ground that tariffs are low and the HEPs (hydroelectric projects) provide for peaking power.

The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) has estimated 9,000 MWs and planned 70 odd HEPs in Uttarakhand.

However, the way these projects have been planned they raise big questions regarding the carrying capacity of the rivers.

The adequacy of e-flow, longitudinal

integrity of the river/streams and tributaries and competing needs of the society for water needs, and above all the wholesomeness and rejuvenation of Ganga have not been taken into account while estimating the "potential," said the Union Ministry.

It further stated that reduction in river flow and break in its longitudinal connectivity caused by storage/ diversion structures have resulted in decline of biodiversity, fisheries, groundwater levels, soil fertility and waste assimilation capacity of the river.

Now, let us examine what stand has been adopted by the Union Government in the three cases related to the NE HEPs, in which the respondents include

Union engineer Pradip Bhuyan, the plaintiff in two of these cases, has stated that the issue of the above affidavit of the Union Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation was raised by him and Abhijit Sarma, who has challenged the Lower Subansiri Hydroelectric Power Project (LSHEP), in the Kolkata-based Eastern Zone Bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT). But none of the respondents have made any reply to this point.

"Union Government merely seeks unfettered/unhindered flow of the three main constituents—Bhagirathi, Alakananda and Mandakini to a flowing Ganga. For us, it is a corollary, -- for the Brahmaputra to flow unfettered/unhindered."

The peaking HEPs that would hold up water for 20 hours, and would thus throttle the Brahmaputra, must be scrapped and replaced by naturally flowing Base-load HEPs", Bhuyan said.

## Polytechnic Institute at Baihata Chariali

## Public irked over shoddy construction work

ANN Service

Though conscious sections of the area have already raised allegations over the low quality construction of the institute but neither the constructing agency or the government department concerned has given any heed to the public complaints.

The public of the area alleged that though they had in-

formed about the development of the big cracks on the walls of the main building of the institute allegedly due to low standard work by the contractor and adjustment of some other substandard materials and fittings to the department concerned, but even after a visit to the spot by the Deputy Commission-

er along with a few senior officers of the State Government, no steps have been taken. The youth of the area have now urged Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma, Minister of Education, Health etc., and the MLA of Jalukbari LAC to look into the matter seriously and take steps in the interest of the public.

## Incomplete works of drains add to woes of Dibrugarh citizens

BUREAU

DIBRUGARH, July 16: Assam's second-biggest city has suffered much due to waterlogging after every smart shower. RG Baruah, the founder of the Assam Tribune Group, started *The Assam Tribune* from here in 1939 because Dibrugarh was the place to be in, in those days. The deterioration of the city began with the AGP Government days, and today, despite the State having a Chief Minister from here, this city is reeling in all-round misery.

The Assam Urban Infrastructure Investment Programme (AUIIP) was supposed to improve urban living conditions in Guwahati and Dibrugarh. But the status of work progress here just points to incompetence of the highest order, followed by nepotism and lack of vision. The AUIIP has taken up two big

ticket projects here: improvement of drainage and solid waste management. In the past three years, nothing much has been achieved other than clearance of water hyacinths from the main drain here and plastic garbage in certain sections from the second main drain.

The Rs 169 crore first phase contract was awarded to Corusn of Spain. After three years and almost zero work progress, the company had awarded sub-contract to the KK Spun Pipes of Balabaghari, Haryana. Later, the company engaged five local contractors and their works have now come to a standstill, following public objections to the design of the renovation work.

Meanwhile, initial tendering-related work on the phase II of the Dibrugarh main drain work, estimated to cost about Rs 240 crore, has begun in right earnest. To the surprise

of all concerned, ad-hoc survey works and haphazard selection of feeder drains have come to light. The Dibrugarh Nagarik Sangha has urged the Deputy Commissioner to initiate steps to halt all works, before a drainage master plan is prepared.

It will surprise the five lakh citizens of greater Dibrugarh once they learn that this city, in 70 years since Independence, does not have a drainage master plan. It has been seen that many drains have been built in the city during the past 15 years. However, the problems of the common man still continue.

The AUIIP schemes are funded by the World Bank loans. Deputy Commissioner, Layla Maduri here, is therefore all the more serious that this money should be prudently spent. She is known to have questioned the palliative planning of the drainage and solid waste management projects,

and has urged the engineers to do long-term planning as such type of funds may not be available again in the near future.

The Dibrugarh Nagarik Sangha (DNS) and the Policy Group for People's Rights, two active civic groups here, have urged the DC to initiate a total re-think on the Phase-II of the Dibrugarh main drain improvement works. DNS vice-president Ajay Baruah and secretary Ron Duarai said that the authorities may think of a workable and more efficient alternative to streamline rain water drainage here. The Sangha is of the view that a reservoir may be dug near Lalukagon, from where the rainwater can be pumped into the Brahmaputra. The Sangha said this would help the thousands of families of the greater Borphor localities, where rainwater from the city wrecks havoc on the paddy fields in the suburbs.

## Flood forces Nalbari district admin to run 6 schools in temporary sheds

CORRESPONDENT

Gyan said that the schools have been completely washed away by the floods, and hence the administration has made an alternative arrangement so that students' education is not affected.

"The classes of the schools will be resumed in the temporary sheds," he informed.

According to him, the current wave of flood has affected 1.28 lakh population of 71 villages under four revenue circles.

Addressing a press conference on Saturday, Deputy Commissioner of Nalbari Ananta Lal

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Addressing a press conference on Saturday, Deputy Commissioner of Nalbari Ananta Lal

## OBITUARY Bidyadhar Dutta

 GUWAHATI, July 16: Bidyadhar Dutta of New Guwahati Ganesh Mandir Path

passed away on July 13. Born to Late Khetekeswar Dutta and Late Deheswari Dutta of Golaghat on March 1, 1952, he joined as Junior Inspector in the office of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Assam in 1974 and retired as Assistant Registrar from Hojai in February 2012.

He leaves behind his wife, Gayatri Dutta, retired Asst Manager of Reserve Bank of India, Guwahati; three brothers, one sister and a host of nephews, nieces and well-wishers.

## Embankment breached at Lohorighat

CORRESPONDENT

MORIGAON, July 16: Although the overall flood situation of Morigaon district has shown a slight improvement, yet the main embankment of the Brahmaputra at Lohorighat was breached at around 10.20 pm last night posing a threat to 11 revenue villages in the circle. The dyke got breached at Kathoni point despite the Water Resource Department's relentless efforts to protect the same. Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal had visited the flood-affected areas recently and directed the officials to expedite the

protection works. However, the people are worried over the situation following a breach in the embankment.

Meanwhile, more than 2.5 lakh people of the three revenue circles – Lohorighat, Bhuraigaon and Mayong in Morigaon district have been badly affected in the current wave of flood.

What is more alarming is that, the flood has claimed two lives in the district so far. The district administration has streamlined the relief and rescue operations on a war footing. The administration has distributed 800 quintals of rice, 258 quintals of dal and 100 quintals of salt among the flood-

hit people.

The Public Health Department has installed 100 tubewells in order to provide pure drinking water in the affected areas. Four mobile medical teams have been pressed into service for the marooned people in the district.

Meanwhile, Pobitora wildlife sanctuary located at Mayong revenue circle famous for the one-horned rhino, is still under water forcing the wild animals to flee to safer places. The Forest Protection Force of Pobitora has intensified its vigil on the sanctuary to prevent any untoward incident.

## 12-hr NH-54 stretch blockade at Harangajao



The submerged NH-54 stretch at Harangajao in Dima Hasao district. — Photo: Haflong Correspondent

CORRESPONDENT

HAFLONG, July 16: Demanding immediate completion and immediate repair of a stretch between Harangajao and Jatinga of NH-54 E popularly known as the East-West corridor road which has remained in a pitiable condition due to the indifferent attitude of the NHAI, the Red Hills Society, Harangajao, Dimasa Students' Union (DSU), Harangajao Branch, Changes Society, Harangajao branch along with the local people of Harangajao who for 12 hours from 5 am onwards Saturday.

It would not be out of place to mention that the commuters have to suffer a lot especially during the monsoon season due to deplorable condition in between Harangajao and also Harangajao-Silchar. Though the construction of NH 54 E started long back but the people of Ha-

rangajao were left to suffer due to the lackadaisical attitude of the NHAI as well as the companies engaged in the construction of NH 54 E. Last April, an ME school teacher

was washed away and his body was recovered a mile downstream and another driver of a construction company also lost his life while trying to cross a subway constructed by JKCM company.

This week also the operators of Sume and Cruiser in between Haflong-Silchar kept their vehicles off the road demanding of immediate repair of the road and also approached the Deputy Commissioner, Dima Hasao for his intervention in this matter. It is learnt that the Dima Hasao Deputy Commissioner has also moved

the higher-ups since the maiden visit of the Governor of Assam Banwarilal Purohit to Haflong is scheduled on July 18.

It is learnt that a memorandum was also submitted in this regard to the Union Minister for Shipping and National Highway, Nitin Gadkari, detailing the sufferings of the people caused by the dilapidated condition of NH 54 E.

Talking to the media, protesters disclosed that they would call an indefinite NH-54 blockade if the concerned authori-

ties fails to do the needful.

# Flood situation still critical in Lakhimpur

## CORRESPONDENT

**NORTH LAKHIMPUR,** July 16: The flood situation is still in a critical condition as the water of Rangnadi is flowing through the breached portions of its embankment in Bogoleejan, Jaunpur and Amtola.

The worst affected areas are Bogoleejan, Hatiling, West Telabeh, Malowad and Shantipur. The district administration in a press briefing today stated that 119 villages under four revenue circles of Lakhimpur with 20,013 people have been affected by flood. Till today ten people have died in flood with the latest being Bikas Gar (11) in Kadam Revenue Circle area. One person is missing so far in flood in the district.

The victim's family have been given a compensation of Rs four lakh each by the district administration. Talking to



Flood relief being distributed by Goodricke India's Deejoo Tea Estate at Bogeoleejan in North Lakhimpur on Sunday. — Photo: North Lakhimpur Correspondent

the media, Lakhimpur Deputy Commissioner Biju Bhuyan said that an expert team from the State Water Resources department would visit North Lakhimpur on July 19 to find out a temporary pre-

ventive measure to channel out the flood water induced by NEEPCO's Rangnadi Hydro-Electrical Plant.

While getting the feedback from the media concerning distribution of relief in flood

affected areas, the reports of poor service by district Public Health Engineering department in providing drinking water has been acknowledged by the Deputy Commissioner. He announced that

there has been a scarcity of drinking water in flood-hit areas and assured of taking strong actions against the officials concerned. A special train from Murkongchekle to Guwahati from today to July 21 is announced for the mobility of flood affected people of Lakhimpur and Dhemaji districts, he said.

Relief materials have been distributed by various organisations to the flood-affected people in North Lakhimpur. The Deejoo Tea Estate of Goodricke India distributed relief materials consisting of rice, pulses, potatoes, salt, rice-flakes, biscuits, candles and soaps to the flood victims in Bogeoleejan. They also organised a free medical camp for the flood-affected people and distributed free medicines. Similarly the Marwari Mana March, North Lakhimpur distributed

## 38 per cent of KNP still under water

## STAFF REPORTER

are still under treatment of the CWRC team. One of these two animals is a hog deer and the other a rhino, said the report.

Floodwaters have so far forced evacuation of seven anti-poaching camps of the National Park. Two of these camps belong to the Kohora-based Central Range of the Park. They are - Bokabeel and Thungru. The Biswanath-based Northern Range has four such camps evacuated, they are-Gatapu, Gopalgaron, Hockfloat and Khou. The Agoratal-based Eastern Range has one such camp.

It is Sapekhali.

Since July 5, the Forest officials, the CWRC team and the local people rescued 119 wild animals and of these animals 115 were hog deers. Of the drowned animals, the Hog deers top the list with 36 cases, while there are four cases of drowning of swamp deers and an equal number of rhinos also were found drowned during the period. Of the dead hog deers, 14 were found dead on arrival by the CWRC team, the report said.

Two of the rescued animals

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**WEATHER  
NORTHEAST**  
Forecast for North Eastern States : Moderate rain/thundershower may occur at many places over Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. Light to moderate rain/thundershower is very likely to occur at few places over Assam and Meghalaya. Light rain/thundershower is very likely to occur at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh.

Warning: Nil

Temperatures :	Max (°C)	Min (°C)
Dibrugarh	35.9	27.4
Tezpur	34.8	26.3
Silchar	37.4	24.0
Dhubri	34.1	26.9
Jorhat	35.5	28.0
Nalakumpur	37.0	24.0
Shillong	26.4	14.7
Imphal	31.0	23.0
Itanagar	37.6	25.1
Aizawl	31.2	19.0
Agartala	35.0	27.0
Kohima	28.8	18.6
Pasighat	35.8	26.5
Cherrapunji	27.8	16.8

Land acquisition for Indo-Bangla rail project begins in Tripura

**CORRESPONDENT**

AGARTALA, July 16: Tripura Government has issued a notification for acquisition of land for the proposed Indo-Bangla railway project, official sources said here on Friday.

"As per preliminary reports, altogether 257 land owners are supposed to get compensation against the land acquisition," said an official of District Magistrate (DM), West Tripura Office. The entire process is scheduled to be completed by August 15.

The Centre has already released Rs 97.63 crore for land acquisition for the proposed rail project connecting Agartala railway station to Bangladesh's Gangasagar station.

Reports across the border indicate, land acquisition process has already begun in Bangladesh side. Of the total 15-km length railway project, around 10 km rail track will fall in Bangladesh side while remaining part falls in Indian side.

In India side, a major portion will be elevated corridor to save land and this has reduced the land acquisition process for the railway project.

The IRCON has been tasked to execute the 15 km ambitious project amounting to Rs 967.85 crore. IRCON is expected to start the work at the earliest. - Correspondent

**Meritorious students felicitated**  
**NEWMAI NEWS**

CHANDIL, July 16: The Naga Students' Union Chandil (NSUC) has conducted felicitation-cum-meritorious award function for the meritorious candidates of HSLC, HSE and CBSE examinations 2017 on Friday at Indo-NSU in Chandil town.

The students' body honoured over 80 native students from across the country with certificates and cash incentives. Colonel Prasad Ghorade, CO 18 AR Chandil; Langhi Bliss, president of NWUC; among others, were present on the occasion. The dignitaries gave many valuable advice concerning to their educational careers to the hundreds of students attending the event, according to the NSUC.

## IPFT-govt talks fail, all eyes on meeting with Rijiju

**CORRESPONDENT**

AGARTALA, July 16: The talks between the Tripura government's senior-most officials and the agitating Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT) leaders headed by NC Debarma and Ananta Debarma, the first meet since the 'Road and Rail' blockade programme by the IPFT demanding separate 'Tripuraland' state.

The government officials also pointed out that only Centre could initiate a move to create a separate State and the Bill in this regard should be passed in both the Parliaments and State Assembly, as mandated by the Constitution (Article 3).

But the IPFT delegation said that they could not relent on the issue which was a popular demand of the tribal people. They also said that two of their leaders are camping in Delhi to hold discussions with Central government over the issue. "Un-

til we know what transpires in Delhi, we can't withdraw the agitation programme unilaterally," said Naendra Debarma.

Addressing the mediapersons after the meeting, IPFT chief NC Debarma indicated that a fresh round of talks would be held only after they came to know what happens in Delhi. "Two of our leaders are scheduled to meet Union Minister of State for Home, Kiren Rijiju, on Monday; unless we know what transpires in that meeting we cannot take a position and hold talks with the State government," said Naendra Debarma.

If the State government was determined to reject the demand, a tripartite meeting must be held involving Centre for a solution as they also wanted an early solution to the problem, he added.

### FABRIC OF CULTURE



People taking part in an annual religious festival of the Pnar community, at Jowai in Meghalaya on Sunday. - UB Photos

### Two more Cong MLAs join BJP in Manipur

**CORRESPONDENT**

IMPHAL, July 16: Two more Congress legislators – S Biren Singh of Lamba Assembly Constituency and P Brojen Singh of Wangjing Tenha Assembly Constituency – joined the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Manipur Chief Minister Nonthombam Biren Singh led ministers, parliamentary secretaries and MLAs welcomed and felicitated the two MLAs during a reception function at the State BJP office on Saturday evening.

Four councillors – Imran Ahmed (Ward-1), Md Sayeed Ahamed (Ward-2), Ajmal Nisha (Ward-3) and Abdul Barik (Ward-6) of Liling Municipal Council under Thoubal district and two functionaries of Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee, including chairman Laishram Memo Singh and secretary Potongsang Sankhila Singh, also joined the BJP too.

Congress MLAs Th Syamkumar Singh (Andro), now Foreign minister in the four-month-old BJP-led coalition government, and Günsanhuo (Singhat) were the first Congress MLAs to join the BJP soon after the last Assembly elections.

Four more Congress MLAs – S Bira Singh (Kumbi), Y Surchandra Singh (Kakching), Nganthang Haokip (Saitu) and Lukhio Singh (Wangol) also followed on April 29.

With Saturday's political development, the strength of the Opposition Congress has reduced to 20 from its original position of 28 in the House of 60 members. In the last Assembly polls, BJP bagged 21 seats. Thus it formed a coalition government with National People's Party (4), Naga People's Front (4), Trinamool (1) and Independent (1).

Meanwhile, eight Parliamentary secretaries – L Sisindro (Home), S Subashchandra (Health), L Rameshwar (IFCD), N Indrajit (MAHUD), K Robindro (Education), Th Satyabheram (Finance), H Dingo (Rura Development) and Dr Bhupen (Culture) – also joined the BJP too.

Congress MLAs Th Syamkumar Singh (Andro), now Foreign minister in the four-month-old BJP-led coalition government, and Günsanhuo (Singhat) were the first Congress MLAs to join the BJP soon after the last Assembly elections.

**CORRESPONDENT**

DIMAPUR, July 16: The NPPC party has put in a public domain certain facts of the NPP party over the ongoing political crisis in Nagaland for the people.

With Saturday's political development, the strength of the Opposition Congress has reduced to 20 from its original position of 28 in the House of 60 members. In the last Assembly polls, BJP bagged 21 seats. Thus it formed a coalition government with National People's Party (4), Naga People's Front (4), Trinamool (1) and Independent (1).

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### Zeliang cannot move no-trust motion: Nagaland CMO

**CORRESPONDENT**

However, the CMO said the NPPC party is open to a total reconciliation process and therefore would not like to place in the public domain the internal matters of the party.

The statement stated that the Leader of the House is Dr Shurhozelie Liezetsu by virtue of being the Chief Minister in the present scenario and that there is no vacancy for the Chief Minister's post.

In a statement today, the CMO said that dissident leader Zeliang cannot move a no-confidence motion against Chief Minister Dr Shurhozelie Liezetsu as he belongs to the NPP party which the Chief Minister heads. Therefore, if claimed, Dr Shurhozelie still enjoys absolute majority in the House constitutionally and legally because NPP alone commands 47 members in the House of 60.

The CMO stated that the confidence motion would put the NPP MLAs where they could be disqualified if they voted against the party whip, while adding that the party is amicably split and that there is no vacancy for the Chief Minister's post.

He pointed out that there is no Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly as it is an Opposition-less government and added that even if there is an Opposition party in the Assembly, if the number of MLAs is less than 1/6 of the total number of MLAs, one cannot be termed as Leader of Opposition. That is why in the 12th Nagaland House with eight Congress Opposition MLAs, their Legislative Party Leader could not be termed as Leader of Opposition and was not accorded official status but only referred to as Congress Legislative Party leader, it stated.

The CMO regretted that the issue, purely an NPP internal party problem, which

could be resolved in the party, has now been dragged to the Governor's office and Speaker's office. It added that both

### Meghalaya's climate to be similar to Assam in 30 yrs

**RAJU DAS**

SHILLONG, July 16: Meghalaya's climate would be similar to present day climate of Assam or West Bengal in the next 30 years with environmentalists recording a rise in mean temperature between 1 to 1.5 degree Celsius over the past 30 years, according to a study.

"So, overall the mean temperature would increase by three degree Celsius from 1981 to 2014. There is a genuine fear that the climate would be like that of present day Assam or West Bengal in the next 30 years," Mishra informed.

He said during this study period, the cold days and hot nights have also shown considerable change. If there were 12 annual cold days during 1981, this number has reduced to four-five days annually on an average.

Moreover, the climate change has also had its impact on the rainfall pattern. On an average the rainfall has increased by 400 mm during the study. The rainfall pattern has changed and has become somewhat unpredictable, coupled with high rainfall would give rise to flash floods and frequent landslides in the State.

Amongst the worst affected districts of the State, East Khasi Hills and Ri-Bhoi have witnessed considerable rise in temperature.

There are various socio-economic factors that have affected this change in climate in the region.

### Khandu takes steps to combat corruption

**CORRESPONDENT**

Department in English, Hindi and as well as in the vernacular language of the area.

The notice read: "Do not pay bribes. If anybody of this office asks for bribe or if you have any information on corruption in this office or if you are a victim of corruption in this office, you can complain to the head of the department or the Chief Vigilance Officer or Principal Secretary (Vigilance) or Secretary Vigilance or Superintendent of Police, Vigilance (SIC)."

It should be noted that anonymous/sedulous complaints will not be entertained as per CVC guidelines. Formal complaints can be made submitted to any of the aforementioned officers whose contact details have also been given in the said notification. The Vigilance Department also asked the departments to display the notice board in front of the public entrance area of the office premises with blue background and letters in white. All Government functionaries have also been directed to follow the orders with immediate effect.

Accordingly, it has been mandatory for all the public offices of State government to display the notice board in front of their offices at prominent place in entrance area in a format issued by the Vigilance

Fresh case of H1N1 reported in Imphal West dist

IMPHAL, July 16: After a gap of almost two years, a fresh case of influenza A (H1N1) virus has been detected and confirmed on Saturday in Manipur's Imphal West district. The State Health Minister, L Jayantakumar Singh disclosed the information during a press conference at the Conference Hall of Old Secretariat here on Sunday.

Health Minister Jayantakumar said that a person was found to be positive after a series of necessary tests. But the disease has become less alarming than before as there have been different measures taken up by the State Health Department to control and prevent ailing from the disease, he added.

The 45-year-old person, who was admitted to a private hospital here since July 4, is currently in the ICU of the hospital.

The minister appealed to the people to be cautious and follow the health tips like washing hands often, avoiding crowded places, drinking plenty of water, etc., to keep disease from such communicable diseases.

The first case of swine flu was detected in Manipur in March 2015. - Correspondent

19 in hospital after eating soybean

AIZAWL, July 16: At least 19 people, all from Dinthar locality in Aizawl, were hospitalised after consuming fermented soybeans.

After breakfast, several people in Dinthar complained of stomach pain. Of these, 19 were brought to Aizawl civil hospital. All of them are now stated to be out of danger.

According to those taken ill, they all had bought fermented soybeans from the same vendor. Fermented soybean is a delicacy among the Mizos as well as the Khasis. - Correspondent

### 'Natural spring water in Meghalaya is of BIS standard'

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

SHILLONG, July 16: Water from springs in Meghalaya is of excellent quality for drinking purposes and conform to BIS standards and therefore opens up a unique opportunity for economic growth in the rural sector.

A study titled 'Aquifer System of Meghalaya' conducted by the Central Ground Water Board available with *The Assam Tribune*, stated, "The spring water is of excellent quality and is suitable for drinking purposes as per BIS standard." So far, 60,000 springs have been

mapped in the State. These springs are found mainly restricted to foot-hills and intermontane valleys of the State. The study pointed out that the people in rural areas are totally dependent on these springs.

Water from these natural springs are not just clean and hygienic, but are also loaded with healthy minerals. However, the study cautioned that these springs must be properly managed. A different study of the Meghalaya Climate Change Centre has found that out of the total 60,000 springs mapped so far, 50 per cent have been impacted due to various

reasons. Some have dried up totally.

However, efforts are on to rejuvenate these springs through the help of the communities and the State Climate Change Centre. "There is an urgent need for scientific approach for proper development and management of this precious resource. These springs play a major role of water requirement for the people in rural areas," the study stated.

Underlining the importance of ground water management, Chairman SC Dhaman of Central Ground Water Board, said that rapid urbanisation

has increased demand on ground water at an alarming rate.

"Dependence on ground water is increasing rapidly in order to supplement the domestic, agricultural and industrial needs. The management of ground water is to be focused on aquifers which act as the repository of ground water," Dhaman stated.

He said that to meet these challenges it has become imperative to formulate aquifer ground water management to establish the priorities for ground water use with community involvement at various levels of implementation.

"Aquifer System of Meghalaya will provide a framework to prioritise the aquifer level management strategies and build inventories of the aquifer for better understanding of the ground water resources," the CGWB chairman said.

According to the study, ground water is found to occur under confined to unconfined aquifer conditions within 300 metre in Meghalaya.

Ground water is generally extracted through springs, dugwells, seepage and borewells. Apart from this, tubewells are in use in West Garo Hills district.

The annual gross dynamic ground water recharge of Meghalaya has been estimated as 1,234 billion cubic metre (BCM). Annual allocation for domestic and industrial water requirement up to year 2025 is estimated to be 0.096 BCM as per census 2001.

Therefore, 1,014 BCM of ground water potential may be utilised for irrigation and other purposes. The level of ground water development in the State is just 0.15 per cent, the study found and identified over 6,000 areas in the State where the ground water resources could be developed and managed.

# Number of PSBs may go down to 12

NEW DELHI, July 16: The government is working on a consolidation agenda with a view to creating 3-4 global-sized banks and reduce the number of state-owned lenders to about 12, an official said.

The 21 public sector banks would get consolidated to 10-12 in the medium term, the official said.

As part of a three-tier structure, the official said, there would be at least 3-4 banks of the size of SBI, the country's largest lender.

Some region-centric banks like Punjab and Sind Bank and Andhra Bank will continue as independent

entities while some mid-size lenders would also co-exist, the official added.

Last month, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said the government is "actively working" towards consolidation of public sector banks but declined to provide details, saying this was a price-sensitive information.

Enthusiastic by the success of SBI merger, the Finance Ministry is considering clearing another such proposal by this fiscal if the bad loan situation comes under control by then.

According to former RBI Gover-

nor C Rangarajan, the system will have some large banks, some small banks, some local banks and so forth.

"What is needed in the system is variety," Rangarajan said.

One of the possibilities is that large

graphical reach, financial burden and smooth human resource transition have to be looked into while taking a merger decision, they said, adding, a very weak bank should not be merged with a strong one "as it could pull the latter down".

In the last consolidation drive, five associate banks and Bharatiya Mahila Bank (BMB) became part of SBI on April 1, 2017, catapulting the country's largest lender to among the top 50 banks in the world.

With the merger, the total customer base of SBI reached around 37 crore with a branch network of around 24,000 and nearly 59,000 ATMs across the country. The merged entity began operation with deposit base of more than Rs 26 lakh crore and advances level of Rs 18,500 lakh crore.

The government in February had approved the merger of these five associate banks with SBI. Later in March, the Cabinet approved merger of BMB as well.

SBI first merged State Bank of Saurashtra with itself in 2008. Two years later, State Bank of Indore was merged with it. - PTI

## CAPSULE

### 'Khadi by Raymond'

KOLKATA, July 16: Textile and apparel major Raymond Ltd will launch 'Khadi by Raymond' on October 2. Raymond was to first forge a partnership with Khadi & Village Industries Commission (KVIC) and work promote the fabric in India and global markets. "We have decided to launch the khadi range on Gandhi Jayanti on October 2. We will launch it through 300 exclusive stores and about 10 KVIC stores across India. Raymond VP & Head (Sales) Ram Bratagar told PTI.

### Britannia plans

NEW DELHI, July 16: FMCG major Britannia is scouting for profitable growth opportunities in the bakery segment, to strengthen its position as a leading food company in the country, according to the company's annual report. "Going forward, your company's major focus areas would be entry into adjacent food categories... Your company has been actively exploring realising untagged opportunities in the bakery business..." Britannia said in its Annual Report for 2016-17. -PTI

### HP hikes prices

NEW DELHI, July 16: Tech giant HP has hiked prices of its multifunction printers (MFPs) and cartridges by up to 15 per cent due to higher tax levy on these items post-GST. However, the prices of notebooks and desktops remain unchanged, said the maximum retail price (MRP) of MFPs has been increased by 8-10 per cent, while ink cartridges will be dearer by 12-15 per cent. -PTI

### HPCL investment

NEW DELHI, July 16: State-owned HPCIL will invest Rs 61,000 crore over the next four years in expanding and upgrading its existing refining capacity to meet higher quality fuel norms, the company said in an investor presentation. HPCIL has a production of Mumbai and Kochi refineries to produce fuel meeting Euro-VI emission norms. "Major planned investments will be in refinery, PCL (petroleum, oil and lubricants) distribution and natural gas projects," the company said in the presentation. -PTI

### MobiKwik

NEW DELHI, July 16: Digital payments company MobiKwik has signed with Samsung Pay under which consumers will be able to make payments with a single tap using select Samsung handsets. As part of the tie-up, MobiKwik wallet is now integrated with Samsung Pay Mini to enable one-tap payments at more than 10,000 MobiKwik-powered merchants across the country. The digital payments firm said in a statement. -PTI



Union Ministers Uma Bharti, JP Nadda, Smriti Irani and Rajiv Pratap Rudy at the 2nd anniversary celebrations of the Skill India Mission on the occasion of the World Youth Skill Day, in New Delhi on Saturday. - PTI

## GSTN portal to be ready for invoice uploading from July 24

NEW DELHI, July 16: Businesses can start uploading their sale and purchase invoices generated post July 1 on the GSTN portal from July 24, a top company official said today.

The goods and services tax has kicked in from July 1 and so far, the GST Network, the company handling the IT backbone for new tax regime, has been facilitating registration of businesses.

"We plan to launch the invoice upload utility on the portal on July 24 so that businesses can come forward and start uploading the invoices on to the GSTN portal and for next tax regime, July 24 this Excel sheet will be uploaded on the portal."

Kumar said GSTN would put up a video on its portal to assist businesses in uploading invoices.

Besides, a call centre help desk has been set up to assist taxpayers regarding any query they might have about the new tax regime.

Generating invoices for

deals above Rs 200 and keeping invoice records in serial number even if maintained manually are prerequisites for claiming input tax credit under the GST regime.

The GST had last month launched an offline Excel format for businesses to keep their invoice records and from July 24 this Excel sheet will be uploaded on the portal.

Under GST, which is a single tax in place of multiple Central and State levies like excise, service tax and VAT, businesses are required to upload on GSTN portal invoices of their trade every month.

Kumar had earlier said that the offline Excel tool can up-

load 19,000 invoices data on GSTN portal at one go and the process takes just half a minute.

So, if businesses which generate about 10,000 invoices a day upload the data on a daily or weekly basis, it would be less cumbersome for them.

While uploading invoice on the GSTN portal, a business would need to mention the invoice number and date, customer name, shipping and billing address, customer and taxpayer GSTIN, place of supply and HSN code.

Also, the taxable value and discounts and rates of CGST, SGST and IGST would have to be filled, along with item-wise details like description, quantity and price. - PTI

## Apartment funding route likely to perish post-RERA'

MUMBAI, July 16: With the RERA making it mandatory for developers to deposit 70 per cent of the receipts through any kind of sale in an escrow account, "apartment funding" mode of raising funds from investors is likely to perish, says property consultant Jones Lang LaSalle.

RERA, which came into effect from May 1, requires developers to deposit 70 per cent of the payments through any kind of sale in an escrow account, which is to be used for project expenses and is not available to the promoter-developer until completion of the project.

"Apartment funding (AF) is a fund-raising structure where the involved investors acquire real estate units at deeply discounted prices. Such funding route would not only ensure quick sale of multiple units which

would support their financial needs, but they also had no restrictions on its usage," JLL India Associate Director, Capital Markets Research, Akshat Shah said.

However, with this regulation in RERA, the key benefit for the developers to get up-front funding from apartment funds is lost, he said.

"While the developers receive all the money, they can take out only a small part of it for purposes other than the specified expenditures," Shah said.

He further said with GST being introduced, the cost of purchase has increased by 6.5-7 per cent under construction projects. Earlier, developers were charging VAT plus service tax, which together accounted for around 5-5.5 per cent.

"As of now, companies can take a leeway as we have not defined what will define the location, area and other mandatory re-

quirements, would be issued shortly, officials told PTI.

The enabling provision under The Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 has made it mandatory from July 1 to have creche facilities at establishments having 50 or more employees.

"As of now, companies can take a leeway as we have not defined what will define the distance a creche should be opened by an employ-

er. We are to bring that into the rules and then have to notify that. We should be able to notify that in a couple of months," a nominal official said.

Even though the rule has already come into effect from the 1st of this month, many establishments across the country, including government organisations, have not yet tendered the facility for their employees.

The amended Act states that:

"Every establishment having 50 or more employees shall have a facility of creche within such distance as may be prescribed, either separately or along with common facilities."

The Labour Ministry will also do advocacy in case other ministries or departments have not still provided creche, the official said. - PTI



NEW DELHI, July 16: The Labour Ministry will soon come out with regulations for setting up creche at workplace to give effect to the maternity law, under which all offices with 50 or more employees are required to set up boarding facilities for 50 or more employees.

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## Oil Ministry intensifies monitoring of ONGC fields

NEW DELHI, July 16: The Oil Ministry has intensified monitoring of oil and gas fields of state-owned firms like ONGC to slippages in domestic output despite the targeting of cutting import tariff.

The Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH) in the last few weeks has issued specific directives to Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) and Oil India Ltd (OIL) to submit daily field-wise production report as well as periodic reservoir management reports, the order said.

In March 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had called for cutting India's dependence on imports to meet oil needs by 10 per cent by 2022, from 77 per cent then.

However, India's import dependence has since risen to 81 per cent. While output as well as investments by private firms have not only dried up, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan sees rising production from fields given to state-run firms on a nominal basis, without bidding, as key to achieving the target.

On May 25, the ministry organised an all-powerful review committee headed by its upstream technical arm DGH, to monitor performance of ONGC and Oil India, and having powers to relinquish any oil and gas field for auctioning to private firms.

The panels will review from annual work programme and budget to declaration of discoveries as commercial as also reservoir and production performance, monitoring of development activities and collaborations with other explorers. - PTI

which are cement-incentive, be it highway or affordable housing, and all have potential to raise consumption, and GST will help in availability of the required funds," said Choudhury, who is a whole-time Director of JK Lakshmi Cement.



The industry will also benefit as the logistics cost would come down by 30 per cent because of elimination of blockage time at check posts under the GST regime.

"Next fiscal, we would definitely have a better year and there will also be improvement in the second half of the ongoing fiscal," he added.

Under the GST, there has been a price reduction of around 5 per cent on the bagged cement sold in the open market.

The tax incidence on the loose cement sold to the institutional clients has gone up by around 4 per cent, according to Choudhury.

"Both categories have come under 28 per cent tax slab under GST," he said, adding that there has been an added advantage of input tax credit.

"From the input side, we were getting credits earlier also but under GST coal is charged at a lower rate now," he added. - PTI



As per the latest auction sale (No 28) held at Guwahati Tea Auction Centre (GTAC) on July 12-13, the total tea offerings were 1,16,018 packages, out of which 78 per cent were sold. Prices for brighter Assam teas were barely steady while balanced teas were irregular and tended easier according to the quality. Tata Global and HUL, led fair support along with the western Indian buyers. There was also some export enquiry. The auction average price for this week stood at Rs 147.81, up by Rs 1.24 from last year.

**Top garden price**

BOP	Price	BOP/MBP	Price	OPPF	Price
HALMARA	397	SOTAI	330	SOTAI	291
SOCOTRINTGA	265	LUMRAH	317	LUMRAH	270
DULFRATINGA	275	BANAMALIE	308	HOOKEWAL	260
MADJUPUR	270	LOHOPHIA	307	SOOKLATINGA	260
HALMARA	289	MADJUPUR	286	BANAMALIE	256

Secretary, Guwahati Tea Auction Buyers Association(GTABA)

## TRAI to meet telcos on July 21

NEW DELHI, July 16: Regulator TRAI will meet all telecom service providers on July 21 to seek their views on 'minimum floor price' for voice and data tariffs, as being demanded by some operators, an official has said.

The minimum floor price, for both data and voice calls, has been demanded by a section of incumbent telecom operators, but implementing it could mean an end to freebies in the market.

Also, the tariffs are currently under forbearance – operators virtually have a free hand in fixing the rates and report plans to TRAI in 7 days of launch – and, hence, a floor price setting, if it happens, would imply a shift from that regime.

The regulator will ask the operators to explain their views on 'minimum floor price' for tariffs, and also the formulation or math for the fixing such a rate, the official said.

During the meeting, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) will seek the rationale for the floor price demand, and has asked operators to also give detailed presentation to support their arguments. It is also expected to ask the telcos why an upper ceiling for tariffs is not similarly justified.

The demand for imposition

## Opportune time for RBI to cut key interest rates: PHDCCI

NEW DELHI, July 16: This is an opportune time for the Reserve Bank of India to cut key interest rates to boost manufacturing and investment which are in the lacklustre trajectory," Gopal Jiwrajka, President of PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said here in a statement.

"Despite the significant deceleration in inflation rate, the repo rate is still high and growth of industry and manufacturing sector is in the lacklustre trajectory," Gopal Jiwrajka, President of PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said here in a statement.

So, at this juncture rate cut becomes inevitable to support the industrial growth and to enhance the

competitiveness of the manufacturing sector, he said.

"Now, almost all the factors are favourable such as good monsoon behaviour, inflation is under control and GST is implemented," he said.

"Going ahead, we expect at least 25 basis points cut in repo rate from 6.25 per cent to 6 per cent in the forthcoming third monthly monetary policy due on August 2 and further, 25 basis points cut in repo rate by December 2017," he added.

Wholesale price index (WPI) inflation has decelerated from 3.3 per cent in January 2017 to 0.9 per cent in June 2017.

On the other hand, growth in in-

dustrial output, as measured in terms of Index of Industrial Production (IIP), for the month of May 2017 grew only at 1.7 per cent of which the growth of the manufacturing sector stood at 1.2 per cent in the same period.

The Nikkei India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) fell to a four-month low of 50.9 in June 2017 from 51.6 in May 2017, signalling a subdued improvement in the manufacturing sector.

India's inflation rate is lower as compared to various advanced and emerging economies such as the US, Germany, South Africa, Brazil

and Russia.

However, interest rates in India are much higher than the US, Germany, China and Singapore, he added.

It has been observed that the US has lower inflation rate (1.6 per cent), but at the policy front, interest rates in the country is also low at 1.25 per cent. Similarly in the case of China and Singapore, the inflation and interest rates are in the lower trajectory.

"Considering the good monsoon behaviour supported by reforms in the supply side, we believe that inflation would not be more than 1 per cent in the current financial year 2017-18," Jiwrajka said. - IANS

## Rahul claim on UP education budget refuted

LUCKNOW, July 16: Rejection Rahul Gandhi's suggestion that Uttar Pradesh should close down hospitals to save money after it reportedly cut the education budget, the State Government today clarified budgetary allocation for education has been increased by 25 per cent.

"The total budget for primary, secondary and higher education in the UP budget for 2017-18 is Rs 62,185.25 crore as compared to the previous budget of 2016-17 of Rs 49,607.93 crore, which is 25.4 per cent higher," an official spokesman said. He said the budget for primary education is Rs 50,142 crore this time compared to Rs 38,066.06 crore last time, which is 31.7 per cent more. The budget for secondary education is 4.8 per cent higher than the previous fiscal. - PTI

## CPM takes Modi to task over Women's Reservation Bill

NEW DELHI, July 16: The CPM today targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not fulfilling his promise of 33 per cent quota for women in elected bodies in the run-up to the 2014 general election and demanded immediate passage of the legislation.

"Before the Lok Sabha election, the Prime Minister had promised the passage of the Women's Reservation Bill. Now the Government should ensure its passage," CPM General Secretary Sitaram Yechury said after an all-party meeting here.

The Monsoon Session of Parliament is set to begin tomorrow and slated to conclude on August 11.

The Women's Reserva-

tion Bill or the Constitution (108th Amendment) Bill, 2008, had sought to reserve



one-third of all seats in the Lok Sabha and legislative Assemblies for women.

The Rajya Sabha had passed the Bill in March 2010. But it could not be cleared by the Lok Sabha

and had subsequently lapsed.

Similar Bills were introduced thrice in the late 1990s, but lapsed with the dissolution of their respective Lok Sabha.

A Joint Parliamentary Committee chaired by CPI leader Geeta Mukherjee had examined the 1996 Bill and made several recommendations, five of which were included in the Bill tabled in the Rajya Sabha in 2008.

Introduced by the UPA-I Government in May 2008, the Bill had also proposed that one-third of the total seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be reserved for women belonging to those communities. - PTI

## Darjeeling agitation will turn 'terrible', warns Gurung

DARJEELING (West Bengal), July 16: The chief of the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) Bimal Gurung has warned that the agitation for a separate State will turn "terrible" as the indefinite strike called by the outfit entered its 32nd day today.

GJM is spearheading the Statehood agitation.

"The agitation which has been going on for over one month will turn terrible and it will be a decisive battle for our independence," Gurung told reporters here last night.

"If I need to shed my blood, I am ready to do that, but the fight will go on till Gorkhaland is achieved," Gurung said.

Meanwhile, the ban on Internet services, which was imposed on June 18, has been extended till July 25, by the district administration.

With food supply severely hit, GJM activists and some NGOs were seen distributing food items among the people.

The Army was deployed in Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Son La and police and security forces were patrolling the streets

Morcha president Prakash Gurung said.

He said there are "no pre-conditions and those ready to do on their own terms and desire".

He did not divulge details of the people who have sent such proposals, but merely said "the agitation will intensify in the days to come".

The GJM, which had resigned from the shutdown in the hills since June 15, had threatened to start a fast-unto-death strike and later self-immolation to pressure the State and the Central governments to give in to their demand.

Although the GJM has postponed its plans for the fast-unto-death strike due to the presidential election, the party's youth wing has started groundwork for preparing youths for self-immolation in the days to come, party leaders said.

"After we announced that we would go for self-immolation to meet our demand, I have been flooded with hundreds of proposals and messages from the youths and people of the hills, who have expressed their desire to sacrifice themselves for the cause," GJM youth wing Yuva

## Actor Dileep to move HC for bail: Counsel

KOCHI, July 16: Malayalam actor Dileep, arrested for allegedly plotting the abduction and assault of a popular South Indian actress will move the Kerala High Court tomorrow to bail, said his counsel today.

The actor decided to seek bail from the high court a day after an Angamaly magistrate refused to grant bail to him and sent him to judicial custody till July 25.

"We will move the high court for his bail tomorrow," Dileep's counsel K Ramkumar told this news agency.

He asserted that the actor has been framed in the case.

The prosecution has said they will oppose the bail plea.

Opposing Dileep's bail plea yesterday, the prosecution had told the magistrate court that there was strong evidence against Dileep.

The prosecution counsel had also expressed fears that on his release on bail, the accused might hamper investigation and tamper with evidence, besides trying to influence witnesses. It would also adversely affect the ongoing probe. - PTI

Dileep has a history of self-immolations over the demand of a separate State. In July 2013, a 45-year-old supporter had set himself alight at the Damachowki in Kalimpong town (now a district). He died of burn injuries a month later.

Another GJM supporter, a 32-year-old physically challenged man, had attempted self-immolation in 2013, but survived after prolonged treatment. The picturesque hill station has earlier witnessed a 40-day bandh in 1988 and a 44-day one in 2013. - PTI

NDA Presidential nominee Ram Nath Kovind being welcomed at Ahmedabad airport by local BJP members, on Saturday. - UNI



GJM supporters taking out a rally for a separate State of Gorkhaland, in Mirik on Sunday. - UNI

## Railways biggest litigant with over 66,000 cases

NEW DELHI, July 16: The Railway Ministry is the biggest litigant among the Government departments as it is a party to over 66,000 cases pending in courts across the country, the Union Law Ministry says.

Government litigation includes service matters, disputes with private entities as well as disputes between two Government departments and two PSUs, according to a law ministry document of June 2017.

Citing data available on the LIMBS – Legal Information Management and Briefing System – website, the document states that as on June 12, 1,35,060 Government cases and 369 contempt cases against the Government or its officials were pending in courts.

Railways with 66,685 pending cases has the highest number of pending

cases. Out of the total, 10,464 cases are pending for more than 10 years.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj with three pending cases has the least number of pendency among Government departments.

The document clarifies that as the LIMBS is a dynamic website, the data is constantly changing.

The Finance Ministry follows the Railways with 15,646 cases. The Ministry of Communication has 12,621 cases pending in courts.

The Ministry of Home Affairs is the fourth-biggest litigant with 11,600 cases, the document states.

In a letter addressed to his Cabinet colleagues heading various ministries, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had recently said that the "Government must cease to be a

compulsive litigant... The judiciary has to spend its maximum time in tackling cases where the Government is a party, and the burden on the judiciary can only be reduced if the cases are filed after taking a careful and considered view."

The Law Minister's letter to his Cabinet colleagues and the chief ministers came at a time when the Centre is working to bring out a national litigation policy since 2010. Several States have already adopted their separate litigation policies.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had in October termed the Government as the "biggest litigant" and had pushed for a need to lessen the load on the judiciary, which spends its maximum time in tackling cases where the Government is a party. - PTI

## SP divided on Prez poll eve, cross-voting likely

LUCKNOW, July 16: The Samajwadi Party appears divided on the eve of the Presidential election with camps led by its patron Mulayam Singh Yadav and party chief Akhilesh Yadav all set to vote for rival candidates, triggering possibility of cross-voting.

"I have very old relatives with him. BJP has selected a strong candidate. The most important thing is that the BJP has a majority," Mulayam had said on record.

On expected lines, Shivpal, the warring uncle of Akhilesh, said that whatever his elder brother Mulayam decides was the last word for him, indicating that he too would back Kovind.

Opposition candidate Meira Kumar met Akhilesh and Mulayam at the SP headquarters here on Friday before meeting BSP supremo Mayawati to seek votes.

Interestingly, Shivpal and another senior party leader and MLA Azam Khan were conspicuous by their absence.

Akhilesh has instructed his MLAs to vote for Opposition candidate Meira Kumar, who has "represented a secular ideology".

Significantly, the dinner was skipped by Akhilesh and Mayawati, who are sup-

porting the Opposition candidate.

The SP patron's vote for Kovind became a foregone conclusion the very day he openly described him as a "strong candidate", said the SP insider.

"Ram Nath Kovind is a good candidate. I have very old relatives with him. BJP has selected a strong candidate. The most important thing is that the BJP has a majority," Mulayam had said on record.

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Interestingly, Shivpal and another senior party leader and MLA Azam Khan were conspicuous by their absence.

Akhilesh has instructed his MLAs to vote for Opposition candidate Meira Kumar, who has "represented a secular ideology".

"Netaji jo kahengey wahi hogi" ("Whatever netaji says will happen"), he said.

Shivpal-loyalist Deepak Mishra, though not a voter, pledged "open support to Kovind" and thanked the Prime Minister for his selection. - PTI

**CRITERIA FOR JUDGING**

- In-Campus Hygiene (Weightage 85%)**
  - Availability of toilets in hostels, academic buildings, toilet condition, maintenance, running water facility etc.
  - Garbage clearance in campus and frequency
  - Disposal system of garbage
  - Whether any innovative technology used for solid and liquid waste management
  - Hostel kitchen hygiene apparel of staff, extent of mechanisation of food preparation, availability of cooking gas, chimneys etc.
  - Water storage, pipeline systems, quality of drinking water
  - Green coverage of campus
- Activities outside campus (15% Weightage)**
  - Whether any village or neighbourhood adopted
  - Outcomes achieved in spreading hygiene

**MODALITIES**

- Log in to website [www.mhrc.gov.in](http://www.mhrc.gov.in)
- Fill up web based form online before 31 July 2017
- Teams will inspect institutions in August 2017
- Finalisation of ranks based on criteria in first week of September 2017
- Awards will be given at a Conference in New Delhi on 8 September 2017

ENTRIES OPEN FROM 20 JULY TO 31 JULY 2017



dayp 2120113/0006/1718



## Celebrating Indian crafts

Celebrated fashion designer Anita Dongre feels technology can drive rural craft in a big way, writes Radhika Bhirani

**C**elebrated Indian fashion designer Anita Dongre, who works closely with artisans in villages, feels technology can drive their craft in a big way in the near future.

Just earlier this month, Dongre launched a stand-alone store of Grassroot—one of her fashion brands focussed on celebrating Indian crafts in luxury pret—in Soho, New York.

One of the speakers on a panel on Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the FICCI-FLO Global Media Forum on Friday, Dongre spoke about the challenges of working with artisans in villages and how technology helps to ease the process.

"WhatsApp helps... Weavers from Benares can just show me samples at a click over WhatsApp while I am sitting in New York."

"So, I say WhatsApp is a saviour... There are remote villages like Barmer where phones still have come to but that's where some NGO helps."

"They click pictures and share with us to get approvals. I am sure technology will drive craft too in a certain way," the designer said.

With an experience of well over two decades in the Indian fashion industry, Dongre has multiple brands, each of which make optimum use of 'desi' elements.

Her designs are worn widely by celebrities, and was also famously flaunted by Duchess of Cambridge Kate Middleton during her India visit.

As a socially responsible designer, Dongre said:

"I primarily today see myself as someone creating employment, and that in rural India."

She started Grassroot three years ago.

"There are some amazing artisans in the villages of Gujarat and Rajasthan... And they had reached the dead-end because the artisans had the skill of embroidery, but they needed design intervention and a marketplace."

"That's how Grassroot was born... Today for me, it is very gratifying that I am using everything that I know in design for the last 30 years, I am finally using all my experience as designer to understand what a consumer needs, what a woman wants because I love making beautiful clothes and that's what I am all about."

"But today not only am I now making beautiful clothes and making women feel lovely, but behind every garment that I make for Grassroot, there's a beautiful story behind it... Of a proud artisan who has created that garment which is handwoven, hand embroidered, and is always done in a village of India."

"We are hoping to bridge beautiful artisanal handcraft from India and providing it in the marketplace in the West."

About the challenges of pursuing this passion, Dongre said: "The challenge is that I work with a team of a really young designers."

"I have to encourage them to travel to rural areas... It is not always easy, to go into villages, stay there and work with them," Dongre said. — IANS

## Know your DAY

By JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to Monday, July 17, 2017.

This year you are very intuitive. You also sense that problems and hassles appear for a karmic reason. You will be learning how to break out of the status quo by tapping into an enormous reserve of creativity. As you open up to new thinking, your life seems to move more easily. If you are single, the type of person you are attracted to could change radically. Enjoy your freedom and the company of your friends. You are a real dear if you are attached; your sweater could be taken back by how much you are changing. TAURUS might not reveal his or her real feelings to you.

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

**ARIES** (March 21-April 19)

\*\*\*\* You have a tendency to go overboard, as you might not be getting a clear reading of what is going on around you. Do not lose your temper out of frustration. Know that others also will be dealing with the innate chaos of the day. Tonight: Run some errands on the way home.

**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20)

\*\*\*\* You are a dreamer, no matter what you decide to do. You serve as a muse for a muse. At times, you might feel as though this person seems otherworldly. Inspiration flows from your very active imagination right now. Tonight: Have dinner with some close pals.

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 20)

\*\*\*\* You need a break off. You have been running on high lately. You suddenly realize with your routine sets in. You generally know how to live up a space like this, but you could find it difficult right now. Allow yourself the space to do what you want. Tonight: Early to bed.

**CANCER** (June 21-July 22)

\*\*\*\* You need more open when more often in the company of others. Zero in on what you want. You could feel as if you have no choice but to pursue a particular goal. Listen to your instincts, and you will make the correct decision. Tonight: Find an excuse to celebrate.

**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22)

\*\*\*\* You need to go back to basics. You'll be called upon to use your intuition. You need to find a way to break past self-imposed limitations. The instinct to conform might arise, but the solution to finding your own way lies in your dynamic thinking. Tonight: Head the gym first.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

\*\*\*\* You people might be acting out. If you are loved one is amazement by what happens. Don't handle any money negotiations today, as the results probably won't be to your liking. Add more humor to your interactions. Tonight: Act as if it is Friday.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

\*\*\*\* You might have an opportunity to have an important one-on-one conversation with a loved one actually might prove to be otherwise. Take your time, see how the other party feels and then decide whether to act. Tension electrifies the moment. Tonight: Join a friend for dinner.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

\*\*\*\* You might feel stiffed, but you aren't dumb—you know what seems to be coming. Bumps in the road seem inevitable. Today: Minimize any obstacles that result from not-well-thought-out plans. You will know when to charge right in. Tonight: Accept an offer graciously.

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

\*\*\*\* You might feel as if your feelings might be overshadowed by insecurity or unrealistic expectations. You easily could be hurt by what seems like an innocent comment. The more you refuse to act on these feelings, the better off you will be. Tonight: Focus on one task at a time.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

\*\*\*\* Others attempting to walk in your shoes might be left speechless. Given a moment or two, you'll come up with some suggestions. Your creativity surges to unprecedented levels. Those around you might want to tap into your ingenuity. Tonight: Make the most of the moment.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

\*\*\*\* If you feel inclined to stay home, do. Whether you realize it or not, you are likely to flourish in this situation. You might feel off-kilter and wonder what would be best for you to do. Don't allow yourself to be triggered by an insignificant comment. Tonight: Make it an easy night.

**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20)

\*\*\*\* You might feel as if you are being diplomatic, but based on someone else's reaction, you are likely to discover otherwise. Looking at the situation openly could be particularly revealing. Touch base with a dear friend or loved one. Tonight: Keep conversations open.

\*\*\*

Thought for the day

The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.

— SUN TZU

### Kids

CN

colors

## Panama panel for reopening 15 cases against Sharif

ISLAMABAD, July 16: The joint investigation team which looked into Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's family assets in London following the Panama Papers leak scandal has recommended reopening of 15 cases against the embattled leader, a media report said today.

The high-profile scandal is about alleged money laundering by Sharif in 1990s, when he twice served as prime minister, to purchase assets in London. The assets surfaced when Panama Papers leak last year revealed that they were managed through offshore companies owned by Sharif's children.

The six-member JIT which probed the issue submitted its final report to the Supreme Court on July 10. It said the lifestyle of Sharif and his children were beyond their known sources of income, and recommended filing of a new corruption case against them. Sharif has dismissed the report as "a bundle of baseless allegations".

According to the report in Pakistan's Dawn newspaper, the JIT has asked the court to reopen 15 old cases, including five cases decided by the Lahore High Court, eight investigations and two inquiries against the prime minister.

Of these 15 cases, three were filed during the 1994 and 2011 tenures of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and 12 were prepared during the tenure of Pervez Musharraf, who toppled Sharif's government in October 1999 in a military coup.

The case relating to the Sharif family's four London apartments was also among the eight investigations started by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in December 1999.

In its April 20 verdict, the Supreme Court asked the JIT to investigate the money trail for the London flats. The court's other 12 questions were related to the sale and without giving evidence a chance to come on record".

The JIT also recommended reopening of another case from the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) registered the same year of the same nature.

It reported out that the LHC had quashed an NAB reference filed against Sharif and Sajid Rehman related to the purchase of a helicopter allegedly through unfair means, and said it was a "case of further investigation".

Discussing the LHC verdict on the Hudabiyah Paper Mills reference, the team opined: "It was very well investigated reference which could not get a chance to go under trial and was quashed mere on technical grounds."

Regarding the Sharif family's assets reference quashed by the LHC in 2014, the JIT insisted that there was strong evidence against the accused individuals. The team recommended that the SC direct NAB to appeal the acquittal of the Sharif family in these cases. - PTI

## Kolkata Police team in B'desh over arrest of Burdwan blast accused

DHAKA, July 16: A Special Task Force of the Kolkata Police has held a meeting with Bangladeshi security officials here for information on arrested Jama'at Mujahideen militant Sohel Mahfuz, wanted in India in the 2014 Burdwan blast case.

The three-member team reached the capital city yesterday and met Bangladeshi security officials at the police headquarters, Assistant Inspector General Md Moniruzzaman said.

In the meeting, they discussed information received so far during the interrogation of Neo-JMB militant Mahfuz, who was arrested along with three other militants by the Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit from Chaitapinawaganj district in northern Bangladesh on July 7.

The officials from both countries also shared their experiences dealing with militant incidents in addition to information on Mahfuz, Moniruzzaman said was quoted as saying by the *Daily Star*.

Mahfuz, a top explosives specialist of neo-JMB, is on a



*Supporters of Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan gather in a ceremony marking the first anniversary of the attempted coup at the Presidential Palace in Ankara, Turkey on Sunday. - UNI*

## Israel reopens sensitive Jerusalem holy site after attack

JEERUSALEM, July 16: Israeli authorities reopened an ultra-sensitive holy site today that was closed after an attack that killed two policemen, but new security measures including metal detectors and cameras were being put in place.

Three Israeli assailants opened fire on Israeli police on Friday in Jerusalem's Old City before fleeing to the nearby Haram al-Sharif, known to Jews as the Temple Mount, where they

were shot dead by security forces.

Israeli authorities said they had come from the flashpoint holy site, which includes the Al-Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock, to commit the attack.

It was among the most serious incidents in recent years in Jerusalem and heightened Israeli-Palestinian tensions.

Israel took the highly unusual decision to close the Al-Aqsa mosque com-

pound for Friday prayers, leading to anger from Muslims and Jordan, the holy site's custodian.

It remained closed on Saturday, while parts of Jerusalem's Old City were also under lockdown. Israeli authorities said the closure was necessary to carry out security checks.

The site was to be reopened around noon on Sunday. Police spokeswoman Luba Samri said the metal detectors were being installed at entrances to the holy site and cameras were also being mounted in the area.

It was to be reopened gradually, police said, without providing details.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke of the security measures late yesterday before departing for a trip to Paris.

"This evening I held a discussion with the top security leadership and I instructed that metal detectors be placed at the entrance gates to the Temple Mount," he said.

"We will also install security cameras on poles outside the Temple Mount but which give almost complete control over what goes on

there."

Natanayahu spoke by phone with Jordan's King Abdullah II on Saturday night, a statement from Amman said.

Abdullah condemned the attack, but also called on Netanyahu to reopen the Al-Aqsa compound and stressed the need to "avoid any escalation at the site."

The new security measures are likely to be controversial. A plan developed in 2015 between Israel and Jordan to install cameras at the site itself fell apart amid disagreement over how they would be operated.

The Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount is central to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with Palestinians fearing Israel may one day seek to assert further control over it.

It is located in east Jerusalem, occupied by Israel in 1967 and later annexed in a move never recognised by the international community.

It is considered the third holiest site in Islam and the most sacred for Jews.

Jews are allowed to visit but not pray there to avoid provoking tensions. - AFP



## Opposition cries foul as Congo votes for Parliament

BRAZZAVILLE, July 16: Congo voters go to the polls today in legislative elections in the oil-rich African country, the first since violence-marred presidential polls last year which returned Denis Sassou Nguesso to power.

Its report pointed out that the LHC had quashed an NAB reference filed against Sharif and Sajid Rehman related to the purchase of a helicopter allegedly through unfair means, and said it was a "case of further investigation".

Discussing the LHC verdict on the Hudabiyah Paper Mills reference, the team opined: "It was very well investigated reference which could not get a chance to go under trial and was quashed mere on technical grounds."

Regarding the Sharif family's assets reference quashed by the LHC in 2014, the JIT insisted that there was strong evidence against the accused individuals. The team recommended that the SC direct NAB to appeal the acquittal of the Sharif family in these cases. - PTI

for the 151 seats available, while several independent candidates have close ties to the party.

The main parliamentary opposition group, the Pan-African Union for Social Democracy (UPADS), has put forward 43 candidates, compared to 31 run by the UD-Yuki group of Guy-Brice Parfait Kolélas, who came second in the presidential last year.

But an opposition coalition comprising the IDC, the FROCAD and the CJJM has said it will only take part under certain circumstances, including "the end of the crisis in the pool and the release of all political prisoners".

Two leaders of the coalition, Jean-Marie Michel Mokoko and Andre Okombi Salissa, were arrested and jailed in June 2016 and in January "for threatening the internal security of the state".

However, the head of the Independent National Election Commission (CNEI), Henri Bouka, insisted voting will be held nationwide, including in Pool. "No constituency will be left out", he said.

"Campaigning has been carried out normally," Django Cissoko, head of a 50-strong African Union observer mission said Friday.

But UPADS spokesman Daniel Tsoumou Ngouaka said the ruling party had an unfair advantage. "It's a one-way campaign because the PCT has controlled all the state media, leaving no space for others," he said. "The PCT drew on public funds to the campaign of its candidates and its allies. It's unacceptable," added Christophe Moukoueke, spokesman for a collective of opposition parties which has called for a boycott of Sunday's polls. - PTI

## Chinese Coast Guard ships enter Japanese waters

TOKYO, July 16: Two Chinese Coast Guard ships entered the Japanese territorial waters near the southwestern island of Kyushu, authorities confirmed here.

The vessels briefly entered Japanese territorial waters near Tsushima and Okinoshima islands, located in the Korea Strait, on Saturday. Efe news reported.

The Japanese Coast Guard called over the radar for the vessels to leave, although it did not consider the act an illegal intrusion.

Under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, ships are permitted passage through territorial waters provided it is carried out in accordance with the international law and local regulations.

The incident is the first time Chinese ships have entered the area.

Chinese vessels, both Coast Guard and fishing vessels, are often known to enter the waters around the disputed Senkaku islands, known in China as the Diaoyu islands.

The Senkaku sovereignty dispute escalated in 2012 after Japan nationalised several of the uninhabited islets. The increasing militarisation by both sides has caused friction between Beijing and Tokyo. - IANS

## Iran President's brother arrested on financial crime charges

TEHRAN, July 16: The younger brother of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Hossein Fereydoun, has been arrested on financial crime charges, the judiciary said today.

"Multiple investigations have been conducted regarding this person, also other people have been investigated, some of whom are in jail," deputy judiciary chief Ghahmosseini Mohsen Ejieji said in a televised press conference.

"Yesterday, bail was issued for him but because he failed to secure it he was referred to prison," Ejieji said, adding that he would be released if he secures bail, pending trial.

Fereydoun has acted as a key advisor and gatekeeper to Rouhani. - AFP

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# Mourinho rules out Ronaldo move after United rout Galaxy



Manchester United's Marcus Rashford scores the second goal during the pre-season friendly against Los Angeles Galaxy in Los Angeles, on Saturday.

**Dravid, Zaheer are being humiliated: Guha**



NEW DELHI, July 16: Former Committee of Administrators member Ramesh Guha feels Ravi Shastri and Zaheer Khan have been subjected to "public humiliation" by the manner in which their appointments as consultants has been put on hold.

"The shameful treatment of Anil Kumble has now been compounded by the cavalier treatment of Zaheer Khan and Rahul Dravid," Guha tweeted.

"Kumble, Dravid and Zaheer were true greats of the game who gave it all on the field. They did not deserve this public humiliation," he added.

His comments came after the CoA approved the appointment of Ravi Shastri as chief coach. However, the committee did not implicitly specify that Dravid and Khan were board as batting and bowling consultants respectively for overseas tours, as had been claimed by the BCCI.

As per the minutes of the meeting, the "appointments of other consultants will be decided at the committee in consultation with the head coach".

Gulta had resigned from the CoA, lambasting the "superstar culture" in Indian cricket, while also hitting out at former players on "conflict of interest" issues. - PTI

## Eight dead in Senegal stadium crush

DAKAR, July 16: Eight people were killed during Senegal's football league cup final in Dakar in a stampede that broke out following clashes between supporters that were met by police fire tear gas.

At least 49 were seriously injured in the confusion, the official APS news agency reported along with the death toll, requiring a mass deployment of fire-fighters and ambulances.

An AFP journalist at the match described a stadium full to bursting with people for the long-awaited clash be-

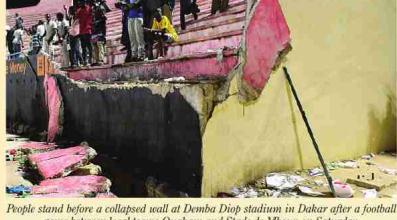
tween local teams US Oukam and Sta-

de de Mbour.

At 2-1 during extra time, US Oukam supporters began throwing stones at Stade de Mbour fans, causing spectators to begin vacating their seats in a rush, the journalist said.

Part of a wall supporting bleachers started falling from both sides then collapsed, while police had begun firing tear gas and panic spread in the stadium leading to a crush.

"All of a sudden when the wall fell...



People stand before a collapsed wall at Demba Diop stadium in Dakar after a football game between local teams Oukam and Stade de Mbour on Saturday.

## Training 10 hours a day to face Vijender: Maimaitiali



India's Vijender Singh (L) and his competitor Zulpikar Maimaitiali of China pose during a traditional face-off at a press conference in Mumbai.

5th August Vijender will actually face the toughest opponent in his pro boxing career," he added.

Maimaitiali said he has worked out his plan to tame the Indian, who is unbeaten since

his debut in 2015.

"My team has watched all his bouts. At this phase, maybe only myself and my coach should understand the training schedule that have been implemented," he said. - PTI

Ramkumar, Karman and runners-up

NEW DELHI, July 16: Ramkumar Ramanathan will have to wait for his first ATP Challenger Tour final on Saturday after losing 6-7 (1), 2-6 to Japan's Akira Santillan in the summit clash of the USD 75000 Nielsen Pro Tennis Championships in Wimberley, USA.

Ramkumar earned 48 ranking points and pocketed USD 6360 for his effort.

Meanwhile, in the USD 25,000 Namibia event ITF Pro Circuit, Karman lost 2-6, 1-6 to Chinese rival Jing Lu. - PTI

## Makarova, Vesnina lift Wimbledon doubles title



Russia's Ekaterina Makarova and Elena Vesnina pose with their Wimbledon trophies after winning the women's doubles final against Taiwan's Hao-Ching Chan and Romania's Monica Niculescu, on Saturday.

## I'll be back, vows Venus after Wimbledon heartache

LONDON, July 16: Venus Williams vowed to make amends for her Wimbledon final heartache by ending a bittersweet year on a high at the US Open.

Williams failed in her bid to become the oldest Grand Slam champion in the Open era as the American star was crushed 7-5, 6-0 by Garbine Muguruza in yesterday's title match.

Instead of celebrating her sixth Wimbledon title, and first major trophy since 2008, the 37-year-old trudged off Centre Court looking her age for virtually the first time in her unexpected 2017 renaissance.

Venus, beaten by sister Serena in the Australian Open final in January, has reached the two Grand Slams finals in the same year for the first time since 2003.

Given her battle with the autoimmune disease that leaves her fatigued and once threatened

to end her career, Venus's return to prominence is a tribute to her ferocious will to win.

With Serena set to miss the rest of the year as she prepares to have her first child, Venus will still be among the favourites to win her eighth Grand Slam title when the US Open gets underway in late August.

"I'm in good form. I've been in a position a lot of times this year to contend for big titles," Venus said.

"That's the kind of position I want to keep putting myself in. It's just about getting over the line. I believe I can do that."

"This is where you want to be. I

like to win. I don't want to just get to a final. It's just about playing a little better."



Venus Williams poses with the runner-up trophy after losing the final against Spain's Garbine Muguruza, on Saturday.

"I've had a great two weeks. I'm looking forward to the rest of the summer."

Batting away questions that

invited her to blame the 24-minute second set meltdown on tiredness caused by her illness, Venus admitted she could have no complaints about the result.

Her only regret was a failure to take the break points that came her way in a fiercely fought first set.

"Definitely would have loved to have converted some of those points. But she competed really well. So credit to her. She played amazing," Venus said.

"There's always something to learn from matches that you win and the ones that you don't win. So there's definitely something for me to

learn from this."

"I went for some big shots and they didn't land. Probably have to make less errors."

Umpire Eva Asderaki-Moore had inspected the barren, grassless baseline at Venus's request before play got underway on Centre Court, but the American wouldn't criticise the state of a surface that has come under fire from stars including Novak Djokovic.

"They said the court was ready to go, so we started play," she said.

Twenty years after making her Wimbledon debut, Venus isn't keen to bow out on such a frustrating low note.

Asked if she would return next year, she said: "Presumably, yes."

"It took a lot of effort to get right here today. So this is where I want to be every single major."

"What else can I say? It was a great experience." - AFP

es made by the Galaxy.

United got their fourth of the night on 67 minutes when Martial burst forward and threaded a pass to Mkhitaryan who made no mistake with a confident low strike.

Martial made it 5-0 five minutes later, rifling home Timothy Fosu-Mensah's pullback.

Galaxy meanwhile, who had failed to register a single attempt on goal in the first half, bagged two late consolation goals through Mexico international Giovani Dos Santos.

Mourinho said the game had been "an amazing training exercise."

"That's what we need," he said. "They gave us two different teams they gave people with intensity, so it was good for us."

Mourinho was also satisfied with an experimental formation which saw him play with a three-man central defence.

"We tried a system that is not our main system," he said. "We were working a few days on this to try to make the players feel a new experience in a new position and I'm really happy happy with that. "It's something we have to keep working and keep improving in case during the season we decided to play with three at the back. Maybe we want to do it more times."

United travel to Utah to face Real Salt Lake in the second game of their tour on Monday. - AFP

## Harinder Pal Sandhu wins Victorian Open title



CHENNAI, July 16: India's Harinder Pal Sandhu continued his fine run by winning a second title in two weeks, beating top-seed Rex Heddick of Australia 12-14, 11-3, 11-4, 11-7 in a 77-minute final of Victorian Open squash, a PSA Tour event, in Melbourne today.

Sandhu, who had reached the final without dropping a game, ran into an opponent, who was ready for a long battle. The first game saw long rallies and Heddick held his nerve to win it on extra points as the two mixed combat with aggression.

Third-seeded Sandhu, who had won the South Australian Open last week, stepped up to win the second game 11-3 using an attacking game to keep his rival at bay.

The third game also followed a similar pattern as Sandhu romped home 11-4.

Harinder Pal Singh Sandhu poses with the Victorian Open trophy.

The 28-year-old Indian carried the momentum into the fourth game and stayed ahead to win it 11-7. It was his fourth title of the year. - PTI

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