

NEWS CAPSULE

3 ultras killed

DIPHU, April 2: Three militants of the United Kokigram Defence Army were killed and another injured in an encounter with security forces in Karbi Anglong district today, police said. Acting on a tip-off, a joint team of the army and police conducted an operation near Julian village under Manza police station. – PTI

Black money

NEW DELHI, April 2: Stepping up its hunt for black money stashed abroad, India has approached Switzerland for banking details of at least ten persons and entities said to have unaccounted untaxed money in Swiss banks. These include two textile companies. – PTI

Legal officers

ALLAHABAD, April 2: The government would appoint facilitation officers in 200 districts across the country where cases older than 10 years are pending in court. Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said here today. The officers will help people coordinate with the government and the courts. – PTI

PIL junked

NEW DELHI, April 2: The Supreme Court has junked a PIL seeking action against illegal Bangladeshi migrants whose influx, the petitioner claimed, has affected the sovereignty and integrity of the country. – PTI

RTI rules

NEW DELHI, April 2: The government has proposed a new set of rules for processing Right to Information applications, complaints and appeals and has sought suggestions from the public by April 15. The proposed rules are aimed at replacing RTI rules of 2012. – PTI

Bangla tics

DHAKA, April 2: India attaches the "highest importance" to its relations with Bangladesh and believes that a strong, stable and prosperous neighbour is in its best interest. Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan said today as she called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina here. – PTI

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Basanti Gogoi
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Dalai mantra: Mental peace key to overall good health

R DUTTA CHOWDHURY

GUWAHATI, April 2: Anger affects not only one's mind but also the overall health, said Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama. He also said that the special supplement brought out by *The Assam Tribune* to commemorate the concluding function of its platinum jubilee celebrations brought back his childhood memories.

Talking to *The Assam Tribune* in his hotel room this morning, the Dalai Lama stressed the need for having mental peace for overall

good health of a person. He pointed out that anger, fear, stress, etc., not only affect the mind of a person but also the overall life. He said that anger, stress, etc., affect

the overall immune system of a person and lead to different diseases. That is why, the scientist of our world are now giving

good and bad. When infants are shown good cartoons, one can see joy in their face even though they do not understand a single word

between good and bad, there is no reason why the human beings cannot differentiate the same. Violence will never give anyone peace of mind, which is necessary for a healthy body, he added.

The Dalai Lama said that even infants, who do not speak a single word can differentiate between

of it. But if they are shown violence on TV, their expression changes immediately and they can recognise that something is not right. If infants can differentiate

Happy to attend the Assam Tribune Group function'

Tamper-proof EVMs before 2019 LS polls

NEW DELHI, April 2: The Election Commission is set to buy next generation EVMs that become "inoperable" the moment attempts are made to tamper with it, a move which comes amid claims by some parties that the machines were tampered with during the recent assembly polls.

The MS3-type electronic voting machines (EVMs) are also equipped with a self-diagnostic system for authentication of genuineness of the machines.

These will come with a public key interface-based mutual authentication system.

Only a "tamper-free" EVM – manufactured either by atomic energy PSU ECIL or defence PSU BEL – "communicates" with other EVMs in the field.

Any EVM manufactured by other companies would not be able to communicate with other machines, thus exposing it.

Around Rs 1,940 crore (excluding freight and taxes) will be required to procure the new machines which are likely to be introduced by 2018, a

fresh tranche of Rs 1,009 crore for the Election Commission to buy new EVMs so that it can phase out the ageing ones before the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

The Cabinet had also authorised the Election Commission to vary the quantity to be ordered on BEL and ECIL based on their production capacity and past performance.

On July 20 last, a similar

Election Commission proposal to buy nearly 14 lakh new EVMs – the first tranche – at a cost of Rs 9,200 crore during 2016-17 was approved by the Union Cabinet. – PTI

Forced conversion not good: Dalai Lama

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 2: Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama today said it was always better to stick to one's traditional faith.

The Dalai Lama, however, maintained that if an individual wanted to embrace a different faith, he should have the freedom to do so.

"If any person thinks a religion is suitable or more effective, he should have the freedom to embrace it voluntarily," he said.

The Nobel Peace laureate further underlined the need to learn about different religions to broaden the mind and develop religious harmony.

"We should have better knowledge of the teachings of all traditional values. Knowledge of other traditions is important for religious harmony," he said.

He said changing faith could confuse the mind of the person. "Forced conversion is not good. It is always better to keep one's traditional faith and religion. Changing faith could create confusion," he said.

The Dalai Lama, however,

maintained that religion is a deeply personal choice and no religion can be forced on any person.

He pointed out that though

he is a Buddhist and has met people from across the globe, he never tried to propagate the religion, even during his visit to western countries.

The Dalai Lama, however, maintained that if an individual wanted to embrace a different faith, he should have the freedom to do so.

"If any person thinks a religion is suitable or more effective, he should have the freedom to embrace it voluntarily," he said.

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Graduate (Experience in TIP on

FSW will be preferable). Salary

will be paid as per ASACS norms.

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Introspect poll result, unfair to blame EVMs:
EC to AAP

NEW DELHI, April 2: The Aam Aadmi Party is free to file an election petition in the State high court if it wants to verify votes cast in Punjab polls with data of paper trail, the Election Commission said today.

In a strongly-worded letter, the EC also said it is for the AAP "to introspect as to why your party could not perform as per your expectations and it is unfair on your part to attribute unsatisfactory poll performance of your party to the alleged tamperability of EVMs".

The poll watchdog said after declaration of results only alternative available to verify the data of votes cast is to file an Election Petition before the High Court concerned.

The AAP alleged that poll authorities in Punjab had refused to accept its demand to tally results with paper trail audit. The party had moved the Commission over reliability of the machines and the results of Punjab polls. - PTI

Banda at 44.8°C hottest place in country

NEW DELHI, April 2: Banda in Uttar Pradesh was the hottest place in the country today, recording a maximum of 44.8°C Celsius, while many other cities too registered 40+ plus temperatures as the heat wave onslaught continued in several parts of the country.

The maximum temperature in national capital Delhi settled at 23.9°C Celsius, making it the hottest morning of the season. The maximum temperature was recorded at 38°C Celsius.

However relief seemed to be in the offing for Delhiites as the weatherman has predicted a dip in temperatures after April 4. - PTI

Adityanarayan's first Cabinet meeting on April 4

LUCKNOW, April 2: Over a fortnight after taking oath, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will hold his first Cabinet meeting on April 4 where key issues in the BJP's poll manifesto, especially farm loan waiver, are likely to be taken up.

"The Cabinet meeting will be held in the evening on April 4," State Health Minister Siddhartha Nath Singh told reporters here.

In Varanasi, State Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shaha said a proposal had been pre-

pared for loan waiver of farmers and it will be presented before the Cabinet at its first meeting.

BJP in its Lok Kalyan Sankalp Patra (manifesto), had promised to waive the loans of small and marginal farmers and Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said in his election speeches that writing off farmers' loans would be among the foremost tasks of the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh.

Modi had promised during his election campaign that a decision on loan waiver would be taken at the first

Cabinet meeting of the BJP government in the State.

According to officials, there are around 2.30 crore farmers in Uttar Pradesh, of whom, around 2.15 crore fall in the 'small and marginal' category. They had suffered losses due to natural calamities in the recent past and were unable to repay loans amounting to about Rs 62,000 crore.

As the figure is huge, the Uttar Pradesh government is mulling various options, including raising loans, to honour the saffron party's commitment to waive the loans of small and marginal farmers.

A State Finance Department spokesman said Finance Minister Rajesh Agarwal has already started deliberations with senior

officials of his department in this regard.

As the State government will have to pay the banks to waive the loans of small and marginal farmers and for that, it will have to either seek funds from the Centre or raise loans on its own, the spokesman said.

Sources in the government said it would be difficult to handle the burden of loan waiver in a single financial year.

They added that it was one of the reasons for putting the Cabinet meeting on hold till some way was found to honour the Prime Minister's poll promise.

Some officers were of the opinion that a decision in this regard could be taken and a policy formulated later, but the Chief Minister insisted that the decision be made

once the policy was clear, so that there were no hurdles.

Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya said the promises made in the BJP's manifesto for the State Assembly election will be on the agenda of the Yogi Adityanath government's first Cabinet meeting, scheduled to be held at Lucknow on April 4.

"Decisions on a number of important issues will be taken at the Cabinet meeting on April 4. The focus will be on honouring the promises made in the party's sankalp patra (manifesto)," he told reporters in Allahabad.

Maurya, however, declined to comment when asked if farm loan waiver would be on the agenda of the meeting. - PTI



Andhra Cabinet

Naidu inducts son, 4 YSRC MLAs who switched sides

AMARAVATI, April 2: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu today inducted his son, Nara Lokesh and six others besides the four opposition YSRC MLAs, who had joined his party TDP after dropping five ministers.

Naidu effected the first major reshuffle of his Cabinet since formation of the TDP-BJP government on June 8, 2014, attracting angry reactions from Leader of Opposition YS Jaganmohan Reddy and triggering demands for his resignation.

Jaganmohan Reddy said the induction of four YSRC Congress MLAs into the AP-Cabinet was a "grave insult" to the Constitution and also to the State. "This is a black day in the political history of Andhra Pradesh," the YSRC president said.

One of the dropped ministers, Bojala Gopala Krishna Reddy, resigned from his Assembly membership.

The veteran TDP leader from Chittoor forwarded his resignation letter to Speaker Kodela Sivaprasada Rao this morning. A copy of the letter was sent to the CM. Chandrababu spoke to Bojala on phone and is said to have explained the reason for his sacking.

Governor ESL Narasimhan administered the oath of office and secrecy to the new ministers at a function near the State government's transitional headquarters at Velagapudi.

The AP Cabinet's strength has now increased to 26.

The Cabinet now has four members of the legislative council, including Lokesh who was elected to the State Legislative Council under the MLAs quota last month.

The four YSRC MLAs, who were sworn-in as ministers included RV Suja Krishnam Rao, Bhuma Akhila Priya, Ch Arindaryanana Reddy, N Amarapatha Reddy.

Veteran TDP leader and party's state unit president K Kala Venkata Rao was taken into the Cabinet while his sister-in-law Kimidi Mrimai was dropped.

The others from the TDP to get Cabinet berths included Pithani Satyanarayana, Nekka Ananda Babu, Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy, Kaval Srivatsav and Kothapalli Samuel Jawahar.

In all, 21 out of 67 MLAs of the YSRC switched loyalty to the TDP since February 2016.

Reacting to induction of four YSRC MLAs, who had crossed over to the TDP into the Cabinet, Jagan said in a release: "Though being the constitutional head of the State, the Governor himself participated in this gross violation of the Constitution." - PTI

168 CRPF jawans fall ill with suspected food poisoning

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, April 2: As many as 168 jawans attached to the CRPF camp at Pallipuram were taken ill due to suspected food poisoning, prompting authorities to order a board of inquiry into the matter.

The jawans had their dinner around 7.15 pm last night and after a few minutes they complained of uneasiness. The personnel were shifted to hospitals after they showed symptoms of vomiting, headache and stomach cramps, a senior CRPF official said.

"A board of inquiry was ordered today and the report is expected in 7-8 days," the official told PTI.

While media reports quoting police had stated that at least 400 jawans attacked to the camp had taken ill due to suspected food poisoning, CRPF has clarified that only 168 had shown symptoms of vomiting, headache and stomach cramps.

The CRPF has lodged a police complaint and food security officials have also collected samples of the food consumed.

State Health Minister KK Shylaja had visited the jawans at the hospital last night. - PTI



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Malaysian counterpart Dato' Mohd Najib Bin Tun Abdul Razak, during exchange of documents, at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Saturday. - UNI

In Memoriam



Late Dr. Ziaur Rahman (Jolly)
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We miss your presence and your fragrance blossoms as an unforgettable memory amongst us. On your 1st Death Anniversary, we fondly remember you and pray for your eternal peace.

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AAP will provide power subsidy to tenants as well, says Kejriwal

NEW DELHI, April 2: To woo voters ahead of the civic election in Delhi, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced today that if voted to power, his Aam Aadmi Party would extend power and water subsidies to tenants as well.

This is the second major poll announcement by Kejriwal.

The AAP had earlier promised to abolish residential house tax, as the party gears up to wrest control of the three BJP ruled Municipal Corporations of Delhi (MCDs).

"The tenants living in Delhi do not get the benefit of low tariffs on power and water. After the MCD polls, we will also work to extend the relief to these tenants," Kejriwal tweeted.

The Chief Minister, however, did not give any timeline on implementation of the promise.

AAP leaders said the move would help the party reach a wider voter base, who have not got the relief of power subsidy.

As per the Delhi government scheme, consumers whose monthly power consumption does not exceed 400 units get 50 per cent subsidy in tariff while it provides 20,000 litres of free water per month to a family.

Many of those who sublet rooms in Delhi do not have a separate electricity metre. So, even if the tenant consumes 250 units and the landlord uses as many units, jointly it exceeds the slab of 400 units, depriving the tenants of subsidy. - PTI

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ব্ৰহ্মপুত্ৰ মহোৎসৱ ২০১৭
নগাঁও জিলা



অসমৰ মাননীয় মুখ্যমন্ত্ৰী

শ্ৰীযুত সৰ্বানন্দ সোণোৱালদেৱলৈ
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তাৰিখ :- ৩ এপ্ৰিল, ২০১৭

সময় :- দিনৰ ১০-৩০ বজাত

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No question Russia meddled in election: US envoy

WASHINGTON, April 2: The US ambassador to the UN says there's no question Russia was involved in the US presidential election and that the actions of the Kremlin will be addressed after the investigations are completed.

"We don't want any country involved in our elections, ever," Nikki Haley said in an interview aired today on ABC's "The Week." Russian President Vladimir Putin has denied his country meddled in the contest between Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton.

While the Trump White House rejects any suggestion that Trump or his staff had connections to Russia, Trump himself has said he believes Russian operatives hacked

Democratic Party emails but that any Russian involvement in the election didn't affect the outcome.

US intelligence agencies report that Russia tried to help Trump's campaign effort. The FBI as well as congressional committees are investigating whether the Russian government coordinated with Trump associates during the campaign.

Trump as president persuaded Haley to leave the governorship of South Carolina to represent the US at the United Nations.

In the interview with ABC, she said Trump hasn't told her not to criticize Russia and that she was "beating up on Russia" over issues such as its actions in Crimea and its dispute with Ukraine.



"There's no love or anything going on with Russia right now," she said. "They got that we're getting our strength back and that we're starting to lead again, and, honestly, at the United Nations, that's the No. 1 comment I get is that they're just so happy to see the United States lead again."

Haley said US is also pressuring China to take a firmer stand regarding North Korea's nuclear program. China provides diplomatic and economic support to its neighbor but claims that its influence over Kim Jong Un's government is limited.

UN resolutions have failed so far to deter North Korea from conducting nuclear and missile tests. Last year the North conducted two nuclear tests and

two dozen tests of ballistic missiles. The US would "no longer take the excuses from China that they're concerned, too," Haley said. "They need to show us how concerned they are. They need to put pressure on North Korea. The only country that can stop North Korea is China, and they know that."

Asked what the US would do if China doesn't cooperate, Haley said "China has to cooperate. This is now down to, do we want to continue to see these ballistic missile attacks from North Korea or does China want to do something about it?" She added: "At some point, we need to see definitive actions by China condemning North Korea and not just calling them out for it." - AP

Britain will never cede Gibraltar without its consent: May

LONDON, April 2: British Prime Minister Theresa May today insisted that she would "never" allow Gibraltar to slip from British control against the wishes of Gibraltarians as the issue took centre-stage in early Brexit wranglings.

May told Chief Minister of Gibraltar Fabian Picardo that "we will never enter into arrangements under which the people of Gibraltar would pass under the sovereignty of another state against their freely and democratically expressed wishes."

Her comments came as Spain pledged it would not close its border post-Brexit with the 6.7-square-kilometre (2.6-square-mile) British overseas territory on the southern tip of Spain.

On matters of trade, the European Union has said that Spain would have to agree to extend any deal between the bloc and Britain to also cover Gibraltar.

This means that Madrid could potentially block Gibraltar's access to any trade deal, and politicians in "the Rock" fear that Madrid will use the

veto to seek sovereignty over the peninsula.

May told Picardo that she would never "enter into a process of sovereignty negotiations with which Gibraltar is not content," according to a readout of the phone call released by her Downing Street office.

"The UK remains steadfastly committed to our support for Gibraltar, its people and its economy," it added.

"We remain absolutely dedicated to working with Gibraltar for the best possible outcome on Brexit, and will continue to involve them fully in the process."

British foreign minister Boris Johnson earlier Sunday stressed that the territory "will not be bargained away".

"Gibraltar is not for sale.

Gibraltar cannot be traded. Gibraltar will not be bargained away," Johnson wrote in the *Sunday Telegraph*.

Johnson wrote that the policy of the government "remains fixed and firm. The sovereignty of Gibraltar cannot be changed without the express consent of the UK and the people of Gibraltar." - AFP



Chief of Indian Army Staff, General Bipin Rawat meeting the President of Bangladesh, Abdul Hamid at President House, in Bangladesh on Saturday. - UNI

Search under way for S Korean ship crew

SEOUL, April 2: Search and rescue efforts are under way to find 22 crew members of a South Korean ship that sank in the South Atlantic last week.

Two sailors were safely picked up in a life raft, the Seoul government said on Sunday.

The search for the missing South Korean ship, the *Stellar Daisy*, began on Saturday, one day after the ship's crew sent a text to their South Korean employer, saying their ship was sinking. Yonhap News Agency reported.

The 266,000-tonne *Stella Daisy*, carrying eight South Korean and 16 Filipino sailors, departed from Rio de Janeiro on March 26.

The Marshall Islands-flagged ship was sailing near Uruguay when it made the distress call, according to the Foreign Ministry here.

South's embassy in Brazil asked for assistance to find the missing crew with the Brazilian Air Force dispatching a C-130 plane to the site.

The escape raft carrying the two Filipino crew members was found drifting by commercial ships in the area.

Another raft and two powered lifeboats that can carry up to 30 people each were also discovered, but no one was on board. Authorities said that all crew members probably were wearing their life vests. - IANS

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The girl's mother told The Associated Press last month that her daughter received online threats following the attack. The girl's family had been relocated.

Police have said the attack involved five or six males.

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The video marks the second time in recent months that Chicago police have investigated an apparent attack that was broadcast live on Facebook. In January, four people were arrested after video showed them allegedly taunting and beating a mentally disabled man. - AP

Rumbles in ANC against axing of Indian-origin Finance Minister

JOHANNESBURG, April 2:

South Africa's ruling African National Congress (ANC) treasurer general, Zweli Mkhize, on Saturday said he had "reservations" about President Jacob Zuma's Cabinet reshuffle that saw Indian-origin Pravin Gordhan ousted as Finance Minister even as the widely-respected minister slammed

allegations he held a secret meeting abroad in an attempt to undermine the country and its economy.

Mkhize said the ANC leadership should have consulted on Zuma's cabinet reshuffle.

"Unlike previous consultations which take place with senior officials of the ANC during such appointments and changes to the composition of

the national executive, the briefing by the President left a distinct impression that the ANC is no longer the centre and thus depriving the leadership collective of its responsibility to advise politically on executive matters."

The ANC needs to be able to justify all its leadership decisions as a collective, he said, and previous decisions have ordinarily been handled that way.

Zuma dismissed Gordhan as part of a late night cabinet shuffle in which 10 of 35 ministers were fired, Jackson Mthembu, a senior ANC lawmaker, said Gordhan's only crime was "incompetitiveness."

Gordhan has slammed allegations that he held a secret meeting abroad in an attempt to undermine the country and its economy.

The disclosure forms released on Saturday.

The second, an amended version, lists the names of the companies that made the payments under a section for any non-government compensation that exceeds \$5,000 "in a year."

That list appears to include all of the work that Flynn, a retired three-star Army general, has done since leaving the military in 2014, without providing compensation figures for any of it. No reason was given for the discrepancy between the two forms.

The Russia-linked payments were detailed in a letter released in March by congressional investigators, and included a \$45,000 speaking fee from RT news network, for a speech in 2015 in Moscow.

During the same trip, Flynn attended the network's 10th anniversary dinner and was photographed sitting near Russian President Vladimir Putin.

However, the disclosure forms showed income of nearly \$1.5 million, a sizable amount for a man who left

the military less than three years ago, the New York Times reported.

Flynn reported an income of \$1.37 million to \$1.47 million.

The bulk — \$827,055 — came from the Flynn Intel Group, the consulting business he founded after being pushed out as the chief of the Defense Intelligence Agency in 2014.

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10 militants die in Afghanistan attack

KABUL, April 2: At least 10 militants were killed overnight when Afghan security forces repelled an attack by Taliban in northern Takhar province, police said on Sunday.

"Dozens of militants stormed Darqad district centre at mid-night (on Saturday)," Tolo News quoted a military official as saying.

He said three policemen and nine militants were injured in the attack in the district bordering Tajikistan.

Several security towers around the district office building were damaged following the clashes in the province, 245 km from here. - IANS

Sri Lanka Navy arrests 6 Indians for smuggling drugs

COLOMBO, April 2: The Sri Lankan navy today said it has arrested six Indians for allegedly smuggling 13.5 kg drugs into the country.

The Sri Lankan ship on patrol detected a suspicious movement in IMBL (International Maritime Boundary Line) from Indian waters to Sri Lanka's territorial waters in the wee hours, the Sri Lankan navy said in a statement.

"The suspected boat movement was continuously monitored by the patrolling ship," the navy said. The drug parcels believed to contain heroin were taken to the Kankesanthurai harbour. - PTI

Teen girl killed by stray bullet buried in Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO, April 2: At least 500 people have shown up for the funeral of a 13-year-old Brazilian girl who police say was killed by a stray bullet.

Maria Eduarda Alves de Conceicao was buried today in Rio de Janeiro's Parque Jardim cemetery.

Police say the bullet that killed her Thursday was fired during a shootout between police and suspected drug traffickers in the low-income Acari neighborhood. The girl was at a physical education class inside a nearby school when she was struck.

Relatives, friends, teachers and neighbors wept as they filed past the young teen's white coffin and then accompanied it to the grave site. - AP

Putin, friend or foe? Russia looms over French election

PARIS, April 2: Russia looms large over France's presidential election, with candidates on the hard left, right and far right all promising to improve ties with the Kremlin, accused by some of meddling in the vote.

As US authorities press their investigation into alleged Russian interference in favour of Donald Trump in America's election, officials on both sides of the Atlantic are warning of possible attempts by Russia to also sway the French vote.

This week, the chairman of the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence out-right accused Russia of an "evil effort" to disrupt France's April 27-May 7 vote.

"I think it's safe by everybody's judgement that the Russians are actively involved in the French elections," Senator Richard Burr told reporters.

European Commission Vice

President Frans Timmermans also rounded on Russia, accusing President Vladimir Putin — who hosted French far-right candidate Marine Le Pen for a visit on March 24 — of trying to weaken an already ailing EU.

"There is a reason why Mr Putin supports the extreme right all across Europe," Timmermans said.

"Because he knows the extreme right makes us weak, he knows the extreme right divides us....And a divided Europe means that Putin is the boss."

Boris Johnson said on Sunday that he had used to justify their firing was "absolute nonsense".

According to the report, Gordhan and Jonas had set up secret meetings to start what it called "Operation CheckMate" to sabotage Zuma. This led to Zuma calling on Gordhan to cancel the international investment roadshows to Britain and the US and immediately return to the country this week.

Gordhan has been replaced by Home Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba and Jonas by Sifiso Buthelezi. Jonas described the intelligence report as nonsensical, saying: "It's like it was written by amateurs. It's so fundamentally flawed". - IANS

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62 liquor shops closed down

GUWAHATI, April 2: Following the Supreme Court order banning sale of liquor within 500 metres of highways, 62 liquor shops have been closed down in Kamrup Metro since yesterday, including 47 IMFL outlets and 15 bars and bars-in-restaurants, said an administration statement. — Staff Reporter



People in large numbers attending the Namami Brahmaputra Festival in Guwahati on Sunday. — UB Photos

Thousands throng Namami Brahmaputra

STAFF REPORTER



mighty river.

Transport Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said it had been raining since yesterday, but the clouds

cleared as soon as the spiritual leader set foot at the venue.

"This is the power of spirituality. As soon as His Holiness came to the venue, the clouds cleared and the sun came out," he said.

People flocked to have a glimpse of the spiritual leader and security personnel had a tough time managing them.

Showers during the day were less than yesterday. There was a heavy rush during the afternoon hours.

Long queues of people were waiting at the exhibition domes while stalls and food courts also saw huge footfalls.

A boat race held at the venue also

attracted spectators. Cultural shows were lined up for evening.

Meanwhile, nodal officer of the event Anand Prakash Tiwari told this newspaper that some sections were involved in rumour mongering about the event and were misleading the people.

"There were several attempts to hack the website and the Twitter handle of the event. Today there was a rumour created in the social media that entry of general people at the venue has been closed from 2 pm. This is wrong information. This event is for the people and all are welcome to the venue," he said.

Tiwari said the venue will be kept open for all visitors.

People have right to voice fears over environment: Dalai Lama

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 2: Worried over degradation of the environment, particularly water contamination, Tibetan spiritual leader The Dalai Lama today said people have the right to express their concerns over such environmental issues.

Pointing out that some major rivers of Asia have their origin in the Tibetan plateau, the Dalai Lama said, "Several crores of people are dependent on the rivers that flow out of Tibet. So people have the right to express their concerns over environmental issues."

"In Tibet, the rivers are very clear. We can drink the water directly, anywhere. But when we go outside (Tibet), we cannot drink it. I have then realised that the environmental issues are very serious. Water is the basis of our life. All human beings, animals,

plants all depend on water," he said, participating in a programme organised as part of the Namami Brahmaputra Festival at Pragjyoti ITA Centre here.

The Dalai Lama also recounted his connection with the Brahmaputra, which originates in the Tibetan plateau, and which he had crossed while escaping from Tibet to India in 1959.

The spiritual leader also stressed on proper education and said he has involved educationists to formulate a curriculum from KG to PG level for secular, ethical education.

"I will send the draft to Assam. May be the government can implement in one or two schools and see the results and then implement in more schools," he said.

He said a lot of problems in the world today has been created by the "mind".

Chief Minister Sonowal, while speaking on the occasion lamented the fact that in spite of enormous contribution and presence, the Brahmaputra is most often negatively projected in the country as the river that causes flood and erosion. "This is a gross injustice to the Brahmaputra," he said.



Singer Sudakshina Sarma (C) and other dignitaries releasing two CDs, Jibon and Pagali, containing songs and poems, at Guwahati Press Club on Sunday. — UB Photos

Issues related to library science discussed

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 2: Pandu College, in a joint initiative with the Assam College Librarians' Association (ACLA) organised a lecture programme followed by an interactive session recently on the college premises here.

Julie Bobay, noted global personality and Executive Associate Dean of Indiana University, Bloomington, USA, addressed the gathering and spoke on various issues such as the role of pro-

fessional association, electronic collection, digitisation and future steps to be adopted in the field of Library and Information Science.

Bobay in her speech spoke about several issues related to the field of library — academic, public, and special library, etc. — that are emerging in countries like the US and Canada, and also talked about her perspectives about Indian libraries.

Dr Jyoti Kalita, Principal of Pandu College, delivered the welcome speech of the

programme. Prof Narendra Lahkar, president of ACLA, and Prof Sanjay Kumar Singh, Head of the Department of Library & Information Science (DLIS) of the Gauhati University, and other members of ACLA were present in the programme.

Navajoti Bora, Associate Professor of Pandu College, anchored the interactive session.

Teachers, students and employees of Pandu College also attended the programme.

Health camp for scribes

GUWAHATI, April 2: Ayursundari Superspeciality Hospital conducted the weekly evening OPD clinic at the Guwahati Press Club on April 1 for the benefit of the Club members and their dependants.

Dr Prerit Sarma (Emergency Medicine) and Dr Ayona Barthakur (O&G) checked the health status of over 35 participants and offered necessary consultations.

Besides health-related free consultations, the participants also got the facility of weight, blood sugar, pressure examinations in the brief camp. The camp was assisted by Satyabrat Baruah (Public Relations Officer), Bijoy Sankar Nath (Marketing), Manab Kumar Kalita (pharmacist) and Bandita Kalita (nurse) from the healthcare institution.

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MESSAGE FOR TODAY

Where your talents and the needs of the world cross lies your calling.

- ARISTOTLE

The Assam Tribune

Path towards peace

In spite of having to live in exile from his homeland for almost seven decades, it is a wonder how the Dalai Lama can retain the cheerfulness that is intrinsic to his nature. This trait was very much in evidence during the concluding function of the platinum jubilee celebration of *The Assam Tribune* and the golden jubilee celebration of *Dainik Asom*, when he delivered a talk on 'A Human Approach to World Peace'. Even more remarkable, given the tragedy that has overcome him and his people, is the ability of the Tibetan Buddhist leader to retain his vision of a peaceful world and chart out for others a path towards it. According to him the path towards a peaceful world order is one of progression, beginning from a happy individual who can create an environment for a happy family, then a happy family which can contribute towards the making of a happy community, and finally happy communities which can create a happy world. Clearly, ameliorative change within an individual human being becomes a seminal key to the broader concept of world peace. However, according to His Holiness, currently neither education nor the social environment is geared towards bringing about such amelioration. The education system, for instance, is designed to teach a student how to acquire material things, when it should actually inculcate values such as *karma* or compassion towards fellow human beings.

Recalling his first visit to Europe in 1953, he said he saw that though the people there were materially well off, they were not happy and there was anxiety and suspicion among them. It was then he realized that, with his belief in the core concept of *karma*, he could contribute to making this world a more peaceful place. The older generation of the 20th century had not succeeded in bringing this about, for the world saw great violence during that century. It is up to the younger generation of the 21st century to ensure that the cycle of violence and counter-violence of the last century are not repeated in this century. *Karma* is the foundation stone of Ahimsa or non-violence and it is only through the latter that we can achieve global peace. Moreover, whenever there is conflict, it is only through dialogue with each other rather than using violence which can bring about peaceful solutions. Truly, in this modern age of conflict and violence, more than ever there is a need to tread on the path towards peace that a wise individual like the Dalai Lama has charted out. But then, the rationalistic solutions towards global problems which he has suggested are unlikely to be taken heed of by the powers that be. Autocratic China, for instance, is already denouncing the Dalai Lama's forthcoming visit to Arunachal Pradesh as being detrimental towards India-China relations!

Hindu migrants

The mass rally organized by the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and 29 organizations representing various ethnic communities of Assam has sent out a strong signal that the common masses are against the Centre's move to settle Hindu Bangladeshi migrants by amending the Citizenship Act. The Centre needs to heed the popular mood in the State. The move to accord citizenship rights to Hindus from Bangladesh was a hasty decision without taking into confidence the State which is bound to bear the brunt of any exodus of Hindus from Bangladesh in the wake of the development. It would have been somewhat understandable had the Centre adopted a course for settling the refugees in a planned manner across the country – and after due consultation with all the stakeholders. The decision, therefore, was not just hasty but arbitrary as well, and the protests in Assam are reasonable, given the existential threat being endured by its people in the face of large-scale illegal cross-border migration from Bangladesh for decades. Indeed, the Centre's move exposes the ruling BJP to be insensitive to the legitimate interests of Assam and its people, especially the indigenous communities. The State Government, too, has failed to make clear its stand on the issue as it is happy to toe the lines of its bosses at the Centre even when it means undermining the State's interests.

What is also apparent is that the Centre's move has more to do with consolidating the saffron brigade's vote bank than with any genuine concern for Hindus fleeing Bangladesh owing to persecution. The prudent course of action would have been to put pressure on the Bangladesh Government – more so with an India-friendly regime in the neighbouring nation – to ensure that the rights of the minorities are respected and protected. It is to be noted that the situation *vis-a-vis* minority rights in Bangladesh has improved considerably in the past few years. In any case, even if the Bangladeshi migrants are to be given citizenship on humanitarian grounds, there can be no justification in burdening Assam with any more number of migrants. This is because Assam is already having a large population of Bangladeshi migrants – legal as well as illegal and Muslims as well as Hindus. If illegal Hindu Bangladeshi migrants are settled in Assam as Indian citizens, the State runs the risk of turning into a Bengali-majority State in the near future together with the associated fallouts – not the least the termination of Assamese as the official language. It will also be a total rejection of the Assam Accord which mandates that every illegal migrant irrespective of his or her religion must be detected and deported. The Assam Movement – notwithstanding its share of drawbacks – was a struggle for the safeguard of the composite Assamese identity which was at risk of marginalization in the face of large-scale illegal migration from Bangladesh. Rehabilitating Hindu migrants in Assam will cause irreparable damage to the Assamese identity which has always been a linguistic one encompassing a broad spectrum of communities.

National Health Policy 2017: a paradigm shift

■ Dr Manigreeva Krishnatraya

After Independence, the first National Health Policy (NHP) was formulated in 1983 and in 2002, the second NHP was brought into effect. Over the course of the next three decades since the inception of the first health policy, NHP has served well in providing the necessary directions to the health sector of the country. However, since the last NHP in 2002, a lot has changed as far as the health care system of the country is concerned. A few major changes emerged in the health care delivery sector for which updating of NHP was required to put it into context. First and foremost is the growing burden of non-communicable diseases and certain infectious diseases with the emergence of anti-microbial resistance. Although, factors like maternal and infant mortality were declining, but its priority in health care scenario was maintained as a status quo in the NHP 2017. Next is the role of private health care industry, growing at double digits and it's increasing contribution to the well-being and health of the society, which is now well recognized. The need for public-private partnerships in the health care industry could not be ignored any more. The third change was the high costs of health care leading to catastrophic expenditures and out of pocket spending. This in fact has thrown many households into the brink of poverty. It was seen as a major challenge and it necessitated gradual raise in the Government health care spending from 1.15% to 2.5% of the Gross Domestic Product by 2025.

There are reasonable and path-breaking changes in the NHP 2017, which are aligning health care with the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Nirbhaya Nari, action against gender violence, reducing indoor and outdoor air pollution, promotion of healthy diet and exercise, and improving safety in the workplaces, to name a few. The idea is to create Swasth Nagrik Abhiyan, a social movement for health.

The guiding principles of the National Health Policy 2017 are to inform, strengthen and prioritize the role of the Government in shaping health systems in all its dimensions, raise investments in health, prevention of diseases and promotion of good health through inter-sectoral coordination, access to latest technologies of health care, developing human resources, developing better financial protection strategies, strengthening regulation and health assurance. The National Health Policy was formed keeping in mind the Sustainable Development Goals set for 2030 by member countries of the United Nations. It can be hoped that with the implementation of the NHP 2017, the highest possible level of health and well-being for all at all ages and each and every individual will have universal access to good quality health care services without facing deep financial hardships.

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In keeping with the need for manpower resources in health care, the National Health Policy recognizes the need to increase the number of postgraduate seats in medical colleges. To this effect, the Government has recently announced to create more than 4,000 postgraduate medical seats. Also, the policy recommends strengthening existing medical colleges and converting major district hospitals to new medical colleges. This however should

be considered in the light of existing manpower resources to work as faculty members in medical colleges, as a sudden increase in the number of medical colleges may not meet the prescribed guidelines of student-faculty ratio, which is required for delivering high quality medical education. The NHP 2017 proposes financial and non-financial incentives, creating medical colleges in rural areas, and recognizes that mere mandatory rural postings of medical graduates without transparent career progression guidelines will not help. This is a welcome step to further strengthen rural medical services without compromising the valuable efforts of medical professional in their career progress.

A major thrust of the National Health Policy is that, it proposes free drugs, free diagnostics and free emergency care services in all public hospitals. The policy envisages starting a robust National Health Accounts System, which would be operationalized to improve public sector efficiency in resource allocation/payments.

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The Brahmaputra and tourism

■ Jayanta Sharma

The Namami Brahmaputra festival is an appreciable effort by the Assam Government for showcasing the enchanting cultural and natural beauty of the State and her people for the knowledge of the global audience and thus to promote tourism in this part of the globe. These types of promotional activities would definitely contribute to some extent in creating awareness about the cultural and natural heritage of a territory, which is relatively lesser known and at the same time unexplored. However, since tourism has emerged as one of the most important areas for earning revenue particularly for Assam and Northeast India these days, keeping the Namami Brahmaputra festival as a starting point to explore tourism in Assam, we have to take recourse to some practical steps while formulating our approaches. These include educating our people, particularly the young generation (of Assam and other States of North-

east India) in matters of our historical monuments, like the largest man-made tank Jyosages, which covers more than three square kilometres of area and the water level is at 14 feet above the ground, and many more prehistoric heritage, because the extent of the archaeologically and paleontologically rich Himalayan and Siwalik Hills Range of pre-ice Age is in the region.

Its natural heritage like the endangered river dolphin (which is the mascot of the festival now and significantly from Assam to Amazon only a few thousands of such dolphins are now surviving and out of these about 500 river dolphins are living in the Brahmaputra and its tributaries), the one-horned rhinoceros, the feral horses of Dibrugarh, Salukhwa forest, and many more flora and fauna of the region also have tremendous potential to attract domestic and foreign tourists.

Its traditional art and cultural performances, traditional sports, traditional dances, dramas, music and musical instruments, architectural

grandeur and of course the cleanliness and the decorous hospitality of the people of the State towards their guests, are the unique areas, which need to be highlighted for attracting tourists.

Preparation of a roadmap and creating tourist area zones are important aspects which need adequate attention. This should be stitched together with proper and adequate arrangements for communication and a dedicated team of trained guides.

The unique characteristics of the State as well as the NE region's societies should be so highlighted that these also attract those people from across the globe who take interest in societal matters. These characteristics include the non-existence of the caste system, absence of the dowry system, the undying bonhomie among the communities, where people of a religious community sing paens of the people of a different religion. The Zikirs of Assam are such hymns, which though sung by the devout Muslims, declare that Hindus are also God's creation.

Mention may be made of another important example of communal harmony, which is a rare thing in other parts of the world. This is a structure of the Ahom era, where the outer walls of the monument are decorated with the terracotta images of various Hindu deities, but its interior is shaped like a mosque with the Mibrab, which is usually located in the mosques. It is the Ghanashyam House or Natosh Doul located on a bank of the Jyosages tank.

The Assamese society has emerged through a process of assimilation of the ethno-linguistic diversity of Indo-Aryan, Austro-Asiatic, Tibeto-Burman, and Tai-Kadai linguistic groups, people of which are living in close proximity for centuries. Pan-Assam is the result of the assimilation of these groups. So, Assam is the *Maha Milan Kshetra* (an area where all ethnic elements have melt together to give a new ethnic entity), as was viewed by legendary singer late Dr Bhupen Hazarika.

Assam should also be projected as a biodiversity-rich area, with its lush green forests and brilliant wildlife. Its tea gardens, the rich craftsmanship of its artisans and weavers, among others, should also be highlighted through producing short films with sub-titles in different languages for different countries.

The promotion of selected cultural items of Assam in foreign lands by small teams of experienced artists with the support of India Tourism, which has 22 offices all over the world, besides the Indian embassies, with brochures written in several foreign languages, apart from English, should also be done in right earnest. For presentation of films as mentioned above with touring of cultural groups in four countries every year will not cost more than Rs 50 to 60 lakh per annum but it will create a tremendous response from abroad.

We must be committed and dedicated to explore our heritage in our country and abroad. If we do so, surely Assam will flourish in all count. The public in general and the State administration in particular should look into the matter for the growth of our land in all fronts.

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor

EDITOR

Letters to the Editor

Surnames and Apex Court's ruling

role in a job interview or in a police station as it fuels caste prejudice and creates the wedge division.

It is argued that a single name can cause confusion as it is difficult to distinguish a person among his or her namesakes. This problem can easily be sorted out by replacing occupational and caste marker surname with a simple second name that can be the name of either one's parent or any other unpoluted word. Surnames cause pain not only to the Dalits and backward castes but also to women who are forced to change their surnames after marriage to satisfy the patriarchal demands. Thus, surnames also act against gender equality.

Now, we should all realize and feel the pain of living and working with an abusive surname. This edifice of discrimination should be destroyed so that the Dalits and the women of our country can breathe easy. We need a legislation to rid of our baggage of prejudices. Yours etc., SUJIT DE, Datalpara, Guwahati.

Questionable idea

Sir, – In recent times, there has been attempts to curb the harassment of women in public space, for which dedicated ('anti-Romeo') squads have been created. Unfortunately, these

groups have often failed to distinguish between 'consensual relationship' that adults might share and the act of eve-teasing, which have led to a lot of unpleasant situations. Shakespeare's Romeo, to my limited knowledge, was not an eve-teaser. This is a clear cut case of distorting facts. Such a name for these groups seems to legitimize the obliteration of distinction between consensual relationship between adults, and harassment. One might object to the former on grounds of his/her code of morality. But distorting names and enforcing one's ideas on the pretext of public order is something that must be questioned by all. Yours etc., REETU RAJ KASHYAP, Datalpara, Guwahati.

Namami Brahmaputra

Sir, – It has been observed that the Namami Brahmaputra festival has evoked mixed reactions through various social and print media. Some of the TV channels started making audio-visual noise even before the festival's official inauguration by airing all sorts of stories. It's like releasing an arrow in the dark without knowing its long-term consequences. This negative and unethical debate adds nothing to the society. The basic objective of this festival is to showcase the trade and commerce,

culture, skill, industry and tourism of Assam to the rest of the world which would definitely create greater awareness among the people in many ways. People of Assam should feel proud of being a part of this mega initiative for future prospects of Assam. Definitely, it would pave the way for pollution-free waterways from Sadiya to Dhubri and beyond. Moreover, this would fetch economic progress for this region in the South-east Asian market as part of India's Act East Policy. These waterways will not only make Assam the centre of India-ASEAN collaboration but also attract major investments from around the world. It is the time to introspect and not to disrespects this event by all of us. Yours etc., RABIN PRASAD KALITA, Azaara, Dalai Lama's visit

Dalai Lama's visit

Sir, – The 12-day planned visit of the Tibetan spiritual guru the Dalai Lama to the North-east is strategically significant for India. Despite Chinese protests, the 14th Dalai Lama reached Guwahati on his way to Arunachal Pradesh. He has already graced the concluding function of the Platinum Jubilee celebration of *The Assam Tribune*. The 82-year-old Nobel Peace laureate recalled his emotional landing at Tezpur, remembering the great

escape. In 1959, Tibet rose up in revolt against the Chinese occupation. The Dalai Lama's escape from Lhasa to Tawang marks the starting of the Tibetan struggle for independence. It was a milestone event in the history of the world. Tawang is the birthplace of the sixth Dalai Lama, Tsangyang Gyatso. China's claim of Arunachal Pradesh is overambitious. The McMahon Line was agreed by Britain and Tibet in a secret deal in 1914. The Chinese claim on Tawang goes against the 2005 agreement of no exchange of territories with settled populations.

China is occupying Aksai Chin since the 1962 war. While it has rejected the McMahon Line in India's case but accepted it in setting the boundary dispute with Myanmar. Will Aksai Chin be the answer for India ceding Tawang? A pragmatic approach is required for a meaningful and mutually-accepted solution. But India cannot compromise on Arunachal Pradesh. The control of Tawang would give China the ability to cut India's North-east from the rest of the country. Yours etc., KAMAL BARUAH, Rukminigan, 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.

Tibetans have preserved ancient Indian wisdom better: Dalai Lama

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 2: Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama today said that though historically the Tibetan Buddhists were the disciples of the ancient Indian school of wisdom, they preserved the knowledge for thousand years better than the modern-day Indians.

In a public talk on 'Ancient Indian knowledge in modern times' at the Gauhati University today, the spiritual leader said that he was a "messenger of the Indian culture" to the outer world and that India was the best example, where all the major religions of the world could live together.

"Staying here for the past 58 years, I am the longest guest of the Government of

India," he said.

The public talk was organised by the Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU) and Lawyers Book Stall (LBS), Panbazar, where the Dalai Lama also released the Assamese translation of his book *My Land and My People - Memoirs of His Holiness the Dalai Lama*.

Translated into Assamese by Indranil Laskar, the book has been named *Men Dush Aru Mor Manuh Punyatma Dalai Lamar Atmajiwani*.

The core of the message by the 14th Dalai Lama was about finding inner happiness and compassion to promote happiness in troubled times.

"I am optimistic about a peaceful and non-violent world. I don't know whether

it would happen in my life time though," he said stressing the role of awareness and education in promoting non-violence.

"Today, when the world is facing lots of crisis, violence and moral degradation, the knowledge of Indian wisdom about emotions can be very relevant. As far as knowledge of system of mind and emotions is concerned, western psychology looks like of Kindergarten level compared to India," he said.

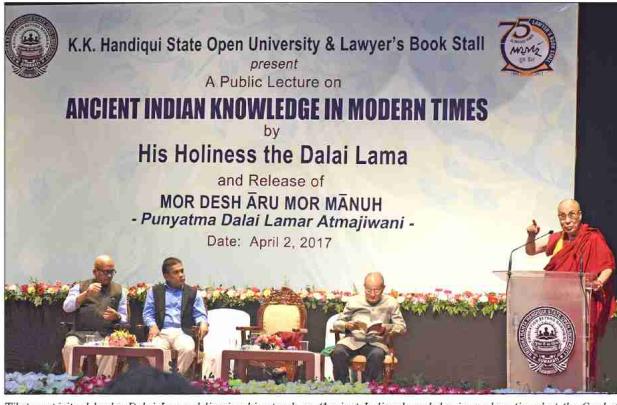
The spiritual guru also said that he considered himself as a son of India. "For the past few years, I have started calling myself a son of India.

When a member of a Chinese media delegation asked me about it, I explained that I was present on the occasion.

ry cell of my brain was filled with the Naland school of thoughts. My body has survived on the *dal, chawal and chapatti of India*," he said.

Citing the reference of the teaching of Shantarakshita, the eminent scholar of Nalanda invited to Tibet by Emperor Trisong Detsen, he said that the Indian knowledge elaborates about constructive and destructive emotions and teaches us the virtues like *karma* (compassion) and *ahimsa* (non-violence), key to a peaceful society.

KKHSOU Vice Chancellor Dr Hitesh Deka, proprietor of the LBS, Bhaskar Dutta Barua, RU Registrar Dr SK Nath and retired bureaucrat Jatin Hazarika were also present on the occasion.



Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama delivering his speech on 'Ancient Indian knowledge in modern times' at the Gauhati University on Sunday. — UB Photos

ABSU demand to divide Assam unacceptable: elders' club

STAFF REPORTER

State was absurd, and most provocative.

Explaining the genesis of the problem and the violent movement launched by the Bodo organisations causing immense loss of human lives and public property, DN Chakravarty, general secretary of the organisation, said that 13 lakh Bodoland people could legitimately claim about one thousand square km only and not 39,000 km as claimed by the ABSU and others.

Referring to the prevailing socio-economic problems of Assam, Chakravarty said that while the

anarchists and Communist bodies had for long been misguiding the people with their wrong information and harmful philosophy, there were brilliant intellectuals with high degrees from prestigious universities wasting their brilliance in petty matters not worthy of being dealt by even ordinary sloganists.

Chakravarty also mentioned about the necessity of allowing reservations for Assamese Muslims reserving five Assembly seats and one seat in the Parliament besides offering them other

economic and educational facilities.

Former Union minister Renuka Devi Bartaikary, Surendra Kumar Baruah and Ajit Bakarikati, while participating in the discussion, explained the economic and social misery brought to Assam by the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) with its futile movement to carve out an independent Assam.

Earlier, the association mourned the deaths of Arun Sarma, Bhadra Bora, Dr Renu Deka, Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, Dr Sanjha Baruah and Kamakhya Sappabandit.

Changkakati is also a founder member of GSCA.

Hrishikesh Goswami,

Press Adviser to the Chief Minister, will be the chief guest.

Elders to fete N Changkakati

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 2: The

Guwahati Senior Citizens' Association (GSCA) will felicitate Nishnath Changkakati, retired Director General of Police, Assam, for his illustrious services for the cause of society as president of philanthropic organisation Karunadhara and also as the chief of Asam Go Sewa Samiti at a function at Pensioners' Bhawan, Chandmari, at 10.30 am on April 8.

Changkakati is also a founder member of GSCA.

Hrishikesh Goswami,

Press Adviser to the Chief

Minister, will be the chief

guest.

5 State institutes selected to receive aid for various projects

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 2: A donation award function organised by the Chalha Foundation and the Jadav Prasad and Debabala Chalha Trust was held at India Club recently where five institutes from Assam were selected to receive a total amount of Rs 22,44,600 for various projects.

Speaking about their initiative, Ranjit Chalha, trustee, Chalha Foundation and Jadav Prasad and Debabala Chalha Trust, said, "We selected five institutions from the State to help them in their projects. These organisations have been

working for the welfare of society for many years and it is our privilege to be able to help them in their cause."

The five institutes selected include 'Swalambani', a rural centre for early intervention, prevention and stimulation for children with disabilities at Dimoria block, which received an amount of Rs 5,50,700 from the Trust; 'Creative', an organisation which trains students of children's clubs on conservation of the environment, wildlife and forest at Chayani and Rani blocks and for skill-handicapped people in making handicraft items, received an amount of Rs

6,43,500; the 'Institute of Child Health and Mother Welfare', providing skill training programme for unemployed women, midwifery and home care nursing, received an amount of Rs 3,50,400; 'Parijat Academy' received an amount of Rs 4,00,000 for setting up a classroom for 50 students, while 'North East Network' received Rs 3,00,000 for their project Saneki Weaves.

The Chalha Foundation was registered in 1975 and the Jadav Prasad and Debabala Chalha Trust in 1997. Both the Trusts were instituted by the children of Jadav Prasad and Debabala Chalha after their demise.

Factors responsible for artificial floods in Guwahati

SUBHASHIS DAS

Guwahati is situated on the banks of the Brahmaputra and several of its tributaries pass through the city. There has been rapid urban growth in the city over the years with uncontrolled development activities. These activities have had a detrimental impact on the ecology and environment of the city, which is surrounded by wetlands that are presently under threat due to encroachment and unplanned urban development.

Further, the city is prone to landslides and is located on quake-prone (Zone-V) belt too. In addition to being vulnerable to these natural hazards, the city is frequently affected by seasonal flash floods, which are not entirely caused by natural factors alone.

Let us discuss the primary factors responsible for this major irritant to the city dwellers one by one. Guwahati city has a typical situation of man-made hazard as it does not experience normal flooding events, but is characterised by urban flooding owing to a number of issues highlighted below.

Deforestation: The most serious environmental problem we face now is deforestation. Its effects, if unchecked, are most certain to bring about permanent ecological harm with a dramatic increase in flash flood problem in Guwahati. De-

forestation on hill slopes leads to loosening of soil and it creates massive erosion along the hill edges. Excessive rains, too, add to the woes and it carries this loose soil into the drain channels leading to saturation. Guwahati faces a severe problem of landslides during the monsoons, for which rains are considered the primary factor, but the triggering cause is excessive cutting along the hills and encroachment on them. Uncontrolled deforestation on the hills around Guwahati has resulted in more exposed slopes which are more prone to soil erosion as compared to the vegetation covered slopes.

Unplanned urban development: Guwahati is sitting on the mists of natural forests, forests, hillocks and the river edge of one of the mightiest rivers in the world. These collectively form an inter-linked ecological system, which is under threat due to rapid and unplanned development. Environmental degradation is fast becoming a major threat to this sensitive arrangement of natural entities and the population which relies on it.

Encroachment: Encroachment on a large number of wetlands that serve as natural reservoirs has also reduced the retention capacity of the drainage system, thus causing the flood level to rise. The



desire to enjoy a better life and to earn handsomely lures migrants from villages and towns towards the cities. Guwahati is facing a major threat as a big portion of migrant population illegally occupies hillocks to build their shacks. They exert pressure on the already tottering infrastructure of the city and thereby make the flood mitigation process an arduous task.

Road building: Unplanned road building has wrought havoc in eco-sensitive zones comprising hillocks, forests and wetlands. Because of the unprecedented population growth in the city, the construction of roads for transportation has become inevitable. Little concern is shown for the natural environment in the process, the severe effect of which shows up in the form of frequent flash floods and landslides in and around Guwahati.

Migration: Migration has been a continuous phenomenon for Guwahati city for the past several decades. Economic opportunities along with many other social and political reasons lure people to migrate to the city. Better urban services as compared to rural areas such as education, medical facilities, better transportation, etc., also encourage migration. During the past few years, with an increase in employment opportunities due to growth of industries and other secondary and tertiary sectors, migration has taken place from various rural areas of the State, and even from outside, into Guwahati. As in most cases, these people are poor or from economically backward background who tend to settle in illegal settlements, thereby encroaching on hills or fragile lands.

Ecosystem and land use: Guwahati city is located in a valley surrounded by hills on three sides. The city boundaries also have a large area under hillocks and water-bodies. These natural elements are under threat due to rapid urbanisation, and as they also form part of the natural drainage system of the city, their preservation is utmost necessary. Unplanned expansion of the city has led to deforestation and encroachment on the hillocks. Such expansions are open invitation to disasters like landslides and floods.

Waste discharge into rivers: One of the important tributaries of the Brahmaputra, the Brahambari river which flows through the city, is an important channel for the drainage of the city. Due to siltation, the Brahambari river has considerably risen. A major chunk of the waste discharged from the city is directly released into this river. Waste water from households, commercial and business establishments, small and medium industries also ends up in the Brahambari and gets discharged into the Brahmaputra. Even in the upper reaches, refinery waste water from the Indian Oil Corporation's refinery at Noonamati flows directly into the river. With choking of the natural drainage, the city has become more prone to waterlogging and urban flooding.

Transport: Guwahati is the largest city of the Northeast, and hence the transport system of the city plays a vital role in connecting other parts of the country with the region. Many of the roads do not have footpaths, roadside drains and street lighting. The overall condition of roads is important for a city to fight flood-like situations as inadequate storm drains and broken patches of roads only compound the problem. Despite all this, the density of vehicles is one of the highest in the entire country.

Recurring floods hamper the infrastructure of the city every year and the frequency of such events is increasing. During floods, basic amenities like drinking water, power supply and medical services are impacted and it adds to the vulnerability of the people. Besides, the overall lack of drainage, the absence of a solid waste management system, and pollution of surface water bodies and groundwater resources have created an interlinked situation that leads to flooding and waterlogging in the city every year. Flash floods have thus become a major threat to the city and its residents. The natural drainage channels and wetlands have been insensitively encroached upon, and their rejuvenation is very much necessary to find out a long-term solution to urban flash floods.

Governor inaugurates Sanskrit seminar at GU

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 2: Governor Banwarilal Purohit inaugurated a two-day seminar on Sanskrit on the topic 'Sanskrit – its present state and future in Assam' at the Phanindra Dutta Memorial Hall of the Gauhati University here today.

Attending the function as a chief guest, which was organised by Sanskrit Bharati Assam, the Governor said that Sanskrit is an important subject that not only enlightens, but also enhances one's knowledge base. He called upon the students to use this subject to become wise, and at the same time, as a tool to know our rich antecedents.

He also said that Sanskrit is a language that has a prominence in the land of

World Health Day celebration

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 2: City-based Down Town Hospital is going to celebrate the World Health Day by organising a free health camp on April 7 from 11 am to 3 pm on the hospital premises.

People can avail of free registration, self-assessment test, and screening, followed by free consultation by the experts of the Department of Psychiatry and Psychological Counselling of the hospital during the event.

The hospital will also display posters on the day awareness on the issue of health.

"This time the World Health Day will be celebrated with the theme 'Depression: Let's Talk'. Depression affects people of all ages, from all walks of life. It causes mental anguish and impacts on people's ability to carry out even the simplest everyday tasks, with sometimes devastating consequences for relationships and the ability to earn a living," said a statement issued from the hospital.

"Yet, depression can be prevented and treated. A better understanding regarding the same will help to reduce the stigma associated with the condition and lead to more people seeking help," it added. — Staff Reporter

Secret of Dalai's glowing skin

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 2: The secret of glowing and flawless skin of the Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso is a secret that he won't reveal to anyone!

When posed with the question of the secret behind his smooth skin during the public lecture organised at the Gauhati University today, the Dalai Lama's first reaction was teasingly evasive. "When someone asks me the questions like how I am so fit and agile at this age, I reply that it is my secret, why should I reveal it?" he said.

The spiritual leader, however, was generous enough to reveal the trick for the sake of the women present in the audience at the programme, organised by the Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University and the Lawyers Book Stall. "It is the inner peace, which reflects on the outer body," the octogenarian replied to a thunderous applause in the auditorium.

Dalai mantra ...

(Contd from page 1)

the killing of animals. At the same time, he supported the ban on alcohol imposed by some states of India. The Tibetan spiritual leader said that they like the Indians, belief in reincarnation and consider the soul may go away but the soul does not. On this issue, he jokingly said, "Once I had a dream that I was in Egypt in one of my previous lives and I was by the Pharaoh. It made me wonder whether I was a bad man in a previous life to be jailed," he said. The Dalai Lama said that he was happy to address yesterday's closing function of the platinum jubilee celebrations of *The Assam Tribune* and the golden jubilee of *Dainik Assam*. He admitted that he felt good addressing an enlightened audience and receiving some 'interesting questions' during the interactive session.

Praising the supplement brought out by *The Assam Tribune* to commemorate the occasion, the Dalai Lama said that it took him to childhood days as an old picture of his mother and sister entering India along with him in 1959 was also published. He said that his mother was a very kind-hearted woman and never scolded anyone. He said that his elder sister always took good care of him since his birth. He jokingly said, "Once I pulled my father's mustache and got a good beating for that."

Centre to promote ...

(Contd from page 1)

publicity that Assam has received in the run-up to and during the Namami Brahmaputra festival. Also in a major development, the Tourism Ministry has decided to transfer the rights of Brahmaputra Ashok Hotel presently managed by the ITDC to the Government of Assam. All necessary modalities to formalise the transfer of rights will be executed within the next 15 days. The Tourism Ministry has also decided to work collectively to enlist Majuli in the coveted list of World Heritage Site. The Tourism Ministry has already engaged the Archaeological Survey of India to prepare the dossier for submitting it to the UNESCO.

The Union Tourism Ministry has also sanctioned Rs 2 crore for the Namami Brahmaputra festival organised for the first time by the Government of Assam to glorify River Brahmaputra as well as to promote tourism economy and utilisation of the State at the global arena.

Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal has expressed his gratitude to the Government of India for this gesture and has expressed the hope that the Tourism Ministry would continue to provide support to the State Government in developing Assam as a prime tourist destination.

The Government of Assam has also submitted a memorandum to the Union Tourism Minister on various issues concerning development of the tourism sector in the State to which the minister assured to look into the same positively.

'Yes, he is the ...

(Contd from page 1)

armed security from Shakti to Lungla, and handed them to the next security group," Das said, with the memories still fresh in his mind. He was apparently happy that the Dalai Lama showed an instant connection with him when he was introduced on the dais of the programme today. "The Dalai Lama asked me how I am doing now. I am happy to have met him today," he added. The Dalai Lama honoured Das with a traditional shawl.



Anganwadi workers holding a protest meeting at Mitalipur in Baksa district, on Saturday. — UB Photos

KSA, HSDC observe MoU signing day in Karbi Anglong

CORRESPONDENT

DIPHU, April 2: The Karbi Students' Association (Simeon faction) celebrated the signing day of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) here at Diphu on Saturday.

It may be mentioned here that an MoU was signed between the leaders of the then ASDC of the hill districts of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao and the Central Government on April 1, 1995.

If the outcome of the Autonomous State movement launched by the then Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) from 1986, which resulted in the signing of the MoU between the hill leaders of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao viz., the leaders of ASDC, KSA and the Dimasa Students' Union (DSU) and the representatives of the Central Government. The signing resulted in increase of powers and departments to the KAAK but by the State Government.

This is the 22nd year of the signing of the MoU. The MoU signing day was celebrated at the Diphu KSA district committee office situated at Luming Road. Taking part in the MoU signing day celebrations, former CEM and convenor of

HSDC, Jotson Bey said that the signing of the MoU is one step next to attaining Statehood. It has also given more powers to the KAAK, but the present party in power has surrendered to the State Government which is very unfortunate for the people of Karbi Anglong. The purpose of the hill state movement is to accomplish the unfulfilled dreams of late Simeon Sing-lobi by attaining Statehood and until it is achieved, the movement will go on, said Bey.

Daniel Teron, incharge publicity said that the State Government bestowed the KAAK with more executive and legislative powers including some financial powers and law and order with the signing of the MoU. It has increased to 30 departments from the 16 subjects, while other additional departments were given executive powers. Certain financial powers were also given as the KAAK was allowed to prepare its own Budget and the DC and SP ranks were within the KAAK authority, which meant that law and order were also within KAAK's ambit, Teron admitted.

While pointing out to the present KAAK body, he said that it was quite unfortunate that present KAAK body led

by the BJP dose not know how to use these powers and thereby it has surrendered to the State Government.

It may be mentioned here that the MoU signing day was observed in several places by KSA at Diphu, Kaziranga, Bakalia, Bokajan, Dolumara, Belpahar and Hapong respectively.

On the other hand, KSA Kaziranga district committee celebrated the MoU signing day at Dolamura where Simeon Rongbari, president, KSA, Selwan Bey, ex-KSA vice president and Dharansingh Teron, research and analysis wing, HSDC general secretary Chomang Kro and Samuel Rongbari observed the day at Bakalia.

Besides, Dr Jayanta Rongi, former MP and Convenor, HSDC and Laichan Engeng, Convenor, Students & Youth Council observed the day at Belpahar, Bokajan.

The MoU signing day was also observed gorgeously at Baithatangso, West Karbi Anglong where Chandra Kanta Terang, general secretary include cultural, HSDC and Kamalsingh Bey, member, Central Working Committee, HSDC, former MLA and Convenor, HSDC Horiram Terang and Harsing Teron took part as guests.

103rd birth anniversary of JB Hagher observed

CORRESPONDENT

HAFLONG, April 2: The 103rd birth anniversary of Late JB Hagher was observed at different places like Umrangso, Diyungbra, Maibang etc., in the district of Dima Hasao with a long programme today.

At Haflong, the Cultural & Publicity Department of NC Hills Autonomous Council organised the celebration of 103rd birth anniversary of JB Hagher at the District Library auditorium in a befitting manner.

The programme began with the offering of floral tribute at the portrait of JB Hagher by the local MLA and also the son of Late Hagher along with Niranjan Hoaji, Kukundra Daolagupu, Executive Members of NHCHAC and several others of officials and people from various communities.

Speaking on the occasion, the speakers dwelt at length on the life and the contribution of Hagher while appealing to the youths of Dima Hasao to follow the footprints of Hagher and

to take inspiration from his life. Hagher's contribution for the uplift of society was always admired by every section of the people living in Dima Hasao. People from every community living in Dima Hasao considered him as their leader. Everyone loved him for his simplicity and care for all irrespective of caste, creed and religion.

Earlier, a booklet on life and the contribution of JB Hagher was released by the Deputy Director Sanjay Jidhang.

Illegal fish-laden truck recovered, 2 sent to jail

CORRESPONDENT

RANGIYA, April 2: Acting on a tip-off, Rangiya Police recovered a truck from West Bengal carrying illegal Chinese magur variety of fish weighing more than one quintal without valid documents here on NH 31 near Balagon under Rangya PS. The driver and the helper were arrested and sent to jail.

Lightning death

CORRESPONDENT

SILCHAR, April 2: Asha Ree (29), wife of Sushen Ree of Borthol Teesta Estate in Cachar district died after being struck by lightning on Saturday.

Four stolen bikes recovered

CORRESPONDENT

MANGALDAL April 2: In a major breakthrough in counter operations against the intra-state bike-lifting racket, police from Dalgona Police Station recovered four stolen Bajaj Pulsar bikes and also managed to nab one recently.

Out of the four bikes recov-

ered in the wee hours of Friday from Baruarh and Madhupur villages under the police station, two have been registered as AS02M 9729 and AS01BZ 5462 respectively while the other two are without any registrations, informed Sreejith T. SP, Darang.

One person identified as Dildar Hussain (21), s/o Isab

Ali and a resident of village Nagion under the same police

station, has been arrested the source added.

With the rise in bike lifting cases of the said model, the customers have become sceptical about the safety locking mechanism of the model. They hope that the concerned bike company will definitely look into the matter.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Chief said that it will relieve the people from the trouble of going to the Kokrajhar treasury office for every small purpose. Speaking on the road development to Mitalipur, he said that the EM urged the women farmers to maintain a good book of accounts and engage themselves in result-oriented agricultural activities which will bring them profit as well as sustainability to their Self Help Groups (SHGs).

Asunwi Khunger Boro, Executive Member of BTC, handicrafts to the village organisations.

In his speech, the EM urged the women farmers to maintain a good book of accounts and engage themselves in result-oriented agricultural activities which will bring them profit as well as sustainability to their Self Help Groups (SHGs).

Bipul Dewry, Programme Manager of GVM, explained that MKSP is implemented by GVM in Nalbari district as well as Baska and Tamulipar blocks in Baska district. Baska Block Federation is formed as a part of the project which is a platform of 10 village organisations comprising 100 SHGs.

The objective of the project is to empower rural women through formation of village, block and district-

level institutions and engaging each member in sustainable agricultural practice.

The initiative studies the hardships faced by women in agricultural activities.

"The handicrafts have been identified as a tool to reduce the hardship faced by women farmers.

These carts will be assets of village organisations which will also help them in additional income generating activities."

Ansumwi Khunger Boro, Executive Member of BTC, handicrafts to the village organisations.

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Dr Shankha Dhar Baruah: a tribute



Born on January 3, 1927 at Dibrugarh, Dr. Shankha Dhar Baruah, passed matriculation examination in 1945 and secured the 9th rank among the candidates from the then undivided Assam. After passing the intermediate examination in science from Cotton College, he obtained MBBS degree from Assam Medical College in 1952. Thereafter he passed DCH in 1958, MRCP in 1959 from the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. He served as Assistant Professor of Medicine (Pediatrics), Assam Medical College, he set up the Paediatric Department and elevated it to the level of post graduate teaching centre. He served as member of Child Welfare Board, Dibrugarh and was the founder member of Dibrugarh Child Welfare Society. He has many publications to his credit and has earned a name in the field of pediatrics not only in Assam but also in the country as well. He was awarded the Shishu Visheshshaya Shiromoni

on to become the Principal and the Superintendent of the Silchar Medical College. He also served as the Director, Health Services, Assam from 1982 to 1983. He joined as professor and Head of the Dept. of Paediatrics, Gauhati Medical College and served in that capacity till his retirement in 1987.

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(Left) An elephant safari being taken out during Namami Brahmaputra Festival at Silghat in Nagaon district on Sunday. Tai Phake girls performing during the festival at Dibrugarh on Sunday. — UB Photos

Rain fails to dampen festive spirit at Jorhat

CORRESPONDENT

JORHAT, April 2: Even incessant downpour could not dampen the festive spirit of hundreds of people at Jorhat on the third day of Namami Brahmaputra festival as they were enthused by the festive spirit of showcasing unity among diversities through colourful cultural procession in the city today which made the onlookers spellbound for moments.

Clad in traditional attires attesting of indigenous communities of the district showed their distinctive features of life and

traditions which they have been practising for centuries along the northern bank of mighty Brahmaputra for generations.

The melodious folk songs and music of the communities, including Mising, Deuri, Tai and Jhumur dances of tea garden workers caught attention of the people in the city. Besides, the beautiful dresses and cultural performances of Punjabi and Rajasthani people also made everyone spell bound during the cultural procession in Jorhat which was named as Sampriti Sobhayatra.

Traditions which they have been practising for centuries along the northern bank of mighty Brahmaputra for generations.

In this border district, river Brahmaputra has shaped the lives of the people in the true sense of the word.

South Salmara Mankachar dist celebrates Namami Brahmaputra

STAFF REPORTER

The district administration under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Dr Karuna Kumar made adequate arrangements for the inauguration of the festival at Sishumara Ghat where MLA of Manka-

char Motiur Rohman Mondal

inaugurated the festival amidst much fanfare on Friday.

The people of the district came out spontaneously to celebrate the festival in a move to pay their tributes to the mighty Brahmaputra which has showered its blessings on the district and its people in several ways.

A photo exhibition was also inaugurated on the occasion depicting the several facets of the Brahmaputra and its life-giving prosperity. As part of the festival, a function was also held to pay obeisance to the Brahmaputra and a traditional *arati* to the mighty river was also conducted.

A colourful cultural programme was also held showcasing the rich culture of Assam vis-à-vis the district. A bike rally was another highlight where young boys and girls participated conveying the message of friendship and camaraderie in the district.

Moreover, synchronising with the festival, an exhibition of art, craft and handloom was also organised. Beach volleyball and other traditional sports were other attractions of the festival.

At the end of the session, an interactive session was held with the participants.

Seminar on Brahmaputra

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 2: As part of the Namami Brahmaputra festival, a seminar on the theme Assam economy – Role of Brahmaputra and Media was organised at the Manas Symposium Centre at Kamchamari Ghat on Sunday.

At the outset, the welcome address was delivered by BB Dev Choudhury, Director of Inland Water Transport, Government of Assam.

The speaker, senior journalist Samudra Gupta Kashyap, in his speech, laid stress on tapping the potential of the Brahmaputra and the need for scientific research on it.

River fest hit as rains play spoilsport

CORRESPONDENT

BARPETA, April 2: Incessant rains since Saturday have spoilt the enthusiasm of the Namami Brahmaputra Festival held along the Brahmaputra shore on the foothills of Baghbar hill in Barpeta district.

The only two events conducted on Sunday were adventurous sports inaugurated by Gunindri Nath Das, MLA Barpeta and an exhibition on beauty of cattle inaugurated by Dr Hitesh Pathak, Veterinary Officer, Patacharkuchi.

However if the weather does not improve, the programmes for the last two days to be held at Baghbar may face similar fate.

Ferry service resumed at Dhansirighat

JORHAT, April 2: On the third day of Namami Brahmaputra festival, Golaghat district administration resumed the ferry service from Dhansirighat to Gamirighat of Biswanath district on Sunday which was suspended for about four years.

Participating in the programme of resuming the ferry services at Dhansirighat, State Agriculture Minister and MLA of Bokakhat, Atul Bora, said that the river-port should be named after the first actress of Assamese cinema Aideo Handique.

Along with the minister, several bureaucrats of Golaghat district administration also opined that the ferry services between Dhansirighat and Gamirighat will help the people immensely in travel and transportation of goods through the waterways of the Brahmaputra. — Correspondent

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Yojana

Screen-2

At 12, 15, 25, 35, 80 pm

Yojana

Screen-3

At 12, 15, 25, 35, 80 pm

Yojana

Screen-4

At 12, 15, 25, 35, 80 pm

Yojana

Screen-5

At 12, 15, 25, 35, 80 pm

Yojana

Screen-6

At 12, 15, 25, 35, 80 pm

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Screen-7

At 12, 15, 25, 35, 80 pm

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At 12, 15, 25, 35, 80 pm

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At 12, 15, 25, 35, 80 pm

Yojana

Screen-29

At 12, 15, 25, 35, 80 pm

Yojana

Screen-30

At 12, 15, 25, 35, 80 pm

Yojana

Screen-31

At 12, 15, 25



Indo-Naga talks on the verge of conclusion: NSCN-IM

CORRESPONDENT

DIMAPUR, April 2: Stating that the Indo-Naga talks were on the verge of conclusion to create a new history for the Nagas, the NSCN-IM has appealed to all the Naga people to be cautious in words and deeds, or otherwise it could have a detrimental effect on the political talks process.

In order to resume the Indo-Naga political talks process, the collective leadership of NSCN-IM led by its general secretary Th. Muival and vice president 'general' (retired) Kohli and dialogue team members left for Delhi yesterday, the report informed in a release. The NSCN-IM collective leadership was here in Nagaland to attend the 38th Nagaland Republic Day celebration, NSCN council meeting and the two-day Tatar Hoho Budget session.

"It would be unwise to indulge in shortsighted thinking and magnifying rumors that could lead to momentary emotional burst, but would be apt to patiently wait for a better future under the final solution," the release stated. The NSCN-IM maintained that it is representing the Nagas and is working out what is best for the them and will never let down the Nagas with regard to the anticipated solution.

It therefore urged and appealed to all "Nagas across the length and breadth of Nagaland for constant prayer and policy support for an early solution."

70 houses damaged by hailstorm in Mizoram

NEWMAI NEWS

Sources said that the roof of a Sunday School hall belonging to EFCI church in Vairengte was blown off by strong wind, while one person was injured in the incident. No other casualty was reported.

Communication and power supply were disrupted in the area as a large number of electric poles and trees were uprooted by the storm, the sources said.

Meanwhile, reports said the administration is taking up all necessary measures to address the plight of the affected people.

The hailstorm also caused damages in Chaihpui village under Ngopa sub-division in Champai district of Mizoram.

Minor raped in North Garo Hills

TURA, April 2: Meghalaya

with its rapidly increasing cases of sexual violence against women and children saw another addition to the growing numbers after a drunken man raped a 5-year-old girl in the village of Nogopara under Dainadubi outposts in North Garo Hills.

According to police sources, a 5-year-old girl had gone to the rented accommodation of the alleged culprit Renick M Sangma (35) years along with other children to watch television. After a while, the suspect chased the other children but held back the 5-year-old minor who he took to his room, and after locking it, sexually assaulted her.

Two boys who had stood by even after being chased later peeped through the bamboo house and saw the act being committed on the minor.

The incident happened at about 630 pm on Friday, though the matter was informed by the girl only yesterday.

Immediately after neighbouring residents heard about the incident, they caught the culprit and thrashed him publicly. After being beaten up, the suspect was handed over to the police team in Dainadubi after which a case under POCSO Act was filed against him in Mendi pathar PS. - Correspondent

Teacher trampled

TURA, April 2: A Hindu teacher named Taher Ali Sheikh, who was returning from Tikkirilla in West Garo Hills was trampled to death by a herd of wild elephants after the tempo he was travelling in came in their way. The incident happened on Friday evening near the village of Gaptuli under Nidupur outpost.

The deceased used to work at the Kukurmara HS School and was a resident of Fekamari near Hatingsingmar in South Salmara district of Assam. - Correspondent

Manipur to probe anomalies in CCTV installation

CORRESPONDENT

IMPHAL, April 2: The Manipur Government has decided to conduct an inquiry into the procurement, installation and commissioning of CCTV cameras in Imphal town to ascertain the facts and to find officers responsible for lapses, if any.

Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Dr Suresh Babu is issued an order to conduct an inquiry by an enquiry committee consisting of Additional Director General of Police Pramod Ashtamrao as chairman, Secretary (RD&PR) Suman Singh and IGP Clv Khongsei as members.

The principal secretary (Planning) Vinod Joshi also issued the committee into the process of tender, procurement, installation and commissioning of CCTVs and find out lapses if any, and identify the persons responsible for such lapses. The report shall be submitted to the Government within 15 days from March 31, official source said.

It may be mentioned here that the State Home Department had sanctioned a sum of Rs 8,01,54,775 under the Plan 2009-10 and 2010-2011 for procurement of CCTVs for installation and commissioning at the website of the State Planning Department in respect of CSS/State Plan.



The under-construction Shillong-Guwahati Road at Umsing, on Sunday. - UB Photos

NORTH EAST Digi-Dhan Mela in Manipur



NEWMAI NEWS

MC Mary Kom also attended the function as special guest.

A first of its kind in the State, the Digi-Dhan Melas seeks to promote cashless economy through digital mode of transactions.

Speaking at the function, Chief Minister N Biren Singh said that it is necessary to create awareness about digital payments throughout Manipur so as to bring about a digital revolution and corruption-free State. Considering the steps taken by the banking sector, N Biren Singh further said the digital mode of transaction would enable the people living in the remote areas of the State to be a part of the banking system. More bank branches and micro ATMs should be opened in rural and

far-flung areas, he added.

Biren Singh then said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as India has seen many transformations in various sectors, Manipur should not be left out in this transformation. "However, to usher transformation and change it should begin from ourselves", he added. He further said the Centre has given approval for a 100-bed cancer hospital at the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences (JNIMS), besides a 60-bed mental hospital in the State. To have better health-care services in the State, the Union Home Ministry has also approved mobile or helicopter ambulance services for the remote areas of Manipur. The Centre has already sanctioned 150 crores for building of a woman's market in each hill district of the State and for the installation of flood lights in the Hockey and Main Stadium at Khuman Lampak. He also appealed to all concerned to go for bilateral dialogue with the Government before calling any general strike or bandh. For this, the door is always open. He further said that the Government needs the support of the people and any suggestion and positive criticism would be appreciated so as to develop Manipur into a world class State.

Speaking at the function, Union Minister of State for Home, Kiren Rijiju said that the Digital India campaign is an important component for transforming the country. He

further urged the people to educate any other member of the family about digital payments or the technology involved and the benefits of cashless transaction so as to develop a digital economy in the State. He appreciated the enormous potential of Manipur in the field of art and culture, sports and natural beauty. He further assured the people of the State that the Central Government would do everything to fulfil the aspirations of the people of Manipur.

During the function, a short video on digital payment was also screened. The winners of the digital lottery schemes was announced. The lottery schemes, conceptualised by NPCI on the request of think tank NITI Aayog, aims to provide incentives to the people doing small business so as to adopt digital mode of payments like UPI, USSD, RuPay and AEPS. The winners of the slogan writing, poster-making and jingle competitions were also announced. Altogether, 35 stalls from various banking sectors like SBI, UBL, Bank of Baroda etc., e-Lohshang (Common Service Centre) and digital payment company Paytm participated in the mela.

The inaugural function was also attended by various Cabinet Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries, Chief Secretary, O Nahakishore Singh, officials from Nit Aayog and NPCI, Commissioner of IT, P.K. Singh. The first-ever Digi-Dhan Mela was organised by the Department of Information Technology, Government of Manipur.

Border vaccination prog conducted

CORRESPONDENT

IMPHAL, April 2: To reduce the risk of import from neighbouring countries and also to maintain the country's police-free status, international border vaccination was provided during the 2nd round of intensified pulse polo immunisation (PPI) programme 2017 today by setting up two booths at Moreh border town in Manipur, according to official sources.

The State authority is planning to cover 6,325 children in Moreh town alone out of the State's total target of 3,58,474 children.

Meanwhile, the State-level second round of PPI programme 2017 was launched here with Health and Family Welfare Minister L Jayanta Kumar as chief guest.

Parliamentary Secretary (Health & Family Welfare) S Subhas Chandra, Commissioner (Health) PK Singh, Director of Family Welfare, K Rajo and Director of AYUSH, K Loindro also attended the function by administering polo vaccine to children upto 5 years of age here this morning.

Around 14,340 vaccinators and 717 supervisors, besides 11 State observers plan to cover 3,58,474 children, in-

cluding 61,474 children in Thoubal across 3,585 booths from the first round (January 29-31) to 2nd round (April 2-4) in the State.

According to Health and Family Welfare officials, the programme will be followed by day's vaccination programme will be held every house where volunteers will visit every house to find out if there are any left out children. No polo case was reported in India, except Howrah district in West Bengal after the IPP programme are organised regularly.

It may be noted that the first-ever IPP programme was held on December 9, 1995 and January 20, 1996.

Non-completion of road flayed

BIPLAB KUMAR DEY

TURA, April 2: The much-vaunted German technology road from Resubelpara to the town of Mendipara in North Garo Hills came up for ridicule due to non-completion. The road is fast becoming any driver's nightmare.

The United Democratic Party (UDP) yesterday questioned the delay in completion of the road, which is already half-finished and requires macadamising to be completed.

The road in question was initially half-complete just before the annual ABDK Sabha, which was held at Resubelpara, i.e., two years ago, with the contractors ignoring construction of the road.

"The road has in the meantime become a nightmare for travellers. With early rains, the slippery nature of the soil has made travel difficult. Non-completion is condemnable and as residents of the district, we demand its immediate completion," said UDP joint secretary Anand Marak.

The party further questioned the disparity in development, asking as to why only North and South Garo Hills were being neglected.

Another road that connects the DC and SP office is also now in a state of tatters, but repair work is yet to start.

The Deputy Commissioner of NGH when contacted said that the PWD team had been alerted on the matter and construction of the road was to commence from the month of March, but is yet to get off.

"The PWD had through an order asked the contractors, i.e., CC Constructions to complete the road immediately, but the same is yet to start. I will seek an answer once again regarding the status of the construction," said DC SC Sardar.

"Even worse is that these seats will not be won by so-called 'geniuses' as people in general would opt for vision-oriented leaders. And when majority seats are won by non-

Garos will become minorities in their own land, claims BJP leader

CORRESPONDENT

Garos, a new Bill can be introduced in the State Assembly and passed in the interest of the non-Garos," he added.

"According to the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution (Para 12A) the Act passed by the State would overlap the Bill passed by GHADC and that will be a nightmare to many," he felt.

Bernard alleged that it was a political agenda of a few people for what he considered a hastily-passed Bill.

"Once it becomes an Act, the worst will unfold," opined Bernard. The BJP leader demanded the Bill to be repealed in the interest of all.

"The intention of the GCL Committee and Denang-led EC is questionable. Whether they examined the political, economic and social repercussions before placing the Bill or were they simply too dumb to see the bigger picture? Either way, it would have a negative impact on the peaceful coexistence of the 'Garos,'" he added.

He urged the people who supported the Bill to see the bigger picture. "Treat this as an insight as there are thousands out there who are not scared to face what may be. For the safety of the Garos, this Bill needs to be repealed immediately," stated the release.

tive Assembly during the just-concluded Budget session had resolved to request the Government of India to impress upon the Myanmar Government to permanently drop the project of construction of fencing along the Indo-Myanmar border with a view to continuing the cordial and brotherly relations amongst the Nagas living on both sides of the border.

Since the beginning of 2017, various organisations across Nagaland and Myanmar have been protesting against the fencing along the India-Myanmar border in Nagaland's Tuensang district after the Myanmar Government began erecting fencing in the Naga self-administered zone - 10 metres from the demarcation border on December 20.

The construction of the border fencing was put on hold following objections by different Naga organisations and leaders.

Joint survey along Indo-Myanmar border opposed by Pangsha villagers

CORRESPONDENT

DIMAPUR, April 2: Expressing dismay over a survey team of India and Myanmar which is in Pangsha to conduct joint survey work as per the existing imaginary line between BP145 and BP146 along the Indo-Myanmar border at ITC Dan, citizens of Pangsha range in Nagaland's Tuensang district have objected to the proposed joint survey work. They claimed that the existing imaginary line has bifurcated the land of the Khammungan Nagas tribe without their knowledge.

A joint representation to the Nagaland Chief Minister by the village councils of New Pangsha, Old Pangsha, ITC Dan and Waing villages stated that the 'BP146' border post was installed erroneously within our land where 3,500 acres of cultivable land has been com-

promised to the foreign country for no wrong of the land owners."

The Pangsha range residents demanded that the BP146 be immediately removed and the existing boundary realigned as per the traditional boundary of Pangsha (India) and Kingphu/Wolian, Poukyu (Myanmar) village.

The representation also appealed to the Government of India to withdraw the survey teams of both the countries from the spot and that no activities of any form by the concerned governments should be taken until and unless necessary rectifications are made.

It also urged the authority concerned to take up this issue on a war footing in order to "make a conducive and peaceful atmosphere between the two nations in the border area."

On March 28, the Nagaland Legisla-

CAPSULE**ATF rate cut by over 5%**

NEW DELHI, April 2: With the recent dip in global crude oil prices to around \$50 a barrel levels, the price of aviation turbine fuel (ATF), or jet fuel, has been cut by over 5 per cent – reversing a trend of hikes over the last two months. State-run oil marketers have cut the price of ATF by Rs 1.38 per kl, or by 5.1 per cent, to Rs 51,428 per kl with effect from Saturday. – IANS

Karnataka Bank

MANGALURU, April 2: The Karnataka Bank, a private sector bank in the country, is targeting a business turnover of Rs 1,10,000 crore in 2017-18 fiscal. It was eyeing deposits of Rs 64,500 crore and advances of Rs 45,500 crore, a top bank official said here yesterday. – PTI

TAL Brabo

NEW DELHI, April 2: Tata Motors today said its subsidiary TAL Manufacturing has received 'CE' certification for Made-in-India 'TAL Brabo' for commercial use in Europe. The TAL Brabo now complies with essential requirements relevant to European health, safety and environmental legislation, permitting export of the TAL Brabo robot to customers in Europe. Tata Motors said in a statement. – PTI

Pawan Hans

NEW DELHI, April 2: The government has roped in SBI Caps as an adviser for the proposed disinvestment of Pawan Hans, which is expected to be completed by end of May. The state-of-the-art helicopter services operator is a joint venture where the Central government holds 51 per cent stake and the remaining is with state-owned ONGC. – PTI

Mahindra

NEW DELHI, April 2: Mahindra & Mahindra today reported 6 per cent rise in total sales to 56,031 units in March as against 52,718 units sold in the same month last year. In domestic market, sales were up 9 per cent at 53,322 units last month compared to 48,967 units in March 2016. M&M said in a regulatory filing. – PTI

Jaitley to chair SASEC Finance Ministers' meet today

NEW DELHI, April 2: Finance Minister Arun Jaitley will chair the South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Finance Ministers' meeting here tomorrow, an official release said.

"The meeting will be attended by the seven Finance Ministers from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka, apart from officials from these countries and the Asian Development Bank (ADB)," it added.

As a part of the SASEC initiative, the member countries have come up with SASEC vision for the economic growth of the sub-region, which will be launched by Jaitley during the meeting. It will be followed by consideration of the joint ministerial statement.

"The event will be a unique opportunity for the member countries to discuss and exchange ideas and strive to foster better cooperation in the sub-region. Myanma has joined the SASEC programme as its seventh member and will be officially welcomed during the event," the release said.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is supporting SASEC in this endeavour. – PTI

Exim Bank to raise \$3 bn

NEW DELHI, April 2: Exim Bank plans to raise up to \$3 billion from overseas markets this fiscal.

"We would be looking to raise between \$2.5-3 billion in the current fiscal year." Export Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) Managing Director David Rasquinha told PTI.

Finmin seeks industry's comments on GST rules

NEW DELHI, April 2: The Finance Ministry today placed eight sets of rules in public domain, which will be applicable once the Goods and Services Tax (GST) is implemented from July 1.

The government has sought comments from industry on the four sets of new rules on – GST Composition, GST Valuation, GST Transition and GST ITC.

These rules had received the "tentative" approval at the GST Council meeting on March 31.

Further, the Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) has come out with four payment of revised rules on – GST Invoice, GST Payment, GST Refund and GST Registration.

These rules had secured final approval at the Council meeting last week.

However, the CBEC is yet to place the final rules on filing of GST return in public domain.

PwC Partner and Leader - Indirect Tax Pratik Jain said the rules provide much needed clarity on several critical aspects such as mechanism of credit of tax paid on opening stock across the distribution chain, valuation of inter-state stock transfers and certain specific services, which currently enjoy lower service tax incidence such as airlines and insurance.

"This would now enable the industry in planning for the transition and process/technology

related changes".

Rajat Mohan, Director (Indirect Taxation) Nangia & Co said: "With this, the government has made it clear that July 1, 2017 is the date for GST implementation".

With regard to the rules, Jain said that while it has been mentioned that declared invoice value shall be accepted for valuation of inter-state supplies within the same entity, it needs to be clarified as to any value declared by the companies would be acceptable by the authorities.

"There is an indication that insurance companies, banking companies, and telecom operators, would get some relief in case of self-supplies as they can issue the invoice on a quarterly basis," Mohan said.

Also, the CBEC has put up on its website 223-page FAQs on the basis of CGST, SGST, IGST, UTGST and Compensation Cess laws, along with a host of rules approved by GST Council.

The Lok Sabha last month had approved the Central GST (CGST), Integrated GST (IGST), Union Territory GST (UTGST) and the Compensation to States law. Now, the State Assemblies would consider and pass their respective State GST (SGST) law.

Touted as the biggest indirect tax reform since independence, GST would subsume central excise, service tax and other local levies. – PTI

Jio's new pricing will continue to bleed industry: COAI

NEW DELHI, April 2: Cellular operators' body COAI has said Reliance Jio's latest pricing will continue to bleed the industry and there is risk of cascading impact on banks and others that have large exposure to the telecom sector.

COAI said that while market's move towards lower pricing is good for consumers, the larger question of whether such pricing conforms to tariff regulations is a matter that needs to be settled by the courts and the Central government holds 51 per cent stake and the remaining is with state-owned ONGC. – PTI

The industry will continue to bleed under this pricing, and there is the risk of cascading impact on the banks, government (accruals from licence fee and spectrum payments made by telcos), and equipment manufacturers," COAI Director General Rajan Mathews told PTI.

The telecom industry owes close to Rs 4.60 lakh crore to various financial institutions and

banks. Mathews refused to comment specifically on the tariffs announced by Reliance Jio.

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio on March 31 announced it had notched up an unprecedented 72 million paid subscribers, and extended by a fortnight its deadline for migrating other subscribers to its paid offer.

It has further sweetened the deal by announcing a 'complimentary offer' for three months to those who pay Rs 303 prior to April 15, thus offering data at rock-bottom prices.

Put simply, subscribers recharging prior to the said date using Jio's Rs 303 plan (or any higher plan) will get services for the initial three months on a 'complimentary' basis, and paid tariff plan will kick in only in July.

"The consumer will have the benefit of the plans but the larger question of whether it is right or wrong, that is, in

compliance with regulations, will have to decide by the courts," Mathews said.

Jio launched the inaugural free voice and data plan in September last year and in December extended the freebies till March 31, 2017, much to the ire of other operators who alleged that such freshies not only hit their profitability and disrupted the market, but were also against the regulations.

Incidentally, the warning sides, Jio and incumbent operators, are members of COAI.

Incumbent players such as Airtel and Idea Cellular have moved the telecom tribunal against regulator TRAI for letting the new operator continue the promotional offer beyond the stipulated 90 days. They have also questioned the free offers on the ground that it violates the floor of 14 per cent set in the form of call termination charges. – PTI

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'Chenani-Nashri tunnel is India's longest, safest'

CHENANI (J&K), April 2: Jammu and Kashmir's Chenani-Nashri tunnel, touted as India's longest tunnel, is also the country's "safest", with provisions to ensure the safety of passengers from fire incidents and collision inside the 10.89 km-long tunnel on the Jammu-Srinagar Highway, says a top official.

The Chenani-Nashri tunnel, built with new Austrian tunnel technology, has a series of smart safety features – all functioning through a single software.

"Its uniqueness is that it has an integrated Tunnel System under which all the systems, such as Entrance Detection Control System, Electrical Fire Signalling System and Video Surveillance System and Evacuation Broadcast System, are controlled through one particular software," Ashutosh Chandwar, Vice President of Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services (IL &FS), told IANS

in an interview.

The IL&FS bagged the tender for executing the project with NHAI's support.

According to Chandwar, in tunnels abroad such safety techniques require a separate software for every feature, which would count the number of vehicles in the tunnel and accordingly set the speed limit.

"The Traffic Control System in the tunnel has green and red lights, the speed limit signs and others are variable signs depending upon the traffic condition inside the tunnel," said Chandwar.

The tunnel is part of the Jammu-Srinagar Highway's four-laning project. Twelve other similar tunnel projects are being

constructed to reduce travel time and distance between Jammu and Srinagar. The Rs 2,519-crore all-weather tunnel, is located at an elevation of 1,200 metres.

The tunnel will help reduce the 41 km-distance between Chenani in Udhampur district and Nashri in Ramtan in 10.89 km and can be covered in 10 minutes, instead of the two-and-a-half hour needed currently. The Jammu and Srinagar Highway is considered to be the lifeline of the State.

Once all the other 12 tunnels are constructed, it will reduce the length of the 293 km between Jammu and Srinagar by 62 km. This 231 km can be covered in 4-4.5 hours.

A unique feature of the tunnel is that at every 150 metres it has an emergency SOS box and a safety evacuation passage connecting to a safety tunnel constructed parallel to the main tunnel.

"The tunnel has an Incident Detection

Systems under which if any accident happens, our control team will get to know before the victim contacts us through the SOS call box. Accordingly, our rescue team will help in evacuation of the person and vehicle through the safety tunnel," said Chandwar. He said the tunnel has hydrants at every 150 metres, to tackle any kind of fire incidents.

"This tunnel is completely dry, which means not a single drop of water will be present in the entire tunnel. To make it dry we have a water proofing membrane behind the concrete walls. Behind the membrane there is a system which collects the water coming out from the mountains and takes it to a central drain. Once collected, the water is saved for captive use, such as fire fighting and construction activities. This water is rock water so it is completely safe for drinking as well," said Chandwar.

According to official statistics, the entire project was completed in five years and it was closely monitored by the Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways.

Chandwar, who was earlier with the National Highways Authority of India, said the tunnel also has a special drainage system to flush out water flowing in from the mountains and to use it for fire fighting and construction activities.

"We also face severe difficulties in taking the construction material inside and taking out the excavated material, as there were only two ways to enter the tunnel. The third challenge was to maintain the ventilation system for the workers inside as they should get enough oxygen. We were compelled to install ventilation ducts and fans," said Chandwar.

The National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (NHIDCL) has also decided to replicate the technology for the upcoming 14 km Zoji La tunnel, between Leh and Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir. – IANS

Muslim dancer performs as Lord Krishna

JALPAIGURI (WB), April 2: A young Muslim dancer has mesmerised the audience by his performance as Lord Krishna at a programme celebrating 150th birth anniversary of Sister Nivedita, organised by the Ramakrishna Mission here.

Imran Sheikh, who came from Assam as a member of the Rangprabha Dance Academy to take part in the 4-day programme, danced on the themes of 'Dashavatara' and 'Krishna Leela'.

Asked about taking part in a Hindu religious programme, Sheikh said, "I am an artiste and an artiste does not have any religion or caste."

Ramakrishna and Vivekananda had taught about unity of all faiths, the 18-year-old dancer said.

He also took part in Satyra, a classical dance form originated in Assam and was attributed to 15th century Vaishnava saint Sri-Sravana-Sankaradev.

"Humanism is the best religion. Ramakrishna and Vivekananda never taught religion of gods or goddesses. They strove for the development of the country and its people," secretary of Jalpaiguri Ramakrishna Mission, Swami Shabaprmananda said.

The four-day sesquicentennial programme of Sister Nivedita concludes today. – PTI

AAP seeks validation of all VVPAT enabled EVMs

CHANDIGARH, April 2: Leader of Opposition in Punjab Vidhan Sabha, HS Phoolka today said all the electronic voting machines used with Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) system should be validated and asked Congress to support the party's issue.

To incident of default setting of an EVM-linked with VVPAT to the BJP symbol during trial for Assembly bypoll of Bhind in Madhya Pradesh has vindicated the AAP's allegation that the EVMs were tampered with by the ruling party, he said.

"AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal had brought the matter to the notice of Chief Election Commissioner of India but no heed was paid," he added. Phoolka said that the AAP and the Congress had demanded use of ballot paper in the polls to the three municipal corporations in Delhi but the Delhi Election Commission had turned down the demand.

Treating it as "moral duty" of the Congress to support AAP for validation of all EVMs used with VVPAT in the Assembly elections, he said that alleged tampering of EVMs was bigger conspiracy to hijack the election system and a serious threat to democracy in India by the BJP.

Phoolka said that all opposition parties should take unified stand on the issue to save the democracy. – PTI

Modi pitches for use of IT for speedy delivery of justice

ALLAHABAD, April 2:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today advocated the use of technology for speedy delivery of justice and assured CJI JS Khehar that the government will make all efforts to back his resolve to reduce pendency of cases.

He also asked startups to come up with innovations that could aid the judicial system to dispose of cases expeditiously.

"The government wants that the judicial system of our country makes full use of information and communication technology. This should be given priority," he said, noting, "This can help save a lot of time and money."

Addressing a function to mark 150 years of the Allahabad High Court, Modi said, "I assure the chief justice that government will back his sanksarp (resolve) to bring down the burden on the judiciary and reduce pendency of cases."

He also said video-conferencing should be used for deposition made in courts by defendants, witnesses and officials to prevent wastage of time and money.

"So many precious hours of officials, which should have been spent doing administrative tasks, get used up in trav-

elling to far-off places to appear in courts. This can be obviated through video-conferencing," he said.

The Prime Minister noted that security concerns associated with physical production of underts in courts could be addressed by use of video-conferencing.

Many unfortunate incidents have taken place in Uttar Pradesh during transportation of underts to courts but with Yogi Adityanath as chief minister, there may be a drop in such incidents, Modi remarked, evoking praise of the prime minister.

The PM recalled that during the 2014 Lok Sabha poll campaign he had said that he would abolish archaic laws if elected and the government has now done away with 1,200 redundant laws.

The proposed rules, aimed at replacing RTI rules of 2012, have been placed by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) on its website for comments from public.

"It is in the interest of justice that the people of the country are liberated from this huge, complicated tangle of laws," he said.

Quoting the address of the then president S Radhakrishnan at the centenary celebrations of the high court five decades back, Modi said every law must ensure justice and welfare of all, not just the rich and those principle remains relevant. – PTI



The 9km long Chenani-Nashri tunnel in Jammu and Kashmir, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi will dedicate to the nation after a 15-day trial, on Sunday evening. – UNI

Govt proposes new RTI draft rules

NEW DELHI, April 2: The

government has proposed a new set of rules for processing Right to Information applications, complaints and appeals and has sought suggestions from the public by April 15.

The proposed rules, aimed at replacing RTI rules of 2012, have been placed by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) on its website for comments from public.

"The time given is too less. There is no official press release in this regard as well. How will people know that something like this is placed on website for them to give opinion?" RTI activist Commodore

(Retd) Lokesha Batra told PTI.

A major proposal now allows the Central Information Commission (CIC) to convert a complaint into second appeal which would mean it can order the disclosure of information to an applicant who has come under complaint clause of the RTI Act which was not the case earlier.

"The Commission may in its discretion allow a prayer for any amendment of a complaint during the course of its hearing, including conversion of the complaint into second appeal, if available remedies have been exhausted, on a prayer made by the complainant," the draft

rules state.

The Supreme Court had held in one of its orders that Section 18 of the RTI Act provides for complaint while Section 19 of the RTI Act provides mechanism of second appeal.

It had said that the CIC while hearing a plea under complaint clause cannot order disclosure of the information which can only be provided if the person is approaching it under second appeal or section 19 of the Act.

Another provision says that the proceedings before the Commission will abate in case of death of the appellant.

The new draft rules also direct the Commission to use its dis-

cretion for allowing withdrawal of appeal or a complaint if appellant requests but such requests cannot be entertained once the matter has been decided by it.

Some RTI activists have objected to such suggestions by the government in the past saying information seekers may be coerced by people with vested interests and may even be killed as the information against them cannot be ordered to be disclosed in such cases.

The rules also introduce provisions like providing a copy of complaint and appeal to the Central Public Information Officer before approaching the CIC. – PTI

Alliance Air to triple its fleet

NEW DELHI, April 2: Alliance Air, the regional arm of Air India, plans to triple its fleet this fiscal by inducting 20 more ATR aircraft amid an increased focus on enhancing connectivity to underserved and unserved airports.

Over the next two years, Alliance Air aims to expand its fleet to 50 ATAR aeroplanes, Air India CMD Ashwani Lohani said.

"We will induct 10 ATR 72-600 planes in September. We plan to lease another 10 ATR aircraft within this financial year. In the following year, we hope to procure another 10 to 20 ATRs," he said.

"We will be operating flights to enhance regional connectivity, and (only) some of them will be part of UDAN. We are very aggressive about this," Lohani said while interacting with mediapersons.

Air India is also procuring a new ATR 72-600 simulator,

which will be operational in October, to train its pilots for flying these aircraft. This will replace the Airbus A320 simulator at its Central Training Establishment in Hyderabad.

"So far, Alliance Air has been sending its pilots for training to Toulouse, Singapore and Bangkok. This is a costly and time consuming exercise. These pilots can now train at our facility in Hyderabad," Captain Amitabh Singh, Executive Director (Training), Air India told PTI.

Alliance Air, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Air India, currently provides flight services to 34 tier-two and tier-three cities via Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad. – PTI



A health worker administers oral polio vaccine drops to a child at a centre in Srinagar during the National Pulse Polio drive for children up to five years of age, on Sunday. – UNI



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being received by the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir NN Vohra and Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti on his arrival in Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday. – UNI

40 years of bloodshed benefitted none, PM to Kashmiri youth

UDHAMPUR (J&K), April 2: Sending

a message to the misguided youth of Kashmir, Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said "40 years of bloodshed" has not benefitted anyone and that they should choose tourism over terrorism to ensure the State's development and well-being.

He again invoked former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's slogan of 'Kashmiriyat, Jamhooriyat, Insaniyat' (Kashmirism, democracy and humanity) and said this "prime motto" will be used for taking the State to new heights of development and "no obstacle can stop us".

Modi, who was on a brief visit here to inaugurate the country's longest road tunnel between Kashmir and Jammu, used the occasion to tell the stone-pelters of the valley that stones can be used for better purposes than building infrastructure.

Addressing a rally here, he told the Kashmiri youth that if they ignore the "invalidable tradition of suff culture", they would

"lose the present and put your future into darkness".

In a veiled manner, the Prime Minister also hit out at the rulers of Pakistan who are eyeing Kashmir, saying "they can't even take care of themselves". He said his government was committed to ensure fast-paced development of Jammu and Kashmir, which would also tell the people living under "occupation" in the other parts of the State that they are being destroyed.

At the event attended by Governor NN Vohra, Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti and some Union and State ministers, Modi promised to stand shoulder-to-shoulder in the development of Jammu and Kashmir and sought the cooperation of the people in this regard.

"I want to tell the misguided youth of Kashmir Valley, realise the power of a state. On one hand, there are some misguided youth who sell stones, on the other hand, there are youth from the same Kashmir who carve stones to build infrastructure," he said.



The message was clearly for the youth who are indulge in stone-pelting in the Kashmir Valley and thus risk their lives. "I want to tell the Kashmiri youth, there are two paths in front of you which can determine your future – one is tourism, the other is terrorism," he said. "Over last 40 years, there has been lot of bloodshed. My own valley has been blood-soaked, my Kashmir's beloved youth, my Hindustan's beloved youth. Nobody has benefitted from this bloodshed," the Prime Minister emphasised.

He said if the people of Kashmir had devoted the same 40 years to development of tourism, the valley would have been blessed with tourism of world class.

Modi said whenever the mention of Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh comes, remembrance Vajpayee was inevitable as he gave the slogan of 'Kashmiriyat, Jamhooriyat and Insaniyat'.

"Using the same prime motto, we will move ahead with harmony, with brother-

hood, with strong will and determination for the brighter future of the youth," he said, amid repeated chants of "Modi, Modi".

The Prime Minister said development will be pushed further in all three parts of Jammu and Kashmir State – Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh.

He showered praises on Mehbooba and her government, in which his party, the BJP, is a partner, saying more than half of the Rs 80,000 crore package given by the Centre over a year back has already been spent in such a short span of time. "Otherwise the packages remain on the paper only," he said while complimenting the Chief Minister.

Modi said the State had the potential to have the highest per capita income and to realise this, the people need to walk with the government, shoulder-to-shoulder. "Development is the only mantra," he said and emphasised the importance of 'Jan Bhagidari' (people's cooperation) and taking the youth along. – PTI



The single screen saga

Single screens were once the ultimate film hubs: Hand-painted posters, serpentine ticket queues, affordable *samosas* and popcorn, and silver and golden jubilee celebrations. All this has become a rarity now – as rare as single-screen theatres themselves in one of the largest film-producing nations in the world.

One wonders what the future holds for single screens.

Kamal Gianchandani, CEO, PVR Pictures, one of the largest players in India's film exhibition market, told IANS: "There are single screens which have really maintained themselves and stayed contemporary in terms of technology. So, it won't be fair to say single screens will completely disappear."

But clearly, some single screens which do not invest in technology and comfort, would find sustaining themselves tougher and tougher as we move forward. But there will always be space for single screens."

One of the greatest challenges that the \$2-billion Indian film industry now faces is low screen density,

said to be just eight screens per one million people.

To tackle that, "more screens is the way forward – multiplexes or single screens,"

Gianchandani said.

He stressed that basics like hygiene, comfort, safety and security will be increasingly important for the movie viewer visiting cinema halls. The frills, of course, come later – and come with a ticket price to match what is offered.

At PVR, he said, the average ticket price stands at Rs 195 across India – opposed to the "myth that ticket prices are expensive".

All that kept aside, where's the "janta cinema", asks film distributor Jignesh Mahajan, who wonders where the poor man will go to watch films.

"All producers are busy making films for the multiplexes, which attracts the gentry. There are very few films for the audience that comes to single screens," Mahajan said. Regd's Chowdhary agrees, noting that only films like *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, *Sultan* and *Dangal* managed decent business at his theatre in recent times. – IANS

Credit it to limited content and programming flexibility, low occupancy and poor revenue realisation from the food-beverages and advertising streams. Not to forget an inability to keep up with fast-evolving sound and projection technology.

Know your DAY

By JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Monday, April 3, 2017:

This year you meet many different people from various walks of life. Be willing to learn from those who have experienced life from a different cultural perspective. Observe a tendency to act out if feeling frustrated. If you are single, you could meet several potential suitors. Do not push yourself into a choice, but just go along. It may be better to attach yourself to two or three whom either's company is a lot. Your sweetest promise to be very lucky for you. CANCER can be unusually emotional, which often irritates you.

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

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

Let your good fortune help you in a financial deal that you would not expect through New information might be coming to light. You might find that this situation could cost you more than you initially had thought. If you need to do so, do. Tonight: Happy to head home.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Speak your mind, and others will respond accordingly. A friendly attitude will help suppress some anger, which seems to be arising from out of nowhere. Listen to advice from an expert, especially if it involves your health and daily life. Tonight: Meet up with a friend.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

Opportunities open up as a result of your ingenuity. Know that you might be asked to do something that sounds a bit crazy, but it involves the right person. Tonight: Meet up with a friend.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

You could be at your wits end with a difficult associate. You might be asked to do something that sounds a bit crazy, but it involves the right person. Tonight: Meet up with a friend.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

Your interest in a professional or community leader might bring you closer to him/her. Tonight: You're more likely to networking with topics that you care about. Several people will reach out to you in order to get your feedback. Tonight: Consider vanishing for a bit.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

Zero in on associations and friends. You will want to expand his/her social circle. You will seek support in your life. Realize just how important this is to you. Dedicate more time to networking and socializing. Know that anything can happen. Tonight: Where the action is.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

You are on top of your professional game right now. A friend or associate often makes you feel as if he or she has better ideas than you. Ignorance is your new form. Your optimism and good luck come through for you, adding power to your ideas. Tonight: In the limeight.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

Don't let your partner be on the warpath. Holding this back will be close to impossible, as he or she seems to need to air his or her quarks and thoughts in general. Do not make judgments about his or her issues. Tonight: Remain responsive, even if you don't want to.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Deal directly with a partner who can support you in what is likely to be a hassle of some sort. The two of you can clear out a problem with greater speed than just one of you. A meeting will test your ideas and abilities. Tonight: All's well that ends well.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Defer to others, as they seem to want control. You will take a stand, and your opinions will be remembered. You could be overwhelmed by what is happening. Think through any actions carefully, and try not to add any confusion to the mix. Tonight: Go along with a friend's plans.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

You might want to have a long-overdue conversation. A family member or a domestic situation could be dominant and irritating. Detach, and get more facts before coming to any conclusions. Check out an investment with care. Tonight: Head to the gym for some exercise.

PISCES (Feb. 19-Mar. 18)

Your imagination fuels much of what is going on at the present moment. At least you are not bored, but be aware that some of the conjured-up images in your mind could be off. In that case, consider keeping them to yourself. A partner comes through for you. Tonight: All smiles.

Thought of the day

Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.

– JOB

Kids CN

MUSIC COOL

PLAY

ZOO

Entertainment

StarPlus

colors

22:00 Time After Time

22:30 Two and a Half Men

23:00

Kids

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Colombia mudslides kill 206, sweep away homes



MOCOA (Colombia), April 2: Mudslides killed at least 206 people and left hundreds injured or missing after destroying homes in southern Colombia, officials have said.

They were the latest victims of floods that have struck the Pacific side of South America over recent months, also killing scores of people in Peru and Ecuador.

In the southwestern Colombian town of Mocoa, the surge swept away houses, bridges, vehicles and trees, leaving piles of wrecked timber and brown mud, army images from the area showed. The mudslides struck late Friday after days of torrential rain in the Amazon basin area town of 40,000.

"The latest information we have is that there are 206 people

confirmed dead, 202 injured, 220 missing, 17 neighbourhoods hit hard," Colombian Red Cross chief Cesar Urueña told AFP yesterday.

President Juan Manuel Santos visited Mocoa, the capital of Putumayo department, yesterday to supervise rescue efforts in the heavily forested region.

He declared a public health and safety emergency to speed up rescue and aid operations. He also expressed his condolences to victims' families.

Putumayo Governor Sorrel Aroca called the development "unprecedented tragedy" for the area.

There are "hundreds of families we have not yet found and

whole neighbourhoods have disappeared," he told W Radio.

Carlos Ivan Marquez, director of the National Disaster Risk Management Unit, told AFP the mudslides were caused by the rise of the Mocoa River and tributaries.

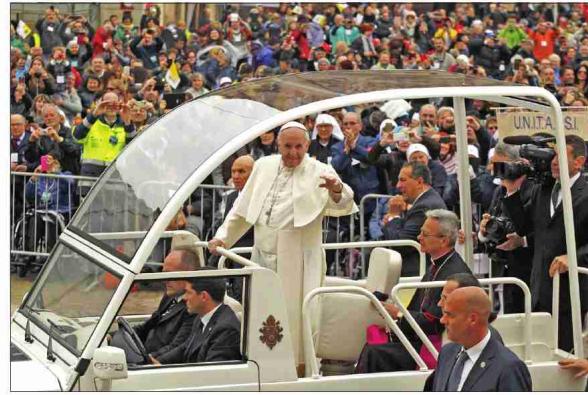
The rivers flooded causing a "big avalanche," the army said in a statement.

Some 130 millimetres of rain fell Friday night, Santos said.

"That means 30 per cent of monthly rainfall fell on last night, which precipitated a sudden rise of several rivers," he said.

He promised earlier on Twitter to "guarantee assistance to the victims of this tragedy, which has Colombians in mourning."

—AFP



Pope Francis waves to the faithful from popemobile as he arrives to celebrate a Holy Mass in Carpi, Italy on Sunday. —UNI

Around the WORLD

Laziness may be contagious: study

LOUISVILLE, April 2: Do you have lazy friends or coworkers? Their attitude can rub off on you, according to a new study which shows that people tend to imitate behaviours of laziness, impatience and prudence.

Prudence, impatience and laziness are personality traits that guide how people make decisions that involve taking a risk, delaying an action and making an effort, said Jean Daunizeau, from the Brain and Spine Institute (ICM) in France. Prudence is a preference for avoiding risk, and impatience is a preference for options that involve little delay and a strong desire for a payoff now rather than later.

Lazy people are those who determine that the potential rewards are not worth the effort.

In the study, the researchers recruited 56 healthy people. To measure the participants' attitude toward risk, delay and effort, they were given a series of tasks.

Participants were asked to choose between a 90 per cent chance of winning a small payoff in three days or a higher payoff in three months with lower odds.

They were then asked to guess "someone else's" decisions on a similar task, and after making a selection, they were then told which choice this "other" participant had made. —PTI

Heartfelt tribute



LOS ANGELES, April 2: Pop diva Mariah Carey paid a touching tribute to George Michael with a cover of his song "One More Try."

The singer performed the tune, off Michael's 1987 album *Faith*, at her concert in Dubai, reported *Us* magazine.

Dressed in a sequined black gown, Carey called the ballad "one of his greatest records."

"I always loved it. I

always loved him. He was a really great person," she said.

The Grammy winner asked the audience to shine their cell-phone lights in honor of Michael. She took a deep sigh before singing, saying, "We'll make it through this."

"We miss you, George Michael" Carey wrote on Facebook, captioning video of the cover which she called "my heartfelt tribute." —PTI

Indonesia destroys 81 foreign vessels

JAKARTA, April 2: Indonesian authorities have destroyed 81 foreign vessels that were captured fishing illegally in the country's waters.

The ships were blown up at sea in 12 locations around the archipelago yesterday.

Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Susi Pudjiastuti, who witnessed the sinking of two ships in the port of Ambon in Maluku province, said Indonesia was upholding its sovereignty and combating illegal fishing.

Indonesia has now sunk 317 foreign fishing vessels since 2014, when it began taking a tougher stance against illegal fishing in its waters.

Most of the vessels are from Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand. —AP

No protection for speech inciting violence: Judge to Trump

LOUISVILLE, April 2: A federal judge has rejected President Donald Trump's free speech defence against a lawsuit accusing him of inciting violence against protesters at a campaign rally.

Trump's lawyers sought to dismiss the lawsuit by three protesters who say they were roughed up by his supporters at a March 1, 2016 rally in Louisville, Kentucky. They argued that Trump didn't intend for his supporters to use force.

Two women and a man say they were shoved and punched by audience members at Trump's command. Much of it was captured on video and widely broadcast during the campaign, show-

ing Trump pointing at the protesters and repeating "get them out."

Judge David J Hale in Louisville ruled on Friday that the suit against Trump, his campaign and three of his supporters can proceed.

Hale found ample facts supporting allegations that the protesters' injuries were a "direct and proximate result" of Trump's actions, and noted that the Supreme Court has ruled out constitutional protections for speech that incites violence.

"It is plausible that Trump's direction to 'get 'em out of here' advocated the use of force," the judge wrote. "It was an order, an instruction, a command."

Plaintiffs Kashiya Nwangoa, Molly Shah and Henry Brousseau allege that they were physically attacked by several members of the audience, including Matthew Heimbach, Alvin Bamberg and an unnamed defendant they have yet to be identified.

Bamberg later apologized to the Korean War Veterans Association whose uniform he wore at the rally. He wrote that he "physically pushed a young woman down the aisle toward the exit" after "Trump kept saying 'get them out, get them out,'" according to the lawsuit.

Heimbach, for his part, sought to dismiss the lawsuit's discussion of his association with a white nationalist group

Two get death term for B'deshi blogger's death

DHAKA, April 2: The High Court here on Sunday confirmed the death sentence for two persons and different terms in jail for six others for killing Bangladeshi blogger Ahmed Rajib Haider.

The two death row convicts are Redwanul Azad Rana and Faisal Bin Nayem alias Dweep, the *Daily Star* reported.

Rana is also the main suspect in writer-blogger Avijit Roy's killing.

Blogger Rajib, who was an activist of Shahbag movement and used to write against Jamaat-Shibir and war criminals on different blogs under the pseudonym Thaba Baba, was hacked to death near his Mirpur house in the capital on February 15, 2013.

On December 31, 2015, a Dhaka court handed down death penalty to the duo while handing down different terms in jail to the six persons, including chief of banned militant outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT), for killing Rajib.

Among the jailed convicts, ABT chief Mufti Jasimuddin Rahmani, 45, was awarded five-year jail term as he was found guilty of provoking Rajib's murder through his sermons.

Five other convicts – Makhdul Hasan alias Anuk, Ehsan Reza Rumman, Nafis Imtiaz, Nayem Sikdar Irad and Sadman Yasir Mahmud – were also students of a private university in 2013. –IANS

2 dead, 26 missing in Indonesia landslide

JAKARTA, April 2: At least two people were killed and 26 were feared buried under heavy mud after a landslide struck Indonesia, the national disaster agency said today.

Nineteen people were also injured when the landslide slammed into 32 houses in the village of Banaran in Ponorogo district, East Java on Saturday morning. Search and rescue teams were searching for missing people but heavy rain on Sunday afternoon forced them to stop, the national disaster agency spokesman said.

"The challenge is the road to the disaster zone is very narrow... And there are many cars now because people want to watch, so they hinder the mobility of the team," national disaster agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho said. —AFP

20 murdered in Pak shrine

LAHORE, April 2: At least 20 people, including six members of a family, were tortured and killed at a shrine allegedly by its "mentally ill" custodian and his associates in Sargodha in Pakistan's Punjab province.

Sargodha Deputy Commissioner Liaquat Ali Chatta said the incident took place at the dargah (shrine) of Muhammad Ali Gugar in a village in Sargodha district, some 200 km from Lahore, at around midnight yesterday.

The custodian Abdul Waheed, who was apparently suffering from mental disease, used a dagger and stuck to kill his victim, he said.

Chatta said it appeared that

the caretakers of the dargah had first drugged the visitors, stripped them and then stabbed and clubbed 20 people, including three women, to death.

Police official Mazhar Shah said that the motive behind the crime has not been ascertained yet but locals have said that from last two years the suspect used to visit the area for "spiritual sessions" with the disciples.

"We have taken five people, including the caretakers of the dargah – Waheed and Yousef, into custody for interrogation," Chatta said. Three persons, including two women, have been injured. They have been shifted to hospital where their condition is stated to be critical.

People would come to the dargah for "cleansing" their sins and allow the caretakers to beat them with clubs.

"But in this case the visitors were first drugged and then stabbed with daggers and hit with clubs, apparently during the cleansing process," Chatta said.

He said that the prime suspect, a resident of Lahore, is an employee of the Election Commission of Pakistan.

According to senior police officer Bilal Itthkar, one injured witness also said there was a clash between two groups of the caretakers of the dargah over its possession. —PTI

YANGON, April 2: Official results from Myanmar's election committee show that Aung San Suu Kyi's ruling National League for Democracy party has retained voters' loyalty in its Yangon strongholds, but has weakened in ethnic minority areas that helped boost her party's 2015 landslide general election victory.

The results released for Saturday's by-elections show the NLD taking eight of 12 seats provided a full and free pardon," LePage said in a statement.

"I feel that Dakota is a dog that deserves a second chance, and we're appreciative that she's going to get that, and that the Governor is taking an interest in her," Lisa Smith with the Humane Society was quoted as saying.

The Maine Constitution gives chief executives wide latitude to "grant reprieves, commutations and pardons" and species is not specified. Kennebunk County District Attorney Maeghan Maloney said her office was "researching" the Republican governor's authority. —PTI

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for the combined upper houses of the national parliament.

It won only one of seven seats at stake in state assemblies, where ethnic-focused parties performed strongly.

The NLD won its 2015 election majority with the support of ethnic minorities anxious to end five decades of military rule,

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It won only one of seven seats at stake in state assemblies, where ethnic-focused parties performed strongly.

The NLD won its 2015 election majority with the support of ethnic minorities anxious to end five decades of military rule,

but Suu Kyi's failure so far to meet their political demands for greater autonomy has fractured their united front. —AP

The results released for Saturday's by-elections show the NLD taking eight of 12 seats

for the

Di Maria sparkles as PSG retain League Cup

LYON, April 2: Angel Di Maria scored one goal and set up two more as Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) thrashed Monaco 4-1 to lift the French League Cup for the fourth successive season.

Julian Draxler fired PSG ahead with just four minutes played in the final in Lyon, but Thomas Lemar levelled for Monaco before the half hour.

Argentine international Di Maria restored the lead for Unai Emery's side a minute before half-time and Edinson Cavani sealed a record seventh title for PSG with a clinical second-half brace.

"We've had some difficult times, but we haven't given up. We've proved we're a great side. I think it's a deserved win and we can celebrate a bit," midfielder Marco Verratti told Canal+.

"In four years here we've won everything. We have a great team and this is a victory for everyone involved. The league title is our goal now and we'll give it our all until the finish."

After the shock of their European League last 16 collapse against Barcelona in the second leg, a third meeting with Ligue 1 leaders Monaco this season presented an opportunity for redemption for PSG.

Monaco's Radamel Falcao failed to shake off a nagging hip injury that has sidelined the Colombian since March 11, but Thiago Motta returned to the PSG line-up for his first start in six weeks.

PSG have dominated the competition in recent seasons – Monaco's last major trophy came when they won the 2003 final – and the holders stormed into an early lead albeit in controversial circumstances.



Paris Saint-Germain players celebrate with the trophy after winning the French League Cup final against Monaco at the Parc Olympique Lyonnais in Decines-Charpieu on Saturday.

Verratti slipped Di Maria in behind the defence, with the Argentine electing to unselfishly slide the ball across for Draxler to tap home.

Replays showed the Germany international was marginally offside, although unlike in Tuesday's international between France and Spain where a video assistant referee was used in the country for the first time there was no such help available at Parc OL.

Indian women's hockey team beat Uruguay

WEST VANCOUVER (Canada), April 2: The Indian women's team beat Uruguay 4-2 in the penalty shootout to begin their campaign in the Women's Hockey World League Round 2 on a winning note here.

Skipper Rani, Monika, Deepika and Navjot Kaur held their nerves to score in the tense penalty shootout that saw them through after the two sides were locked 2-2 at the end of the regulation time.

India got off to a good start and took the lead with skipper Rani scoring as early as in the sixth minute.

India held on to the lead till the third quarter but Uruguay struck their first goal in the 45th minute to equalise through Maria Teresa Viana Ache.

After a quick two-minute break before the final quarter began, a few key variations brought in by India chief coach Sjoerd Marjine saw Vandana Kataria convert a fine field goal in the 49th minute to take 2-1 lead. – PTI

No reserve day for IPL Play-offs

NEW DELHI, April 2: The three Play-offs of the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) will not have any reserve days, the BCCI announced today.

The first qualifier is scheduled for May 16 in Mumbai while the second qualifier will be played on May 19 in Bengaluru.

Bengaluru will also host the Eliminator on May 19.

The final, to be played on May 21 in Hyderabad, has May 22 as reserve day.

The 10th edition of the League, starting April 5, will be broadcast on Sun Pictures Network. – PTI

Everyone needs to fill in for Russell's absence: Gambhir

NEW DELHI, April 2: Two-time champions Kolkata Knight Riders will be missing their key all-rounder Andre Russell but skipper Gautam Gambhir wants his team to treat the Jamaican's absence as an "opportunity in bold letters" during the upcoming Indian Premier League.

The flamboyant Russell has been handed a one-year ban for violating anti-doping whereabouts regulations and KKR now have England's Chris Woakes as a like-for-like replacement picked from the auctions.

"There are two ways to look at such situations in life. Either we can see Russell's absence as a challenge or look at it as an opportunity in bold letters," said Gambhir.

PTI during an interview.

Asked if Woakes could fill in for Russell as a batsman, Gambhir gave an interesting answer.



"Maybe a combination of Manish Pandey's batting and Ankit Rajput's bowling can get us what Russell did. Not only Woakes but the entire team need to fill in for Russell and for that you don't necessarily need an all-rounder. May be some other pair can do this," said Gambhir.

The seasoned opener doesn't believe it helps brooding when one is a leader. "I better be looking at glass half full," he said.

Gambhir reckons that the core Indian group of batsmen like Manish Pandey, Surya Kumar Yadav and Robin Uthappa will have to take more responsibility on a relay Eden travel where pacers will have more advantage.

"From a track that used to favour spinners, it now has good deal of pace and bounce in it. With that as a background, battoning has to be top-class. The rival team fast bowlers will come hard at us and we have to be ready for that."

Talking about pace on Eden Gardens track, New Zealander Trent Boult's presence would certainly add variety to KKR's bowling. – PTI

Mustafizur is expected to arrive on April 7: Moody

HYDERABAD, April 2: Sunrisers Hyderabad coach Tom Moody today said that Bangladesh's left-arm pace sensation Mustafizur Rahaman is expected to join the franchise on April 7 after playing the final match of the limited overs series against Sri Lanka. There were unconfirmed reports that said that this 'cutter master' will be available during this season of IPL after playing a major role for his country this season.

"At this stage, we are expecting him to come. We have not had any official word in any other way. We are expecting him to be here on (April) 7th. Unless, we hear differently from BCB, we will continue to expect him," he said.

Sunrisers Hyderabad takes on Royal Challengers Bangalore on April 5 in the inaugural match which Mustafizur will be missing. – PTI

With this win, Paez clinched his 20th ATP Challenger title. Paez has now won at least one title every year for the past 26 years.

Paes wins first title of season in Challenger tournament

LEON (Mexico), April 2: Leander Paes today won his first title of the season, combining with Canadian Adil Shamasdin to lift the Leon Challenger tournament's men's doubles trophy after a straight-set triumph here.

Paes, who was named a reserve in India's Davis Cup team for the Uzbekistan tie, and Shamasdin defeated Luca Margaroli (Switzerland) and Caro Zampieri (Brazil) 6-1, 6-4 in the title clash at the USD 75,000 hard court event.

With this win, Paes clinched his 20th ATP Challenger title. Paez has now won at least one title every year for the past 26 years.

It was Paes' first final this season. He had earlier reached the semifinals of Dubai Championships and

with South African Raven Klaasen.

Paes' last Grand Slam in the men's doubles event came in 2013 with Radek Stepanek at the US Open while in mixed doubles, he is still a force, winning three titles with Martina Hingis in 2015 and the French Open last season. Paes was named a reserve along with Rohan Bopanna by new non-playing captain Mahesh Bhupathi, who picked four singles players in the squad.

Bhupathi has said that he may pick either Paes or Bopanna, if required, as a doubles specialist in the tie, slated for April 7-9 in Bengaluru. – PTI

We will have solid bench strength in four years: Gopichand

NEW DELHI, April 2: Olympic silver-medallist Pullela Gopichand will take Indian badminton through to at least the next four years, feels national coach Pullela Gopichand, who foresees a strong bench-strength emerging at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.

Gopichand, who shined India and Olympic bronze-medallist Saina Nehwal among others, believes it will take some time for the next big star to emerge.

"Sindhu is just 21 and I think she will take us through for the next few years and by the time she is 25, we will have a new star. I don't want to wish a junior name right now, but I can assure you that four years from now we will have solid bench-strength in women's singles," said Gopichand.

"It will take a little time, we have prospects like Rutvika and Rituparna, who also have the potential of doing well. There are others in the ranks. I think it is not easy to produce players back to back."

Asked about the doubles players, Gopichand said: "I think we can say that Pranaav and Sindhu have done well and Chirag and Satwik are there."

"There are at least 6-7 players under the age of 20 who have the potential to do well, so overall good signs for Indian

badminton," he added.

Talked about Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, who recently won their fifth International challenger title

matches give them a lot of confidence and they are developing very well.

Indian shuttlers have been plagued by a series of injuries and Gopichand advised:

midterm things got a bit messed up last year due to the Olympic qualification, but the Indian players have shown that we messed up a bit a little bit in terms of the number of tournaments ahead of the Olympic qualification because a couple of them played more tournaments because of the Rio Games. But this season it would be better," he said.

"I don't think injuries are a cause of concern. It is a learning curve. Each of them is learning about themselves. Muhammed Hanif is also working on the players, he has done a lot for the players."

Asked about the status of Glasgow Commonwealth Games champion Parupalli Kashyap, who has been going through a long injury lay-off, Gopichand said: "Kashyap is fine and he should play in China Open in two weeks' time."

Asked about his life post-Olympics, Gopichand said: "Fortunately or unfortunately, the Olympics have made my life a little tougher in terms of my schedule, so I have not been able to give much time to all projects. I think a lot still needs to be done in every department." – PTI

Mortaza gets one match suspension

DUBLI, April 2: Bangladesh one-day captain Mashrafe Mortaza was today suspended for one match and fined 40 per cent of his match fee for maintaining slow over-rate during the third ODI against Sri Lanka in Colombo on Saturday.

Mortaza's teammates were fined 20 per cent of their match fees, ICC said in a release.

Bangladesh was ruled to be two overs short of its target after time allowances were taken into consideration.

In accordance with Article 25.1 and Appendix 2 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Players Support Personnel, which deals with minor over-rate offences, players are fined 10 per cent of their match fees for every over of their side fails to bowl in the allotted time, with the captain fined double that amount.

As Mashrafe had previously been found guilty of a minor over-rate offence during the first ODI against New Zealand in Christchurch on December 26, 2016, this offence constituted his second minor over-rate offence within a 12-month period which has led to a suspension.

The suspension means Mashrafe will miss his side's next ODI.

Andy Tysoff of the Elite Panel of ICC Match Referees imposed the suspension while the charge was laid by on-field umpires Michael Gough and Ruchir Pathak, third umpire S Ravindran and fourth official Ramiro Martinez. – PTI

Atletico brush aside Malaga to usurp 3rd spot from Sevilla

MADRID, April 2: Atletico Madrid leaptfrogged Sevilla into third place in La Liga as goals from Koke and Filipe Luis secured a 2-0 win at struggling Malaga on Saturday. In a game of few chances, Atletico were by a distance the more clinical side to register a fourth straight La Liga win.

Sevilla can move back into third on Sunday when they host Sporting Gijon. The top two are also in action on Sunday as leaders Real Madrid host Alaves, whilst Barcelona travel to Granada.

"We didn't make mistakes and when we got our chance in the second-half, Filipe finished it fantastically," said Atletico boss Diego Simeone. "The 2-0 (scoreline) makes it look like something it wasn't. I always felt there were difficulties and in danger."

Malaga remain winless in three games under new coach Michel to remain just six points above the drop zone. The hosts' struggles were summed up by a lack of punch in front of goal despite dominating posses-

sion for long spells.

Atletico by contrast are coming into form just at the right time of the season ahead of a huge April as they travel to meet Real in the Madrid derby

next weekend before facing Leicestershire City in the Champions League quarterfinals.

Koke sent an early warning when his low effort from 25 yards was well

held by Carlos Kameni.

However, the Spanish international netted for the second straight game when he latched onto Fernando Torres' turn at the edge of the box to

prod home from close range.

Clear chances were had to come thereafter as Jan Oblak easily saved Keko's ambitious backheeled attack of a lovely Malaga move.

Atletico sat back for the majority of the second-half happy to resist Malaga's powerplay attacks.

And the visitors took their chance to make the game safe 16 minutes from time when Luis was the beneficiary of another Torres assist as he dinked the ball over Kameni from a narrow angle.

Earlier, Villarreal and Real Sociedad once again slipped up in the fight for European places. Sociedad edged a point ahead of Villarreal in fifth despite being held 1-1 at home by Leganes.

Villarreal surrendered an early lead as Eibar maintained their hopes of qualifying for Europe for the first time with an impressive 3-2 win of El Madrigal.

Three points now separate fifth and eighth as Athletic Bilbao were also 2-1 victors at rock bottom Osasuna thanks to goals from Ariz Adur and Inaki Williams. – Agencies



Atletico Madrid's Koke celebrates after scoring against Malaga during the La Liga match at the La Rosaleda stadium in Malaga, on Saturday.

SU DO KU

			2	4	3	9
8	4	9			7	
6	3		7			4
7		4		6	2	1
2			7			3
9	3	1	2			5
4			1	6	8	
	5		8	1	7	
8	2	6	5			

Solution of last problem

Originating from Japan, 'su do ku' is a mind game and a puzzle that can be solved with proper reasoning and logic. It uses nine digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3x3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9 without repeating any.

