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GUWAHATI, SUNDAY, MAY 10, 2020

RN-1127/57 TECH/GH - 103/2018-2020, VOL. 82, NO. 125

COVID-19 strikes staffers inside White House

p5 Forest dept wakes up to fresh Amchang encroachment

p8

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Over 500 migrants from across India stuck in Dhubri

NEWS

4 Naxals shot

RAIPUR, May 9: Four wanted Naxals - who all carried rewards on their heads - and a police official were killed in an exchange of fire in Rajnandgaon district of Chhattisgarh, police said on Saturday. The incident took place on Friday night at Pardhauni village. located over 150 km from here. - PTI

Rhino killed

KAZIRANGA, May 9: The carcass of a rhino was recovered this evening at Duamari beel under Agaratoli range. Park director P Shivakumar said the horn was missing and the rhino was believed to have been killed twothree days back. Eight empty cartridges of AK series rifle were found on the spot. - Correspondent

Tag removed

GUWAHATI, May 9: The containment zone tag has been withdrawn from the Athgaon mosque and Athgaon kabarsthan areas here today as the areas had not reported any new case of COVID-19. The areas were declared containment zone on March 10. - Staff Reporter



nightmare Dr. Sanghamitra Bora ■ VAGRANT WORDS Dhruba Hazarika

Vastav Bora ■ MY SPACE

Plus all our regular features

JOCOSERIOUS



Not bulletproof jackets, now masks and sanitizers ensure protection!

Workers piling geobags on the Brahmaputra banks at Salmora in Majuli for protection from erosion, on Saturday. - UB Photos

www.assamtribune.com

Centre's advisory to NE states on returnees during lockdown

SPL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, May 9: The Centre on Saturday asked the northeastern states to ensure that the homebound migrant labourers and students and those returning from abroad are screened and quarantined as per guidelines and protocol laid down by the Ministry of Health and Familv Welfare and the Ministry of External Affairs.

As the northeastern states have international borders. the Centre advised them to take adequate measures in the border areas to prevent exposure by conducting screening of all individuals at entry points and follow quar-

Union Health Minister holds review meeting

antine protocol.

Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Dr Harsh Vardhan held a meeting with northeastern states to review preparedness and containment measures taken for COVID-19 management. The video conference was also attended by Minister of State for H&FW Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Mizoram Health Minister Dr R Lalthangliana, Arunachal Pradesh Health Minister Alo Libang and Assam Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Pijush Hazarika

along with senior officers from the eight states.

"It is a huge relief and very encouraging to see green zones in most of the northeastern states... Let us focus and work together by converting the orange zones to green zones, and maintain the protective status across the states," Dr Harsh Vardhan said.

During the detailed interaction with the northeastern states, the Central team highlighted various issues related to testing facilities, health infrastructure, surveillance, contact tracing, and also shared their best practices. "Political commitment at

the highest levels is leading the government's response against COVID-19. India is prepared and fighting with the pandemic through its various timely measures and sturdy systems of surveillance for the virus," Dr Harsh Vardhan said.

The Union Health Minister said with cohesive efforts of both the Centre and the states, an adequate number of dedicated COVID-19 hospitals as well as quarantine centres are being developed in the Northeast.

>> SEE PAGE 6

Dental hostel tagged containment zone

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 9: The Regional Dental College Hostel, which currently has 40 boarders, was today declared a containment zone after a PG student tested positive for COVID-19 last night.

Principal of the College Dr AC Bhuyan said Dr Deepa Deka of Nalbari had volunteered for COVID-19 duty and was deployed in the screening area of GMCH from April 25 to May 1, after which she was asked to go on self quarantine.

"After a doctor in the screening area tested positive a day before, we sent samples of four girls from our college who were also doing screening duty there. Deepa's result was positive for COVID-19, while the other three were negative," Dr Bhuyan said. Deepa is now admitted at GMCH, but doctors said she was healthy and had no symptoms.

The dental college was closed for treatment since the lockdown and only palliative care was being provided there.

The canteen has been shut and the hostel area was today declared a containment zone. Samples of all the 40 boarders – mostly PG

students and interns - have been sent for tests. All structures in and around the dental college and GMCH are being sanitized.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said samples of 529 staff of GMCH have been sent for tests. "We got the results of 357... all are negative. We are in the process of collecting the samples of other staff and patients," Sarma said.

Even though the test results are negative, the contacts of Dr Litikesh VS, who had tested positive for COVID-19, will have to be in quarantine for some days and go for another test after a week or so.

Ending speculations that if Guwahati could be put under orange zone category following the detection of five new positive cases, Sarma, citing the population of the city, said the government is averse to shutting down the district completely. "Instead, we will go for containment and buffer zone strategy, so that public inconvenience is minimum," he said.

No fresh COVID-19 case was detected today till evening. The total number of cases stands at 59. Thirty four have been discharged after treatment so far.

Singh hails 'disciplined' NE model of COVID-19 management ID-19, the entire Northeast "By tradition and by life-

NEW DELHI, May 9: The northeastern region, which has traditionally been disciplined, has emerged as the model of coronavirus management and the rest of the country should emulate it, Union minister Jitendra Singh said on Saturday.

He said people in the eight northeastern States - Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura and Assam - have been following the lockdown-related guidelines in letter and spirit.

style, people of northeastern region are civilised and disciplined. That is why they could very easily follow the lockdown guidelines. There has been no problem in ensuring implementation of the lockdown-related guidelines there," Singh said.

He said within six years of the Modi government, the northeastern region has emerged as the model for development for the entire country. "Similarly, during the lockdown due to COV-

has become model for the whole country to emulate it," he said, adding that the way people are adhering to these guidelines is commendable.

Singh said five northeastern States are free from this deadly virus now and Sikkim never had a single case throughout. "The spread of the deadly virus in the region by far has been contained by the support of people and the administration," he said.

> SEE PAGE 6

Existing BBCI patients to get therapy

R DUTTA CHOUDHURY

GUWAHATI, May 9: Though Dr B Borooah Cancer Institute here has been closed for new patients, chemotherapy and radio therapy for the existing patients will start from Monday, said the institute's director Dr AC Kataki.

Talking to The Assam Tribune, Dr Kataki said as treatment of the cancer patients cannot be overlooked, the institute has decided to carry on treatment of the existing patients from Monday. He said emergency services have been opened from today and treatment is also provided to 78 patients who are now admitted in the institute.

He said radiotherapy is given five days a week – from Monday to Friday, and the existing patients who have to get treatment would not suffer much. However, it is still not decided when the institute will be able to open the outpatient departments for treatment of new patients.

Dr Kataki said even during the lockdown period, the institute was providing chemotherapy and radio therapy, though the flow of patients came down by around 50 per cent as it was difficult for the patients to come to hospital.

Though treatment of the

existing patients will resume, Dr Kataki admitted that the patients might have to face some difficulties as the institute would have to function with only around one-third staff. The quarters of the institute have been marked as containment zone after the death of a 16-year-old girl due to COVID-19 and a number of doctors, nurses and other staff would not be able to at-

Stay at HOME Stay SAFE tend to their duties.

"Under the circumstances, the patients may have to face some problems and I appeal to all of them to bear with us in the troubled times. However, the institute will take all possible measures to reduce the hardship of the patients," he added.

Another problem that the institute is facing is that in some places, the staff of the hospital are quarantined though they did not have any history of coming into contact with the teenage girl who died in a quarter of the hospital. This has also created a new problem and may result in severe shortage of staff.

>> SEE PAGE 6

and send those to Rajbong-

shi. The cartoonist makes the

caricatures and return them

to the NGO, which then sends those to the donors,"

Kuldeep Das, secretary of

Shubham, told The Assam

Tribune.

Cancer patients from Mumbai to reach tomorrow STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 9: The cancer patients and their attendants, who are being brought to Guwahati from Mumbai in six buses, are scheduled to reach the city on Monday night.

Joint resident commissioner of Assam Bhawan, Mumbai, Devasish Sharma, who is accompanying the patients, said that 132 patients and attendants are travelling by bus and they are all fit and fine. "The only problem is that we have to stop the buses at frequent intervals that has slowed down our progress. But there is nothing to worry," he added.

discharge rules NEW DELHI, May 9: sation of patients based on

Govt revises patient

Coronavirus-infected patients developing severe illness or having compromised immunity will have to test negative through RT-PCR test before being discharged by a hospital, the Union health

Confirmed cases

clinical severity," the ministry said.

The death toll due to COVID-19 rose to 1,981 and the number of cases climbed to 59,662 on Saturday, registering an increase of 95

4,050,864

NGO charts unique way to induce people into donating

SIVASISH THAKUR

GUWAHATI, May 9: In a unique way to induce people into donating for the needy during the lockdown, a Barpeta-based NGO - Shubham - has undertaken an initiative under which the donor gets a caricature of his or her picture done by a reputed cartoonist as a token of gratitude.

The novelty of the endeavour has elicited response not just from Assam but also from many in other States as well as abroad. People from Delhi, Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Odisha – and from Nepal, Oman and the USA - have contributed to the cause.

The success of the endeavour is corroborated by the fact that it has been able to

attract over 150 donors within a short span time since it was launched. With the motto 'Your Pho-

to can bring a Smile', the NGO is reaching out to the

Supporting the needy

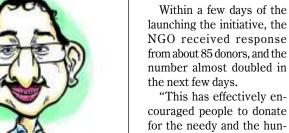
needy through donors who are happily donating and receiving a cartoon of his or her photograph as an acknowledgement of appreciation.

jbongshi who has volun-"We have roped in famous

Supporting the needs

teered to make the caricatures. We collect pictures of the donors through WhatsApp numbers and e-mail

cartoonist Nituparna Ra-



couraged people to donate for the needy and the hungry who are struggling to get food and other essential commodities during the COVID-19-induced nationwide lockdown. The poor will continue to be affected even after the lockdown is lifted, and we hope to continue with our efforts to reach out to the needy in this manner." he said.

Rajbongshi said he happily volunteered to make the caricatures in response to the noble initiative of the NGO to help poor families in distress.

"These are hard times for many who are not in a position to earn for the past oneand-a-half-months. If we can offer a small help for them through our humble work, it will mean a lot," he said.

A donor said that he was happy to be involved in the initiative to help the needy. "We are happy to contribute to a noble cause. And the caricature of mine I received from the eminent cartoonist is a beautiful bonus for me," he said.

ministry said in its revised deaths and 3,320 cases in the **COVID-19 STATUS**

WORLD

| Cured/Discharged | 1,406,107 | | | | |
|------------------|-----------|--|--|--|--|
| Death | 277,491 | | | | |
| INDIA | | | | | |
| Confirmed cases | 59,662 | | | | |
| Cured/Discharged | 17,847 | | | | |
| Death | 1,981 | | | | |
| ASSAM | | | | | |
| Confirmed cases | 59 | | | | |
| Cured/Discharged | 34 | | | | |
| | | | | | |

Data as on Saturday last 24 hours, according to the

discharge policy for COVID-19 cases on Friday. Moderate cases of COVID-

Death

19 and pre-symptomatic, mild and very mild cases need not undergo tests before being discharged after resolution of symptoms.

According to the rules till now, a patient was considered fit to be discharged if he or she tested negative on day 14 and then again in a span of 24 hours.

'The revised discharge policy is aligned with the guidelines on the 3 tier COV-ID facilities and the categori-

Union health ministry. The discharge criteria for

severe cases, including immune-compromised like HIV patients, transplant recipients, and those having malignancy will be based on clinical recovery and of patient tested negative once by RT-PCR (after resolution of symptoms), the revised policy stated.

Cases clinically classified as "moderate" will undergo monitoring of body temperature and oxygen saturation.

>> SEE PAGE 6

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Late Syed Eusufur Rahman Death: 10.05.2008

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Mrs. Jarjam Rahman and family members Saheb Tila, Guwahati

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resounding applause to ostra-

cisation and isolation. That's essentially the journev Lt Cmdr Robert Embleton, who served 34 years in Britain's Royal Navy, took by ambulance when discharged

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TENDER NOTICE

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NOTICE INVITING TENDER Sealed tenders are invited from well-established reputed Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) or authorized dealer for the Supply and Installation of Necessary Classroom furniture for new Academic Building of Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology (RGIPT), Assam Centre. The tender documents with details of T&C may be obtained from RGIPT, Assam Centre, Sivasagar, Vill: Gohain Gaon Sivasagar-785697, Dist.: Sivasagar (Assam) or can be downloaded from https://rgipt.ac.in/ from 11th May, 2020 onwards. The last date and time for submission of tender is 8th June, 2020; 12:00 PM.

CD/TN/BL000025/1

Virus leaves its mark on UK's elderly

Being ostracised

from Derriford Hospital in Plymouth, southwestern England, on April 8 following his near-month sickness

INTERNATIONAL ————

with COVID-19. Arriving at his retirement home, he immediately went into self-isolation with his wife of 55 years, Jean, who has shown no symptoms of the virus. Soon after, Embleton realized he was carrying some new baggage - the stigma of the virus. He even considered buying a bell to warn

of his presence.

"I was regarded as a sort of leper, a plague carrier. Some people when they spotted me, they recoiled," the 79-year-old told The Associated Press. "I was particularly regarded as a menace." That's some contrast to his final moments at Derriford Hospital, when the "somewhat embarrassed". Embleton received a round of applause from all the frontline staff from the cleaners to the

Robert Embleton

 $Embleton\,received\,an\,MBE$ honour from Queen Elizabeth II in 1993 for outstanding service to the Royal Navy. He un-

derstands the need to shield those elderly people with underlying conditions, but says those without serious health

"This is why the whole con-

cept of tests aren't necessari-

ly great," Trump said. "The

tests are perfect but some-

thing can happen between a

test where it's good and then

Derriford with the 57-year-

old Poorna Gunasekera when

much more "common sense." The prospect of this type of stigmatisation was something he had discussed in

they were in a ward together recovering from the virus. Gunasekera, who unbeknownst to Embleton was a doctor and had been treated by three of his former students, thanks the former naval officer for "single-handedly" lifting his spirits. The fact that Embleton had visited Gunasekera's hometown of Kandy, Sri Lanka, forged a connection, and the two have reconnected on Facebook since their brushes with death.

"I've always been a morale officer," Embleton explains.

Gunasekera remembers that all four in the ward shared the same anxiety of becoming fresh sources of outbreaks after leaving the hospital. – AP

Coronavirus strikes staffers inside the White House

WASHINGTON, May 9: Vice President Mike Pence's press secretary has the coronavirus, the White House said, making her the second person who works at the White House complex known to test positive for the virus this week.

President Donald Trump, who publicly identified the affected Pence aide, said he was "not worried" about the virus spreading in the White House. Nonetheless, officials said they were stepping up safety protocols for the complex.

Pence spokeswoman Katie Miller, who tested positive Friday, had been in recent contact with Pence but not with the president. She is married

to Stephen Miller, a top Trump adviser. The White House had no immediate comment on whether Stephen Miller had been tested or if he was still working in the White House.

Katie Miller had tested negative on Thursday, a day before her positive result.

The positive test for the senior Pence aide came one day Ivanka's PA tests positive

something happens.'

sistant has tested positive for the deadly coronavirus, making her the third White House staff member to be infected from COVID-19, a media report said on Saturday. The assistant, who works in a personal capacity for US President Donald Trump's daughter, has not been around

her in several weeks, the CNN reported. She has been

teleworking for nearly two months and was tested out of

caution, the report quoted a source as saying. – PTI

WASHINGTON. May 9: Ivanka Trump's personal as-

after White House officials confirmed that a member of the military serving as one of Trump's valets had tested positive for COVID-19.

Six people who had been in contact with Miller were scheduled to fly with Pence on Friday to Des Moines, Iowa, on Air Force Two. They were removed from the flight just before it took off, according to a senior administration official.

None of those people were exhibiting symptoms, but were asked to deplane so they could be tested "out of an abundance of caution," a senior administration official told reporters traveling with Pence. – AP



Russian military helicopters fly over the almost-empty Red Square to mark the 75th anniversary of the Nazi defeat in World War-II in Moscow, Russia on Saturday. A massive Victory Day parade on Red Square was cancelled due to the coronavirus outbreak, but Russia marked the holiday with the flyby. - AP/PTI

NYC boy dies of rare syndrome likely linked to COVID-19

five-year-old boy in New York City has died from a rare syndrome potentially associated with COVID-19, raising new concerns about the pandemic's full impact on children.

On Friday, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo told the media that the boy died on Thursday, and there have been 73 reported cases of children with the syndrome in the state, reports Xinhua news agency.

The multi-system inflammatory syndrome has features that overlap with Kawasaki Disease and Toxic Shock Syndrome, including persistent fever, abdominal symptoms, rash and cardiovascular changes, according to an advisory issued by the state's health department on Wednesday.

The department asked health providers to immediately report those cases in patients who are under 21

NEW YORK, May 9: A years old, and perform a diagnostic and serological test to detect the presence of novel coronavirus or corresponding antibodies in the patients.

Health experts in New York were still trying to figure out whether the syndrome was linked to COV-ID-19, as not all 73 children tested positive for coronavi-

6-week-old baby dies of coronavirus in England

LONDON, May 9: A six-week-old baby has become the youngest victim of coronavirus in England as the official death toll across hospitals and the wider community linked to COVID-19 hit 31,241 in the UK. The baby's death on Friday comes as Britain prepares

to curb the spread of the deadly virus as it is believed that Britain is past the peak of the pandemic. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is to make a televised address on Sunday, during which he will lay out a

for some easing in the strict lockdown measures in place

"comprehensive plan" to start unlocking the economy. However, Cabinet ministers have been warning against raising expectations beyond a "modest" easing of the social distancing rules in place to manage the pressure on the state-funded National Health Service (NHS).

There are some concerns that people would start flout ing the "stay-at-home" message during a long Bank Holiday weekend to mark the 75th anniversary of the World War-II Victory in Europe (VE) Day on Friday. – PTI

rus or its antibodies.

In Westchester County in the suburbs of Manhattan. officials said on Friday that a seven-year-old boy died last week under similar circumstances, but it was still too early to determine whether his death was a result of COVID-19 complications or underlying diseases.

Similar cases have been recently reported in Britain and other European countries.

If the syndrome becomes

prevalent, it would alter the

assumption that children are largely not affected by the pandemic. "This is every parent's nightmare, right, that your

child may actually be affected

by this virus," said Cuomo. On Tuesday, New York City officials said that 15 children in the city had been hospitalised with this rare syn-

drome. Four of them tested positive for coronavirus and six others had antibodies. - IANS

Situation 'normal' in village where gas leak claimed 12 lives: AP govt

hra Pradesh government today said the situation was "normal" in RR Venkatapuram village, where a styrene vapour leak from the LG Polymers plant claimed 12 lives and left over 300 people hospitalised with various ailments.

Director General of Police D Gautam Sawang and Special Chief Secretary (Industries) Karikal Valaven inspected the plant and spoke to the LG management and later told reporters that "everything is normal and there is no need to panic."

Temperature at the styrene storage tank, where the vapour leak occurred, has come down, as also the PPM (ambient air quality) level.

"Definitely the air is also fresh and there is nothing to worry about. In the coming days, life will come back to normalcy," the DGP said.

"Just to be on the safe side, as per protocol, people are being asked to stay away for 48 hours. That period will end tomorrow."

"Scientists and experts from different parts of the country, including New Delhi, are coming here. They will review the situation and give final clearance," he added.

Valaven said temperature at the plant has come down, as well as the PPM level.

"Experts from the Petroleum University, In-

VISAKHAPATNAM (AP), May 9: The And-dian Institute of Chemical Technology and others are coming here. After they inspect, we will take further required steps," the Special Chief Secretary said.

Meanwhile, the LG management too issued a statement saying, "We are happy to confirm that the status-quo at the plant is brought under control this morning.'

It said a special task force has been set up to help victims and families to "resolve any issues" and provide every assistance to the bereaved families.

"All (the affected) families will be contacted shortly. This team has the responsibility to provide every support for the deceased, medical supplies and household goods, and emotional management for psychological stability to all injured and victims," the company statement said.

The company teams were working with the government to assess the impact of the damage caused and create concrete measures to deliver an effective care package that could be implemented immediately.

The company assured that it would also "actively develop and promote mid-to-long term support programmes" that could contribute to the local communities. – PTI



Promoting Artefacts

Tribes India is a chain of outlets selling arts and crafts from empanelled tribal suppliers. It is run by TRIFED or The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India.

P.S. TRIFED was established in the year 1987.



•••• /apnedeshkojano | contribution@apnedeshkojano.com

Powered by: Priya Communications

Mothers in villages use household items to homeschool kids

While parents in cities are tutoring their children at from a village in Jharkhand home using digital tools and technology amid the ongoing COVID-19-induced lockdown which has led to closure of schools, those in villages are utilising simple household items like fruits, buttons and pulses to homeschool kids.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced a nationwide lockdown from March 25 to April 14 and urged the country of around 1.3 billion people to stay home in view of the coronavirus outbreak. The restrictions were first extended till May 3 and again extended till May 17.

The death toll due to COVID-19 rose to 1,981 and the number of cases climbed to 59,662 in the country on Saturday, registering an increase of 95 deaths and 3,320 cases in the last 24 hours, according to the Union Health Ministry.

As most of the educational institutions in cities across the country are offering online classes due to the lockdown, parents too are chipping in to educate their kids at home using iPads, tabs and smartphones.

However, in the absence of fancy gadgets, internet connection and in some cases even electricity, those living in the hinterlands have come up with unique ideas like using fruits, vegetables, buttons, pulses etc. to teach their kids how to count and identify different shapes, sizes and colours.

In a video shot in a remote village in Odisha, a mother can be seen using tomatoes. onions and green chillies to

NEW DELHI, May 9: teach her child how to count while another similar clip shows a mother teaching her child about different shapes through drawings that she made on the ground using a piece of chalk.

The child identifies the rectangle, circle and square before jumping inside them as part of an educational game. In another video, children can be seen learning about numbers with the help of buttons and grains of different pulses.

The mothers made the videos as part of an initiative by child rights NGO Save the Children to teach minors in remote parts of the country and ensure that the parents are engaged in the learning process of the child.

"Our field level staff made some videos based on domain areas and shared them. We started the videos as an experiment because we are working with families who are struggling for their daily bread and butter and other issues," said Kamal Gaur, deputy director-education at Save the Children.

"But these videos acted like a stimulus. We have developed a time table that every day we will touch upon an area so we started sharing those videos and we asked people how they were spending time with their children, following which they started sending us videos," she told this news agency.

She further said that sometimes the mothers would replicate what was sent to them, but most of the time they come up with their own innovative ideas. – PTI

Restrictions continue in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, May 9: Re- mained peaceful, officials said. strictions continued in Kashvalley where the situation re- the officials said.

ing of Hizbul Mujahideen chief continued in the valley for the Riyaz Naikoo in an encounter fourth consecutive day on Satwith security forces on urday following Naikoo's kill-Wednesday, but the curbs were ing in Pulwama district of ple and opening of shops in relaxed in some areas of the south Kashmir on Wednesday,

They, however, said the Restrictions on the move- curbs were relaxed in some mir today in the wake of kill- ment and assembly of people areas of the valley where the situation remained peaceful.

Some relaxations in terms of allowing movement of peocertain areas have been allowed, they added. - PTI

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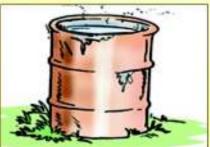


Be Aware of Dengue in advance

Steps to prevent Dengue

- Don't allow water to stagnate in and around your house in open containers, coconut shells, flower pot etc.
- Use mosquito net (LLIN) while sleeping, even during the day. Dengue Mosquitoes bite during the day.
- Wear long sleeved clothes to protect yourself from mosquito bites.
- As soon as dengue like symptoms occur consult a doctor. Don't take medicine without consulting a physician.









Symptoms of Dengue

- High Fever
- Headache
- Pain behind eyes
 - Muscular pain
 - Joint pain
- Redness of the eyes
 - Rash on skin
- Bleeding from gums etc.

Prevent Breeding of Mosquitoes inside and outside your home, save yourself from Dengue

Treatment for Dengue is available in all Govt Hospitals and lab facilities for testing is also available free of cost For more information contact your nearest Health Centre or dial 69133 47771/2/3

MESSAGE FORTODAY

A pandemic influenza would mean widespread infection essentially throughout every region of the world.

- ANTHONY FAUCI

The Assam Tribune

Rise in transmission

With the euphoria over a low incidence of the contagion in the State now replaced by a sense of growing uneasiness following a quick rise in transmission, the situation warrants efficient handling by the Government. No less imperative is the need on the part of the citizenry to exhibit common sense, especially with regard to maintaining the protocols of social distancing and personal hygiene. Regrettably, many of us are apparently still unaware of the grave dangers stemming from a cavalier attitude that cares little about social distancing, universal wearing of masks, and hand-washing or sanitizing. Indeed, more than government efforts, the real check to a massive wave of spread now can be prevented by the people by sticking to the basics of safeguards. A case in point happens to be our public spaces where the masses are still found to be ignorant of or rather not inclined to practising these simple safeguards. Many are still seen moving about without wearing a mask despite there being a hefty fine on the violators. The government authorities must be vigilant to mark such violations and enforce the norms strictly.

In a disturbing twist to the Covid-19 situation in the State, six more persons including four more from the bus from Aimer and a student from the Regional Dental College Guwahati tested positive on a single day on Friday, taking the total cases to 59. That several inmates including doctors from two premier healthcare centres have been among the infected gives an altogether disturbing dimension to the developments. Any case of infection in hospitals can trigger a big spike in its spread besides affecting services to prospective patients as the hospitals will have to remain closed for some days to new patients. There is now clear evidence of community spread in the State going by the nature of some of the recent infections whose sources cannot be confirmed. The neighbouring State of Tripura, too, has recorded a big spurt in cases with the detection of 25 positive cases in a BSF camp. The changing situation calls for a shift in the approach to tackle further spread through enhanced testing and creating containment zones. There is an urgent need for more testing facilities and institutional quarantine centres in view of the easing of the

Heart-rending

The travails of migrant workers in India seem never to end, despite almost a month and a half having passed since the national lockdown to fight the novel corona virus was imposed. A huge number of migrant workers having found themselves stranded in various parts of the country, following natural human impulses, lakhs of them had begun their journey to return to their native places by whatever means available, many on foot. The latest tragic episode, when 16 migrant workers returning to Madhya Pradesh were killed after being run over by a goods train in Maharashtra's Aurangabad on Friday, is particularly heart-rending since it is steeped in irony. According to reports around 20 workers, who were natives of Umarya and Shahdol in Madhya Pradesh and working in SRG Company in Jalna, were walking to Bhusawal, which is about 150 kilometers away, in order to board a "Shramik Special" train to return to Madhya Pradesh. Having walked around 45 km they had become exhausted and were sleeping on a railway track when they were run over by a goods train between Badnapur and Karmad stations in the Parbhani-Manmad section. Apparently, with the lockdown having shut most modes of commuting, including railways, the workers were under the illusion that rail-tracks were safe resting places since no trains were plying.

The saddest aspect to this tragedy is that the workers were killed not by the corona virus which had caused the company they were employed to close down, leaving them without jobs and income, but by a train! Though this is an extreme example of the suffering migrant workers are being subjected to, it is not a solitary one. The media has been rife with reports of deaths of migrants due to exhaustion and hunger, while TV screens have been filled with visuals of women and children walking in the pre-monsoon heat for abnormally long distances. No doubt the Centre, responding to protests by workers, was forced into allowing stranded migrants to return home and arranging buses and trains to facilitate their journey. But, as the Maharashtra tragedy reveals, the mechanism devised by it and the involved States has not been full-proof and such facilitation has not reached many of the stranded people. It has been also witnessed that there is a lack of coordination between States-for instance, a busload of migrants which included a number of Covid-19 infected persons was allowed to travel all the way from Ajmer to Assam without the latter State being informed! It is high time the Centre and the States get their act together in reference to migrant workers trekking home, thereby ensuring that heart-rending tragedies like the one in Maharashtra do not recur.

'Social media firms growing amid pandemic'

Face to Face

Prasanta J Baruah

Utpal Kumar Hazarika, founder CEO of Integrated Systems & Services, the largest IT services company in Assam employing over 80 engineers. He is also founder of software product company CWT Schoolzone I, which provides mobile app platform for schools-teacher-parent-students communication and teaching with Assamese language support. He is also director in startup iVantage, which manufactures health and climate conscious bamboo and cane furniture.

What is your assessment of the role of Information Technology and Communication (ICT) on our society in the prevailing COVID-19 situation?

ICT has become all prevailing in the society since the inception of Covid-19 lockdown and has become the only means for social networking, education, work etc.Many business organisations particularly those involved in IT and consultancies, have started working from home using different ICT tools.

Which sectors of our economy will be impacted most by the lockdown?

Airlines and hospitality sectors including hotels, tourism and restaurants will be very adversely affected and will take long time for them to recover.

In what ways do you visualize the changes that will come in the way we do business in the coming days?

I don't feel that the way we do business will change drastically after the pandemic. However, home delivery of food will become more popular and many companies will start work from office.

In the present situation many educational institutions have introduced online classes. How far is it successful?

While some elite schools are able to conduct the online classes, most of the schools/colleges are finding it very difficult due to various reasons including lack of proper planning/framework, lack of computers/smart phones with students/teachers, lack of IT skills, poor internet connectivity, lack of any student database, lack of educational content in Assamese etc. With proper planning educational institutions, including Govt ones, could have availed benefits of ICT for imparting online education. While it is not feasible to have an online live class due to lack of sufficient bandwidth, it is still possible to impart education by providing the students with class notes, recorded classroom video through youtube etc. Teachers can easily use screencasting for preparing presentations/talk for students at home and upload to youtube for students. Besides, assignments/homework can be given to the students using social media platform like WhatsApp. It would have been much easier if the schools were



equipped with app based school management software which can provide these facilities.

Internet connectivity is the basic requirement for online services.Is Assam and the northeast adequately equipped to face the present situation?

As 4G mobile data connectivity is available in most of the locations, it cannot be considered as a major hurdle in availing internet services. However, I feel completion of Bharat Net project in Northeast, under which all panchayats were to be connected by Optical Fibre, would have greatly improved the internet connectivity in the region.

The interior and rural areas of Assam and NE have very poor Internet connectivity. Under the circumstances will ICT make any

impact on the people? As the mobile connectivity has covered almost the entire region, I feel, with proper planning, people can take advantage of ICT. Rather than poor connectivity, it is the lack of digital literacy among vast majority of people, which is the major hurdle faced by most of the people in availing benefits of Internet.

New terms like Webinars, Zoom, Google Classroom, Gotomeeting, Google Meet, Screencasting are the new concepts practised to overcome the **COVID situation? Can you** explain these concepts?

Webinar is virtual live video

meeting of two or more people over internet where each one can listen and see the others live. There are different software/app like Zoom, Google Meet, Gotomeeting etc. using which one can conduct Webinar over internet. Google Classroom is one of many software/app used for giving assignments to students in structured manner. Students can also submit their assignments using this platform. Screencasting is the recording of screen displays in the form of video. It is useful for recording educational videos for students.

Will working from home be the new style of working in coming days? What are its advantages and disadvantages?

Though some of the organisations may opt for "Work from Home", I don't foresee "work from home" becoming a standard practice. Working from home reduces the office maintenance and real estate cost. Besides, employee's time and money will be saved when he works from home. But productivity may go down in the absence of proper monitoring mechanism. Besides, lack of proper space, internet, mentoring etc.at home may also reduce the productivity. Working alone from home may also lead to depression which is alarming.

How can the Govt machinery take advantage of ICT in making its schemes successful?

Development of appropriate mobile apps, backend integration with departments. spread of digital literacy, creation of citizens' database are some of the areas where Govt can work to make schemes successful using ICT. The citizen database can be created by linking NRC data to Aadhaar by providing

What more needs to be done for advancing the ITindustry in Assam and NE?

Aadhaar to each citizen.

IT industry has not grown in Assam as the large IT companies do not find Assam and NE attractive for investment due to its geographical location and perceived disturbances in the region. Only way to ensure growth of IT industry in the region is to ensure growth of local companies. For this Govt needs to give preferential treatment to the local IT companies, while awarding Govt. contracts, so that they can grow.

What is your assessment of the people's response to ICT in our state?

The use of ICT has increased tremendously in day to day life of people during the lockdown period. Different social media platforms like facebook, twitter, Instagram, whatsapp etc. are extensively being used.

The NRC exercise in Assam is considered to be a success of ICT. You were also associated with it. What is your take on this?

Software and connectivity played a very important role in making the project successful.NRC was a massive task where attempt was made to find the legacy and

residents.It necessitated investigation and quasi judicial scrutiny of 3.3 crore people (In India average time taken by a lower court to resolve one case is 6 years). NRC was completed in 4 years only because of the use of ICT to the maximum extent possible. As this kind of project has never been undertaken anywhere in the world, innumerable software modules had to be developed within short notice to take care of the unforeseen requirements. Even with limited access of internet in the remote villages of Assam, where NRC SevaKendras were located, data was

citizenship of 3.3 crore

While the world economy is suffering due to COVID-19 pandemic, Facebook has invested \$5.7 billion inRellianceJio. What is your opinion about this investment?

transmitted online utilizing

the existing connectivity to

the fullest.

While Pandemic has hurt the world economy, the social media companies are growing. Facebook has realized the great potential in Indian market with more than 30 crores smart phone users. Facebook must have felt that securing a stake in the largest mobile company in India, will help them in securing a hold on the social media market in India in the face of any new competition that may emerge in this sector. Though it has been an win-win deal for both Reliance and Facebook, it may hurt the net neutrality in some form which will in turn hurt the netizen's interest in the

(pjbaruah_at@yahoo.com)

Global war against COVID-19

Dr Umesh C Tahbildar

s the mystery deepens regarding the true source of the pandemic coronavirus, the US Government has made it amply clear that China was too slow in reporting the lethal virus that originated in Wuhan in the Hubei Province. As a result, the world is now engulfed in a tragedy unlike any in more than a hundred years. The entire world is in a state of limbo with both economy and public health in a severe crisis. The harsh reality is that as of today (May 6, 2020), the world has lost 257,078 people and USA alone has lost 71,078. Comparatively, India has been very lucky and blessed to have lost only 1,695 people with a population more than 4 times higher than that of the USA. It has been found that the virus is very capricious. Some countries have been hit very hard while others not so much. No one has yet pinned down a

scientific reason as to why. There are some dire predictions regarding the future course of the virus. In the Spanish Flu pandemic (1918-20), 12-17 million people died in India and lasted 2 years or more. One of the persons who contracted the disease was Mahatma Gandhi who later recovered. Some are saying that the coronavirus will be here to stay two or more years. The gravity of the situation is recognized by all nations. Surely, draconian measures like lockdown cannot be continued for ever without dealing mortal blow to the economies resulting in untold miseries for the people of the world. It is logical, therefore, to have an urgent stratagem to beat back the virus as soon as possible. Clearly, two paths need to be followed in parallel. First, a vaccine need to be developed as a preventive measure. Once such a vaccine is ready, most of the 7.8 billion people on earth, but not all, will have to be vaccinated to achieve "herd immunity" across the globe. The other path is to develop an antiviral drug for already infected people.

Vaccine: Massive efforts are under way across the globe in search of a COVID-19 vaccine. Currently, there are more than 115 different COVID-19 vaccines in development worldwide. Some potential vaccines have been approved for clinical trials. The United States has a timeline for developing its vaccine by the end of 2020. To that end, it has launched a programme called "Operation Warp Speed" under the leadership of President Donald Trump himself. It normally takes years to develop a vaccine for a new virus. To produce a vaccine for COVID-19 by the end of 2020 is a lofty goal. However, some vaccine companies have expressed guarded optimism in spite of the thorny road ahead to the point of getting an approved vaccine with required safety and efficacy. In light of latest research in China on the viral strains, the COVID-19 is mutating and different mutants are appearing in different parts of the world. A vastly different mutant may cause problem for efficacy of the vaccines being developed. The US Government has already tied up with two pharmaceutical companies- Johnson & Johnson and Moderna of Cambridge, Massachusetts. The Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) of the US government is investing \$1 billion to support development and manufacturing efforts of these two companies. A trial vaccine, Ad26 SARS-Cov-2, is being developed by Janssen - a pharmaceutical subsidiary of Johnson and Johnson. The US government is working with Moderna on a different experimental vaccine SARS-CoV-2 mRNA-1273. It is being developed in collaboration with the National Institute of Health (NIH), USA and is currently undergoing trial in Seattle, WA at Kaiser Permanent Washington Health Research Institute in Seattle. Among many others, a potential vaccine co-developed by Pfizer and German biotech BioNTech has entered human trials in Germany, and began human trials in the United States on Monday, May 4, 2020. The Oxford University vaccine group is currently running human trials on its vaccine hAdOx1 nCoV-19. The Serum Institute of India, Pune, world's largest vaccine maker, will start mass-producing the vaccine in fall, 2020.

Anti-viral Drug: No approved antiviral drug exists today. However, on May 1, 2020, the Federal Drug Administration (FDA), USA approved a promising drug "Remdesivir" produced by Glead Sciences, Inc of California for emergency use in the case of severely ill COVID-19 patients. It has been announced by Dr. Anthony Fauci, Head of National Institute of Allergy and Infectious diseases (NIAD), Maryland. that results of tests indicated that the drug reduced the time of hospital stay by about 30 percent. There are question marks as to whether the final approval of the drug for mass use to cure COVID-19 will come to fruition. Gilead is not waiting for the final outcome of testing and building up capacity to manufacture the drug.

In the absence of an approved drug, hospitals have tried different existing drugs used earlier successfully for other ailments. One such drug, Hydroxychloroquine, effectively used for Malaria for decades, was touted to be a game changer in the fight against COV-ID-19. In fact, President Donald Trump managed to get abundant doses of the drug from India for use in the USA.

Voices of the WEEK



Courtesy: THE HINDU

"All those who want to come, our government is fully committed to bring them back. We will greet them with open arms." -HEMANT SOREN, CM, Jharkhand

"The spread of the virus overseas has not been curbed yet and cluster cases reported in a few areas in China pose uncertainty to the epidemic control." - XI JINPING, President, China

"Our country is now in the next stage battle. A very safe phased and gradual reopening of our country." – DONALD TRUMP, President, USA

"India should have big stimulus package to revive demand..." - ABHIJIT BANERJEE, Nobel laureate

"Pakistan is coming out of the fear of the pandemic due to a well-devised strategy adopted by the government to cope with the health crisis." - IMRAN KHAN, PM, Pakistan

"People travelling from Red Zone like Ajmer Sharif has high possibility of bringing in the virus. Assam is entering challenging phase...."-HIMANTA BISWA SARMA, Health Minister, Assam

"The India-EU partnership has tremendous potential in many areas, including scientific research and innovation." - NARENDRA MODI, PM, India

"Our laws and our legal system are totally geared in favour of rich and powerful......" –DEEPAK GUPTA, Supreme Court Justice

"Disbursal of MGNREGA wages to the job cardholders should be ensured so that the distressed people in rural areas can get the benefit of the scheme." - SARBANANDA SONOWAL,

The Assam Tribune

From **THE PAST**

MORE AMERICAN TROOPS MOVE INTO CAMBODIA 1,046 COMMUNISTS KILLED IN WEEK-LONG OPERATION

SAIGON, May 9: Some 2,500 additional American troops plunged into Cambodia today to open an eighth front against North Vietnamese and Vietcong forces, field reports said. The US command said elements of the 2nd Brigade of the US 25th Infantry Division made the new thrust. The field reports said the new operation—with scores of Sheridan tanks and armored personnel carriers, and backed by tactical fighter-bombers, helicopter gunships and artilliery- was launched 130-145 km northwest of Saigon, to the west of a massive sweep begun a week ago in the Fishhook Areas of Cambodia. The belatedly reported operation which started on Thursday opened a new front in the Parrot's Beak Section, 70 km west of Saigon. Seven of the Cambodian war fronts now range from 55 km west of Saigon to more than 160 km, to the north-northeast, with another battle scene far to the north in the Central Highlands, 80 km west of Pleiku City. US troops sweeping through North Vietnamese Base Camps inside Cambodia, meanwhile, uncovered a 300- ton stockpile of munitions and foodstuffs, military sources said.

SUNDAY, MAY 10, 1970

wo weeks into the lockdown, the Sharmas had had enough. Hemanta clumsily used Zoom to work from home. He wore a crisply ironed shirt above, and his crumpled shorts and sandals below. Saved him time., he told Mini

"What time?" she shot back. "We have all the time in the world. When did we ever get the time to binge

watch Narcos twice? Mini flounced off to the kitchen to make scalloped potato rolls, baked pasta and coconut cheesecakepeering shortsightedly at YouTube videos. The lockdown, nuisance as it was, had trans-

formed Mini into a Michelin Star cook. In the evening Hemanta toddled out to

Lockdown blues Different trokes

Indrani Raimedhi

shop. The empty streets were ghostly. Even the dogs had forgotten to bark. Two marauding policemen whacked his behind for loitering. He was indignant. How dare they behave like this with an IIT alumnus? He was home in record time, carrying some puny looking brinjals.

The next day Mini was surprised to see Hemanta walking in the evening

on the roof top terrace. His backside still felt sore.

"Aren't you going out?" She asked. "We need some things."

"That's it!" He bellowed. "Always slave driving me, always exploiting me. You women think you have married men whose life is to to serve your every interest!"

Mini backed away from him, burst into tears and ran down the stairs. Hemanta felt terrible. He had only wanted to forget he had been whacked by the policemen. To avoid a repeat, he had started walking on the terrace. But he was too

lockdown's fault. People's nerves were on edge. His was especially on edge. A sudden thought struck him. What if Mini left him the minute the lockdown ended? Emotional abuse, she would tell the judge. He ran down the stairs, rang the bell, and waited, his heart throbbing.

macho to tell Mini about it. It was all the

Mini opened the door. He held out his arms, blubbering. "Wait!" Mini's voice fell like a whip.

"Don't even think of hugging me. We are observing social distancing.."

Different Strokes

Anecdotes full of wit and humour with a finishing punchline having a word count of 360 words may be sent to differentstrokes@assamtribune.com



Partly cloudy sky with haze Maximum and minimum temperatures are most likely to be 35°C & 23°C respectively on Sunday TEMPERATURE: Max 34.2°C

Psychotropic drugs seized in city

Min 21.7°C

CITY CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI, May 9: The city crime branch and the Basistha police in a joint operation on Saturday seized 7 kg of methamphetamine, a psychotropic drug which is also known as 'ice' or 'crystal meth', and some tablets from a rented house at Basistha.

A source in the Basistha police said three persons, including a woman, were arrested in this regard. They have been identified as Eviam Shogli, Kibton Singh and Binita Singh.

"A team of Basistha police and crime branch, acting on a tip-off, conducted a raid at the rented house at Patarkuchi in Basistha this morning. Seven packets of such drugs weighing 7 kg and ten packets containing around 1 lakh tablets were recovered from their possession. The team also seized Rs 1 lakh cash from them," the source added.

Amended building construction bye-laws hailed STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 9: Assam Real Estate Infrastructure Developers Association (AREIDA) has welcomed the Guwahati **Building Construction** (Regulation) (Amendment) Bye-Laws 2020 and thanked the state government for the notification.

"It has been a long fiveyear pursuit for this Association since the last bye-laws were notified in 2014 with numerous errors. We thank the Chief Minister for taking initiative in getting the stalled process moving. It is important that we can compete with other states in terms of businessfriendly regulations if we are to progress," said AREIDA president PK Sharma.

The amended bye-laws have introduced the Mukhya Mantri Sohoj Griha Achoni which provides for instant approval for both planning and building permit for G+2 buildings, up to plot area of 670 square metres, submitted online through empanelled RTP (registered technical persons).

"It is indeed a welcome development and addresses long pending genuine needs of the industry as well as the citizens. It is now essential to incorporate these amendments to the building bye-laws for the rest of the urban areas of the State," he said.

Forest dept wakes up to fresh Amchang encroachment

RITURAJ BORTHAKUR

GUWAHATI, May 9: The State forest department has slapped over 30 notices so far on people who have allegedly encroached inside the Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary taking advantage of the lockdown.

"We had been getting reports about fresh encroachments as well as expansion of those structures which already existed. The matter is currently subjudice and therefore, status quo must be maintained. We cannot allow encroachment inside the sanctuary," Guwahati Wildlife Division DFO Jitendra Kumar said.

The Forest Ranger has been asked to intensify patrolling and fix the notices at the illegal structures found inside the sanctuary. So far, over thirty notices have been fixed, despite resistance by the encroachers.

In the notices, the encroachers have been given fifteen days' time to dismantle the structures, failing which eviction may be carried out

"We have noticed structures about one km inside the existing boundary of the sanctuary," a forest official said.

The Assam Tribune in March-end had reported that encroachers tried to burn down forests inside the Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary, apparently in a bid to set up dwellings. Attempts



A file photo of the fire that was set off by miscreants inside the Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary on March 28.

Over 30 notices

so far on people

the Amchang

the lockdown

have been slapped

who have allegedly

encroached inside

Wildlife Sanctuary

taking advantage of

have been made by the miscreants

ment of Assam had ordered a fresh survey of protected area by an independent authority - Survey of India. The task is yet to be com-

The move to hand over the survey to an independent agency came after a disagreement between the forest department and district administra-

pleted.

tion over a survey report for demarcation of forest land and revenue land

Evictions were carried out inside over the last few days in Birkuchi area. the sanctuary in 2017 on the direc-In September, 2018, the Governtions of the Gauhati High Court, but

the exercise was put on hold in the face of protests from the encroachers According to an af-

fidavit filed by the forest department in the High Court, there are still more than 1,000 structures inside the sanctuary which are yet to be evicted.

drive was carried out inside the sanctuary in November, 2017 after which the exercise remained suspended till the sanctuary was well demarcated. As

The last eviction

removed from the sanctuary during

The government had prayed before the court to allow it to suspend the eviction temporarily "because in the large number of households, schoolgoing students are preparing for annual examination and they shall suffer

Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary comprises three reserve forests - Khanapara Reserve Forest, Amchang Reserve Forest and South Amchang Reserve Forest. In 1953, the Khanapara Reserve Forest was declared with an area of 9.96 square kilometres. The Amchang Reserve Forest was declared in 1972 with an area of 53.18 square kilometres. In 1990, the South Amchang Reserve Forest was declared with an area of 15.50 sq km. Ultimately on June 19, 2004, Assam government declared these three reserve forests as Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary. The sanctuary is located within the geographical limits of 91.50°E to 92.03° East longitude and 26.08' N to 26.26' North latitude covering an area of almost 78.64 square kilometres.

There are 24 species of mammals in the sanctuary and among them some are very rare and endangered. The hoolock gibbon is feared to be lost as nobody has heard its mystic voice for a long time.



Men engaged by Shivam Paul to carry out sanitization and distribute masks at Adarsh Nagar. - Photo: Jorabat Correspondent

Youth sanitizes village,

distributes masks

CORRESPONDENT

JORABAT, May 9: Amid the nationwide lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic, residents of Adarsh Nagar on the outskirts of Guwahati city have heaved a sigh of relief after a youth of the area emerged as a role model to help the village fight against the deadly virus.

As has been learnt, the villagers had approached various government representatives of the area to conduct a sanitization drive in their village, but they failed to get any positive response.

Touched by their concern, a 24-year-old youth, Shivam Paul today surprised the villagers with his initiative. He conducted a sanitization drive

and spread awareness about the novel coronavirus pandemic. He also gifted two pieces of masks each to over 50 households.

Paul also installed a touch-

free sanitizer dispenser at the village entrance to keep the residents out of harm's way. All the expenses were borne by the Paul himself. Talking to The Assam Tribune, Paul said, "As it is almost

impossible for the government to reach out to every village to sanitize it, I came up with an idea to engage the youths in the fight against the pandemic. So I took the initiative."

Paul has called upon the State's youths to come together to fight the deadly virus in their respective areas with similar initiatives

Liquor shops closed pending use of new MRP on products

Startup designs foldable japi

home. They can't do so because

of its large size and the high prob-

ability of getting damaged when

put into bags. This was the main

motivation behind the design-

ing of a damage-proof japi,

which can be folded and packed

in a bag easily," Rupankar said.

CITY CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI, May 9: After the State government's decision to increase the maximum retail price (MRP) on all segments of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL), beer, wine and overseas products with immediate effect, the excise department has issued an order to shut down liquor shops until new stickers of MRP are pasted on the old stock.

As per the order, retail vendors are not allowed to sell or lift any excise product till the new MRP is registered by the excise department and duly notified.

"All superintendents of excise shall ensure the accounting of stock having details of existing brands and MRP, etc. The retailers are directed to pay the additional excise duty and VAT for the stock under the possession through treasury challan or online portal for

CITY CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI, May 9: Guwa-

hati-based students' startup

Earth Craft's founder Rupankar

Bhattacharjee has designed a

foldable *japi* in a bid to make it

member of Help Earth, an

NGO focusing on biodiversity

conservation. It encouraged

him to work on his idea and

design the Assamese tradi-

tional *japi* in an innovative way.

from India or abroad, who ex-

press the desire to take a *japi*

"I meet many people, be it

The 22-year-old is also a

ready for global outreach.

which the demand notice shall be issued by concerned superintendents of excise with intimation to the Commissioner of Excise," the order stated.

"All wholesale warehouse licensees shall ensure the pasting of new MRP sticker masking the old MRP for the entire stock lying in their possession immediately. The additional excise duty and VAT arising out of difference between new and old MRP shall have to be deposited by wholesale licensees for the stock in their possession through online portal. The demand notice and time period for depositing the same shall be issued by excise department," the order further stated.

The licensees of bottling plants and breweries are directed to arrange for pasting of new MRP sticker by masking the old MRP on the stock. This order is applicable to all excise products except country spirit.

"The *iabi* is often gifted to

people as a token of love, ex-

pressing the warmth of Assa-

mese hospitality. The folding japi

will solve the problem," he said.

make foldable *japis* using the

same items used in making the

traditional japi. However, it can

be made with any material,

provided it is made, piece by

piece, to fit onto the base plate

designed to be folded," he said.

of bamboo and leaves of tokou,

a local variety of palm, deco-

rated with pieces of colourful,

patterned cloth.

The traditional *japi* is made

"Our team is working to

Reshuffle in administration

GUWAHATI, May 9: Making a reshuffle in the administration, the state government on Tuesday appointed Kailash Karthik N as Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup district and Dilip Kumar Borah as DC of Darrang. Bhaskar Phukan has been posted as DC of Kokrajhar district. - Staff Reporter

Sanitizers distributed

GUWAHATI, May 9: Rotary Club Guwahati Luit today distributed sunglasses and sanitizers in the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Traffic, Panbazar and Latasil PS, said a press release.

Masks, sanitizers and sunglasses were also distributed among the labourers at Galapatty, Fancy Bazar and among some rickshaw-pullers here by Rotary Club Guwahati Luit, added the release.

Blood donation camp today

National Medicos Organisation, Assam in collaboration with Seva Bharati Purbanchal will organise a statewide voluntary blood donation camp titled 'Rakta-Dhara in Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Silchar, Jorhat, Tezpur, Barpeta, Nalbari, Sivasagar, North Lakhimpur and Roha on the occasion of 163 years of 'Sipahi Vidroh' on

Sunday. - City Correspondent

Mixed response to State Govt move on labour reforms

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 9: The decision of the State government to effect labour reforms in the State has been met with mixed reactions.

Opposing the decisions taken by the State government regarding labour reforms, the Trade Unions and Employees Federations, Assam will stage a Statewide protest on May 11.

All trade union and labour bodies including CITU, IN-TUC, AITUC, AICCTU, HMS, AIUTUC, UTUC, etc., will take part in the protest by following all lockdown-re-

decided to introduce fixedterm employment, increase the duty time from eight to 12 hours during the COVID-19 period, increase the minimum number of workers for implementation of the Contract Labour Act and also increase the minimum number of workers for implementation of the Factories Act.

On the other hand, FICCI Assam State Council has welcomed the decisions pertaining to labour reforms taken by the State Cabinet on Friday.

Ashish Phookan, chairman FICCI Assam said it was a very timely step to help the local industry in these difficult The State government has times and to position Assam

as a favourable investment destination. "We had requested the government to increase shift timings from eight hours to 12 hours," he added.

Phookan further said that introduction of fixed-term employment, increase in minimum number of workers from 10 to 20 for applicability of the Factories Act and from 20 to 50 for application of the Contract Labour Act are all welcome decisions.

"At the same time, we would also like to urge the government to evaluate Assam's competitiveness vis-avis other states and bring about more reforms if neces-

Culling only way to contain African swine fever: expert

GUWAHATI, May 9: Culling is the only way to contain the African swine fever, which led to the death of around 13,033 pigs till today, in the State, as no vaccine or treatment is available for the disease, said a senior veterinary expert in Assam.

According to a statement issued by the State Veterinary department, the disease has already spread to nine districts of Assam including Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, Jorhat, Lakhimpur, Biswanath, Majuli, Golaghat and Kamrup (Metro).

The expert said the culling drive will cover the farms which have already got infected with the disease. As per 2019 census, Assam had around 21 lakh pigs but the number has increased to around 30 lakh this year.

The drive will start after testing of samples collected from the infected pigs. Already the department has started sample collection drive in all the affected areas of the State.

As a step to contain the disease, the department started a series of initiatives in every district including sanitization of pig farms by using bleaching powder and caustic soda, mass awareness drive by using leaflets and other methods, declaration of containment zone in affected places, etc.

In the mass awareness drive, the department is mainly emphasizing on to stop freeranging pigs along with the use of all bio-safety measures.

Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Minister Atul Bora today reviewed the situation at the Kaziranga National park.



The minister stated that his department is in continuous communication with the Union government regarding the outbreak of the disease. Moreover, three teams of doctors and officials have been entrusted with the duty to carry out an on-the-spot investigation in all the affected areas. The department is also taking a step to test a large number of samples in the coming days. During the visit, Bora also suspended a veterinarian, Dr Debamohan Saikia, for his absence in duty.

Online short story contest winner announced

GUWAHATI, May 9: Clémenceau from Germany Twist & Twain, an online literary magazine, has announced the winner of its first short story contest open internationally to people aged 18 years and above.

According to a press release issued here by Twist & Twain's Rajib Das, the story Müller's Mosaico by David

got the winner's prize of Rs 25,000 for its graphic portrayal of refugees fleeing their war-torn nations and entering Europe, only to be hated by the local populace.

The other writers who had made it to the shortlist are Lance Dowrich (Trinidad & Tobago) for his story *Ethel*- bert and the Free Cheese, Lohit Datta-Barua (USA) for his story Brother's Silent Love, Candle Vanrempuii (Mizoram) for her story And the Story of Regina Reginald and Blanca Blunche, Moachiba Jamir (Nagaland) for his story Fallen and Tialila Kikon (Nagaland) for her story Mismatched Patches.

Twist & Twain plans to start its second contest soon with more exciting prizes. Interested people wishing to submit their stories and articles may visit the site www.twist and twain.com.The magazine has so far published works of many writers from around the world, the release added.

Hapless woman's case exposes poor distress response mechanism in State

MAMATA MISHRA

GUWAHATI, May 9: The State's preparedness to survive the COVID-19-induced situation has conveniently overlooked a most vulnerable section – destitute women.

The sorry state of affairs in the State machinery and voluntary organisations in responding to distress calls exposes a serious lack of concern among the upper echelons to have a mechanism to give shelter and assistance to hapless women.

The apathy came to light after *The* Assam Tribune's attempts to find an overnight shelter for a woman in need on Friday evening. Forty-nine-year-old Kanika Barman (name changed) was allegedly driven out of her relative's house in the city whom she was visiting for some essential work.

The woman, originally from Nalbari, approached *The Assam Tribune* seeking the media's assistance in finding a shelter.

With evening curfew in force during the lockdown and no other place to go, she waited for hours on the footpath as the 181 Women Helpline pleaded with NGOs and shelter homes to arrange for a night's stay for her to no avail.

While most of the shelter homes including the Swadhar Greh meant for women in distress and One Stop Centre to respond to women's grievances stated that they were already occupied, some NGOs maintained that they were not ready to take the woman without a mandatory COVID-19 screening.

police had the knowledge of any advisory on where to take a woman in distress if the



shelter homes are already filled. Especially, observing the woman's somewhat 'mentally unstable' demeanour, the police – who arrived at the scene quite late – were also at a loss as to how to deal with her.

Despite being approached, the Assam State Commission for Women also failed to find a proper solution.

'Shelter homes of Guwahati are not at all adequate to respond to a crisis situation like this. They are neither equipped nor briefed about their roles. Moreover, Kamrup Metro being the main transit point, there is a huge burden of cases of distressed women, victims of domestic violence, women with mental conditions etc.," said sources in the social welfare department, pleading anonymity.

It needs mention that the State has 16 Swadhar Grehs, of which three are in Guwahati. Moreover, one of the three such facilities is in a dilapidated condition, which has not been reviewed by the authorities for long.

"We cannot operate with the existing mechanism in this hour of crisis. To address increasing number of cases, we need separate screening camps or quarantine facilities for women in need. Several other states have arranged such camps," sources added.

On the other hand, when contacted, the One Stop Centre (OSC) in Survey area of the city replied that it had only three beds instead of the mandatory five which were occupied by a pregnant woman, a woman with a minor child and a woman who had completed her quarantine in Meghalaya.

"Moreover, a woman with an unknown background cannot be accommodated at any centre unless the COVID test is complete," Ilusmita Konwar, in-charge of the OSC said. Konwar also advocated a separate facility for screening and quarantine of

women in Guwahati considering the large number of cases being registered through helpline and other sources. The case of Kanika Barman, who was

rehabilitated at the house of her relative in Birubari area after much persuasion, and at the intervention of the police, however left behind several questions about the State's approach and efficiency while dealing with issues concerning underprivileged people.

"We have been asking the State government to include women's issues in the State's COVID advisory. It's unfortunate that the State does not have a special and specific mechanism to address such issues. It's high time such issues got reflected on the administration's priority list," Anurita Pathak Hazarika of women's rights group North East Network (NEN) stated.



Medics applaud COVID-19 patients after being discharged from a private hospital, in Kolkata on Saturday. – PTI

Spike in COVID cases continues in Karnataka, tally 794

AHMEDABAD, May 9: Ex-BENGALURU, May 9: The spike in COVID-19 cases continues in Karnataka with 41 new positive cases, raising the state's tally to 794, an official said on Saturday.

The city's COVID-19 mor-"As of 5 pm Saturday, cumulatively 794 COVID cent, which is almost double positive cases have been that of the country's death rate confirmed in the state. These include 30 deaths and 386 AIIMS director and pulmodischarges," said a health nologist Dr Randeep Guleria official.

In the past 24 hours, 10 people got discharged, three and Kalaburagi and one in Tumkuru.

Of the 377 active cases, staff, who were attending to 371 are currently isolated at designated hospitals and are stable while six continue to be in the ICU.

> In the past two days, spikes in places such as vi, Bengaluru Urban and

From 692 cases on Wednesday, the COVID tally jumped to 794 in three days, recording the highest singleday rise of 48 cases on

Except for the three cases each from Chitradurga and Tumkuru with travel history to Ahmedabad in Gujarat, all other patients were contacts of earlier cases on Saturday. On Friday also, three

Chitradurga cases with similar travel history surfaced. Friday's cases were all aged 64 while Saturday's cases were aged below 35,

Of the 41 new cases, Bengaluru Urban accounted for 12, Bhatkal in Uttara Kannada, 8, Davangere, 6, Tumkuru, 4, Bidar, Chitradurga and Bantawal in Dakshina Kannada, 3 each, Chikkaballapura and Vijayapura, 1 each.

Five of Davangere's six cases were contacts of

positive case 651.

Similarly, five of Bengaluru Urban's 12 cases were contacts of case 419.

With the addition of new cases, total positive cases in Bengaluru Urban have risen to 175, Davangere, 67, Uttara Kannada 31, Dakshina Kannada 25 and Vijayapura,

The number of active cases in these places is as follows: Bengaluru Urban, 82, Davangere, 61, Vijayapura and Uttara Kannada, 21 each and Dakshina Kannada, 15.

The rate of infection in Mysuru has drastically fallen, with only five active cases and 83 discharges out of the total 88 positive cases.

Other places with high active case-load on Saturday include Belagavi, 48, Kalaburagi, 30, and Bagalkote, 32 among others.

A 2-year-old girl and a 1year-old boy also tested positive among the new cases. - IANS

Minorities contributing equally in COVID-19 fight, claims Naqvi

NEW DELHI, May 9: The minority ic along with others in the society, Mi-ment. nority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said today.

He also announced that the Minority Affairs Ministry will launch 'Jaan Bhi, Jahan Bhi' nationwide awareness campaign soon to make people aware of social distancing and other guidelines for safety from coronavirus.

More than 1,500 healthcare assistants, who have been trained under the skill development programme of the Minority Affairs Ministry, are assisting in treatment and wellbeing of COVID-19 pa-

Naqvi said these healthcare assistants in treatment of coronavirus patients in various hospitals and healthcare centres across the country.

This year, more than 2,000 other health- these Haj Houses according to their communities are contributing equally in care assistants will be trained by the Mineeds, he added. the fight against the COVID-19 pandem-nority Affairs Ministry, he said in a state-

> The ministry is providing one-year training to healthcare assistants through various health organisations and reputed hospitals of the country, Naqvi said.

Various waqf boards across the country have contributed Rs 51 crore to the Prime Minister and Chief Minister relief funds for the coronavirus pandemic with the support of various religious, social and educational organisations, the Minister

These waqf boards are also distributing food and other essential commodities among the needy, Naqvi said.

He said 16 Haj Houses across the couninclude 50 per cent girls who are helping try have been given to state governments CARES fund and Aligarh Muslim Unigovernments are utilising the facilities at navirus patients. – PTI

Nagyi said masks have been prepared on a large scale under the ministry's 'Seekho Aur Kamao' skill development programme and these are being distributed among the needy.

All people of the country are working unitedly and strongly to defeat the challenge being posed by the COVID-19 pandemic on the appeal of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Naqvi asserted that the people belonging to the minority communities are contributing equally in this fight along with other people of the soci-

Naqvi also informed that Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) has contributed Rs 1.40 crore to the PMfor quarantine and isolation facilities for versity Medical College has also ar-COVID-19-affected people. Various state ranged 100 beds for treatment of coro-

AIIMS experts guide doctors at Ahmedabad

perts from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) visited the civil hospital in Gujarat's Ahmedabad city today and interacted with frontline staff amid concerns over the rise in COVID-19 fatalities.

tality rate stands at 6.5 per of 3.3 per cent.

and Dr Manish Soneja of AIIMS' Department of Medicine, flew in on a special Indian in Mandya, two each in Air Force plane on Friday, an Mysuru, Bengaluru Urban official said. The duo visited the civil

hospital and met doctors and COVID-19 patients and offered them guidance, the release stated. Principal secretary (health)

Jayanti Ravi also interacted Karnataka has recorded 89 with frontline medical staff at COVID cases, with sudden the hospital, which has the highest number COVID-19 Davangere, Bhatkal, Belagapatients in the city. – PTI

Naidu, Modi pay tributes to Maharana Pratap

NEW DELHI, May 9: Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi today paid tributes to Maharana Pratap on his 480th birth anniversary, saying his patriotism will always be remembered.

In his message, Naidu said Maharana Pratap was one of India's greatest warriors.

"His indomitable courage, valour, leadership skills and love for motherland will always be remembered and continue to inspire every Indian," he

Modi described the 13th king of Mewar as the great son of Mother India.

"His life full of patriotism, self-respect and might will always remain a source of inspiration for the people of the country," the Prime Minister said.

Pratap Singh, popularly known as Maharana Pratap, was born in 1540. – PTI

ED attaches Rs 16.38-cr AJL asset

NEW DELHI, May 9: The day said it has issued a Rs 16.38 crore attachment order against the Congress-promoted Associated Journals Limited (AJL) and its leader Moti Lal Vora in connection with a money laundering probe.

It said the attached proper ty is a 9-storey building in Mumbai having two basements and total built up area of 15,000 square metres.

The asset "germinated out of proceeds of crime has been attached to the extent of Rs 16.38 crore," the federal agency said in a statement.

The provisional attachment order, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), has been issued against the Associated Journals Limited and Moti Lal Vora, the chairman-cum-managing director of AJL. - PTI

Migrants clash with cops in Surat, over 100 detained

SURAT. May 9: Hundreds charge and fired tear gas to allowed to work at the indusof migrant workers came onto disperse the mob. Over a 100 trial units they were employed the streets and clashed with workers were detained in this at in Hazira and paid salaries," the police at a village in Surat connection, an official said. district of Gujarat today to demand that they either be sent Mora village near the indusback to their home states or trial town of Hazira. allowed to resume work at local industrial units to earn detained after they took to the lage and started walking in a money, police said.

The incident took place at

streets, demanding that they large group towards Hazira The police resorted to lathieither be sent back home or industrial area, he said. – PTI

Joint Commissioner of Police (Sector 2) DN Patel said.

The protesting workers came out of their homes in the "Over 100 workers were workers' colony at Mora vil-



Enforcement Directorate to- A woman driving a modified cart along with three others , in Amritsar on Saturday. - PTI

No. NHM/DHS/TSK/2019-20/524/6002

ADVERTISEMENT

Interested candidates fulfilling the eligible criterion may appear in the walk in interview for the following posts for clinical services on purely temporary basis for an initial period of 3 months for COVID-19 duties under District Health Society Tinsukia to be held on 13th May 2020, Wednesday at the Office of the Joint Director of Health Services, Tinsukia

| SI No | Name of the Position | Requisite Qualification and Experience | Remuneration/Wages per month | Vacancy |
|----------|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------|
| 1 | Medical Officer (MBBS) | MBBS Degree from a recognized Medical College/Medical Council of India. Age upto 60 years as on 1st April 2020 | Rs.50000.00 | 02 |
| 2 | Cleaners | Class VIII passed Preference to candidates who have worked in similar hospital conditions | Rs 15000.00 (On lump sum) | 05 |

Date of Walk In Interview: 13th May 2020, Wednesday Time: 10.00 am onwards Venue: Office of the Joint Director of Health Services. Tinsukia

Time of Registration: 9.00 am to 12 Noon Candidates are to bring their testimonials of their qualification and experience (both original and one set of self attested photocopy) and two recent passport size photographs on the day of

Sd/- Joint Director of Health Services **Cum Member Secretary** DHS, Tinsukia

Janasanyog/DF/162/20

Govt ...

(Contd from page 1)

Vijayawada on Saturday. – PTI

If fever resolves within three days and patient maintains saturation above 95 per cent for the next four days (without oxygen support), such a patient will be discharged after 10 days of symptom onset incase of absence of fever without antipyretics, resolution of breathlessness and no oxygen requirement. "There will be no need for testing prior to discharge," the ministry said.

At the time of discharge, patient will be advised to follow home isolation for seven days as per the guidelines.

Patient on oxygenation also falling under moderate category, whose fever does not resolve within three days and demand of oxygen therapy continues, will be discharged only after resolution of clinical symptoms and when they are able to maintain oxygen saturation for three consecutive days.

Mild, very mild and pre-symptomatic cases admitted to a COVID care facility will undergo regular temperature and pulse oximetry monitoring.

"The patient can be discharged after 10 days of symptom onset and no fever for three days. There will be no need for testing prior to discharge," the revised discharge policy stated. At the time of discharge, patient will be advised to follow

home isolation for further seven days as per the prescribed At any point of time, prior to discharge from COVID Care Centre, if oxygen saturation dips below 95 per cent, patient

will be moved to Dedicated COVID Health Centre. After discharge from the facility, if he/she again develops symptoms of fever, cough or breathing difficulty he will contact the COVID Care Centre or State helpline or 1075. His or her health will again be followed up through tele-conference on day 14, it said. – PTI

Singh hails ...

Migrants, who were stranded in Chennai walk along a road towards their native place in Srikakulam, during the lockdown in

(Contd from page 1)

"There has been day-to-day monitoring of the situation at the micro and macro level both by the State governments and by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER)," the minister said.

Singh, who holds multiple portfolios, including the Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office and in DoNER, praised the work being done by women self-help groups in the northeastern region. "There has been a rich tradition of women self-help groups in the northeastern region. These women self-help groups have been making masks for people. These masks are such creative and filled with colours that they can go with almost all kinds of clothes," he said.

Singh said there is no shortage of essential commodities and medical equipment in the entire northeastern region.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi's scientific approach towards managing difficult situations guided us to ensure that there is no shortage of essential goods in the Northeast, which is geographically important to the nation," he said.

He said 350 tonnes of necessary goods have been delivered so far in the northeastern region via air cargo. Singh said the first flight carrying such goods landed there as early as March 30 to ensure that people living in the remote corner of the country do not face any shortage of daily needs.

"I can say very confidently that the whole northeastern region is guiding the entire nation in the efficient ways to contain the pandemic," he said. – PTI

Centre's ...

(Contd from page 1)

"These provide us the assurance that the country is well prepared to face any eventuality due to COVID-19," he said.

The Centre is also supporting the states by providing sufficient number of masks and personal protective equipment, ventilators, etc., he said, while hailing the positive management of COVID-19 in the Northeast.

He urged the states to aggressively pursue the download of Aarogya Setu app to aid contact tracing and surveillance, and for self-assessment by people. He also advised the states to put information on COVID-19 hospitals and allied facilities in public domain to help people access the services.

Existing ...

(Contd from page 1)

Commenting on the death of the teenage girl, Dr Kataki said she was suffering from fever and was staying with her grandmother, who is a staff of the institute. As she was vomiting, her grandmother brought her to the BBCI where she was administered saline and when she died later, swab tests were carried out and the girl was found COVID-19 positive. Tests were also carried out on the doctors and nurses who came in contact with the girl. Dr Kataki clarified that the girl was not a cancer patient.

No. DME/PG/54/2020/5545,

NOTICE

Online Admission into 50% State Quota Post Graduate Seats in Medical Colleges of Assam, session 2020

In reference to this Directorate Admission Notice No. DME/PG/54/2020/5478. Dtd: 06.05.2020. this is for information of all concerned that in view of prevailing situation due to COVID-19 Pandemic, the selected candidates who are not able to take admission in their respective allotted Colleges/ Institute by presenting themselves physically are directed to communicate the respective Principals/ Director of the Institute through E-communication and to complete all the formalities stated in their respective colleges/ institute website from 10 am 11.05.2020 to 5 pm 15.05.2020 failing of which, his/her selection will be cancelled. This will include candidates both staying within and outside the State of Assam.

However, the candidates who confirm their seats through e-communication and formalities without their physical presence are directed to submit their all original documents to the respective Principal's/ Director's office before starting of the 2nd round of counselling which will be announced in due course of time through our website. Failing of which their candidature will be forfeited.

| or willow those carialactare will be follow | Which their candidatare will be forteled. | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|--|
| Contact Address | E-mail Address | Website Address | | | |
| Principal, | principalamch@rediffmail.com | www.assammedicalcollege.in | | | |
| Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh | | | | | |
| Principal, | gmch-asm@nic.in | www.gmchassam.gov.in | | | |
| Gauhati Medical College, Guwahati | | | | | |
| Principal, | principlsmc@gmail.com | www.smcassam.gov.in | | | |
| Silchar Medical College, Silchar | | | | | |
| Principal, | jmc-asm@nic.in | www.jorhatmedicalcollege.in | | | |
| Jorhat Medical College, Jorhat. | | | | | |
| Principal, | faamcbarpeta2010@gmail.com | www.faamcassam.co.in | | | |
| F.A.A. Medical College, Barpeta | | | | | |
| Principal, | tmctezpur@gmail.com | www.tmcassam.org | | | |
| Tezpur Medical College, Tezpur | | | | | |
| Director, | bbci_info@yahoo.co.in | www.bbcionline.org | | | |
| Dr. B. Borooah Cancer Institute, | | | | | |
| Guwahati | | | | | |

Sd/- Director of Medical Education, Assam Sixmile, Khanapara, Guwahati-22 Janasanyog/D/485/20



Forecast for North Eastern States: Rain/thundershower is very likely to occur at many places over Arunachal Pradesh and at a few places ove Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. Warning: Thunderstorm with lightning is very likely to occur at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh. Thunderstorm with lightning and gusty wind with speed (30-40) kmph is very likely to occur at isolated places over Assam and Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura

Temperatures:

| | Max (°C) | Min (°C |
|-----------|----------|---------|
| Dibrugarh | 31.6 | 18.6 |
| Tezpur | 32.9 | 21.9 |
| Silchar | 34.4 | 23.2 |
| Dhubri | 31.6 | 24.2 |
| Jorhat | 32.4 | 18.3 |
| N Lakhimp | ur 32.8 | 19.6 |
| Shillong | 23.8 | _ |
| Cherrapun | jee 25.4 | 15.4 |
| Aizawl | 26.2 | 17.2 |
| Kohima | 25.8 | 16.0 |
| Pasighat | 32.8 | 19.9 |
| Itanagar | 33.8 | 19.2 |
| Imphal | 30.7 | 16.9 |
| Agartala | 36.5 | 24.0 |
| | | |

Samples sent for tests after pig deaths in Meghalaya

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

SHILLONG, May 9: The Meghalava Animal and Veterinary Department has sent 79 samples of pigs collected from across the State for tests in a laboratory here after three pigs died in as many districts.

According to officials, the pig deaths were reported from East Jaintia Hills, East Khasi Hills and Ri-Bhoi districts. The Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department has sent samples (including swab, serum, blood and tissue) for tests following this development. The State Government has

already banned the import of pigs after Assam and Arunachal Pradesh reported pig deaths due to African swine fever. It has also banned inter-State import and export of pigs.

Meanwhile, the State Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department has started conducting periodic inspection of pig sheds, pork stalls and private farms across the State.

Arunachal Govt imposes cess on liquor sales CORRESPONDENT

ITANAGAR, May 9: The Arunachal Pradesh Government has decided to impose a cess of 25 per cent on all alcoholic beverages to augment the State's economy in a bid to effectively tackle the COVID-19 crisis. This decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pema Khandu in Itanagar on Friday.

"To augment State's own resources and to generate much needed revenue to combat COVID-19, the State Cabinet decided to levy a cess of 25% on MRP of all alcoholic beverages including IMFL, beer, imported alcoholic beverages & wine etc," the Chief Minister said in a tweet. He said that the cess has been levied on retail prices and will be payable before movement of goods from the wholesale stores to the retail outlets.

Tripura seeks NICD's help to stem COVID-19 spread

CORRESPONDENT

AGARTALA, May 9: Rattled by the rapid rise in COVID-19 cases in the Dhalai district, the Tripura Government has requested the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) to send an expert team to take stock of the situation and find ways to prevent further spread of the dreaded virus.

Thirty persons, including 25 from the BSF's 86th Battalion, tested positive for COVID-19 in the State last night, taking the total number of cases to 118 and creating fear among the people.

Out of the total 118 cases, 116 are active while two persons have been discharged from hospital after treatment.

Additional Chief Secretary SK Rakesh told media persons today that the State Government has requested the NICD to investigate the matter because it is the competent authority to do so. "We are expect-

ing an expert team from the NICD soon augment the number of beds for COVsince the issue is sensitive and requires a thorough investigation," he said.

The fresh COVID-19 cases were detected among the personnel of the BSF's 86 and 138 battalions at Ambassa in Dhalai district. Both the battalion headquarters

Total positive cases in State reach 118

have been declared as containment zones.

A truck driver is also among the new cases. "Even as a large number of BSF personnel were infected by the deadly virus, there is no transmission among civilians," Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb had told reporters earlier at the Civil Secretariat here.

Sensing trouble, the Government has dedicated COVID care centre in a bid to tal to bring back the stranded people.

ID treatment. It will function under the supervision of the GB Pant Hospital, which is a designated COVID-19 hospital. There are 300 beds at the Saheed Bhagat Singh Hostel. Rakesh said mild and asymptomatic patients would be kept at the hostel.

Following this development, the total number of beds for COVID-19 patients in the State now stands at 410, including 80 at the GB Pant Hospital and 30 at the IGM Hospital. The beds for COVID-19 patients have been increased keeping in mind the outbreak in the BSF headquarters at Jawaharnagar in Dhalai district.

Meanwhile, 17,000 people from Tripura who are stranded in 11 States due to the lockdown, have registered their names declared the Saheed Bhagat Singh Youth for returning to the State. The State Gov-Hostel near the Civil Secretariat as a ernment recently launched an online por-



A mobile COVID-19 testing kiosk set up in a vehicle, parked at Tura in West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya on Friday. - UB Photos

Meghalaya reports new COVID-19 case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

SHILLONG, May 9: Meghalaya reported a new COVID-19 case today with a person employed at the residence of the first COVID-19 patient testing positive for the disease.

"Unfortunately, we have another positive case in Shillong. It is a person working in the residence of the first COVID-19 patient," Chief Minister Conrad Sangma said.

Significantly, the person concerned had tested negative earlier, and is still asymptomatic. The Meghalaya Health Department had conducted new tests of all the primary contacts of the first COVID-19 patient as a precautionary measure. The first COVID-19 patient, a doctor, had already died.

There are 181 primary or high-risk contacts of the first COVID-19 patient. These

CORRESPONDENT

ITANAGAR, May 9: The

Arunachal Pradesh Govern-

ment has made institutional

guarantine mandatory for peo-

ple returning from outside the

State. RT-PCR testing has also

been made compulsory for all

asymptomatic ones have to

Cabinet here on Friday.

been discharged after testing negative later. the GMCH or the B Borooah Cancer In-"As a precaution, the Health Depart-

ment has been re-testing all the primary contacts and in the process, we found this positive case. The person concerned is safe and healthy, and is showing no symptoms," the Chief Minister added.

With this case, the number of active COVID-19 patients in the State has gone up to two. All the COVID-19 cases have been reported from the East Khasi Hills district, which continues to remain in the Orange Zone. The other ten districts of the State have remained COVID-19-free so far.

Till date 2,287 samples have been sent for tests and 2,178 have tested negative. The results of 96 test samples are awaited, Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong said.

The total number of stranded residents who returned from other North Eastern States stood at 2,623 till Saturcontacts were tested earlier and 11 of them day afternoon, he added. In an appeal, had tested positive. All, except one, have Tynsong asked those who have visited

Arunachal directive for returnees

undergo test," Chief Minister people from other North East-

ern States should be complet-

Felix, who is also the gov-

ernment spokesperson, said

that the Cabinet decided that

the BPL Housing Complex at

Lekhi village near here would

be converted into a State quar-

antine facility within 10 days.

The housing complex has 590

vacant units with separate toi-

let and bathroom facilities. Ed-

ucation Minister Taba Tedir

has been entrusted with over-

seeing the implementation of

On certain bottlened

ed by May 14, he said.

stitute in Guwahati since April 23, to report to the Government.

"Anyone who has visited these two places from April 23 this year should call 108 and register. The Government will take care of them," the Deputy Chief Minister added.

Meanwhile, the Meghalaya Government has further relaxed the ongoing lockdown restrictions and allowed automobile and stationery shops to reopen in the State capital, apart from electrical goods, hardware and liquor shops. However, shops at Iewduh (Bara Bazaar) and Police Bazaar will remain closed.

On the other hand, all shops in the rural areas, which are in the Green Zone. will reopen from Monday. Fifty per cent of the available public and private transport vehicles have been allowed to ply in the Green Zones of the State on a rota-

quarantine facility at the Police

Training Centre, Banderdewa,

the Cabinet decided to appoint

Papum Pare DC Pige Ligu as

the in-charge of the quarantine

centre. He will be assisted by

The Cabinet also decided that

the DC, Itanagar Capital Region,

would increase the number of

paid quarantine facilities in the

capital region. All arrangements

with regard to hygiene, securi-

ty and welfare of the quarantined

persons in such paid quarantine

facilities will be supervised and

regulated by the DC and the SP

the SP of Papum Pare.

own vehicles A CORRESPONDENT GANGTOK, May 9: The

Sikkim Govt

allows return

of residents in

Sikkim Government has agreed to allow people belonging to the State, who are stranded in other parts of the country, to return in their own vehicles if they want to do so. This return process will start from May 11 onwards, said the authorities concerned.

However, as per the direction of the Central Government, only regulated movement is allowed during the lockdown period. An application form available on the website, covid19sikkim.org/home/ vehiclepermit, should be filled up for movement of people in their own vehicles (or vehicles hired for this purpose).

But the authorities have clarified that the application in itself is not a permit to travel to Sikkim. A link will be sent to the registered mobile number of the applicant only after approval, which can then be used to download the relevant documents which have to be carel back home.

Also, all returnees have to compulsorily undergo a 14day quarantine on arrival, as per the Health Department protocol. Only a limited number of vehicles will be allowed to enter the State every day. To regulate the movement, priority will be given to patients. People desiring to travel in their own vehicles have been asked to wait for approval after they submit their applications. They should reach the respective check posts between 10 am and 1 pm every day.

All the passengers should also register on the website, registration.covid19sikkim.org. Those belonging to South and West districts should head towards the Melli check post and those from North and East districts go to the Rangpo check post.

Nagaland tests more suspected samples

CORRESPONDENT

as 848 suspected samples were sent for COVID-19 tests from Nagaland till 4 pm on Saturday. Among them, 786 samples have tested negative. The results of the remaining 62 samples are awaited. Principal Secretary (Home)

Abhijit Sinha said this in his briefin the State. He also stated that 93 stranded people from Nagaland, have applied for e-passes to return. As many as 12,839 have asked for government arrangements for transportation.

The State Government on Friday launched the returnees' declaration form on the website, others parts of the country and port of shortage of items. who desire to come back.

movement of stranded people Saturday. About 2,000 people have travelled back to their respective districts from various locations of the State so far.

crore through bank transfer. Sinha said that Union Health rations on Saturday.

He said 18,156 applicants ried in person during the trav- who are stranded outside, lief camps in the State are houscomprising 13,782 working ing 64 migrant workers. Four people, 4,203 students and 171 food camps are also functionpatients, have been provided ing, while more than 500 daily financial assistance of Rs 7.12 wage earners and needy peo-

Minister Harsh Vardhan, during a video conference with all DIMAPUR, May 9: As many authorities concerned of the North Eastern States on Saturday, discussed various issues in regard to the fight against COVID-19 like plans for expansion of testing facilities and status of treatment centres.

He said Vardhan urged evervone to be vigilant despite the fact that the North East region ing on the COVID-19 situation has lesser positive cases than the rest of the country.

According to a report on the law-and-order situation issued by the Home Department, 23 instances of lockdown violation were reported and 23 persons were detained on Saturday. The report said shops selling essential commodities and pharmaiamstranded.nagaland. gov.in, cies were open in all districts, for citizens who are stranded in and that there has been no re-

It said no restriction has been Sinha said that inter-district imposed on the movement of commercial vehicles for districontinued for the third day on bution of essential commodities and service provision. Suitable arrangements have been made for providing food and shelter to migrant workers.

> The report said that four reple were provided food and dry

ADMISSION NOTICE M.Sc. NURSING 2020 ARMY INSTITUTE OF NURSING, GUWAHATI

Mob No: 6901299910, E-Mail: ainguwahati@yahoo.co.in

Application Form is available on website www.ainguwahati.org Filled application form with connected documents and fees to be submitted to Army Institute of Nursing, C/O 151 Base Hospital, Basistha, Guwahati, PIN- 781029 by 20 Jun 2020 (without late fee) & 30 Jun 2020 (with late fee).

CIN: U40101ML1976GOI001658 SHORT NOTICE INVITING BIDS (E-Tender)

NEEPCO Limited invites online bids for "Operation & Maintenance including louse Keeping of NEEPCO Guest House located in K.L. Complex. Oppos NEEPCO Office, Demseinlong, Shillang-793003* for further details, interested bidders may visit the websites https://etenders.gov.in

www.neepco.co.in. Any subsequent changes/modifications/notifical against this tender shall be updated on the websites mentioned above Last date for online submission of bid is 08-06-2020 by 14:00 Hours

Chief General Manager (C), I/c Contracts & Procurer

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (REOI)

WAMUL invites eligible consultancy firms/agencies/o services to undertake

) Benchmarking of various operating parameters of WAMUL starting from

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The interested agencies may refer to the detailed REOI & TOR

at the website of WAMUL viz. http://purabi.org/te

PURAB

Pema Khandu said in a tweet.

gate the returnees on the ba-

sis of the zones (Green, Or-

ange and Red) they come from

and make arrangements ac-

cordingly. Those sneaking into

the State through non-desig-

dures and without informing

that evacuation of stranded

entering the state. Even The Cabinet also resolved the Cabinet decision.

returnees. A decision to this nated routes by not following

effect was taken by the State the standard operating proce-

from #coronavirus, we have strictly dealt with as per law,"

made COVID-19 test 100% Home Minister Bamang Felix

mandatory for every person told reporters today.

"To keep our Arunachal safe the administration will be

"We have decided to segre-

A bride and her groom exchange wedding vows wearing masks amid the COVID-19 crisis in Agartala on Saturday. – Photo: Prabir Sil

'Death Cap' mushrooms behind

Meghalaya deaths

poisonous mushroom that killed six people at a remote village in West Jaintia Hills district has been identified as Amanita phalloides, commonly known as the 'Death Cap', a senior official said today.

Lamin village along the India-Bangladesh border in Amlarem civil subdivision died after consuming wild mushrooms they collected from a nearby forest late last month. The wild mushroom directly affects the liver, State Director of Health Services Dr Aman War said. – PTI

SHILLONG, May 9: The

Six people, including a girl, of

Mizoram's lone COVID-19 Arunachal Governor reviews patient discharged

CORRESPONDENT

AIZAWL, May 9: Mizoram is now eyeing for coronavirusfree tag after the State's lone COVID-19 patient was discharged from hospital today.

pastor, who was admitted to hospital on March 24, was discharged from the Zoram Med- Health Minister R La-in the afternoon hours. Outside the hospital, he was

greeted with a 'Welcome Home' banner by his relatives and church members. The patient was declared negative on May 1, after four consecutive

had returned to Aizawl from lthangliana said.

Amsterdam on March 16. He had tested positive for COV-ID-19 on March 24, becoming the second positive case in the North East.

With all samples that were tested at the ZMC turning out The 50-year-old Baptist to be negative, there is no active COVID-19 case in Mizoram. However, Mizoram ment was not in a hurry to declare the State 'coronavirusfree' as new cases could be detected at any period of time.

"We are not in a hurry to declare our State COVID-19 free because we are still vulnerable and a new case may Rev VL Hruaia Khiangte be detected any time," La-

coronavirus-induced crisis, Arunachal Pradesh Governor Brig Dr BD Mishra (retd) discussed issues to strengthen the State education sector in a meeting with Education Minister Taba Tedir and Secretary (Education) Niharika Rai at the Raj Bhavan here on Friday.

CORRESPONDENT

ITANAGAR, May 9: Amid the novel

They also discussed procurement of textbooks, progress in the opening of three new Kendriya Vidyalayas in Daporijo, Hawai and Namsai, and construction of school buildings, including prefabricated structures, for the new batch of 60 students of the Sainik School at Niglok in East Siang district.

The Governor advised the Education Secretary to expedite the procurement Niglok Sainik School an excellent cam-

of textbooks for classes I to XII. He also pus, he added. stressed the need of appointment of headmasters in all government schools for proper management and supervision.

State education scene

The Governor also called for rationalisation in the posting of subject teachers so that the student do not suffer due to want of teachers. He said it is imperative that all teachers must work in remote schools for a given period.

The Governor also reviewed the progress of campus development of the Sainik School in East Siang district. He said the Sainik School campus environment must be conducive to the cause of education. Proper planning, appropriate layout of infrastructure, availability of amenities and optimum assimilation of the natural ambience will make the

The Governor, who has been keenly

promoting the development of the Sainik School, said: "Our young lads must be groomed and motivated to become part of the Indian Armed Forces and for this, our schools and colleges must take the lead." The Governor asked the Education

Secretary to monitor building of the Sainik School infrastructure and its functioning regularly, and ensure quality works and early completion. Earlier, the Education Minister and the

Secretary briefed the Governor on the status of various academic issues. They also apprised him of the challenges being faced by the people and the progress in taking precautions to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

NEWS IN BRIEF

6 put under quarantine

UDALGURI, May 9: Six persons, including two women of a family of Jangalborigaon under Udalguri Police Station. were put under quarantine at the Harisinga quarantine centre on Friday after their stayed with a woman who died at the GMCH after prolonged illness not realted to COVID-19. The family members said that their relative Kamala Devi (50) died on May 7 at GMCH. Since the six persons stayed with the deceased during her treatment at GMCH from April 26 to May 6, the Udalguri district administration decided to put the family members under quarantine as part of safety measures. - Correspondent

Rickshaw puller kills self

NALBARI, May 9: Acute financial cricis due to the lockdown reportedly compelled a rickshaw puller of Nalbari to commit suicide on Friday evening. Jogen Das, who stayed in a rented house at Sonpur area with his family lost his earnings due to the lockdown. Das, who hails from Guwakuchi village, was also allegedly involved in some domestic violence following his loss of income. He allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself inside his house on Friday evening. Police took the body to Swahid Mukunda Kakati Civil Hospital where a postmortem was carried out. Earlier, a woman from Mollapara area who worked at a hotel also committed suicide due to financial crisis. – Correspondent

Youths distribute masks

NORTH LAKHIMPUR, May 9: Six youths - Jyotishman Bora, Tilen Das, Sonmani Baruah, Prafulla Chutia, Abhijeet Baruah, Ashish Kishore Das and Dimple Baruah - of Baligaon village in Dhakuakhana in Lakhimpur district have so far distributed 1,600 masks among villagers in a bid to create awareness on the COVID-19 pandemic. The youths spent their own money to buy the masks. The youths also distributed masks among media persons of Dhakuakhana. - Correspondent

Sanitization of vehicles

GUWAHATI, May 9: Automovill, a startup by Assamese entrepreneurs Chinmay Baruah and Mridu Mahendra Das and funded by NVCL, is sanitizing vehicles used by the Governor, Chief Minister, DGP and ministers and highranked officers, stated a press release. The Automovill team is using high-grade broad-spectrum anti-microbial in the sanitization process being conducted at the DGP office at Ulubari. Apart from Guwahati, Automovill also operates in Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Gurgaon. In Bengaluru, the team is also sanitizing police vehicles for three police stations.

Liquor materials seized

DHUBRI, May 9: Around 200 kg of raw materials used for making country liquor were seized in joint raid by the Excise department and Dhubri police, led by Superintendent of Excise Manasjyoti Das on Friday evening. The raid was conducted at various places in Bilasipara, including tea estates. In Batertal area, the team seized and destroyed 200 kg of materials used for making country liquor (pachwai). One trader of illicit liquor was arrested at Lutapara. Four cases have been registered and five litres of illicit liquors along with distillation apparatus were seized. - Correspondent

Temples looted

TIHU, May 9: Thieves broke the lock of the donation box inside the 213-year-old historic Sri Sri Bali Kali Mandir in Nalbari district and looted thousands of rupees in cash, on the night of May 6. Thieves also looted some money from the Sri Sri Harimandir situated in the same complex. The incident came to light the next morning when devotees found the lock broken. Temple officials said the theft was committed without breaking the lock of the main door. The incident was reported to the Tihu Police Station. - ANN Service

Teacher dies of penury

SIVASAGAR, May 9: A teacher, Atul Sarmah (57) of Baulimoidam Primary School, who was deprived of his salary since March 2012 along with 1,530 others, died of kidney failure following his inability to go for treatment due to utter penury. Himaiolee Bhunya Dutta and Basanta Neog, president and secretary of the Sadou Asom Betan Banchita Karmarata Sikshak Santha, mourned the death. Neog said more than 20 teachers have died so far primarily due to stress and hardship on account of nonreciept of salary. - Correspondent

ULFA linkman held

SIVASAGAR, May 9: An Indian Army team from Maibela camp arrested one Jan Pegu (35) from his home at Dihingmukh on Friday and took him for interrogation following allegations that Pegu is a linkman of the ULFA(I). Brojen Gohain, officer-in-charge of the Demow Police Station, also visited the family of the arrested man. Correspondent

Free courses for students

MORIGAON, May 9: Following the declaration of summer vacation in schools, some youths of Charaibahi and Pub-Barbhugia in Morigaon district have launched free courses for students. Dipul Kumar Nath, general secretary of the Morigaon unit of AASU, is leading the initative. Those who are taking the classes are Bhargav Kumar Nath, Tonmoy Nath, Dhruba Jyoti Nath, Mrinmoy Nath, Manab Nath and Koustav Nath. Maintaining social distancing, classes are being held for Mathematics, English, General Science and Social Studies. - Correspondent

MLA fetes corona workers

GAURIPUR, May 9: Bilasipara East MLA Ashok Kumar Singhi felicitated workers fighting against coronavirus at Lakhiganj and Futkibari Hospitals and presented them packets of sweets and gamosas. He appreciated the doctors, nurses and paramedical staff and police for their service. He also felicitated the staff of Raniganj Hospital and handed over a cheque of Rs 1 lakh to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund at Srirampur when the Chief Minister visited the Assam-Bengal border area to take stock of the preparations for arrival of stranded people from outside the State. - Correspondent



Students receiving food items distributed by Homeswar Das. headmaster of Khata Banbhag ME School in Nalbari district. Das, who is also a social worker distributed essential items to 50 needy families, and some amount of cash to poor families. - Photo: Paresh Chandra Sarma

Over 500 migrants from across India stuck in Dhubri

CORRESPONDENT

DHUBRI, May 9: As many as 585 poor migrants from different parts of India are stranded in various parts of Dhubri district amidst the lockdown, the district administration said.

According to sources, these 585 migrants belonging to financially weaker sections have come into reckoning only as they were being helped by the administration in the form of being provided rations, but the actual number of the stranded migrant people could be more than double.

Out of these stranded migrants, 113 are staying in a field at Kachaurkhas Pt-II (Chandakhol) village and 99 are staying in a field near the Chilarai Bridge at Agomoni. While 23 persons are in Fakiranirjhar near the Khoraghat Bridge, 40 are in Baniamari (Tamarhat Turning) and 39 are at Jhagrarpar Pt-I. Moreover, 11 persons are

in Thana bylane, 10 at IG Road and 5 persons are at Bethel Baptist Mission School at Dhubri town. Apart from these, many persons are also stranded in different

Also 98 people in Agomoni area, 44 in Chagolia area, 70 in Chapar area could not return due to the lockdown and due to their poor financial conditions, they are being provided with ration supplies at the Chagolia relief camp, Agomoni HS School, Chapar HS School and Chapar Ratnapith College.

"Apart from these, we also have many poor migrant labourers who are stuck in factories, mainly brick kilns, where they work and they are being taken care of by their owners and managements," said District Disaster Management Association district project officer Mufazzal Sarkar.

Sarkar said that apart from this list, there are also many other stranded migrant labourers who are financially

strong and did not need help. There are also many people who have come as guests. He admitted that the administration is still searching for such needy people and after investigations, if they are found to be needing help, the administration will provide it.

Sarkar added that more than 200 people are still staying in different mass quarantine centres of Dhubri district where the administration is providing all the basic commodities apart from timely cooked food.

Meanwhile, in another development, the fifth COVID-19 positive case from Dhubri district, Matiur Rahman Tarafdar, has been discharged and kept at a lodge in Dhubri town under medical observation. After Tarafdar, who was found COVID-19 positive on April 23, all the coronavirus patients of the district have been discharged after getting treatment in Guwahati.

Nagaon ASP, family members under home quarantine

ANN SERVICE

NAGAON, May 9: Additional Superintendent of Police (HQ), Nagaon, Mohan Lal Meena, his wife along with his mother and mother-inlaw who came from Rajasthan a few days ago and are staying with him, have been put under home quarantine.

Sources said Meena was blessed with a baby boy following which his mother and mother-in-law reached Nagaon by a private vehicle from Rajasthan. The visitors and their drivers were screened at the temporary camp at Sarusajai Stadium in Guwahati where health experts advised them to get home quarantined and the two drivers were sent back to Rajasthan.

Meanwhile, Meena and his wife who are staying with his mother and mother-in-law at his police quarters at Nagaon were also advised immediate home quarantine, sources added.

Speaking to this correspondent, Deputy Commissioner Jadav Saikia said Meena was advised home quarantine as he was staying along with his mother and mother-in-law who had come from Rajasthan, a containment zone. They will be examined too as is being done or scheduled for other people in the district who are under home quarantine, Saikia said.

Women receiving sanitary napkins from Udalguri Deputy Commissioner Prakash Ranjan Gharpalia at a function held on Friday. The Foundation for Integrated Support and Solution (FISS), Guwahati, arranged for the distribution of 10,000 masks, 3,024 soaps and 1,536 sanitary pads. FISS officials handed over the items to Gharpalia, and BTC secretary Bhasker Jyoti Manta. - Photo: Rewati Raman Sapkota

Dainik Asam ex-scribe passes away



CORRESPONDENT

BARPETA, May 9: Bhupen Das, a former correspondent of Dainik Asam from Howli, retired Inspector of Schools, and social worker passed away at a nursing home in Guwahati on Friday. He was 65.

He served Dainik Asam for a few years as its correspondent from Howli in Barpeta district while working as a professor in Barnagar College at Sarbhog. Later, he joined as

an Inspector of Schools. He also published two newspapers and compiled a few books. A good orator and actor, Das is survived by his wife and three daughters.

Upper Assam people stranded outside State reach Jorhat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

JORHAT, May 9: The first batch of 37 migrants from outside Assam arrived in Jorhat district by vehicles on Friday while another six reached on Thursday by ambulances.

Jorhat Deputy Commissioner Roshni A Korati said that among the 37 who arrived here, 13 were from green zones of West Bengal, two from orange zones of Odisha and Bengal and 22 from red zones of Delhi and West Bengal. The DC said that those six persons who reached by ambulances were from red zones in Maharashtra and Bihar.

Altogether 43 persons were screened in Jorhat on Thursday and Friday and as people from green and orange zones were asymptomatic, they were sent to their home districts in Upper Assam, the DC said.

Results of 15 of 22 sam-

ples taken for COVID-19 test have come out negative.

Tension at Bandar Chaliha Police Outpost: Tension erupted on Friday evening at Bandar Chaliha Police Outpost near the Assam-Nagaland border under Titabar subdivision after irate tea garden workers staged a protest and a few of them reportedly pelted stones resulting in damage of property of the outpost.

The tea workers were protesting the picking up of a shopkeeper by policemen. A police official of Titabar stated the shopkeeper was picked up after his shop was found open beyond the stipulated time of 4 pm due to which police had to take action against him.

The protesters said that they finished work by 4 pm but they had to wait for wages which took time, and while returning to their quarters they visited the shop to buy groceries and other essentials.

Tripura-returned driver, 18 from family home quarantined STAFF CORRESPONDENT

SILCHAR, May 9: A truck driver from Kayasthagram under Nilambazar Police Station in Karimganj district who returned from Tripura under suspicion of being a COVID-19 positive patient has been kept on home quarantine along with 18 others of his family.

However, the Karimganj district administration and police are claiming that the person, identified as Jaharul Haque, a driver of an LPG cylinder carrying truck, is yet to be ascertained as a COV-ID-19 positive patient.

"He was examined in Tripura and nothing conclusive regarding the ailment was found. He was sent back home on May 7 and on Saturday morning, the person was examined by health officials in the presence of a magistrate and police. His swab sample has been collected and sent to Silchar Medical College and Hospital for ascertaining the COVID-19 positive status. He has been kept on home quarantine along with 18 others of his family," Karimganj SP Kumar Sanjit Krishna told The Assam Tribune.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Anbamuthan MP said that eight migrant labourers from Ratabari constituency who were detained at the PRTI in Ambasa under Dhalai district of Tripura from April 1 to May 8 have been sent back home by the district administration. The eight persons have been kept at Patharkandi Model Hospital under institutional quarantine.

On the other hand, DIG (Southern Range) Dilip Kumar Dev. who rushed to Churaibari on the Assam-Tripura border, said that the inter-state border would be sealed and barring emergencv services, no passenger vehicular traffic would be allowed henceforth till further

3 arrested over teacher's killing

CORRESPONDENT

HAFLONG, May 9: Three persons have been arrested by Badarpur Government Railway Police over the killing of a school teacher in Dittokcherra on May 1.

GRP recovered the body of Ramakanta Dey, headmaster of Dittokcherra Lower Michikur Lower Primary School, under the Jatinga Railway Bridge near Dittokcherra in the evening of May 1.

The three arrested have been identified as Lalmulsam Kujur, Jaggu Ghauri, and Dukku Hazam - all residents of Siding Basti in Harangajao. It has been learnt that the accused confessed during police interrogation that they killed Dey for money and threw his body under the bridge. The three were handed over to police at Dittokcherra on Friday.

NCHAC CEM assures justice over Hojai's killing: NC Hills Autonomous Council Chief Executive Member Debolal Gorlosa has assured that the NCHAC would leave no stone unturned till justice is delivered to the family of Santosh Hojai who was found murdered.

Gorlosa on Saturday said he and his colleagues met Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, and the DGP and ADGP (Law & Order) on May 6 and apprised them about Hojai's kidnapping and

Saeedul Islam: a tribute

Saeedul Islam (1939-2020), Inamka to a host of us, all friends

and associates of his youngest brother, always had a room for all of us and time for our charming profundities. This is no fawning recounting but a record of fond memories on this day of his chalisa and what all we could really register.

He was a peculiarly witty person but his wit was never wry or caustic but critically tolerant as is known to

all familiar with his fiction. Chorus was his only collection of short stories. These stories as well as the novel Dinor Jonaki and his two novelettes are all his considered response to the world around him. Inamka had many vantages and he had varied experiences from the diverse worlds he was

After passing the High Madrassa at the top in Assam, he did his ISc and BSc from Cotton College where he was adjudged the best short story writer for two years. He had also taught in schools for a time and had a stint as script writer in AIR, Guwahati before he joined as an Asst Employment officer and retired as the Joint Director of the Department in 1997. His association with the Mahekia Samakaleen, saw the publication of reviews irreverent of iconicity. As late as 2010, he was invited by the Jamia Milia University, Department of Northeast Studies to talk on the indigenous people of eastern Assam. Shy of fame and apathetic towards publication, he may have left 'unsung' but what he did made a real difference where the meanings are. As journalist or creator, an avid bridge player, or as a trekker in the woods of Karbi Anglong in search of orchids, he was at home everywhere and nowhere which means the same thing.

- Pradip Acharya

Computer-aided image processing technique to protect weavers

Cheaper versions of handwoven items produced in

unscrupulous traders and which flood the State's

power looms outside Assam are imported by

AJIT PATOWARY

The Paschim Boragaon-based In-**▲** stitute of Advanced Studies in Science and Technology (IASST) in Guwahati has developed a computer-aided image processing technique to identify handloom products in a bid to protect the interests of indigenous handloom weavers of Assam.

The indigenous handloom weavers of Assam are facing serious threat to their existence from the intrusion of power loom products from outside the State in huge quantities.

IASST Director (Additional Charge) Dr H Bailung told this correspondent that they are at present working on improving this technique, alongside the digitization of the floral patterns of the State's indigenous handloom products.

This digitization of the floral patterns is part of the computer-aided image processing technique developed for identifying handloom products of Assam, Dr Bailung said, adding that the digitization is

markets in such a manner that indigenous weavers find it very difficult to sell their genuine products expected to be completed within one year's time.

Dr Lipi Banerjee Mahanta, associate professor of the IASST's Computational and Numerical Studies, is leading the endeavour to develop and improve the computer-aided image processing technique and the process to digitize the floral patterns, Dr Bailung said.

The IASST contacted the State's Directorate of Handloom and Textiles in a bid to extend support in identifying the handloom-woven gamosas during Rongali Bihu this time. This was so planned because during Rongali Bihu, gamosas produced in power looms in different locations outside Assam flood the State's markets, imperiling the indigenous handloom weavers.

But because of the coronavirusrelated lockdown, the IASST process could not be applied in the markets this time. However, this process would be applied in the markets in the days to come to protect the interest of the indigenous weavers, said Dr Bailung.

The Indian handloom census, conducted in 2019-2020, stated that Assam has around 10.9 lakh weaver families – the highest in the country. Under the provisions of The Handlooms (Reservation of Articles for Production) Act, 1985, handloom products of the State, like mekhela chador, gamosa, phanek-dakhona,

danka, khamlet, etc., are reserved.

But cheaper versions of these items produced in power looms outside the State are imported by unscrupulous traders and flood the State's markets in such a manner that indigenous handloom weavers find it very difficult to sell their genuine products.

While common people opt for power loom products for their cheaper prices, the common traders are also lured by these power loom products that have good profit margins.

Official sources said the State's Handloom and Textiles Directorate conducts raids and seizes all such power loom products. But the Di-

rectorate has to free all the seized items to the retailers or wholesellers in the long run due to its failure to support its complaint with a valid laboratory certificate.

Elaborating, the sources said that to file the first information report (FIRs) with police, the Directorate needs supporting certificates from authorised laboratories that the seized items are not handwoven products. Since there is no authorised laboratory in Assam for the purpose, the Directorate has to send samples of the seized items to an authorised laboratory in Kolkata. But on most occasions, this laboratory either delays in sending its test reports or says that it cannot determine whether the samples are handwoven or not. Faced with such a quagmire, the Directorate has been pleading for authorising both the Assam Textile Institute and the Indian Institute of Handloom Technology laboratories located in Guwahati for certification of genuine handloom products of the State.

Govt raises market borrowing programme by over 50% to Rs 12-lakh cr

funds to combat the coronavirus infection, the Central government on Friday increased its market borrowing programme for the current financial year by more than 50 per cent to Rs 12-lakh crore, a development that will have severe implications for the fiscal deficit.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Budget 2020-21 had pegged the gross market borrowing, which is a reflection of fiscal deficit, in the current financial year at Rs 7.80-lakh crore, up from Rs 7.1-lakh crore in 2019-20.

However, in view of the impact of lockdown on tax collection and need to garner additional resources to fight the menace of coronavirus, the government on Friday decided to substantially increase the market borrowing programme for the current fiscal by about 54 per cent or Rs 4.2-lakh crore to Rs 12-lakh crore.

The estimated gross market borrowing in the financial year 2020-21 will be Rs 12-lakh crore in place of Rs 7.80-lakh crore as per BE 2020-21. The above revision in borrowings has been necessitated on account of the COVID-19 pandemic," the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

6.98-lakh crore from the dated securities in the first half of the current fiscal. This is 58 per cent of the total borrowing target.

The government raises funds from the market to fund its fiscal deficit through dated securities and treasury bills.

The Budget has pegged fiscal deficit at 3.5 per cent for the next fiscal, down from 3.8 per cent of the GDP in the current financial year.

It would be difficult to quantify an increase in fiscal deficit due to hike in borrowing as the government assessment about economic growth and an anticipated shortfall in revenue collection are not known yet.

The government has also raised weekly auction of dated securities to Rs 30,000 crore as against the earlier decision of Rs 19,000-21,000 crore.

All the auctions covered by the calendar will have the facility of non-competitive bidding scheme under which 5 per cent of the notified amount will be reserved for the specified retail investors, the statement said.

"Like in the past, the RBI in consultation with the government, will continue to have

Of the total, the government would raise Rs the flexibility to bring about modifications in the calendar in terms of notified amount, maturities, etc., and to issue different types of instruments, including floating rate bonds (FRBs), including CPI-linked inflation-linked bonds, depending upon the requirement of the Union government, evolving market conditions and other relevant factors," the central bank said in a statement.

Commenting on the development, ICRA Principal Economist Aditi Nayar said the upward revision in the borrowings for FY2021, although sharp, was inevitable given the estimated extent of revenue loss following the lockdowns related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Higher borrowings are likely to push up yields, unless OMOs or other instruments are deployed by the RBI to absorb a part of the higher issuance, and crowd out borrowings by State governments and corporates. However, less pressure on expenditure compression to offset the expected revenue shortfall, would allow economic activity to display some semblance of recovery in the latter part of this fiscal year," she said. – PTI



Tanmoy Chatterjee, Zonal Manager, Indian Bank, handing over an amount of Rs 20 lakh to Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal as contribution towards the CM's Relief Fund for fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, in Guwahati on Friday.

Jio offers new top-up, annual plans

NEW DELHI, May 9: Reliance Jio has come up with new top-up plans to support extra data usage at up to 75 per cent lower rates and also made annual recharge plans 33 per cent cheaper compared to rivals by enhancing data usage limit at 4G speed to 2 GB

The company has brought three new "work-from-home" top-up plans that are available at the denominations of Rs 151 (30 GB), Rs 201 (40 GB) and Rs 251 (50 GB), which supplement usage once the daily limit is exhausted, as per the company's website.

With these plans, average data cost comes to about Rs 5 per GB. Under the existing top-ups,

which will continue, data on Jio network costs in the range of Rs 8.5 to Rs 21 per GB.

Reliance Jio has revised the price for its annual plan to Rs 2,399 and enhance the daily data limit in the new plan to 2 GB.

So, despite increase in value of the 365-day validity, the annual plan is 33 per cent cheaper than rivals due to extra data offered

Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea offer similar annual plans for Rs 2,398 and Rs 2,399 respectively, with daily data limit of 1.5 GB at

The new plans from Jio comes at a time when companies have been pushing the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India and government to legally raise data prices by up to 5-10 times to address financial stress that some companies are facing.

Mobile subscribers get access to 4G data at a price as low as Rs 3.5 per GB but if the floor price is fixed as demanded by telecom operators, the mobile internet prices will rise 5-10 times from the current level.

Vodafone Idea has proposed that the minimum price of data should be fixed at Rs 35 per GB and Bharti Airtel has recommended a minimum price of Rs 30 per GB for low data users. Reliance Jio wants data prices to be hiked gradually to Rs 20 per GB. – PTI

Govt disburses Rs 18,253 cr to 9.13 cr farmers under PM-Kisan scheme

lockdown

NEW DELHI, May 9: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman today said Rs 18,253 crore has been disbursed to 9.13 crore farmers under the PM-Kisan scheme during the ongoing nationwide lockdown.

Under the PM-Kisan (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi) scheme, each farmer gets Rs 6,000 in a year in three equal instalments directly in bank ac-

Front-loading the release of the first instalment under the PM-Kisan scheme was part of the Rs 1.70lakh crore Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package (PM-GKP) announced on March 26 to protect

the poor from the impact of the coronavirus lockdown. The lockdown was imposed by Prime

Minister Narendra Modi on March 25 to curb the spread of COVID-19, and since then it has been ex-With regard to further assistance to farmers, the

Finance Minister said that 3 crore farm loan borrowers have opted for a three-month moratorium.

"Since March 2020, 9.13 crore farmers have been paid Rs 18,253 crore under PM-Kisan during the #lockdown. About three crore farmers with agri loans totaling Rs 4,22,113 crore availed the benefit of the 3month loan moratorium," Sitharaman said in a tweet.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on March 27 allowed banks to grant moratorium on instalments of

term loans, scheduled to be paid between March 1 and May 31.

In order to ease burden on loan borrowers, she said, "PSBs contacted more than 95 per cent of borrowers eligible for emergency credit lines & working capital enhancements between March 20 - May 6. The amount sanctioned jumped to Rs 54,544 crore, more than double the amount 2 days ago. Number of cases covered more than tripled."

In an effort to promote rural employment through infra projects, the government has rendered support to States under the Rural Infrastructure **Nationwide** Development Fund (RIDF).

> "Support of Rs 4,224 crore was provided to States under RIDF during

March, 2020 for promoting rural employment through infra projects. Working capital limit of Rs 6,700 crore has been sanctioned for procurement of agriculture commodities to State govt entities since March, 2020," she said in another tweet.

The RIDF is a pool created by shortfall of specified priority sector lending of banks. The fund, managed by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), is thus utilised for development of rural infrastructure in the country.

Domestic commercial banks contribute to the fund to the extent of their shortfall in stipulated priority sector lending to agriculture. - PTI

CBDT defers requirement of registration by 4 months

NEW DELHI, May 9: In a relief to religious trusts, educational institutions and other charitable institutions, the income tax department on Friday deferred by 4 months till October 1 the requirement of registration of these entities.

"In view of the unprecedented humanitarian and economic crisis, the CBDT has decided that the implementation of new procedure for approval/registration/notification of certain entities shall be deferred to 1st October, 2020," an official statement said.

Finance Act 2020 prescribed substantial changes in law pertaining to registration/approval of trusts and charitable institutions, whose incomes are exempt under Section 10(23C), Section 11 or for the purpose of Section 80-G of the Act for tax deductible donations

Earlier, such registrations/ap-

provals were granted without any specific expiry period unless specifically withdrawn by concerned tax authority.

Under the new law introduced by Finance Act 2020 and effective from June 1, 2020, all such

Charitable, religious trusts

registrations/approvals would now be issued with an expiry period of 5 years.

Further, all trusts/charitable institutions already having approval/registration were also supposed to file applications for renewal of there registration/approval within 3 months of new law coming into force, i.e., August 31, 2020.

Nangia Andersen Consulting's Shailesh Kumar said "in light of COVID-19 outbreak and consequent lockdown, giving relief to the taxpayers, this timeline has been deferred by 4 months. Thus, the new law which was supposed to come into effect from June 1. 2020 would now come into effect from October 1, 2020.

"All existing trusts/charitable institutions would now need to file applications for renewal of their registrations/approvals by December 31, 2020 instead of earlier August 31, 2020," he added.

The statement said various representations were sent to the Finance Ministry expressing concerns over the implementation of new procedure from June 1, 2020 due to outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) and consequent lockdown and there have been a number of requests to defer the applicability of new procedure. – PTI

CREDAI reports 40-50% hike in cement, steel prices

Cartelisation

NEW DELHI, May 9: Realtors' apex body CREDAI today said cement and steel rates have increased by 40-50 per cent in last few weeks despite ID-19 and even otherwise, such an the lockdown and alleged price carteliabrupt increase in prices will be a bolt sation and unfair trade practices by the from the blue for the developers and

to Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri seeking his intervention in the matter.

"We would like to bring your attention to the cartelisation by the cement and the steel manufacturers by imposing a sudden increase in their selling price," CREDAI said in the letter.

Across various States, there has been an increase of Rs 100-250 per bag cement and about Rs 2,000-2,500 per tonne of steel, it added.

During the past few weeks, there has been a sudden, steep increase in prices of essential raw materials such as cement and steel by 40-50 per cent despite the nationwide lockdown.

The Centre has allowed construction work on sites where labourers are already available.

Given the current crisis faced by the real estate industry because of COVwill lead to increase in the construc-The association has written a letter tion costs and overall project cost,

> CREDAI said. With thin margins, many developers might

alleged be constrained to stop construction work, leading to delays in completion of projects.

"Needless to say, this will have a cascading effect on the homebuyers also. Sir, this abrupt increase in the prices is highly unethical and amounts to unfair and restrictive trade practices," the letter said.

The association stressed the need to control this price rise for smooth construction operations. "We shall be grateful if the issue of price rise of cement, steel, and other raw materials can be taken up by you with the relevant ministries at the earliest," CREDAI urged the Housing Minister. – PTI

Tanishq to reopen 50 stores by today

BENGALURU, May 9: Tanisha, a jewellery brand from the house of Tata, today announced plans to reopen its 328 stores across the country in a phased manner by opening its first 50 stores by Sunday.

It would continue to comply with all rules related to COVID-19 lockdown while reopening and running operations, said a statement.

Tanishq said it has rolled out a gold standard safety e-book that reiterates the company's commitment to safety and wellbeing of customers and its employees at the store.

It covers all staff and customer touch points, entailing numerous safety measures, including contactless shopping and strict social distancing at all times, the statement said.

CEO of Jewellery Division at Titan Company Ltd Ajoy Chawla said: "We are reopening our stores in a phased manner because each store has to pass an eligibility test prior to recommencing operations. This is to ensure each store is 100 per cent prepared to manage the store, staff and customers." – PTI

ICICI Bank Q4 consolidated net profit up 6.91% to Rs 1,251 cr

MUMBAI, May 9: ICICI Bank today reported a 6.91 per cent growth in March quarter net profit at Rs 1,251 crore on a consolidated basis, after setting aside over Rs 2,000 crore in provisions for potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On a standalone basis, the second largest private sector bank's profit grew 26 per cent to Rs 1,221 crore as against Rs 969 crore in the year-ago period. For fiscal year 2019-20, it reported a 135 per cent jump in standalone profit to Rs 7,930.81 crore.

From an asset quality perspective, the bank reported an improvement in gross nonperforming assets (NPAs) ratio to 5.53 per cent as against 6.70 per cent in the year-ago period and 5.95 per cent as of December 2019, despite over Rs 5,300 crore in fresh slippages during the reporting quarter.

ICICI Bank President Sandeep Batra said it had slippages of Rs 4,300 crore in the preceding December quarter, and the additions on this front can be attributed to two accounts - a West Asian healthcare company and a Singaporean oil trading company becoming NPAs during the quarter.

In both the cases, borrowers had misrepresented their financial position to the

lenders, and the bank has made significant provisions for both the accounts, he said,

> Its overall provisions increased to Rs 5,967 crore on a standalone basis, as against Rs 5,451 crore in the year-ago period and Rs 2,083 crore in the preceding quarter. The provisions included Rs 2,725 crore for the COVID-19 impact.

> adding that it does not expect any more

stress from the two accounts in the future.

The provisioning for COVID-19 has been done on a prudential basis in anticipation of possible stress and is significantly higher than the Rs 600 crore asked to be set aside by RBI for accounts which were overdue as of March 1, the management said.

Over 32 per cent of its borrowers by value across the retail, small businesses and corporate segments have opted for the three-month moratorium allowed by the Reserve Bank, the bank management said, stressing that this does not necessarily reflect the asset quality as many customers would be conserving cash.

The management declined to answer a query on whether it is also adopting strategies like employee retrenchments or salary cuts amid the coronavirus crisis. - PTI



Workers engaged at a salt pan during the government-imposed nationwide lockdown as a preventive measure against the coronavirus, at Marakkanam in Viluppuram district of Tamil Nadu on Thursday. - PTI

Govt awards 12 start-ups for innovation in animal husbandry & dairy sector

NEW DELHI, May 9: The government on Friday gave awards to 12 start-ups for finding innovative solutions to address problems faced by the animal husbandry and dairy sector, a statement said.

Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Giriraj Singh announced the winners of 'Start-up India - Animal Husbandry Grand Challenge'. The ministry in partnership

with Start-up India had launched the 'Animal Husbandry Start-up Grand Challenge' to scout for innovative and commercially viable solutions to address the problems faced by the animal husbandry and dairy sector. The challenge was launched by

the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in September last year at a national animal disease control programme in Mathura.

As many as 157 applications

"The 12 start-ups... will be giv-

en cash grants worth Rs 1.02,00,000," the statement said. Under value-added products cat-

egory, the winner was Krushak Mitra Agro Services Pvt Ltd, Mumbai, while Studio Carbon, Ahmedabad, was the runner-up. In the category of eliminating

milk adulteration, White Gold Technologies LLP, Mumbai & Micro Life Innovations, Chennai were selected. For breed improvement, Adis

Technologies, Belagavi, Karnataka and CisGEN Biotech Discoveries Pvt Ltd, Chennai were awarded.

Under animal nutrition, Krimanshi Technologies Pvt Ltd, Jodhpur and Cornext Agri Products Pvt Ltd, Hyderabad were

selected. For finding e-commerce solu-

were received in this competition. tions, MoooFarm, Gurugram, Haryana and AKM Technologies Pvt Ltd, Cuttack got the award.

Under product traceability. EmerTech Solutions Pvt Ltd, Mumbai and NebulARC Technologies Pvt Ltd, Delhi were selected. No start-up got an award in the category 'single-use plastic alternatives'.

"Two winners under each problem awarded with cash grants worth Rs 10 lakh (winner) and Rs 7 lakh (runner-up)," the statement said. The winners will be provided

incubation offers. The incubator would be responsible for physical incubation of these start-ups for up to 3 months, mentor matchmaking, lab facility and testing facilities.

The activities of the start-ups

will be tracked for up to nine months after the completion of the programme. - PTI

UTY MOVIES

09:55 Yamla Pagla Deewana

19:55 Seeta Aur Geeta

23:10 Yeh Hai Jalwa

— Leisure & Lifestyle

12:00 Saaho 15:00 Choti Bahu 16:00 Pavitra Risht

17:00 Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Lil...

12:00 The King Of Queens 14:00 G.I. Joe: Retaliation

19:00 Carol's Second Act

22:00 Love Island UK

16:00 BattleBots

Zcafě

colors

11:25 Fear Factor Khatron.

7:20 Naagin Bhagya Ka...

12:00 Adventure: Snakes in

16:00 Cesar To The Rescue

17:00 Snakes in The City

13:00 Adventure: Primal Survivoi

14:00 Running Wild With Bear

18:00 Running Wild With Bear

COMES POST

20:00 Earth Day: 50 Days 50.

23:00 Hidden Gems Of Turke

HISTORY

11:50 Forged In Fire: Knife/Death

DERN MARVELS!

15:10 OMG! Yeh Mera India

18:05 Magician Impossible

23:00 Find Your Great Britain

GRUMBLE

REMIND THIS GUY OF WHO YOU ARE!

7:30 Shipping Wars

19:00 Leepu & Pitbull

20:00 Modern Marvels

16:10 Forged In Fire: Knife/Death 17:05 Storage Wars

22:00 Chain Of Command

21:00 Primal Survivor

12:50 Car Jackers

13:15 Pawn Stars

if I no n

15:40 Khatron Ke Khiladi Jiga



New age intelligence

iPad-generation kids good at reading facial emotions too

In some good news for parents who are worried at their kids spending too much time with screens, researchers report that today's children are not bad at reading emotions and picking up cues from people's faces than children who didn't grow up with tablets and smartphones.

With the ubiquitous use of tablets and other devices today among toddlers as well as parents, the psychologists wanted to know: Have younger children missed the opportunity to understand social cues? The team at the University of California-Los

Angeles (UCLA) tested the ability of more than 50 sixth graders in 2017, and more than 50 sixth graders in 2012 - both male and female, from the same school - to correctly identify emotions in photographs and videos. Most children from the sixth-grade class of

2012 were born in 2001, while the first iPhone came out in 2007, for example, and the first iPad in 2010 - a time when the sixth graders from the 2017 class were infants and toddlers.

The psychologists found that the 2017 sixth graders scored 40 per cent higher than the 2012 class at correctly identifying emotions in photographs and made significantly fewer errors than

the 2012 students.

In addition, the 2017 students were better at identifying the emotions in a series of videos, but only slightly better, a difference the researchers said is not statistically significant.

"Perhaps our 2017 participants had more opportunities to see, communicate and learn nonverbal emotion expressed in photographs of faces than those from 2012 because of the time spent taking and reviewing photos of themselves and others," explained lead study author Yalda T Uhls in the study published in the journal Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking. In today's world, young people use photos and,

increasingly, video to communicate. In 2018, for instance, 69 per cent of teens reported they used Snapchat and 72 per cent used Instagram, both of which incorporate pictures and text messages. Uhls noted that even text-based communication can convey emotion through capitalization, emoticons and repetition.

"With so many of our kids are on screens so frequently, it is important to know that good things can come from their interactions with photos,'

- (Source: IANS)

On

15:00 Oggy & Cockroaches 18:00 Roll No. 21



19:00 Oggy & Cockroaches 21:00 Be Cool, Scooby-Doo 22:00 Courage, Cowardly Dog

Pago 12:30 Super Bheem-Fire.

16:30 Grizzy & The Lemings

18:00 Chhota Bheem Chatpa

14:30 Chhota Bheem 15:00 Super Bheem



18:30 Super Bheem. 20:00 Chhota Bheem Chatpa 20:30 Chhota Bheem 21:00 Grizzy & The Lemings 22:00 Mr. Bean: The Animate

WILD

12:00 Ultimate Weekends

16:00 World's Deadliest

17:00 Hostile Planet

STILE

18:00 Wonderfully Weird

19:00 Predator Fails

22:00 Night Stalkers

12:40 North America

13:25 The Caiman Hunter

15:50 India's Wild Tales 16:50 Tasmania: Weird.

17:50 Wildest Africa

14:10 Masai Mara: The Big Hun 14:50 Earth: Nature/Our Plane

23:00 Wild Hunters

20:00 Hostile Planet 21:00 Africa's Deadlies

PLANET

WILDEST AFRICA

18:50 Animal Planet Exclusives

19:50 Wild Africa: Rivers Of Life

20:50 How Do Animals Do That 21:25 The Lion Kingdom

21:50 Wild Philippines With Nig

22:50 One Wild Day

15:00 Stranger Than Nature

Enter to nment 19:30 Choti Sarrdaarni 20:00 Naagin Bhagya Ka. 21:00 Fear Factor Khatron Ke

SONY



13:00 Best Of Crime Patrol 17:00 India's Best Dancer 20:00 India's Best Dancer 21:30 The Kapil Sharma Show



12:00 Yeh Rishtey Hain Pyaar Ke 12:30 Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai 13:00 Yehh Jadu Hai Jinn Ka! 13:30 Kasautii Zindagii Kay



14:30 Dil Jaise Dhadke.. 15:00 Jalwa Star Screen Awards 16:00 Star Screen Awards 2020.

19:00 Dil Jaise Dhadke. 19:30 Dadi Amma.. Dadi Amma 20:00 Kasautii Zindagii Kay 20:30 Yehh Jadu Hai Jinn Ka! 21:00 Kahaan Hum Kahaan Tun 21:30 Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Ha

22:00 Yeh Rishtev Hain Pyaar Ke 23:30 Yehh Jadu Hai Jinn Ka!

11:00 Assamese news

16:30 Discussion Show (R)

18:30 Breaking @ 6:30 19:00 Assamesse Prime Time

20:00 Discussion Show (R)

ra:ng

18:00 North East Diva GF

16:00 Upasona 17:00 Devotional Slot 1730 B2B Music

20:00 Rang Blockbuste

23:00 B2B Music

17:30 Guwahati Bisesh

18:00 Guwahati Live

21:00 Kotha Barta 21:30 Talk Time

23:00 Noixo Batori

12:00 Mid Day Live

rishtey

12:00 Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Ghan 16:05 Sasural Simar Ka 18:00 Laagi Tujhse Lagan

19:00 Swaragini 20:00 Sasural Simar Ka 22:30 Nishedh

11:00 The Accountant 13:00 Gossip Girl 16:30 Cyril: Viva Magic

17:35 Top Gear 18:15 Duma 20:00 Jeep Bollywood. 20:50 Gossip Girl 21:30 Supernatural

23:05 Withir

12:00 Hannu Ki Ultan Paltan 14:00 Laal Ishq 19:00 Raat Ka Khel Saara

21:00 Laal Ishq 23:00 Raat Ka Khel Saara



07:45 Pratham Xongbad

16:30 Superfast Prime Time100

15:00 Chah Gachar Maje Maje

14:00 Biyolir Headline 16:00 Abelir Khabar

17:00 City18

19:00 Dintur Shiro

22:30 Noixo Xiror

15.30 Yuba Darpan

16:05 Tezaswini (Epi-65)

16:00 Abelir Batori



10:40 Mars Attacks!

19:55 Hotel for Dogs

21:00 After the Sunset

M*VIES

the Black Pearl

21:10 Captain America: Civi

23:45 Bleeding Steel

14:10 Aeon Flux

15:50 The Island

22:30 Timeline

13:00 Toy Story

14:30 Avatar

17:30 Dumbo

10:05 NYC: Torando Terri 12:00 Toxic Shark 13:30 The Maze Runner 16:00 League of Gods 18:15 Hellboy

Phir Se 13:00 Khakee

16:55 Bandhar

11:00 Dora and the Lost City of

12:30 Aquaman 15:20 Inside HBO 15:40 Rango 17:35 Cloverfield 19:00 Dora and the Lost City of Gold

20:45 Inside HBO





10:35 Family - Ek Deal 12:55 Taare Zameen Pa 16:00 Bandalbaaz 18:10 Chennai vs China





18:00 WWE BlockBusters

20:00 WWE Smack Down

22:00 WWE BlockBusters

18:30 WWE Untold

09:45 Parmanu: The Story of Pokhran 12:00 Shiva the Super Hero 2 14:45 Loafer the Hero 17:15 Bal Bramhachari 19:50 Shahenshah 23:15 Commando – A One Man Army

21:00 Can't Stay Down 21:30 UEFA Champions League 22:00 Countdown to UFC 249

12:00 The Blue Revolution 13:00 Men in Blue Victorious 16:00 The Blue Revolution

UEFA Champions Leagu

19:00 India's Finest 20:00 Nail-Biting Finishes

21:30 Turf Wars 22:00 India's Finest 22:30 Nail-Biting Finishes 23:00 Great Centuries

computes (9)

24 Compel by force

25 Lessen in severity

26 High temperature

28 "You" in Urdu (3)

34 Result or issue (7)

or showy flowers

35 Eye membranes

36 Old-fashioned

37 Sounded a bell

38 Creepy-crawly

40 Avoids or evades

45 Highest point (4)

thing (6)

41 Praised (6)

46 Forehead (4)

39 Nag (7)

(6)

(7)

musician? (7)

30 Former France

coin (3)

22 Junkies (7)

(7)

(5)

STAR AND I

14:30 IPL HLs 15:00 ICC WT20 18:30 ICC Cricket WC HLs

23:00 Football United Special 23:30 Hero ISL HLs

11:00 ICC WC T20

14:30 IPL HLs 15:00 ICC WT20 18:30 ICC Cricket WC HLs

21:30 Ind vs Aus ODI HLs 22:00 Vivo IPL HLs

19:00 Cricket Connected 19:30 Ind vs Aus ODI HLs 20:00 Cricket Connected 20:30 IPL HLs

21:00 Cricket Connected 21:30 Ind vs Aus ODI HLs 22:00 Vivo IPL HLs

22:30 IPL HLs

23:30 Hero ISL HLs

19:00 Cricket Connected 19:30 Ind vs Aus ODI HLs 20:00 Cricket Connected 20:30 IPL HLs 21:00 Cricket Connected

SONY

23:00 Football United Specia

12:00 Best of UCL 12:30 WWE Smack Down 14:30 WWE Main Event 15:30 Arena eSports 16:00 WWE Smack Down 23:00 Australian Open SONY

12:00 Inside the Octagon 249 12:30 UFC Fight Flashback 13:00 NBA HLs 14:00 FA Cup Classics15:00 TNA Greatest Matches

17:00 Dream Team 17:30 UEFA Champions Leagu

18:00 NBA 2K Players Tourney 19:00 Countdown to UFC 249 20:00 Football Greatest

20:30 The Blue Revolution

Know your **DAY**

By JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Sunday, May 10, 2020: You are a lone mover and shaker and are involved this year in an exciting

project that brings you fame and riches. If single, it has been too long and you need to find a mate who gives you emotional support. It will happen once you set your mind to it. If attached, listen more to your partner, who has invaluable suggestions. You are like two peas in a pod. VIRGO gives The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-

Average; 2-So-so; 1-Difficult.

★★★ The role of adviser or teacher comes your way today. You $^{
m I}$ will process data and analyze facts with a flair that leaves others speechless. This very positive pattern promises growth and an overall improvement in standard of living throughout the months to come. Tonight: Relax.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★★ You feel ambitious even on a Sunday, and you are anxious to get moving again and show what you can do. Your image and reputation will be enhanced. Do rituals to open doors for yourself and to stimulate your talent. Tonight: Play the night away. GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

advice, and double-check insurance matters. A child has a fairy tale to tell you. Tonight: Speak your mind and expect to get responses CANCER (June 21-July 22) ★★★★★ A novel goal will become important today. Finances demand your attention. You will work hard to acquire greater security. Suddenly, the tension lessens because of a surprise windfall that might

 $\star\star\star$ Use caution before forming financial partnerships today, even

if idly chatting. Loans you make might turn into gifts. Be wary of

come your way. Your popularity will peak. Tonight: Get a good night's sleep. **LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22) ★★★ Get enough rest and avoid companions and situations that you know are not good for you. Your long-term wellness depends on you being your own best friend during this everlasting stay home period. The lion is growing restless. Tonight: Play with your children or pets

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) ★★★★★ A relationship that was on hold moves forward today. Your kindness to a loved one who needs support adds stability to the relationship. A problem linked to child care or pet care suddenly dissolves. Tonight: An intimate dinner date with a beautiful place setting.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) ★★★ Today there is an emphasis on the home and family area. Allow a temperamental household member time and space to work on a problem. A home repair is needed. You will feel lazy and more inclined to read your book. Tonight: Early bedtime. **SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★ Ideas come from another today. There will be a great deal of

commotion and many short outings. Remain focused and avoid distractions. Transportation issues might need your attention. You will long to purchase some pricy items but must resist the temptation. Tonight: Where the action is not. SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

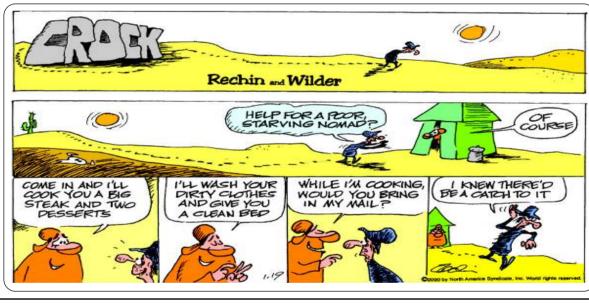
*** Your sector of possessions and security will be accessed and day, so plan an online shopping period. If asked to mediate a disconnected and the concealed. Tonight: Online retail pute, be sure to keep any personal bias concealed. Tonight: Online retail therapy should not cost that much. Stay frugal. CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) ★★★★★ Today brings a very joyful trend, accenting invitations and your popularity. Your appearance is especially pleasing. The finan-

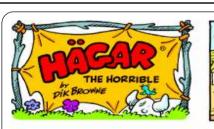
cial prospects are promising too. It's a perfect time to prepare a list of goals

and affirmation for your new season. Tonight: Celebrate. AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) *** Today brings the perfect opportunity for self-analysis and soul-searching. It will be easier to express yourself and articulate tomorrow, but for now you need some time alone. Your physical vitality will be low. Journal and write as much as you can. Tonight: Intense dreaming.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) ★★★★ It is a day to network and be social online. Friends inspire you to develop worthwhile goals. Avoid challenging others, because an aggressive tactic on your part might backfire. Politics within a service organization will be very satisfying. Tonight: Take a soothing herbal bath.

Thought for the day Life would be infinitely happier if we could only be born at the age of eighty and gradually approach eighteen - MARK TWAIN





DO YOU KNOW THIS FACE?

DADDY DAZE

THERE ARE EIGHT SPACES BETWEEN YOUR TEN TOES

EACH SPACE TAKES

1.25 SECONDS TO WASH

00

BABAR



DO I WANT TO

HEAR A BRILLIANT MATH-RELATED VDEA?

SURE.

IF WE ONLY WASH

SECONDS EACH TUME

IF YOU TAKE THREE

BATH'S EACH WEEK

WE'LL SAVE

1366 SECONDS

OR 22.75 MINUTES

EVERY YEAR.





YOU WIN!



GRIPE

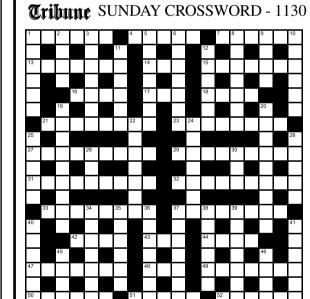
BLABB











42 Needle case (4)

43 The eggs of fish

44 Settle down (4)

person (7)

48 Unwell (3)

team (7)

50 Group of six (6)

51 Musical piece (5)

52 Distorted, biased

or bent (6)

47 Rebuke or scold a

49 Rooted for one's

Philatelists collect them (6)

To jeer at (5) Tribute (6) 13 Contaminate (7)

14 Atmosphere? (3) 15 Modified (7) 16 Mine entrance (4) 17 State on the

west coast of India (3) 18 Strike with the foot (4)

21 Eavesdrop (8) 23 Visionary (8) 27 Large predatory sea fish (9)

29 Overwhelming

electoral victory 31 Happened or occurred (4,5)

32 Happening by good luck (9) 33 Knock down (8)

37 Made a life pee by dubbing (8)

Down Great or exceptional (6) Wheel shaft (4)

Loot or pillage (7) Faux pas (7) Italian F1 team (7) Visual (7)

Distinctive air (4) 10 Entails or necessitates (6)

11 Lounge or sofa (6) 12 Cause resentment

19 Gain control (9) SOLUTION TO SUNDAY **HEALTH CAPSULES®**

HOW MUCH DOES A HUMAN BRAIN WEIGH?

by Bron Smith



BRAIN WEIGHS THREE POUNDS. THE SKIN, THE LARGEST ORGAN IN THE BODY, WEIGHS TWICE AS MUCH AS THE BRAIN. Health Capsules is not intended to be of a diagnostic nature.

CROSSWORD - 1130 Lauded, 45 Apex, 46 Brow.

39 Henpeck, 40 Averts, 41 36 Harpist, 37 Knelled, 38 Insect, 30 Sou, 34 Outcome, 35 Irises, goon, 25 Abate, 26 Fever, 28 Aap, 20 Estimates, 22 Addicts, 24 Dra-Settee, 12 Rankle, 19 Overpower, Optical, 9 Aura, 10 Endues, 11 Plunder, 5 Clanger, 6 Ferrari, 8 Down: 1 Superb, 2 Axle, 3 Cheered, 50 Sextet, 51 Etude, 52

Sink, 47 Reprove, 48 III, 49 37 Knighted, 42 Etui, 43 Roe, 44 place, 32 Fortunate, 33 Demolish, racuda, 29 Landslide, 31 Took 21 Overhear, 23 Idealist, 27 Bar-Altered, 16 Adit, 17 Goa, 18 Kick, Homage, 13 Pollute, 14 Air, 15 Across: 1 Stamps, 4 Scoff, 7



Sivasagar DC and SP inspecting a market area during the lockdown, on Saturday. - UB Photos

Woman quarantined in Nagaon ANN SERVICE

RAHA, May 9: Pratibha Devi, a resident of Amiya Nagar, Chandmari who came in close contact of Boroda Das. a COVID-19 patient of the same locality, has been admitted to a quarantine centre in Nagaon for suspected COV-ID-19 infection on Saturday.

According to information, Pratibha Devi has been picked up by a medical team of the district Health department from her son-in-law's home at Bamunijan area under Raha PS on Saturday morning. The woman visited her daughter's home at Raha on May 6 and was staying with her daughter's family for the last three days.

Meanwhile, her daughter's family has also been kept under home quarantine by the concerned authority.

One killed in road mishap STAFF CORRESPONDENT

DIBRUGARH. May 9: One ex-serviceman (67) was reportedly mowed down by a Maruti van on the bypass near Chabua this morning.

The ex-serviceman, identified as Bhaben Baruah Chowdang, hailed from nearby Deodhai village. The van reportedly drove away from

OBITUARY

Jiten Sharma STAFF CORRESPONDENT

JORHAT, May 9: Jiten Sharma, a resident of Sanjiwani Path, Choladhora locality here breathed his last at a private hospital here on Friday due to old-age ail-

Sharma, who was 84, was a former employee of Sivasagar Municipal Board and was associated with a few religious and cultural organisations. He is survived by his wife, two sons and a host of relatives.

Diphu-Guwahati bus service resumes

CORRESPONDENT

DIPHU, May 9: Two Guwahati-bound buses began operating from Diphu at 6:30 am scheduled time since Wednesday last. The imitative came soon after the State government allowed plying of private buses with 50 per cent occupancy.

On Monday, the bus owners were reluctant to operate their buses with 50 per cent occupancy as it did not cover even the cost of fuel. Karbi Anglong Bus Association, president, Lakhiram Bordoloi said, "The DC has allowed us to operate buses with 50 percent capacity, which means with 40 seat capacity we could carry only 20 passengers and 50 seats capacity we could carry only 25 passengers.'

"Reducing to 50 per cent capacity is part of social distancing. But with a limited number of passengers and increase in the price of diesel we cannot make up for the losses. After discussing again with the DC on May 5 we are starting to operate two buses from here to Guwahati to and fro. Time of the departure is 6.30 am," Bordoloi informed. The fare is Rs 290 which is at par with the fare of Assam State Transport Corporation.

KSA alleges land encroachment: The Karbi Students' Association has once again expressed its anguish over land encroachment by allegedly by Nagaland authority at Tila Basti and Dhansiri area inside the district recently.

The Karbi Students' Association has flayed the Neiphu Rio-led Nagaland government for encouraging its Police Department to encroach Karbi Anglong's land during the period of nationwide lockdown. This was expressed through a press statement issue by its propaganda secretary Peter Phangcho at Diphu recently.

The students' body mentioned that the illegal act repeatedly pursued by the neighbouring State may completely alter the scenario of the border region. The KSA has also blamed the silence of the Assam government and has termed it as "very unfortunate and matter of serious concern".

The students' body has appealed to the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council authority and Assam government to intervene in the issue immediately and visit the areas without any delay to defuse tension which has escalated amongst the people living in contiguous areas with Nagaland.

TU students demand to reconsider quarantine centre decision

CORRESPONDENT

TEZPUR, May 9: Tezpur University Students' Council has appealed to the government of India to reconsider the issue of using the Tezpur University campus as a COVID-19 quarantine centre.

In a memorandum to the Ministry of Human Resource Department, Government of India, the student body mentioned that in view of the recent developments in the Tezpur University campus regarding the establishment of a temporary quarantine facility, we believe it is indeed a noble step towards contributing to the society in this time of crisis. "However, this makes us highly concerned about the students and the residents still residing there. Currently, there are

dozens of international and domestic students from Syria, Zimbabwe, Namibia and a few other countries still stuck in the campus. completely apprehensive of the ongoing situation and the quarantine centre is located within a radius of 100 metres of the Saraighat CV Raman Men's Hostel where those students are currently housed. Sealing the roads will create problems for supply of essential commodities to the hostel," the student body said

The release added that there are over 350 families residing in the campus currently with both kids and elderly individuals, which is a matter of serious concern. There is a single entry and exit point that further leads to the agony. Going ahead with the

quarantine facility might mean pushing back the administration's plans of bringing back batches of students effectively from June- July and resume academic activities if the situation permits. This will further take a momentous challenge to restore normalcy. "Thus, keeping in mind, the prevailing situation and probable problems we request you to explore the possibility of alternatives and substitutes to the Tezpur University campus. We are of the opinion that a now vacant and less dense government facility/area should be more suited to establish a zonal quarantine centre in Sonitpur district instead of a residential campus. Procurement of a residential campus leaves us with more threats to the residents, the release added.



Social workers distributing essential food items among poor people, at Samaguri on Saturday. - UB Photos

Six kept under quarantine in Nalbari

CORRESPONDENT

NALBARI, May 9: Nalbari district administration has kept under quarantine six persons, including three who had contact history with a COVID-19 infected person of Guwahati city.

The six persons were kept under quarantine at an isolation ward of Nalbari Swahid Mukunda Kakati Civil Hospital.

Deputy Commissioner of Nalbari Bharat Bhusan Dev Choudhury said that the administration directed the family members to keep themselves under home quarantine till the test reports of those six persons come out.

It may be mentioned here that two persons of the district have a contact history with the mother of Dipika Nath in Guwahati. On the other hand, another youth of the district drove the vehicle of Dr Lithikesh.

Three other persons of Ghograpar areas have also been kept under quarantine due to their acute fever and cough.

Administrator of BTC holds review meet

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 9: Government officials must be responsive to the people, said BTC Administrator Rajesh Prasad today at Mushalpur in a review meeting at the DC's office conference hall. He also appealed to the officers of various departments to think from the perspective of the common man.

Under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner, Baksa, Ranjan Sharma, the newly-appointed administrator Prasad took stock of the ongoing schemes under various departments in the district. He asked the officials of Water Resources, PHE, PWD, Agriculture etc., to finish their ongoing schemes before the forthcoming monsoon

Prasad also asked District Veterinary officer about the production of eggs and condition of the piggeries and pigs.

He ordered Superintendent of Food & Civil Supplies to distribute rice to people without NFSA cards in a proper manner. He also asked all ADCs, Civil SDOs and Circle Officers to visit and verify the ongoing schemes of different departments under their respective areas and submit the report to the Deputy Commissioner immedi-

Doley reviews rural devp schemes in Nagaon

A CORRESPONDENT

NAGAON, May 9: State Minister for Panchayat and Rural Development, Naba Kumar Doley, held a review meeting at the conference hall of Nagaon Zila Parishad on Saturday and reviewed various ongoing developmental schemes, including PM Awash Yojana, MGNRE-GA, etc.

During the meeting, the

minister strictly instructed the officials to keep a close eye on those schemes so that no irregularity, misappropriation and negligence occur in this regard.

Besides, the minister asked all to wear masks and also to maintain social distance and to follow other guidelines issued by the Central government during the implementation of those

Former CM and current MLA of Barhampur constituency PK Mahanta, MLAs Rupak Sarma, Dimbeswar Das, Angoorlata Deka, Principal Secretary to Department of Panchayat and Rural Development Nurul Huda, Deputy Commissioner Jadav Saikia, Chief Executive Officer, Nagaon Zila Parishad and other officials of the department concerned were present in the meeting.

Centre urged to confer Bharat Ratna on Upendranath Brahma

SPL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, May 9: President of Bodoland People's Front (BPF) Hagrama Mohilary has urged the Central government to bestow the country's highest civilian award Bharat Ratna on Upendranath Brahma, post-

Revered as Bodofa – the Father of the Bodos - Upendranath Brahma, who also was the former All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) president, had ignited the Bodoland Movement in 1987, which later metamorphosed into a strong and progressive cause, Mohi-

In a series of tweets, he said, "Our leader Bodofa Upendranath Brahma has always remained as an icon of Bodo leadership, sacrifice and unity. 'Live and let live' was his mantra and he made relentless efforts to fulfil the Bodo aspirations. He had spearheaded the Bodo Movement which ended up in the formation of BTC in Assam. To honour his work and sacrifice, we would demand the Central government to bestow the Bharat Ratna upon Upendranath Brahma."

Mohilary added, "He dreamt of not only uplifting the Bodos, but the entire backward classes in the State, and to realise this dream, Bodofa brought a revolutionary change in the

"His life was dedicated for social and economic justice for the entire backward masses. It is time we show our gratitude towards Bodofa for the development we are witnessing today," he said.



Health official using thermal screening on people coming from Nagaland, at Nagajhanka in Mariani on Saturday. – UB Photos

Uddhab Bharali develops new sanitization vaporizer concept

CORRESPONDENT

NORTH LAKHIMPUR, May 9: Padma Shri awardee innovator Uddhab Bharali has developed a sanitization vaporizer concept in a bid to bring relief to common people to get sanitized amid the looming threat of COVID-19 pandemic.

Speaking to *The Assam* Tribune, the internationallyacclaimed innovator explained that it was a concept to develop vapour from sanitizer materials that would sanitize a person or any goods within a closed chamber. Bharali has developed the procedure in 15 days during the lockdown pe- the vapour filling a specific Defence Research Laboratory (DRL), Tezpur.

The vaporizer can be ap-

plied by connecting a liquid sanitizer jar to an electrical plug of mosquito repellant device. "The plug will vaporize the liquid sanitizer made of diluted alcohol and hydrogen peroxide that can sanitize a person inside a closed chamber within 5 minutes," explained Bharali.

He also said aroma of various flavours like mint, menthol or citranala could also be added to the liquid sanitizer. "Aroma in the air confirms

riod and it has been tested by area and, hence, it is necessary to add the flavours, Bharali said.

> The innovator also said he developed the concept after receiving a request from the Lakhimpur district judicial authority for a device to sanitize the persons entering the courts.

Apart from persons, the vaporizer could also be used in sanitizing any goods including food and vegetables, packets, etc., informed Bharali.

The innovator also said multiple devices could be used to sanitize large rooms in homes and offices.

As hospitals close, cancer patients take to helplines

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 9: In view of the lockdown, Pratishruti Cancer and Palliative Trust has been getting large number of calls from cancer patients in distress in the last two months in its two helplines - 6001830079, 6001688341. Pratishruti has been providing all kinds of supports like chemotherapy, palliative therapy, investigation, follow up, tele consultation and guidance.

The Dr B Borooah Cancer Institute (BBCI) was closed down for outdoor patients yesterday after the relative of a staff tested positive for COVID-19. The staff colony of BBCI has been declared a containment zone. The only other institute where government collaboration is involved is State Cancer Institute at GMCH.

"Many patients are unable to visit BBCI or other cancer hospitals due to the lockdown and the changing scenario. We want to appeal to cancer patients undergoing treatment at various centres in Guwahati not to panic as we shall

offer a helping hand for all cancer patients. By calling Pratishruti helplines, a patient will be able to talk and get connected to their own consultant for treatment or further guidance," Dr Gayatri Gogoi, Honorary Programme Director of the trust said. This service is free.

The trust has got a total of 359 calls in 2020 and almost 200 patients' calls were registered after the lockdown was announced in the State.

"We have written to the DCs giving the details about the patients and they have requisitioned ambulances for them to come to Dibrugarh. At Dibrugarh, we are taking them to Atal Amrit Abhiyan accredited private hospitals and provided the required treatment or medication. In other cases, we are providing the necessary counselling over telephone, or even through video call. Normally, otherwise many patients used to travel down to Guwahati," Dr Gogoi said.

Around 25 patients of Dhemaji alone were brought to Dibrugarh for treatment. "From diagnosis to psychological

counselling, pain management, facilitating appointments and arranging medicines, the trust is providing a host of services," Dr Gogoi said, adding that 30 health volunteers have been engaged to interact with the patients and do the necessary follow-up.

Palliative home care is also being provided in the Dibrugarh region.

Some 45000 new cancer cases are detected in the region every year and 70 per cent at late stages resulting 50 per cent mortality.

The delayed diagnosis is due to the lack of awareness of cancer symptoms, poor access to affordable care and other psychological factors like fear and fatalism

Pratishruti Cancer and Palliative Trust was established on December 15, 2017 with an objective to provide support to cancer patients in respect of cancer care including palliative care. They have two cancer helplines to answer patients in need at any point of time to counsel, guide, refer, arrange appointment and offer social support.



Maradona autographs shirt to help poor

BUENOS Aires, May 9: Diego Maradona has lent a hand in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic in his hometown by autographing an Argentina national team jersey for a raffle.

The sale raised money for an underprivileged area on the outskirts of Buenos Aires affected by quarantine rules.

"We're going to get through it," Maradona wrote on the jersey, a replica of the one he wore when he led his country to victory in the 1986 World Cup. The jersey was first offered at auction, but is being raffled to those who have given donations in an initiative that has collected hygiene products, masks and around 100 kilograms (220 pounds) of food for charity.

"Diego can't even imagine what he has done for us, it's priceless. I'll be grateful to him until the day I die," said local resident Marta Gutier-

Djoko will need vaccine if required: Nadal MADRID, May 9: Rafael Nadal says Novak Djokovic

will need to be vaccinated to keep playing if the governing bodies of tennis make coronavirus shots obligatory once they become available. Nadal told the Spanish

newspaper La Voz de Galicia this week that Djokovic and all players will have to follow the rules when tennis eventually returns to action.

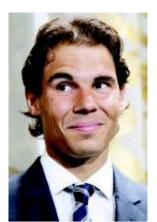
Nadal said no one can be forced to take the vaccine and everyone should be free to make their choices, but all players will have to comply if tennis officials require vaccination to travel and to protect everyone on the tour.

Then Djokovic will have to

be vaccinated if he wants to

keep playing tennis at the top level, Nadal said. The same for me. Everyone will have to follow the rules, just like now we have

to stay at home. Djokovic recently said he was against taking a vaccine for the coronavirus even if it



Rafael Nadal

became mandatory to travel. He later said he was open to changing his mind.

If the ATP or the International Tennis Federation obligates us to take the vaccine to play tennis, then we will have to do it, Nadal said.

The Spaniard compared it to the restrictions players already have on medicines because of doping controls.

It's about following the rules, nothing more than that, he said.

There is still no vaccine

available against the new coronavirus, which has killed more than 270,000 people around the world.

Djokovic on Monday broke confinement rules in Spain after a local club said it mistakenly allowed him to practice on one of its courts.

Tennis players are likely to be authorized to be back on courts in Spain beginning on Monday, May 11. Nadal said he returned to practice but did it on a pri-

> bodies. "Finally we are getting back

Barca return to training as La Liga eyes restart

MADRID, May 9: Barcelona returned to training after the La Liga champions allowed their stars to enter their facility to prepare for a potential restart to football in Spain.

Lionel Messi and company took the fields at Joan Gamper training centre for individual sessions, for which the players arrived alone in kit and took to the three pitches without passing through the changing rooms. As well as doing their routines, they were also subiected to tests to see what effect two months of coronavirus quarantine has had on their

to normal. We hope to carry on and that soon we can get back to enjoying what we like to do most," Arturo Vidal told sports daily Marca.

Sevilla, Villarreal, Osasuna and Leganes also returned to training, while Real Madrid who were two points behind league leaders Barca when play stopped in mid-March will likely start again on Mon-Wednesday.

day should their players pass virus tests carried out on That would mark almost two months since Real had been placed in quarantine following

a positive test for a member

of the club's basketball team. According to Spanish media, none of Real's players have suffered from virus symptoms, but Zinedine Zidane will have to do without Serb attacker Luka Jovic after Real announced on Friday he had frac-

ture his right heel.

Footballers in Spain have restarted training following the announcement last week of government plan that aims to end quarantine for professional players. - AFP

Batra gets extension as FIH president

LAUSANNE, May 9: Indian Olympic Association president Narinder Batra's tenure as the chief of the International Hockey Federation (FIH) has been extended till May next year after its annual congress was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The decision to postpone the Congress, which was earlier scheduled to begin in New Delhi on October 28, was taken at an online meeting of the FIH Executive Board on Friday. "I'm looking forward to the numerous tournaments and competitions ahead of us, which we are preparing with full dedication and passion with all National Associations involved," Batra said.

The exact date of the post-

poned congress will be confirmed as soon as possible, the FIH said in a statement.

"This decision, made due to the current uncertainties following the global COVID-19 pandemic, is based on Art. 12.1 of the FIH Statutes, covering cases of force majeure," it added.

The postponement means the tenures of all the current FIH office-bearers get extension until next year's Congress.

The FIH had informed all 137 National Associations in April about a potential change of dates for the Congress.

"I am pleased with the success of online courses which FIH is delivering; this is great for the future of our sport," Batra said. - PTI

Virat, Anushka donate Rs 5L each

MUMBAI, May 9: Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh on Saturday informed that India cricket skipper Virat Kohli and his wife actor Anushka Sharma have contributed Rs 5 lakh each for police welfare amid the novel coronavirus outbreak.

"Thank you, @imVkohli and @AnushkaSharma for contributing Rs 5 lacs each towards the welfare of Mumbai Police personnel. Your contribution will safeguard those at the frontline in the fight against Coronavirus. #MumbaiPolice-Foundation," Singh tweeted

from his official handle. Earlier, Kohli and Sharma had given undisclosed amounts to the PM CARES fund and Maharashtra Chief Minister's Relief Fund to support the fight against COVID-19. - PTI

6 EPL teams oppose restart: Watford chief LONDON, May 9: Watford amid a challenging backdrop

at least six of the 20 English Premier League clubs are concerned about the plan to use neutral stadiums to finish the Duxbury says there is no altruism in the Premier League and that there are 20 different

chairman Scott Duxbury says

vested interests, which sometimes align but more often than not work purely to protect each individual club. Ahead of Monday's crunch meeting of topflight clubs, the Hornets have joined Brighton and Aston Villa in making clear

Project Restart plans. With nine rounds left, Watford is 17th in the league and looking to fight off relegation

their opposition to the current

brought on by the coronavirus outbreak.

Duxbury says some clubs are happy to sign up to 'Project Restart' because arguably there is only an upside in participating in this compromised format. It means Liverpool can win the title, other clubs can book their place in Europe next season or potentially fight their way up the table from a position of safety. But he adds "when at least six clubs - and I suspect more - are concerned about the clear downside and the devastating effects of playing in this kind of distorted nine-game mini-league, then I believe the Premier League has a duty of care to address those concerns."-AP

Inter, AC Milan back training after lockdown in coronavirus epicentre

MILAN, May 9: Italian football giants Inter Milan and AC Milan were both back training two months after a strict lockdown which has hit the north-

ern Italian city hard. Inter said all their players and staff had tested negative for the coronavirus on Friday, clearing the way for them to return to individual training.

Captain Samir Handanovic led the way in the afternoon as players, including Belgium striker Romelu Lukaku, wearing face masks and some in gloves, arrived at the team's Appiano Gentile training cen-

tre, 35km northwest of Milan. Temperatures were taken on arrival with three groups of players alternating in the afternoon to respect social distancing rules.

Their city rival resumed earlier in the week with club technical director Paolo Maldini warning "not going back on the pitch would be a

Former captain Maldini, together with his 18-year-old son Daniel, a Milan youth team

player, have both recovered from COVID-19, but the San Siro outfit revealed on Friday that some squad members are still not negative.

"You have to be careful, but not to resume would be a disaster from all points of view," 51-year-old Maldini said during an Instagram Live chat on

"France were wrong to decree the end immediately, but we will accept what will be the verdict of the government. There is so much uncertainty."

The city in the northern Lombardy region is the epicentre of Italy's outbreak, one of the worst in Europe in terms of deaths and infections.

It has suffered some 15,000 deaths, around half of Italy's 30,000 coronavirus fatalities, since the outbreak first erupted in early March.

One by one stars have returned to Italy with Juventus forward Cristiano Ronaldo in two weeks' coronavirus quarantine as his team got back to training on Tuesday. – AFP

SU DO KU 8 6 4 9 8 5 2 8 4 6 9 3 8 9 6 2 5 3 2 1 9 6 4 8

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. Fill the grid with digits in such a manner that every row. every column and every 3 x 3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9 without repeating any.

| | 6 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| | 9 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 4 |
| ı | 3 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 8 |
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| | 1 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
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| ı | 5 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| | 4 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 5 9 7 3 8 4 1 6 | 9 |
| | 7 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 5 |



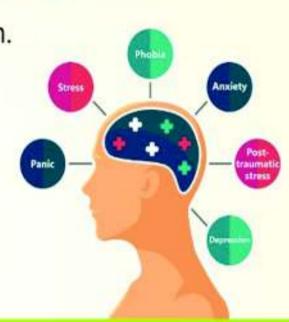
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4

VAGRANT WORDS

DHRUBA HAZARIKA takes
paranoia to a whole new level.

The Assam Tribune READING OF THE STATE OF TH

The good fight

As Assam struggles to cope with COVID-19, frontline healthcare workers are putting themselves at risk, day in and day out, reports NASREEN HABIB.



n April 2, temperatures were soaring in Assam. Bordoisila, the seasonal unruly wind, was yet to unravel. Rajumoni Boruah, a 35-year-old ICU nurse from Demow in Upper Assam, was on night duty at the COVID-19 ICU at the GMCH. There were no A/Cs, coolers or fans installed inside, for fear of circulating the infected air outside (five tower A/Cs have been installed inside now). Suspected COVID-19 patients were steadily streaming in after a one week lull. Rajumoni had not encountered a COVID-19 positive patient, yet. "I felt prepared - we were given adequate training on using PPE kits and knew about the risks involved. But what she had not anticipated was the oppressive heat once she had donned a PPE suit. "It was a warm night and I started sweating profusely. The patient complained of breathlessness and could hardly lie down. I tried to do what I had done hundreds of times before – push an injection through a cannula - to clear up the pathways of his lungs. The sweat dripped over my right eye and my vision got all blurry. I focussed with my left eye, muttered a short prayer and pushed in the

injection; it worked."

For the next four hours or so, Rajumoni stuck by her patient. His condition stabilised as the night rolled by and he could drop off to sleep. She took off her scrubs, followed by a mandatory chlorine bath and went back to her makeshift room in the hospital, thinking of her five-year-old son she would not be seeing for the next one month at least. As the State prepared to battle the novel coronavirus, sealing of GMCH for COVID-19 suspected patients, hundreds of healthcare workers like Rajumoni are ready at the frontline, despite a lack of adequate health infrastructure to support them.

Skilled hands, too, were in short supply. Thus, 1,000 final-year MBBS, BDS and ayurvedic students, and 1,500 final-year students of nursing were pressed in to join the healthcare workforce in their fight against the virus. "I had volunteered because I simply couldn't stay back in the hostel. This is what we medical students prepare ourselves for," said Gagandeep Kaur, a Master's level student of Anaesthesiology and Critical Care at the GMCH, from Mohali in Punjab.

She suited up, strapping on her N95 mask, face shield, gown and apron and slid on her gloves at the donning station before venturing inside the COVID-19 ICU. But, as she softly tells me, she struggled – communicating with a patient is difficult. "You have to shout out the words and hope they made it out of the layered N95 mask. Time goes by slowly."

Narjina Begum, a nurse with the GMCH, also mentions the silence inside an isolation ward, "On a regular day, I would make small talk, now it needed more effort and we were all on edge." She recalls a ten-year-old child, a suspected COVID-19 patient, who bawled for his mother. Narjina finally made a video call to her from the mobile phone kept inside the ward. Comforting a patient is more difficult now, but technology frequently helps. Rajumoni, Gagandeep and Narjina were back on duty, after a 14-day quarantine period. Since the GMCH has been sealed off, following the detection of a PG student turning up positive, they are currently being tested for COVID-19.

As Indians lit thousands of diyas, candles and lamps for healthcare workers, Priyam Saikia, an assistant professor at the GMCH, was at the hospital, inside a special COVID-19 ICU he helped build, in record time: "No one is ready for a pandemic, especially one like this. Building a new isolation ward, or ICU was out of the question. We had to use the existing building and safely restructure it. The PWD helped us to create a red zone, inside which are a donning station, an isolation ward, an ICU, and a place to wash yourself. The COVID-19 ICU currently has 100 beds." Priyam's wife is also a doctor and is posted in Jorhat. In Guwahati, with no time to cook or shop, his brotherin-law let down a tiffin for him late night from their first-floor home, religiously for more than a week.

"Kisiki muskuraahaton pe ho nisaar, Kisika dard mil sake to le udhaar, Kisike waaste ho tere dil mein pyaar, Jeena issi ka naam hai," Mukesh's eternal number floated into the night sky as I dialled Pranjal Sharma's number, a 41-year-old emergency technician with the 108 ambulance service in Assam. There are over 280 such ambulances running all over Assam, saving lives, night or day. When the COVID-19 pandemic entered Assam. Pranial knew there would be a surge of patients and he braced himself. He attended to the first COVID-19 suspected patient who leaned on him for support, and suddenly Pranjal felt scared. "We all are, aren't we? But, I told myself that we will just have to do our duty, coronavirus or no coronavirus." Duty means 12 hours a day, neatly divided into three-day shifts and three night ones.

The lockdown has been eased to ensure that empty *bhorak* (granaries) and purses can be refilled, the fight, though, is on. "It is easy for us doctors to pen down rules; how will someone wash their hands if they have run out of soap? But this pandemic has taught us one lesson – we are connected. I hope we can reach out to each other and tide it over," remarks Lahari Saikia, Head of Microbiology at the GMCH, as she puts her game face on, to supervise the testing of hundreds of samples that have come from all over the State.

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s the pandemic continues to spread, almost every business venture is in the throes of uncertainty. During this outbreak, the Earth is witnessing multiple transformations, which various people have interpreted differently, depending on their own varying personal experiences.

In one way, the outbreak has been beneficial for the Earth's crumbling ecology. The closure of worldwide production firms has led to an eminent drop in the carbon and nitrogen oxide emissions due to which, regions which were earlier considered as highly polluted have seen significant improvement in their air quality. On the other hand, in spite of all these affirmatives, no one can deny the fact that the world economy is moving towards a recession, while a large section of the global population is being subjected to an unprecedented, traumatic experience; all because of the augmentation of the pandemic. Still, further alteration in the global situation is imminent. Our willingness to retrograde to normalcy could help us survive the wretched hour. Similarly, the durability of the pleasant shift in the global climate cannot be guaranteed for long if we attempt to prognosticate the environmental and the economic end results of the pandemic by taking note of an earlier economic crisis

The Economic Crisis of 2008 is one of the worst ever financial exacerbations in history. According to a news report, the Chinese Government had brought forth an exclusive package that funded largescale infrastructure projects for industrial revival and to cope with the crisis. Many



An industrial revival is indispensable now, but not at the cost of harming the environment, writes DRONA SANKARSAN.

other countries followed suit. This led to a rapid surge in economic activities, which, in turn, caused a great leap in emission levels. The pertaining pathetic condition of our environment can very well be blamed on the inefficiently planned boost which production houses had received to make up for the 2008 crisis losses. After the predicament, China became the toptiered polluting country, followed by the likes of the U.S., India, Russia and Japan. Since then, the Earth has been seeing a large spike in the levels of contamination, as well as a surge in global warming. Li Shuo, a senior climate policy advisor for Greenspace East Asia, termed this

tendency of level of emissions to ascend after a crisis as "revenge pollution" and it is now one of the new topics of concern for many experts.

Evidences from history show that after any crisis, policy-makers hardly pay any attention to environmental concerns while formulating remedial policies. After the end of the pandemic, we can expect a variety of economic stimuli that shall cause the skyrocketing of production and of other economic undertakings; especially in countries that will be incurring huge losses in the entire period of battling the impact of the virus, along with those nations that have always been

enthusiastic to attain superiority in the international market. Again, this surge will consequently bring about a jump in the discharge of carbon and nitrogen oxide gases at a much higher level; resulting out of the delirious attempts to redirect the concerned countries' economic trajectories towards resurgence. Hence, there will be a rebound from the current fall in emission levels, while ineptly reviving the market.

Such circumstances – like revenge pollution will, in fact, make the current global environmental reversals pointless and can create more gruesome situations in the coming years. To circumvent such kind of repercussions in the aftermath, global leaders will have to work out efficient methods to revive the market, while also acting responsibly towards sustaining the favourable environmental transitions that have come about recently. Experts condemn lethal pollution as deadly as SARS-CoV-2. If pollution levels start intensifying with restarting of business houses, in the near future, we might have to face far more severe and dangerous catastrophes that could probably result in dreadful woes for humanity.

Mahatma Gandhi once said, "The future depends on what we do in the present." While trying to pull off new accomplishments, we, humans, would have to be on high alert to protect the beautiful and resourceful, yet limited gifts of Nature in order to reserve them to fulfil the needs of our future generation and to avoid any other subsequent disasters on our planet.

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Show me the money!

AJAY JETHI has catapulted into sudden fame after his role in the popular Netflix show *Money Heist*.

ndian-origin actor Ajay Jethi, who is based in Spain, had no clue about *Money Heist*, one of Netflix's most successful series. Known as *La casa de papel* in Spanish, the show's hugely anticipated fourth season released last month and managed to garner even more fans. Playing Shakir's character, Jethi rose to prominence not only in Spain but in India and Pakistan as well. The actor who plays a Pakistani hacker in this show talks about this career-defining role and much more.

What was your first reaction when you received the offer to be a part of *Money Heisf?*

It was just a new project for me and a new offer is always a happy thing for any actor. I was not really aware of the popularity of this project, known the world over as *Money Heist*. I had no real clue that the project was so popular.

So, when did you realise the popularity of the series?

My manager told me about it. Then I watched the first two seasons within three days and I realised how big it was. Initially, I thought it was popular just in Spain. But on the first day of my shoot, when I shared an Instagram story about my role in the show, friends from India and Pakistan started texting me. Only then did I realise that the show is being watched by the Indian and Pakistani community too. I realised its worldwide popularity only after the release of the fourth season as I was getting hashtags on social media.

Was the brand Netflix enough for you to accept the role of Shakir or was content the last word?

No, it was my manager who asked me not to skip the series. He told me about the popularity of the show. He told me it was a big opportunity for me. Since I had earlier worked with Alex Pina (Spanish television producer), I was sure that the show would have a great concept.

How has your life changed after Money Heist?

My life and my vision towards life have definitely changed after *Money Heist*. I am feeling more responsible after getting such an overwhelming response from all corners. Also, I am thinking about how to balance all my work. Apart from that, my hard work will continue.

You have worked in full-length films earlier. Is there any difference between a full-length film and OTT platforms?

It depends on the project whether it is a full-length film or a web series or a short film. I never distinguish between them. I have always wondered why people outside Spain do not watch Spanish films. Now due to the OTT platform, the reach has become wider. No one recognised me earlier, like they do now. Whenever a language barrier breaks, there remains only one level. Right now, all film productions have been stopped, but Netflix is still on. I think OTT platforms have broken all language barriers.

People in India are quite keen to see an adaptation of *Money Heist* in Hindi. While many feel that Shah Rukh Khan could play the Professor's role, others feel maybe Ayushmann Khurrana will do justice to the character. Whom would you choose as the lead actor if you were given an opportunity to adapt *Money Heist* in Hindi?

See, if *Money Heist* comes to mainstream Hindi film domain, it would be great to have Shah Rukh Khan playing the role. But, personally, I would love Irrfan Khan (the interview was taken before Irrfan Khan passed away) *sahab* to do the Professor's role which is very deep.

Do you think it is high-time Indian filmmakers made project

See, Indian films have changed in the last one or two decades. With time, independent films that are content-based have been adapted into mainstream cinema slowly. It would be great to bring films of *Money Heist*-level to the Indian audience, which is very intelligent. People now love the style of acting which is globalised. The films that had Naseeruddin Shah, Om Puri, Shabana Azmi, etc., were earlier known as art films. But now those art films are a part of mainstream Indian cinema. So this change is great.

What is your next plan after *Money Heist?* Are you going to venture into Bollywood or stay in Spain?

I will never leave Spain. But Bollywood is, indeed, my next plan. I seriously want to do content-based Hindi films. I have also received a couple of offers in Hindi films. I have liked both the projects. I have decided to work in those films. It is a different feeling to work in one's own language. The happiness in getting recognition from my own country is unparalleled.

There are plenty of them. I would like to work with Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Anurag Kashyap, Tigmanshu Dhulia, Anubhav Sinha and Imtiaz Ali.



A scene from Money Heist.

WOMEN PLUS

Monalisa Hazarika

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have spent more than a decade in the rural development sector and the one thing that I have learnt is that women are the best educators because they educate themselves first and not merely because it is their duty but because it's a way of life. Also, in my days with the National Health Mission (NHM), having closely worked with women frontline workers like ANMs, Anganwadi workers and, particularly, ASHA workers, it was enriching to observe how these women helped the rural populace understand complex medical terminologies in simple, colloquial language.

COVID-19 is an oft-repeated word now and has become a household name, though myths and fake news regarding the virus have also spread like wildfire. Thus, the need for the dissemination of correct information is of utmost importance to curb the disease. For people like us, it is easy to look up credible sources of information on Google or switch on a news channel for an update or grab a newspaper to get our facts right. But many of our rural masses do not have adequate information on staying safe from sources they can comprehend easily. Women's groups who are working at the grassroots level have done commendable work in this regard.

Specifically, the Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ASRLM) is programmed in such a way that 12-15 women from the same socio-economic background come together to form Women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and focus on generating income. They come together to solve common problems, initiate collective measures of livelihood for overall upliftment of the society, in terms of health, nutrition, economy, and education, rendering women empowerment at large. The SHGs

> egardless of the style or influence you choose for your

interior décor, the job is not

complete until you also add

a few accent pieces and until

you create a focal point. For that, you

can adopt all sorts of strategies. Usually

the spark is not in what you use to make

your décor stand out, but the way you

use it. It's the same with the price. That

being said, let's now take a look at a

Plates are an interesting alternative for

framed artwork. They can usually be

found in antique shops and they can be

collected over time. To hang them on

the wall, use sleek hangers that adhere

to the back of the plates and that are

basically invisible. But before you do

that, try to find a layout that you like

by first placing the plates on the ground

Making a patterned canvas to display

on a wall is quite easy. You can use a

cardboard template or, if you prefer

something a little more artistic, you can

freehand something. Let your talent

speak for you. The canvas can then be

used as an original decoration for spaces

such as a home office, dining room,

bedroom or any other space that you

think might benefit from its presence.

and trying different options.

Paint a canvas

few low-cost decorating ideas:

Hang plates

INTERIORS

The community educators

Rural women are at the forefront in the battle against the coronavirus.



information on Google or switch on a news channel for an update or grab a newspaper to get our facts right. But many of our rural masses do not have adequate information on staying safe from sources they can comprehend easily.

are further federated into higher level community-based organisations like Village Organisations (VOs) and Cluster Level Federations (VO). The frontline workers are also women who are Community Resource Persons who give out all information and training to the SHGs so they become sustainable in nature.

When the COVID-19 pandemic emerged in India in the last weeks of February 2020 and early days of March 2020, guidelines were

circulated from ministries on abstinence from mass gatherings, and all meetings were ordered to be cancelled so that there is no scope of spreading the outbreak. This not only created fear in the minds of the SHG members but, at the same time, they were disappointed as they were unable to celebrate their much-awaited event of the year – International Women's Day on March 8. This day is celebrated in a very big way by the community-based organisations of ASRLM every year. This year was an exception, but ASRLM came up with various training and orientation sessions where the SHGs were enlightened on how they can use their force to spread the message of good health, hygiene and sanitation.

On their part, the community cadres, with proactive leaders of Village Organisations (VOs) and Cluster Level Federations (CLFs), marched ahead to spread the key message of prevention from the coronavirus to all SHG members, their families and the rural masses at large. Social media was also used as an excellent tool. As SHG members went ahead with making reusable masks and free distribution of the same, they also made it a point to make people aware of the necessity of using masks, and proper cleaning and sanitisation of the same. The use of home remedies for boosting one's immune system with available ingredients was also articulated. The SHG members and community cadres were given names such as Jeevika Sakhi, Krishi Sakhi, Pashu Sakhi, Bank Sakhi, etc., and it is to their credit that correct information regarding the pandemic made it to the rural population.

A majority of these women may have not entered the threshold of an educational institution, but have become enthusiastic educators of the society, stemming the virus of fake news.

over the years. It can be anything from

stamps to old coins and books. It's a

great way of including something per-

If you have a small home, it's not all

bad. It is cosier than most large spaces

and there are plenty of things you can

do to create the impression of a larger

space, such as using mirrors. Mirrors

are also inexpensive décor solutions

and their versatility allows them to be

used in any room of the house and in

Another way of personalising a space is

to use framed photos. For example, you

can create a family gallery by displaying

pictures of everyone in the family on

a wall in the living room. You can also

use the same idea for the dining room

or for your office in order to make it

Create a family gallery

sonal into the décor of a room.

Hang mirrors

almost any space.

People Speak

Sunday Reading invites all readers to speak out on vital issues that touch their lives. Our next topic is - "Smart ways to downsize your household budget." Send in your response, not exceeding 100 words, enclosing your name, address and passportsize coloured photograph - latest by May 19, 2020, addressed to: People Spea Sunday Reading, The Assam Tribune, Chandmari, Guwahati-781003 or e-mail us at sundayreading@assamtribune.com

Today's topic

What has COVID-19 taught us?



ny new challenge comes with the opportunity to better ourselves. The more intense the challenge, the more profound the impact is on us. This has exactly been the case with the COVID-19 pandemic as well. By and large, humanity has been able to come out stronger. In Assam, we could see a revival of sorts of our age-old traditions of acceptance and mutual coexistence in this time of crisis. People from all walks of life seem to have come together as one unified force to support each other in ways that would be otherwise unimaginable. This is particularly true for Assam Police. While we have always been a force connected to our roots, during this crisis, we really came into our own and the way we came to the service of our people, makes me really proud to be associated with

Assam Police. The opportunity to serve our people in ways otherwise unimaginable as a policeman is something I am personally very grateful for.

> Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta, IPS. DGP, Assam Police

Dersonally, 2020 was a bad start. My seemingly healthy, active mother fell ill, hospitalised for a month. I realised the frailty of human life. The sad overtone continues. Five months hence we are into our sixth week of lockdown, even as we make history of a different kind. A tiny virus overtakes humanity and mocks at our lofty talk. So much suffering and despair. Countless perish. The other side? A beautiful place called home. Of indulging in little pleasures - the houseplants, innovative cooking with scarce resources, soul music and prayers. Of gratitude long due. Precious relationships, friendships, the food on our table. Of lessons learnt. Thrift and grandmother's wisdom, minimalism and cleaning up clutter - inside out. The great leveller and the need for humility. The spirit and resilience of the frontline warriors. The "Good Earth" and her angst. Of Mother Nature healing.

Every evening two young girls come with a saucepan in hand. I watch, as I take a walk. Quietly, they feed the hungry street dogs wagging weary tails in delight. Of goodness, empathy, compassion. And everywhere - the sound of silence.

Bhaswati Khaund Goswami, Communications Officer, Centre for NE Studies and Policy Research.



There is nothing good about the novel coronavirus, it is killing I many people and shutting millions more inside with fear as their main companion. However, if we are fated to go through this passage, we may as well learn something from it.

Some people scoff at the saying that "money doesn't make you happy". They are sure it will. However, in the light of the devastating

deaths due to COVID-19, we are being reminded that health, not money, is our true wealth, and that we would give anything for the well-being of our family and loved ones. We must also realise that there is another thing money cannot buy, i.e., time. So, use this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for personal growth.

> Md. Rustam Parwez, EFL University, Hyderabad.

OVID-19 teaches us that our first priority in life is our own home Cand family. No matter how far we go in life, home is the safest place. Proper sanitisation, mask-wearing, maintaining social distanc-

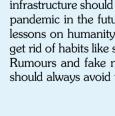
ing are essential. More and more hospitals with proper infrastructure should be built to fight against any such pandemic in the future. COVID-19 also teaches us lessons on humanity and moral values. We should get rid of habits like spitting, drinking alcohol, etc. Rumours and fake news also cause panic. We should always avoid the same.

Pune, Maharashtra.

OVID-19 has taught us a lot. But most importantly, it has demon-

chain. So, why not be committed to the spread of love, peace, and happiness through the same transmission chain method? By doing so, we can surely turn the world into a paradise, slowly and steadily, and hence, turn this adversity into

Sayantana Baruah,



Sharmin Pasha is a food writer currently based in Dubai, UAE, where she teaches

strated to us the power of the chain system. It has shown to us how the action of a single person can affect thousands and thousands of people at the rear end of the

a blessing.

House proud

Here are some low-cost interior decorating ideas for all types of homes.



Make your own art

And since we were just talking about this, another great way of adding some spark to your home's interior is to create your own art. This way, you will make the room feel more personal and intimate and you'll add something that represents you to the décor. It can be anything you want, even some simple doodles on a piece of paper.

Be natural

If you also want to add some freshness

into your home and to bring a piece of Nature inside, you can opt for more natural solutions. For example, you can recycle some wood to make a simple, but charming storage piece for your hallway. It would have a rough look and great character.

Display collections

Sometimes a great way to save some money is to use what you already have. So, you can spice up your interior décor by displaying things you have collected

feel more inviting and cosy. **Choose bold colours** Colour is a very simple way of making something pop. So, if you want to change

the atmosphere in your home and make it more dynamic and vibrant, choose bold colours. Combine them and come up with new ideas, mix different shades and use different patterns and textures to make them stand out.

Ingredients: ▼ Turmeric powder......1 tsp ▼ Yellow mustard seeds......4 tbsps ▼ Mustard oil......¼ cup ▼ Nigella seeds.....¹/_a tsp ▼ Water (warm)......1 cup ▼ Saltto taste

Microwaved mustard fish

Marinate the fish in salt and turmeric powder and keep it aside for half an

Soak the mustard seeds in half a cup of warm water for an hour. Drain it and then grind to a fine paste, along with one green chilli and a pinch of salt.

Place the fish in a large, heat-proof, microwave-safe dish.

Combine the mustard paste, the mustard oil, the water, the nigella seeds and salt. Pour this mixture over the fish. And place the remaining green chillies over the fish.

Cover the dish tightly with a microwave-safe plastic wrap. Microwave the fish on high for five

minutes or until done. Set aside for three minutes. Serve with rice.



CULINARY Corner

Sharmin Pasha

privately-organised cooking lessons on different techniques of cooking. She also hosts an informative page featuring Assamese recipes on Facebook, which was created to showcase the culinary treasures of Assam to the world and to preserve ethnic recipes for generations to come. Ingredients: ▼ Gram flour (besan).....½ cup ▼ Sugar.....½ tsp

▼ Refined oil1 tbsp ▼ Yoghurt.....¼ cup ▼ Fruit salt (Eno).....34 tsp ▼ Salt For tempering ▼ Refined oil1 tbsp ▼ Black mustard seeds......1 tsp ▼ Curry leaves6 ▼ Sugar.....1 tsp ▼ Water......4 tbsps

▼ Lime juice1 tbsp

▼ Coriander leaves, chopped1 tbsp

▼ Fresh coconut, grated1 tbsp

For garnish

Mix the gram flour, the salt, the sugar and the turmeric powder in a mixing bowl. Add the grated ginger and the chopped green chillies. Pour in the water, the yoghurt and a tablespoon of oil.

ated. Add the fruit salt, along with a teaspoon of water. Stir gently to combine.

Using a whisk, beat until smooth and aer-

Now spoon the mixture immediately into a heat-proof, microwave-safe mug.

Microwave for two-and-half minutes on full power, or until done.

For the tempering, heat the tablespoon of oil in a small pan over medium heat. Add the mustard seeds and the curry leaves and

sauté until they sizzle. Add the water and the sugar and cook until the sugar dissolves. Remove from heat and stir in the lime juice. Pour this mixture over the warm gram flour

Garnish with the coriander leaves and the grated coconut. Serve at room temperature.



Mother and me - I

FICTION

Vastav Bora

f I want to write about my mother, I must tell you at the outset that hers was not a happy marriage. I guess the reason why she remained bitter all her life was that she married very late by her expectations – she was 33 or so. Maybe she thought that marriage at 33 was not a very good thing to do when you were marrying a man of 22. Our father married early because of familial responsibilities heaped on him. Our mother, on the other hand, married late because all her ways to an early marriage had been sealed off by her parents' untimely death and her being brought under the care of

MIND MIRROR

Dr. Jayanta Das

psychiatrist. Psychiatrist

The author is a senior consultant

psychologist Dr. Jayashree Das also

sundayreading@assamtribune.com

contribute. E-mail your queries to

Dr. Anweshak Das and clinical

Q. My nine-year-old son has

difficulty in writing; at times, he

misses a word. His attention span

is also very short. However, he is

good at mathematics. His grades

are gradually deteriorating. Kindly

Ans: Difficulty in writing, reversing

letters and missing a word

are signs that your son might

be having a specific learning

disability. If children have any of

these disorders, their experience

with learning may be completely

different to that of other children.

difficulty interpreting information

traditional teaching and schooling

methods. The child may struggle

understanding words and phrases.

with letter/word recognition or

in a way that is compatible with

They are highly likely to have

- S. Gupta

her uncle who did not want to press marriage on her or vice versa.

By nature, our mother was a very reserved woman. Her's was a girlhood of quiet, determined work and glossy women's magazines read before sleep. She would express herself very little and when she did, it was mostly through two preoccupations of her life: cleaning and cooking. As far as I remember, the anecdotes circulating on mother's side have that she was fiercely protective towards a swept floor, so much so that she would command her brothers to keep beyond the threshold; if at all they really had to come in, they might as well clutch their feet to their chests. And so far as cooking was concerned, there is a story that says that my mother

cooked extremely well when she was angry and there is another that says that the *lusi*-mutton she rustled up on the day my father came to see her as a prospective bride was particularly delicious. We would later jokingly remark that she had had an inkling of what was to come in her life.

When she stepped into our home after the night of her wedding rituals, she said she had been disappointed. How great her disappointment was no one could tell. Being a reticent woman, she never confided in anyone, although I guess there were jokes passed on to her sisters about our father's *dhekeri* accent. One of the many things mother did well was sarcasm. She really had an acidic tongue and we were all bruised by it. I particularly remember that day when my sister and I, in our 20s, had

The nature of a learning disability and how it manifests

intellectual disability. A child with

low-intelligence level or attention

deficit also might very well manifest

these issues. So, an IQ assessment

learning disabilities. We might also

have to access certain other areas

in the child like bullying or abuse

and ADHD assessment is a must

before we diagnose specific

asked her to recall her first impressions of our dilapidated house. It would be hard to miss the tone of disgust as fresh as it had been on the day she first felt it. She turned up her nose and said, "What a house! Uneven floors and pigeon droppings on the wall. It was a hovel." Her entire life was governed by this disgust of not having a good house in Guwahati, the city where, perhaps, she had believed she could escape into something better.

But her disgust never exploded outwards. Our relatives always held our parents' marriage as an example and I knew better than to tell them otherwise. To maintain the façade of a happy marriage, whatever disgust my mother felt imploded inwards. It appears she was a very submissive woman in the face of authority. I, very meekly, asked my mother one day, "Why don't you wear kurtas, mother?" I had seen my friends being accompanied home with their mothers wearing flowing kurtas. My mother looked up at me from the dishes. She said in a very cutting tone, "Kurta! Your father did not even allow me to wear the red saree I wanted to." She said that the red saree had been really beautiful. It had these beautiful golden flowers on it. It appeared to my teenage, Psychology Today-obsessed self that my mother had something of a sadomasochist in her. She would swallow every ounce of authority, deny every last fancy and grow a festering ulcer of bitterness that would surround herself as well as others. I remembered my friend crying at school because her mother had been divorced from her father. I thought there was nothing bad in divorces. For all I knew, our mother would have been liberated, she would have had a job and she would have happily walked home in her red saree.

I never hated my mother, I hasten to add. There were certain qualities in her that I admired. She was a pretty hardworking lady if, in retrospect, I begin to think about her daily routine. She was up by six. By the time we would wake up, we would hear the sweeping sound of the broom below our window. If we asked her to stop and rest for a while, she would smirk without lifting her head "And who would store water?"

(To be continued)

Fiction entries should not exceed 1,800 words.

in school, any issues of childhood

or learning disabilities often find

the day-to-day challenges of the

classroom quite daunting. LDs are

not the equivalent to the learning

problems that arise as a result of

motor disabilities. The nature of

the learning disability and how it

manifests itself in each child may

methodological approach typically

facilities are often not sufficient for a

child with a learning disability. Each

learning disability. Special educators

are available who have expertise in

dealing with these types of children.

be advisable to first consult a mental

So, for a proper evaluation, it will

health professional.

vary. Every person is different,

provided by school educational

child has a unique learning style,

so it is important to individualise

the management of a child with

and, therefore, the singular

difficulties in visual, hearing or

Students with learning difficulties

anxiety or depression, etc.



Readers' queries have been answered by doctors of Down Town Hospital, Guwahati. You can send health-related questions to health.assamtribune@gmail.com

Remedy at hand

From gout to pharyngitis, this column offers solutions.

What is the treatment course for gout? How serious an ailment is it?

Prevention is always better than cure, and patient education plays an important role in it. A high level of uric acid is associated with lack of exercise and excess weight. A protein-rich diet like red meat, seafish, whole pulses, alcoholic drinks, and sweetened beverages should be avoided. One should drink plenty of fluids. For symptomatic patients, drugs such as NSAIDs like Piroxicam, Etoricoxib help in reducing gouty inflammation. For chronic gout, agents like uricosuric drugs, example – Allopurinol, help in maintaining the uric acid levels in the blood. The target uric acid level is below 6mg/dL. Gout is not a serious ailment, provided it's under control.

Director, Down Town Institute of Orthopaedic and Joint Replacement.

I am 37. I suffer from pharyngitis, which escalates during the winter months. How can I avoid it or get relief?

Name withheld

Pharyngitis is quite a common problem and not a serious one. If seasonal, it may be due to underlying allergy to pollens, dust, and pollutants. You should check your underlying allergic condition and also thyroid and sugar profile. If



you are getting temperature and pain, you must go for a culture test to find out the bacteria and accordingly, get treated for the allergy or infection. In the meantime, you can take black tea in tepid water and also gargle. Dr. N.N. Dutta,

Senior ENT Surgeon.

My husband has had a pacemaker fitted recently. Can he use a mobile

phone? He is 63 years old.

Name withheld It is recommended to avoid direct contact of a mobile phone right over the pacemaker pocket (the area where a pacemaker pulse generator or battery is implanted). It is also advisable to keep the mobile phone at a distance

of approximately 15 cms. from the pacemaker pocket. Otherwise, there is no other restriction in using a mobile phone by a person with a cardiac pacemaker. However, even without a pacemaker, there are concerns of long-term radiation if mobile phones are excessively used, especially in young individuals. Dr. Indra Kuladhipati,

Interventional Cardiologist

I have been recommended a biopsy of a tiny lump in my breast. There is a lot of information on Google about biopsies, but I am really nervous at the moment. Can you please tell me what a biopsy is?

R. Kashyap

In simple terms, a biopsy is the process of taking a bit of tissue from the diseased area in order to test it for its nature, that is, whether the lump from where the tissue is taken is of benign or malignant nature. It is an important tool for the final diagnosis of the disease. In your case, depending on the size of the breast lump, either you will have to undergo an FNAC (fine needle aspiration cytology), in which tiny bits of tissue-filled fluid is aspirated out of the lump with the help of a needle. Or you may undergo core biopsy, where a small amount of tissue is cut out of the lump. This is a basic procedure with negligible risk and is a must in diagnosing the lump along with radiological and clinical methods of diagnosis.

Dr. Krishnali Hazarika, General Surgeon.

advise.

MY SPACE **Dr. Sanghamitra Bora** sanghamitrabk@gmail.com

Surviving a nightmare

Each to one's own

itself in each child may vary.

They may struggle to memorise and

organise numbers or tell the time.

Many of them may struggle with

spelling, organising information to

write, or the act of writing itself. So,

we have to assess all the following

time, we have to rule out issues like

issues in your child. At the same

attention deficit, hyperactivity or

he nationwide lockdown to combat the COVID-19 pandemic was called for on March 22, 2020. As a doctor, I was called in to volunteer for the service in one of the state-run hospitals. My work was to supervise infection control in the screening area, a potentially infectious zone.

As a daily routine, every healthcare worker works in shifts: morning, evening and night. They would wear or 'don' the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for six hours, during which they cannot eat, drink nor use the washroom. That would require taking off or 'doff'-ing their suits to be discarded in designated Bio-medical waste bins. Both processes have strict guidelines. To ensure extra protection, all workers would wear N95 masks topped up with two triple-layered surgical masks, protective goggles and two pairs of gloves. Once duty is over, every worker would 'doff' their suit and be sprayed with a disinfectant called D-125 that would drench him or her completely from head to toe. One can imagine the plight of these healthcare workers; for those in night duties, it was even more pitiful.

On that fateful day, I noticed a sick person with a lady in the waiting area, in queue for registration. The area was busy, with people waiting to be screened. Unable to resist the waiting time, the lady came up to me to request if they could be sent early as her husband was not feeling well. Blaming it on my palliative care training, I felt the urge to comfort the couple till their turn came. Screening done and samples taken, they were advised medications and home-quarantine. They happily thanked me and went home.

Two days later, I came to know that the man was COVID-positive, and that was the moment I felt an unknown fear, a feeling of restlessness, and a chill down the spine. After reporting to the authorities about my interaction, I was advised to watch out for symptoms over the next seven days. If there were any, I would have to undergo tests and follow standard protocol.

Nothing happened for seven days. However, on the ninth day, I developed a fever. I was on the verge of panic. Why now, I thought. Perhaps bathing twice-a-day and getting sprayed with the

The isolation ward is a secluded place in the hospital, and unnaturally silent. It was scary to be alone. Those on duty looked like robots in their PPEs. They never talked. They would come, do their work and go away. You cannot see their expressions. I had simply not anticipated this.

disinfectant had caused the fever? The fear of contracting the disease was imminent. It is possible to develop symptoms after seven, 14 or even 28 days. This virus is so tricky, symptoms can surface at any time. As per protocol, I was sent into isolation till the test results were available. Isolation, as I had directly interacted with a positive case. Positive patients are sent to the COVID-facility in a different area with appropriate facility for isolation and treatment. The same would apply to me too.

The isolation ward is a secluded place in the hospital, and unnaturally silent. It was scary to be alone. Those on duty looked like robots in their PPEs. They never talked. They would come, do their work and go away. You cannot see their expressions. I had simply not anticipated this. Many questions cropped up in my mind. Will I see my family again? What if my tests are positive? How sick will I become? Symptoms will start once my immunity gives way. Breathlessness first. I could imagine myself struggling for breath with a ventilator pipe. This is so difficult to accept.

My test results came after 36 hours of isolation. Thankfully they were negative. I cannot describe the sense of relief I felt. Tears rolled down as I thanked God for saving me, and they didn't stop for a while.

Being in isolation with uncertainty about the future is an extremely difficult phase. Those 36 hours spooked me and I am a doctor. Imagine people having to live through this for days together. Is there anything we can do to help those who are in isolation? Can we spare some time and compassion to counsel them? I was clear about the fact that if called for duty again, I wouldn't hesitate to volunteer. I realised the change I had brought about in the individuals I had talked to. I also realised there may be unknown fears within the healthcare workers too. That must be the reason why those in the isolation ward behave in that manner. These issues need to be addressed. The virus must be defeated by all means but not at the cost of our sanity and compassion. Winning the war with this pandemic must include compassion and care for both the sufferers and frontliners.

The cough

't was past one-thirty in the morning when I woke up.

I had been in slumber, not really deep, but sound enough so that when I woke up, it was as if I had been dozing in front of the TV. It was dark and silent – except for the ceiling fan whirring at a speed slow enough for the air not to invade my nostrils or my eardrums.

I had tried hard, as hard as perhaps any man of my age and meagre sensitivity is capable of, but it simply wouldn't go – the fear of the virus dancing into my throat aided by a chill from a fan or an air-conditioner. I have always had delicate, sensitive tonsils; and despite the best medicinal efforts, it clings on with a vengeance that brooks no nonsense. It is another matter that my erratic imagination, or whatever little that I happen to possess, has always been the greater part of my paranoia.

And then, above the noise from the fan, I heard the sound: a cough, a wracking, persistent, wheezing expulsion by someone in the neighbourhood. I sat up, groping for the torch and then lifting the mosquito net (come rain or shine, it is as compulsory as my annual income tax statement) groped for the mobile from the bed-side table and then just as stealthily, opened the door to the dining room and then into the drawing room. Closing the door behind me, I switched on the light.

To the West, across the road, and beyond our gate is Nirmal's house. To the East is a six-storey apartment complex with only three families with whom I am socially connected. To the South is a *mandir*, deserted at night; and to the North is a half-built residential complex, now empty of human beings.

The cough had built up again, spasmodic, intermittent, the gaps in between framed by the hoot of an owl. The cough was now louder, dry, longish, and hoarse – like that of a radio commentator at the fag-end of a match. I pulled aside a curtain and peered out into the neon-lit compound, straining my ears. It seemed to me that **VAGRANT WORDS**

Dhruba Hazarika



I watched the water boil, yet with half my mind expecting the cough to burst out again. I listened. But the silence, like a haunting expectant presence continued dominating the night.

the cough had come from the road; or maybe from Nirmal's. We are good friends, Nirmal and I. Thin, slightly bald, a book-lover, he lives a frugal life, never once interfering into any of the neighbours' lives, never once gossiping. I pressed the numbers and waited for him to pick up the phone.

It went on ringing until the built-in voice in the instrument told me that there would be no response. I tried again. Once more the voice came back, dead-pan, emotionless, mechanical. I stepped back from the window, switched off the light and was heading towards the kitchen when the coughing started again. It seemed to have changed directions, coming now from the East, from the six-storey affair. Low at first, it began building up in a series

until it sounded as if the man was now rolling around in agony. I opened the kitchen door, stepped outside. The night air was cool, almost chilly, in the aftermath of a shower the evening

I scrolled through the mobile numbers until I came to Montu's. Montu is a nephew of mine who lives in an apartment in the six-storey complex. I punched the numbers in the mobile, expecting to hear a ringing or a buzz. But there was none. He had switched it off. The night had gone very heavy now, the silence complete, a universe without ears. Even the coughing had stopped. A thin wind sliced against me, and once more the fear crawled in, the fear of attracting a virus floating invisibly, mysteriously in the night air. I stepped back into the kitchen and then closed the door.

Could it have been the security guard in the complex? I had often seen him as he opened and shut the lift in the parking lot. Or, could it have been a policeman on duty, patrolling the deserted streets? I lit the stove, poured water into a pan and then added some tea leaves. I watched the water boil, yet with half my mind expecting the cough to burst out again. I listened. But the silence, like a haunting expectant presence, continued dominating the night.

I carried the cup to the drawing room and then I sat down on a sofa. I waited. An owl hooted. Perhaps it was the same owl. From faraway came the sound of a vehicle passing by. It was very still after that, very silent. For almost half an hour, I sipped the tea and waited. But the cough, like a thief on the run, had gone.

It was past two-thirty when I went back to bed. Even as my eyes closed, I remembered the cough, a cough shaped like a tiny spongy ball, covered with spikes, the stems slim, rubbery and soft and open at one end like a mini trumpet. It was the mother of all coughs. It was a cough that would haunt me as long as I live.

The writer is a novelist, short-story writer and a former member of the IAS.

YESTERDAY ONCE MORE- Dr. Shiela Bora

Inspired by a hero

Kanaklata was a girl far ahead of her times.

y desire to unravel the mystery surrounding Kanaklata Barua, one of the youngest martyrs of the Quit India Movement, took me to the sleepy village of Barangabari in Gohpur, where Kanaklata was born on December 22, 1924, to craft history not only for Assam, but for the entire nation. As I sat in Kanaklata's ancestral Dolakasaria Barua household and tried to visualise the childhood of Kanaklata, orphaned at the tender age of 13, neighbours who wanted to know the purpose of my visit said that Kanaklata was educated not from books but from listening to stories of Gandhi, Independence and the Congress. Nearer home, Kanaklata's role model was Jyotiprasad Agarwala, the Congress stalwart from Tezpur, who fired the patriotic zeal in her tender mind. Inspired by the frequent discussions amongst the elders in her family on Swaraj and the strain of patriotic songs composed by Jyotiprasad, Kanaklata assembled young boys and girls-from the village in an open field and tried to impart Jyotiprasad's revolutionary ideas in their minds.

The Ryot Sabha or the public meeting, held at Gomiri in June -1931, in erstwhile Darrang district, was an important milestone in Kanaklata's eventful life, as it was here that she had the first glimpse of Jyotiprasad, her hero and role model. When the seven-year-old Kanaklata overheard her grandfather's discussions with neighbours, relating to the preparations for the forthcoming Sabha under Jyotiprasad's leadership, she instantly made up her mind and prevailed upon her stepmother to allow her to attend the Sabha, without the knowledge of her grandfather. On the way to Gomiri, as Kanaklata was passing by Jyotiprasad's ancestral garden house in Bebejia, she was elated to catch a glimpse of Jyotiprasad directing the rehearsals for the songs and dances composed for the cultural programme.

Firm in her belief that the call of duty to free Mother India was greater than that of marriage and family, Kanaklata agreed to the proposal of marriage only as a gesture of accepting her grandparents' request and her ring ceremony had been celebrated subject to the condition that she must be given the freedom to work for the country.

Jyotiprasad Agarwala, who endeavoured to highlight the glory of Assam's history through his liberal views as a poet, a playwright and a composer, was a hero beyond compare for Kanaklata. When the shooting for the first-ever Assamese film, Joymoti, was started by Jyotiprasad in Bholaguri Tea Estate,

in 1935, Kanaklata was a student of Class-IV. The news that Jyotiprasad had selected Aideu Handique, a 13-year-old girl from Golaghat, to enact the role of Joymoti, excited Kanaklata and made her determined to visit the site of the shooting. Kanaklata requested her uncle to take her to Bholaguri against the wishes of her stepmother. Immensely disturbed by the fact that Aideu Handique had been ostracised by the village community, Kanaklata decided to walk up to Aideu Handique's cottage and exchange a few words with her. During the call for "Do or Die" in 1942, Jyotiprasad had been assigned the responsibility of conducting the Freedom Movement in the sub-division

of Tezpur, where it was decided to hoist the national flag in all the police stations on September 20, 1942. Meanwhile, Kanaklata, who had enrolled herself in the Mrityu Bahini as a female volunteer of the Congress in Assam, stood with the national flag in hand at the Barangabari Chariali at the head of the women volunteer force, ready to march to the Gohpur police station and hoist the flag. The rest is history. For Kanaklata, the flag which she embraced was the spirit, the faith and the symbol.

The writer is an eminent historian of Assam

FORECAST

May 11 – 17, 2020

Assist a relative or a good friend by setting up a budget for them. It will be all around you. The danger of minor accidents will increase with the turmoil. Don't fall into the trap.



You can come into money that you don't necessarily work for. The emotional state of peers may cause a problem for you. Take care of the needs or respon-



A passionate party for two might be just the remedy. Romantic opportunities will be plentiful this week. Don't be afraid to lay your cards on the table. It is best to be discreet.





partner will have had enough. Do your best, but don't make too many promises or you may exhaust yourself. You might find that co-workers will support your endeavours.

Be creative in your pursuits. Sooner or later, your



You should sign up for creative courses. Concentrate on your work. You can make gains if you work in conjunction with others. Get back to basics. Bring work home if it will help you get caught up.





Be cautious who you deal with financially. This could be a difficult week to deal with co-workers. Exercise discipline when it comes to controlling bad habits.



family. Don't count on getting any help from those you live with. They will not have the patience. SCORPIO You have two choices: get out on your own, or bend to your mate's whims. Your home environment may

be hectic, which could result in emotional disappoin-

ment if you aren't well organised. You need time to

think things through

Don't let your family put demands on you. Any reno-

vation or home decoration should include the whole



Pushy people must be kept at arm's length. New romantic relationships will develop through group activity. You can solidify your relationship if you plan

a special evening with your loved one.

CAPRICORN



Avoid functions that will bring you in contact with those you find difficult to get along with. Take time to help a friend who hasn't been feeling well. Put aside any decisions concerning your finances.

AQUARIUS



Be sure to catch up on overdue correspondence and help those you love find solutions to their dilemmas. Don't be too eager to buy things for those who really



Attend to things that you should have done yesterday. Don't involve yourself in the emotional problems of those you work with. This might not be a week for hasty decisions. Keep busy and let them fume while

PAGE TURNER

Compiled by Indrani Raimedhi Bringing you books the chatterati are talking about.

MOTHERS BEFORE Edan Lepucki

At a time when many parents

are feeling the stress of being with their children 24x7, this compilation of stories has daughters reflect on the lives of the mothers before the daughters were born. A beautiful, evocative collection with nuanced insights and wisdom.



HOW TO PRONOUNCE KNIFE

Souvankham Thammavongsa



This series of short stories brings to life characters that may not figure on the literary radar - from a failed boxer to a manicurist to a young woman working at a chicken processing plant. The author's skill keeps the readers gripped till the end. The orginality and exuberance is remarkable.

MAHATMA GANDHI IN CINEMA Narendra Kaushik

The author blends Mahatma Gandhi and Indian cinema in a significant context. The book brings to life the transformation of Gandhi over the years. Kaushik plots the course of Gandhi's presence in Indian cinema in a linear and interesting fashion. Gandhi continues to fascinate both in real life and reel.



THE BALLAD OF SONGBIRDS AND **SNAKES**

Suzanne Collins



A spin-off and a prequel to the bestselling The Hunger Games, this one has Coriolanus Snow as an 18-year-old trying to mentor a winning tribute at the Games. The odds are against him and he must try to turn the tide for himself and for the Snow family that has now fallen into hard times. In this fascinating read, we find David turn into Goliath.

ALL IS WELL

Dr. Pradip Baruah pbaruahdr@gmail.com

The cup that rejuvenates

he origin of tea is obscured by a maze of legends. One legend associates the origin of tea with Daruma, who founded the Ch'an school of Buddhism in China. While meditating for years together, Daruma fell asleep. When he woke up, infuriated by his sleepiness, he cut off his offending eyelids, threw them away, and tea plants grew where they fell on earth. Thus, tea drives away sleepiness. There is another legend which associates tea with Shen Nung, a 2,737 BC Chinese emperor. While on a hunting trip in wild forests, some leaves of a plant, being carried by the wind, fell into a pot of boiling water. He drank it unknowingly and felt refreshed. When the reason for it was searched, the leaves of the tea plant were found. Thus, the medicinal property of a tea plant was discovered and the brew made out of that plant was initially used as medicine.

Tea, Buddhism, and meditation are closely associated with each other. In today's busy and stressful life, meditation and tea help us to relax, calm the mind and heart, and enjoy the simplicity and goodness of life. Asian countries practise various

tea traditions. Tea is taken in a tea ceremony, which includes its ceremonial preparation and drinking with mindfulness, thus, connecting it with meditation. The best known tea ceremony is 'chanoyu' – the Japanese tea ceremony. Zen monk Eisai Zenji brought both tea and green tea drinking habits from China to Japan in the 12th century, and it was quickly adopted nationwide. The alluring aroma of the matcha green tea and its calming effects became an integral part of the Zen monks' daily lives. The Japanese tea ceremony is

a simple ritual of absolutely and completely giving every ounce of oneself to the moments of preparing and drinking the tea. The tea meditation steps are very simple, easy to do, and are profoundly nourishing and beneficial: make your tea, give thanks, drink your tea, and give thanks again.

Buddhism became closely associated with tea soon after it was introduced to China in the Han Dynasty. It is believed that monk Shan Daokai of the

Jin Dynasty, at the Zhaode Temple, practised meditation and drank tea to recover from fatigue and drive away sleepiness. Monk Shi Fayao of the Southern Dynasty, who excelled in Sado and lived long, drank tea with meals. Tea drinking with meditation became a common practice among monks under Buddhist doctrines. Buddhism deems that tea helps in cultivating the body and the mind.

The path to

inner peace

meditation.

through tea and

could be

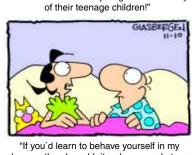
In Korea, during the period of the Shilla Kingdom, a new Seon sect of Buddhism, generally known as Zen Buddhism, began to appear in the remote mountain areas. Tea became popular among the Seon Buddhist monks too, as they drank tea while meditating to stay awake and keep their minds alert. It is important to note that tea became one of the six ceremonial offerings to Buddha during this period, which included rice, incense sticks, candles, fruits, flowers, and tea. After performing ceremonial rites, Buddhist monks drank tea. Many villages sprung up around the temples to cultivate and supply them with tea. Many of the villages were called Dachon or tea



Featuring

HARRIET

STANLEY





divorce is final and they've given us custody



dreams, then I wouldn't wake up mad at you



double, so it looks like you've got twice as much food!



"I wanted to do something special for your birthday, so I made the candle from my very