

p2 England begins to ease COVID-19 restrictions

p5 AJYCP wants 'fake farmers' charge probed

p11 First special train from Delhi reaches State

NEWS Capsule

More arrivals

GUWAHATI, May 13: Six buses from Delhi with 163 students and one bus from Chennai with 24 cancer patients and attendants arrived here today. Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma received them at the Sarusajai quarantine facility. - Staff Reporter

Package

GUWAHATI, May 13: Industries and Commerce Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary today welcomed the special focus on the MSME in the Rs 20 lakh crore 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' financial package announced by the Government of India on Tuesday. - Staff Reporter

Evicted land

KAZIRANGA, May 13: The Kaziranga National Park authority was today formally handed over the evicted land at Bandardubi and Deosur after the verification of records and data at Koliobar SDO civil office. The eviction drive was carried out in 2016 as per Guwahati High Court's order. - Correspondent

Monsoon

NEW DELHI, May 13: Monsoon is likely to reach the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago around May 16, nearly six days before its normal onset date, due to a cyclonic circulation in the Bay of Bengal, the IMD said today. - PTI

The Assam Tribune PLANET YOUNG

- May 14, 2020
- **Anne's undying endurance** by Chayanika Saikia
 - **I, Me, Myself:** Ketaki Bardalai
 - **Aliza and the magical island** by Akshita Kashyap
 - **Know your world:** Library Neelotpal Deka
 - **Book Nook, Picture Crossword.**
 - Plus Quiz, Poems, My Viewpoint, Little Hearts, Comics and other features.

JOCOSERIOUS



It's the mask effect for which I failed to recognise your voice!

15 more test positive for COVID-19 in Guwahati

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 13: In the biggest single day spike in COVID-19 cases in Assam, fifteen people - all said to be contacts of the Fancy Bazar hotel worker - tested positive for the novel coronavirus in Guwahati on Wednesday.

With this, the total number of COVID-19 cases in the State shot up to 79.

The positive patients detected today are Sunil Roy (28), Prabhat Anand (25),

Lakharo Nisab (40), Sanjeet Kumar (24), Sipu Jan Nishad (57), Sumit Kumar (22), Ajay Kumar (32), Sankar Saha (22), Subodh Kumar (49), Mukesh Singh (40), Goni Keward (60), Bindeswar Thakur (30), Prabin Kumar Rao (28), Krishna Kumar Gupta (32) and Biswanath Saha (34).

All were taken to MMCH, a designated COVID-19 hospital, where they will be admitted. Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma rushed to the MMCH to take stock of the situation.

"We are bringing the patients to MMCH. All were co-workers of Mungru Sahani who had tested positive a day before," he said, adding that measures regarding containment, etc., would be taken immediately to ensure that the virus does not spread further.

A number of areas in Fancy Bazar, the Northeast's biggest commercial hub, are likely to be declared as containment zones by tomorrow.

The new patients were those who were kept in home isolation since the ho-

tel worker of Fancy Bazar tested positive.

Forty-five-year-old Mungru Sahani, a worker of Rajkamal Hotel, had tested positive a day before. Sahani, who does not have travel history, hails from Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh and was residing at the Aloopatty area of Fancy Bazar along with his co-workers. Sahani also worked at a potato godown at Changsari that has also been declared a containment zone.

» SEE PAGE 6



Security personnel conducting a preparedness drill at Dibrugarh railway station on the eve of arrival of the first passenger train amid nationwide lockdown, on Wednesday. - UB Photos

Income tax returns filing date extended

NEW DELHI, May 13: In a relief to taxpayers, the government on Wednesday extended the deadline for filing of all income tax returns for 2019-20 fiscal till November 30, 2020.

Announcing a slew of relief measures for the coronavirus-hit economy, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman also slashed TDS (tax deducted at source)/TCS (Tax collected at source) rates for non-salary payments to residents by 25 per cent.

"From tomorrow till March 31, 2021, the TDS/TCS rates have been re-

duced by 25 per cent of the existing rate... This shall also apply to all payments for contracts, interest, rent, dividend, commission or brokerage.. all of these will be eligible for 25 per cent rate reduction.

"This reduction would release nearly Rs 50,000 crore in the hands of the people who would have otherwise paid it as TDS," Sitharaman said.

Also, the Vivad Se Vishwas scheme for direct tax dispute resolution has been extended by six months till December 31, 2020.

Sitharaman further said

the income tax department will fast track processing of pending refunds to charitable trusts, LLPs, non-corporate businesses and proprietorship firms, among others.

Also, assessments getting time-barred on September 30 have been extended till December 31, 2020 and those getting time-barred on March 31, 2021 have been extended till September 30, 2021.

She also said the income tax department has already cleared Rs 18,000 crore worth of refunds where the quantum due was up to Rs 5 lakh. - PTI

Nirmala announces package to boost economy Rs 3 lakh cr collateral-free loans for small business

NEW DELHI, May 13: The government on Wednesday announced about Rs 6 lakh crore package comprising Rs 3 lakh crore of collateral-free loans for small businesses and a Rs 30,000 crore lifeline to non-bank and housing finance companies as part of measures to help the economy tide over disruptions caused by the coronavirus lockdown.

Also, it cut the tax rate on non-salary payments by 25 per cent, extended support to companies to meet statutory liability on employees' retirement fund, provided a Rs 90,000 crore bailout to cash-starved electricity distribution companies and gave construction firms up to six more months to complete the government projects.

Announcing the first set of components of the Rs 20 lakh crore COVID-19 economic stimulus package announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the measures will help "spur growth and build a very self-reliant India".

"It addresses ease of doing business, compliance, and due diligence and the intention is also to build local brands," she said.

The Rs 20 lakh crore spending, including ones previously announced and the Reserve Bank measures, is seen as a government's attempt to check the world's fifth-largest economy hurtling towards its first full-year contraction in four decades.

Sitharaman said automatic collateral-free loans of a 4-year tenure with a 12-month moratorium on interest payment, will benefit 45 lakh small businesses.

Another two lakh such businesses would benefit from a Rs 20,000 crore subordinate debt for stressed or loan defaulting MSMEs, she said, adding a fund of funds for MSMEs is also being created, which will infuse Rs 50,000 crore equity in units that have growth potential.

» SEE PAGE 6

Complete dyke works by May 30: CM

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 13: Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal today inspected the construction work of embankment by Water Resource Department from Morihula to Agorotoli range as a protection measure for Kaziranga National Park (KNP). While surveying the work, he directed the de-

partment to complete the embankment project within May 30.

The embankment project, funded by Asian Development Bank, would cover a total length of 23.38 kms and with a width of 7.5 metres would protect the KNP from floods and erosion.

» SEE PAGE 6

Sonowal reviews NRL projects

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 13: Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal has urged the management of Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) to play a proactive role in promoting agro-based economy in the State and take steps for skill development of youth of neighbouring areas.

The Chief Minister made this call during a review of the Numaligarh Refinery Expansion Project (NREP) and the Bio Refinery Plant at the NRL headquarters at Numaligarh today.

Sonowal also visited the construction sites of both the projects and took stock of physical progress of the projects.

He said in the industrial landscape of Assam, NRL is playing an important role and has generated much hope for the State's economy, especially in view of its expansion project and the biofuel plant.

"However, it is time NRL came out of its conventional area of expertise and focused on promotion of agro-economic fundamentals in the State," he said, adding that

the bamboo-based ethanol plant is a big opportunity for the company to venture into the field of agro-economy by engaging maximum number of local people in bamboo production.

He observed that the new bamboo and cane policy of the State government would significantly help the NRL and local farmers in this regard.

The Chief Minister said the NRL with its wide resources should also give a thought to strengthen the local economy, including setting up cold storages and providing succour to the horticulturists who suffered huge loss during the lockdown.

» SEE PAGE 6

WORLD	
Confirmed cases	4,390,420
Cured/Discharged	1,633,892
Death	295,335
INDIA	
Confirmed cases	74,281
Cured/Discharged	24,386
Death	2,415
ASSAM	
Confirmed cases	78
Cured/Discharged	40
Death	2

Data as on Wednesday

SC seeks reply from Assam govt Payment of wages, rations to tea garden workers

NEW DELHI, May 13: The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Assam government to respond on a plea seeking direction to ensure that workers in all tea gardens are immediately paid wages and rations, in-

State to file its reply affidavit on the plea within 10 days and said the matter would be heard thereafter.

The plea, filed by the Assam Sangrami Chah Sramik Sangha, said that as per information available on the

Alert TODAY Alive TOMORROW

cluding for the period of lockdown, imposed amid COVID-19 pandemic.

A bench of Chief Justice SA Bobde and Justice L Nageswara Rao was hearing through video conference, a plea which has also sought a direction to the Assam government to strictly implement the March 29 directive of the Ministry of Home Affairs for payment of wages to migrant workers.

The apex court asked the

website of the Tea Tribes Welfare Department of the Government of Assam, there are 803 tea estates and around 10 lakh tea garden workers there.

Senior advocate Colin Gonsalves, appearing for the petitioner, told the bench that tea garden workers in Assam are suffering owing to non-payment of wages and rations due to lockdown.

» SEE PAGE 6

Assam Bhawan, Mumbai accomplishes mission

Transfer of cancer patients to Guwahati

R DUTTA CHOUDHURY

GUWAHATI, May 13: It was a Herculean task to bring back cancer patients and children who had undergone heart operation from Mumbai to Guwahati by road. But the challenging task was completed when 132 cancer patients and attendants as well as six children and their parents reached Guwahati last night and despite their ill health all of them reached safely.

The Joint Resident Commissioner of the Assam Bhawan, Mumbai, Devashis Sharma, personally accompanied the team, while, Dr Neelakshi Choudhury, a senior resident of the ENT Department

of Gauhati Medical College provided all necessary medical care to the patients single handedly en route from Mumbai to Guwahati.

The Assam Tribune spoke to Devashis Sharma to know the challenges faced while bringing back the cancer patients from Mumbai by road and he said that though it was a tough task, it was satisfying to bring them back safely. Giving a detailed account of the events, Sharma said that as soon as the lockdown started, all the patients in Mumbai were very tense. There were different categories of patients. The first category was those whose treatment in the Tata Memorial Hos-

pital could not start due to the prevailing situation and they were facing an uncertain future. Most of such patients and their attendants panicked. The second category was those whose treatment was completed for the time being and they were asked to report back after three or four months and they could not return home. The third category of patients had the means to go for treatment in other hospitals in Mumbai, but the private hospitals were not agreeing to allow patients in without doing the COVID-19 test and it was not possible to get the tests done.

» SEE PAGE 6

TOPCEM CEMENT

Mazbooti ka bharsosa...hamesha

World's best rotary kiln technology
Manufactured from India's best limestone
Call: 1800 123 3666 (toll-free)

www.topcem.in

Corona Snippets

BITM to use Ayurvedic sanitizer post-lockdown

KOLKATA, May 13: The Birla Industrial and Technological Museum (BITM) here on Wednesday inaugurated an Ayurvedic sanitization tunnel in which herbal disinfectants will be sprayed on visitors and staff before they enter the premises, a spokesperson of the establishment said.

"As a person enters the tunnel, the sanitizer will be sprayed on him or her by motors for about three seconds. The visitor or staff can then enter the museum, the spokesperson said.

The concentrated sanitization mixture contains camphor, menthol and thymol mixed in 2:1:1 ratio. Two drops of it are then mixed in a litre of water to prepare the sanitizer, he said.

All the ingredients of the disinfectant are organic and have no side-effects, the spokesperson said. - PTI

Cong praises PM for 'sincere attempts' to ferry migrants

KOLKATA, May 13: Even as his party has been up in arms against Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the migrant labourers issue, Leader of the Congress party in Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury has appreciated Modi's "sincere attempts" to bring back those stranded to their home.

Chowdhury, the five-time MP from West Bengal's Berhampore Lok Sabha seat, in a letter to the PM last night, urged him to reduce the rate of tickets, if not making it free, keeping in view the fact that these out-of-job labourers are facing severe financial crunch. "I do like to appreciate your sincere attempt of sending back stranded persons, which include migrant workers, patients and their family, students, pilgrims and tourists, to their native places by announcing 300 special trains," Chowdhury wrote in the letter.

"Please consider the reduced rates of tickets if not free travel," the former minister of state for railways wrote. - PTI

3 migrants, infant returning home killed in road accidents in UP

KANPUR/CHITRAKOOT (UP), May 13: Three migrant labourers and an infant girl were killed, while 46 others suffered injuries in two road accidents when they were returning home in Uttar Pradesh from other states during the coronavirus-induced lockdown, officials said on Wednesday.

A truck carrying a group of 54 migrant labourers and their families from Ahmedabad in Gujarat to Balrampur in Uttar Pradesh rammed into a stationary truck near Lalpur Police Post on Kanpur-Jhansi highway, killing three people and injuring 43 others.

In Chitrakoot, a migrant labourer returning home in Uttar Pradesh from Chhattisgarh on a bicycle was killed after being hit by a truck, the police said. Mohan (44), a resident of Saharanpur, was returning home along with three others on Tuesday evening when the accident took place, they said. - PTI

Borrow gold from religious bodies for COVID fight: Chavan

MUMBAI, May 13: Senior Congress leader Prithviraj Chavan on Wednesday suggested the Centre can "appropriate" gold stock of religious trusts in the country, which he said would help generate at least Rs 76 lakh crore to tide over the COVID-19 crisis.

"Govt must immediately appropriate all the gold lying with all the religious trusts in the country, worth at least \$1 trillion, according to the #WorldGoldCouncil. The gold can be borrowed through gold bonds at a low interest rate. This is an emergency.PC," Chavan tweeted.

"Gold lying with religious trusts in the country is worth Rs 76 lakh crore or one trillion dollars. If it is borrowed from these trusts at a nominal interest rate, the money can be generously spent on lower middle and poor class to increase their spending capacity," the former Chief Minister said.

Dharavi coronavirus count crosses 1,000, death toll at 40

MUMBAI, May 13: The number of coronavirus cases in Mumbai's Dharavi, considered to be the biggest slum of Asia, rose to 1,028 on Wednesday with 66 new patients being detected, said an official of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).

The death toll due to the pandemic in the area rose to 40 on Tuesday from 31, but no new COVID-19-related death was reported thereafter, he said.

Dharavi recorded its coronavirus patient on April 1, 20 days after the first case of coronavirus infection was reported in Mumbai. - PTI

Delhi Police reserves extra beds at private hospitals

NEW DELHI, May 13: With more than 100 of its personnel testing positive for COVID-19 so far, the Delhi Police on Wednesday said some hospitals have reserved beds for it for any emergency admissions as many in the force are deployed at "sensitive" locations.

Among those infected, 35 police personnel have recovered from the infection and resumed their duties, officials said.

According to the police, with a rise in coronavirus cases in Delhi, difficulties are being faced in getting 'COVID-19 warriors' in the dedicated government hospitals in the city.

Delhi Police Commissioner SN Shrivastava spoke to a few private hospitals and, on his request, they have placed some beds at the disposal of the Delhi Police for emergency admissions since many police personnel are performing duties at sensitive locations including containment zones, COVID hospitals and quarantine facilities, the officials said. - PTI

Over 3 lakh migrants return to UP in 268 trains

LUCKNOW, May 13: Over three lakh migrants have returned to Uttar Pradesh in 268 special trains so far, the highest in the country, a senior official said on Wednesday.

All migrants are medically screened and given food packets before being sent to home quarantine, Additional Chief Secretary, Information, Awanish Awasthi told reporters.

Of the total 3,26,040 migrants, the maximum of 44,574 returned to Gorakhpur in 43 trains followed by Lucknow (3,3894) in 29 trains, Jaunpur (18,358) in 15 trains, Prayagraj (17,162) in 14 trains, he said. The special trains also ferried migrants to Bareilly, Pratapgarh, Gonda, Agra, Ballia, Raebareilly, Varanasi, Agra and Kanpur.

Besides, the Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation has brought back over 72,000 migrants to the State, the Additional Chief Secretary said. - PTI

30,000 Indians will return from abroad on 149 flights under phase 2: Puri

NEW DELHI, May 13: Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Wednesday said that 30,000 Indians will return from 31 countries on 149 flights between May 16 and 22, the duration for the second phase of the Vande Bharat Mission.

During the first phase of the Vande Bharat Mission, Air India and its subsidiary Air India Express are scheduled to operate a total 64 flights between May 7 and May 14 to bring 14,800 Indians from 12 countries on a payment basis.

Air India and Air India Express are also operating forward domestic flights after the international flights so that passengers can reach their destinations within the country amid the coronavirus-triggered lockdown.

"Phase II of Vande Bharat from 16-22 May will also include flights from Armenia, Australia, Belarus, Canada, France, Georgia, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Nigeria, Russia, Tajikistan, Thailand and Ukraine," Puri tweeted.

The minister said that 8,500 Indians have already returned till Wednesday morning and more flights are under way as part of phase I of the Vande Bharat Mission.

"In the phase I of Vande Bharat we were to bring back 14,800 Indians on 64 flights. In the 2nd phase the numbers are being doubled. Around 30,000 more Indians will return from 31 countries on 149 flights," he stated.

Out of the 149 repatriation flights under phase II, 31 would come to Kerala, 22 to Delhi, 17 to Karnataka, 16 to Telangana, 14 to Gujarat, 12 to Rajasthan, nine to Andhra Pradesh and seven to Punjab.

During phase II of the Vande Bharat Mission, six flights each would be for Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, three for Odisha, two for Chandigarh, one each for Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

Apart from aerial evacuation, the Indian Navy has deployed two of its ships to repatriate Indians from abroad.

Since March 7, these two ships have repatriated approximately 1,000 Indians from Maldives as part of the Vande Bharat Mission. - PTI

Highway relief camps easing hardships of migrants

PUNE, May 13: The makeshift relief camps set by the Pune district administration in association with several villages along the highways are easing hardships of the migrant labourers, who are going on foot to their native places in and outside Maharashtra, officials said.

According to officials, at least 39 such relief camps have been set up along the highways in the district, which lead to different places like Nashik, Ahmednagar, Satara and Solapur, which further go to different States. The migrants who are found walking on these highways are brought to the relief camps and given water, food and a place to rest before arrangement for their transportation is made, they said.

Sambhaji Langore, Project Director, District Rural Development Scheme, said 39 relief camps have been set up on key roads and highways in the district. "We have deployed buses with the help of local gram panchayats and NGOs to ferry those migrant workers, who are spotted going on foot. They are then brought to the nearest relief camp in these buses," he said.

The marriage halls along the highways have been turned into makeshift relief camps. The local gram panchayats have been given responsibilities to look after their needs, such as food, medical facilities and accommodation. Langore said that so far around 4,000 migrants have been provided help at these relief camps.

Satish Markam, 23, who was brought to a relief camp at Chandoli village in Khed tehsil on Pune-Nashik highway, along with around 20 workers on Tuesday said, "We were given masks, sanitizers. The food provided to us and accommodation arrangements were good. All of us felt relaxed at the camp after walking for a long time." - PTI

SC asks lawyers not to put on coat, long gowns

COVID-19 pandemic

NEW DELHI, May 13: The Supreme Court on Wednesday came out with a formal notification asking lawyers not to wear coats and long gowns during the hearings through video conferencing till medical exigencies exist or until further orders in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic.

The notification came in the evening, hours after Chief Justice of India (CJI) SA Bobde, said such dresses should not be worn as they make it easier to catch virus.

It is notified for the information of all concerned that considering the medical advice, as a precautionary measure to contain spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) infection under the prevailing conditions, the Competent Authority is pleased to direct that the advocates may wear plain white-shirt/white-salwar-kameez/white saree, with a plain-white neck band during the hearings before the Supreme Court of India through Virtual Court System till medical exigencies exist or until further orders, said the notification, issued by apex court Secretary General, Sanjeev S Kalgaonkar.

Besides sharing the notification on the apex court's website, it will be served to the secretaries of Supreme Court Bar Association and the Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association to ensure compliance.

The observation of the CJI and subsequent formal notification assumed significance in view of the fact that the apex court has been holding courts through video conferencing only from March 25 due to the nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and had even suspended entry of advocates and other staff into the high security zone on the basis of their proximity cards, till further orders. - PTI



Guiding Lines
TATA Air Services, later renamed as Tata Airlines was founded by J.R.D. Tata. During its initial years of its operation the pilots used railways lines below for navigation.

Apne Desh ko Jano!

..... /apnedeshkojano | contribution@apnedeshkojano.com
Powered by: Priya Communications

CPCB revises idol immersion norms

NEW DELHI, May 13: In a bid to ensure idol immersion in an eco-friendly manner in the country, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has banned the use of plastic, thermocol and plaster of Paris in making idols of gods and goddesses.

The CPCB has revised its 2010 guidelines on idol immersion after taking views of stakeholders, especially emphasising use of naturally occurring clay, colours in place of synthetic paints and chemicals for colouring idols.

It said that the use of single-use plastic and thermocol shall not be permitted at all and only eco-friendly material such as straw structure shall be used in making idols or decoration of idols/pandas/tazias in order to prevent pollution in recipient water bodies.

"Idols made up of only natural, biodegradable, eco-friendly raw material without any toxic, inorganic raw material, such as traditional virtuous clay and mud as well as free from plaster of Paris, plastic and thermocol (polystyrene) should be encouraged, allowed and promoted, and idols made up of plaster of Paris shall be banned.

"Only dried flower components for making ornaments of idols and natural resins of trees may be used as a shining material for making idols attractive," the apex pollution control body said in its revised guidelines issued on Tuesday.

Every year, the water bodies in the country get highly polluted after idol immersion during festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi and Durga Puja as the idols are made up of inorganic and toxic material instead of traditional eco-friendly mud and clay.

The guidelines formulated by the CPCB in the past have gone largely unheeded as the water quality continued to go down after these festivals.

The revised guidelines have now prohibited the use of toxic and non-biodegradable chemical dyes/oil paints for painting idols as well.

"Only naturally occurring colours from plants (flowers, barks, stamens, leaves, roots, seeds, whole fruits), feathers of different birds, mineral or coloured rocks shall be used," it said.

The CPCB has also directed the concerned State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)/Pollution Control Committees (PCCs) in States and Union Territories to conduct water quality assessment of water bodies, preferably in tier-1 cities (having population of more than 1 lakh), at three stages i.e., pre-immersion, during immersion and post-immersion.

"SPCBs/PCCs shall help district administration in preparing material for creating mass awareness as well as to assess innovative approaches for eco-friendly idol making by idol makers or craftsman or artisans," the CPCB said.

It also said the concerned authorities in State governments and UT administration dealing with safety and security in coastal areas shall take care of the necessary arrangements like motor boats with security personnel/home guards with adequate safety equipment to supervise idol immersion activities during festive season.

"As far as possible idol immersion in rivers/ponds/lakes shall be encouraged only at specific designated artificial confined tanks/ponds with liner made with well graded/highly impervious clay or eco-synthetic liner, on the banks shall be promoted.

"A temporary artificial tank or pond with liner made with well graded/highly impervious clay or eco-synthetic liner, and having earthen bunds on the bank of the river/lake/pond shall be created for idol immersion," it said. - PTI

Weekly Assignment For Creative Skill Development Among Students During Lockdown Period of COVID-19

Class wise weekly topics:

SL No	Class	Topic	Week
1	VI	Fundamental Right	1 st (Within 17 th May/20)
2	VI	Measures taken by Government to stop spread of COVID-19	2 nd (18 th - 24 th May/20)
3	VI	Our Culture and traditions	3 rd (25 th - 31 st May/20)
4	VI	Painting on Festivals	4 th (1 st - 7 th June/20)
5	VI	Write a Poem/Story	5 th (8 th - 14 th June/20)
1	VII	Duties of Citizens	1 st (Within 17 th May/20)
2	VII	Major food crops of the state and its contribution on Economic development	2 nd (18 th - 24 th May/20)
3	VII	E-learning -advantages and difficulties	3 rd (25 th - 31 st May/20)
4	VII	Painting on Assamese Jewelry	4 th (1 st - 7 th June/20)
5	VII	Write a Poem/Story	5 th (8 th - 14 th June/20)
1	VIII	Use of internet and digital lifestyle	1 st (Within 17 th May/20)
2	VIII	Indigenous art and craft works of the state	2 nd (18 th - 24 th May/20)
3	VIII	Prepare a plan on activities to be conducted in your school after lockdown	3 rd (25 th - 31 st May/20)
4	VIII	Painting on Rural landscapes	4 th (1 st - 7 th June/20)
5	VIII	Write a Poem/Story	5 th (8 th - 14 th June/20)
1	IX	COVID-19 and its impact on Ecological balance	1 st (Within 17 th May/20)
2	IX	Consumer Right Awareness	2 nd (18 th - 24 th May/20)
3	IX	Governance and Constitutional Development	3 rd (25 th - 31 st May/20)
4	IX	Conservation of Biodiversity	4 th (1 st - 7 th June/20)
5	IX	Write a Poem/Story	5 th (8 th - 14 th June/20)
1	X	Influence of COVID -19 on Socio-Economic development	1 st (Within 17 th May/20)
2	X	Good and services Tax(GST)-its meaning and importance	2 nd (18 th - 24 th May/20)
3	X	Awareness of women's right in property, marriage and in employment	3 rd (25 th - 31 st May/20)
4	X	Cybercrimes	4 th (1 st - 7 th June/20)
5	X	Write a Poem/Story	5 th (8 th - 14 th June/20)

Students will write on particular topic given for the week at their own home only. After lockdown students will submit the same to the head of the respective school. Teachers will check the same after opening of schools. Selected Assignments will be awarded by state. The followings parameters are to be followed in this regard:

1. Students from class-VI to X will participate.
2. After lockdown, every school will select any three best entries from each class and will submit to the respective CRCC. Concerned CRCC with the support of two subject teachers of Higher Secondary level will select any three best entries from each class and will submit to the respective block. Block will select total 100 best entries covering both UP and Secondary level with the support of block resource persons engaged for academic purpose/subject teachers of Higher Secondary level and will submit to the district. District will select total 200 best entries covering both UP and Secondary level with the support of DIET/Academic Council and will submit to the State.
3. Students can write in any medium of instruction.
4. 10000 selected best entries will be awarded.

MESSAGE FOR TODAY

Do all the good you can, for all the people you can, in all the ways you can, as long as you can.

— HILLARY CLINTON

The Assam Tribune

Cleverly crafted

Towards the end of last March, to combat the imminent economic downturn and hardships to populations caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced a 1.7-trillion-rupee financial package, comprising of direct cash transfers and free food, to assist the poorer segment of Indian society during a time of severe distress. Yet, it had been clear even then that the amount, equivalent to less than 1% of the nation's GDP, was not adequate for a country of 1.34 billion, at least half of whom were financially disadvantaged. Though the Reserve Bank of India too had chipped in by undertaking different measures to inject liquidity into the economy, even that was not enough. Experts had been unanimous in their opinion that greater finances were needed to be pushed into the fiscal system, for addressing the immediate concerns of the poor, and had to be complemented by long-term measures to combat the serious economic downturn. Unless the economy was empowered to absorb vast financial and employment losses, mere offering of doles would not suffice, and it would be up to the Government to undertake appropriate fiscal measures to boost the Indian economy. Thus the element of unexpectedness was missing from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's latest announcement of the Rs 20 lakh crore stimulus package to tackle the impact of coronavirus, for it had been an anticipated measure.

No doubt this package, equivalent to around 10% of India's GDP, is a cleverly crafted one designed to seem to be of an amount larger than it actually is, inclusive as it is of the recent amounts injected into the Indian economy by the Reserve Bank of India as well as the earlier package announced by Nirmala Sitharaman. These together would constitute almost half, or Rs10 lakh crore, which means that the Centre would have to raise an additional amount of Rs10 lakh crore to put its revival plan into action. Yet it needs to be conceded that even this lesser amount is direly required at the moment to pull the nation out of the doldrums the coronavirus has pushed her in to. Modi, whose penchant for catchy phrase formulation is well known, has coined 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' or self-reliant India to be the mantra by which the revival essay would be made. There is nothing new about such a coinage, for India had been attempting this objective ever since her independence, though whether the post-Covid-19 scenario would witness its realization only time would tell. With experts suggesting that the package may include measures such as payment of the wage bill of companies as an incentive to retain their employees, and also provisions for migrant labourers and the self-employed, the provisions of the package might be comprehensive, something that India at this moment direly needs.

Community surveillance

With inter-State travel restrictions relaxed and people in large batches starting to enter the State, the coming days will test the will of the Government and the efficacy of the government machinery in ensuring that the possibility of a major spread is prevented. With the resumption in train services in particular, how the Government goes about the task of facilitating institutional quarantine for all the returnees will have a definite bearing on the outcome of the battle against Covid-19. The first train from Delhi carrying 1,122 passengers reached Assam yesterday and with more trains to come in the days ahead, the onus is clearly now on the State Government to put the passengers to foolproof screening and quarantine. The resumption of train services has also coincided with the country witnessing the biggest single-day spike in cases, and unless inter-State travellers are thoroughly monitored, the situation can worsen manifold. The district administrations will have to be extra vigilant and proactive, as the passengers are going to be quarantined district-wise. This also calls for massive preparedness, especially quarantine facilities in large numbers and in conformity to standard hygienic conditions. The convenience of those undergoing quarantine must not be compromised with and putting them into haphazard, ill-equipped quarantine centres will be unwarranted. Similarly, the houses of the returnees advised home quarantine will have to be monitored effectively as containment zones, failing which the very purpose of the quarantine will be frustrated. While the railway services have been resumed to provide relief to those stranded outside the State, it is equally imperative that the people are brought in reasonable batches keeping in mind the quarantine capacity of the government authorities.

With indications of the beginning of a community spread in the State and with thousands of people set to enter the State from outside in the next few days, the authorities would do well to put emphasis on a community-centric approach as well to combat the menace. We will now need an extended community surveillance programme to detect people with symptoms such as fever, sore throat, cough, etc., so that they may be referred to appropriate screening immediately. The situation in the villages should also be adequately monitored as they have somewhat remained off the radar of the authorities so far. In order to be effective, critical aspects such as epidemiological, behavioural, laboratory and demographic data must be reflected in public health surveillance so that the required action can follow. While laboratory tests are playing a crucial role in deciding the fate of each Covid-19 case, the dominant approaches have centred around sample collection for testing without adequately focusing on population characteristics. This has caused a gap in the most vital people-centric knowledge regarding the disease in the Indian context. Such knowledge is essential for effective public health action and needs to be gathered through systematic public health investigations.

Corona and dwindling work space for women

■ Archana Datta

Our economy is in severe downturn due to the prolonged lockdowns. The World Bank has reduced India's growth to 1.5% to 2.8% in 2020-21, one of the lowest since the 1991 reforms. The unemployment rate is on the rise from 7.57% (March 20) to 23.68% (April 30), while the job losses are likely to be around 11.9 crores. All this together will drive one-third of India's 25 crore households into livelihood crises.

Now, with this pandemic with such wide-ranging socio-economic consequences thrust women into further vulnerabilities and exclusions, especially in workforce participation?

Sadly, India suffers from an abysmally low female labour force participation rate (FLPR), which is also on a declining trend from 36% in 2005-06 to 23.4% in 2019. If we look at the scope of women's employment in India, most of the economically active rural women used to be in agriculture sector, but increased mechanization eventually edged them out and their participation rate dwindled from 88.1% in 1977-78 to 73.2% in 2017-18 (OXFAM 2018). In urban India, the services sector witnessed a rising trend in women's participation from 35.7% in 1977-78 to 60.7% in 2017-18. Now with restrictions in movements and social distancing, this sector has been affected the most, which thus dims women's prospect of re-entry into the sec-

tor in near future. Women already lost out in emerging industries as men got 80% of the 56 million newly-created jobs between 1968 and 2015 (ADB, 2019). In the manufacturing sector, which is facing near closure, barring a few, women have a meagre presence of 3 to 12%, mostly in low paying, casual, home-based work or in unpaid work with no safety net.

Undoubtedly, Indian women's primary identity remained as the unpaid caregivers and they spend 9.8 times more time in such work than men, while globally, it is three times more (NITI Aayog, 2017). Outside home, 83.4% of nurses and other paramedics are women, who are now facing great stress, workload and health and personal risks as India's overstretched healthcare system fights against Covid-19.

Against such a dismal backdrop comes ILO's caution that in India, 'around 40 crore informal sector workers are likely to be pushed deeper into poverty'. Reacting to such a looming scenario, senior journalist Prashant Tandon said that since 94% of Indian women being in the informal sector... either as farm labourers or as domestic helps in big cities... who remain underpaid or unpaid... with no job security... they will be the worst sufferers in the pandemic's after ef-

fects. Ratri Bannerjee, a senior banker, added that apart from job losses, women will also face physical violence... with frustrated husbands sitting idle at home.

Presently, India is in the throes of a phased reopening of certain industrial and manufacturing sectors and a green signal has been given to harvesting, marketing and sowing of new crops. But, do women stand to gain much from this partial reopening? Senior journal-

The partial reopening also makes it difficult for women to go back to work with schools being shut. Thus, for Indian women, it is the story of going back to square one, who have to struggle all over again to regain the lost space.

ist Gargi Parsai apprehended that women will find it hard to have re-access to gainful employment for two counts, one due to low availability of opportunities, and the other being their inability to step out either for on-farm jobs or any other work, due to increased household unpaid care work... the single and woman-headed households will suffer more.

Yes indeed! There is a huge exodus of migrant labourers from cities to villages, many among them may be reluctant to return soon in

the face of uncertainties. In such a situation, there will be a glut in the rural labour market and women are likely to be less preferred for farm or farm-based work and more for home-based caregiver jobs. In cities, among women, only a few are lucky to work from home or have facilities for paid caregivers leave; rather many will undergo pay-cuts and job losses when the businesses remain suspended. The partial reopening also makes it difficult for women to go back to work with schools being shut. Thus, for Indian women, it is the story of going back to square one, who have to struggle all over again to regain the lost space.

Nevertheless, there are some rays of hopes too. Many SHGs across the country have now sprang into action and producing masks, sanitizers, etc., to meet the shortage in the market. Recounting her experience as a banker in rural areas, Bannerjee sounded hopeful and said that the SHGs have great potential as they run on small capital, produce low cost materials and cultivate the values of thrift... women in the villages will have some financial cushion even in this emergency. Thirty-three million Indian women in 2.2 million SHGs could recreate a new story of financial inclusion and empowerment even in a post-pandemic scenario.

Now, amidst such widespread

disruptions, the UN Secretary-General called upon nations of the world for putting women and girls at the centre of their efforts to recover from Covid-19 and urged them that any measure to protect and stimulate the economy, from cash transfers to credits and loans, must be targeted at women... social safety nets must be expanded... unpaid care work must be recognized and valued. While many agree that women will suffer disproportionately from this pandemic impact, but, surprisingly, they remain conspicuously absent in India's comprehensive and integrated response to the pandemic. There are 11 empowered groups, but none focuses on women as a vulnerable group or looks into the gendered impact of the pandemic.

The cash transfer of Rs 500 for three months to 19.86 crore women Jan Dhan account holders, free distribution of 97.8 lakh gas cylinders under the Ujjwala scheme, and free ration to 5.29 crore beneficiaries under the Garib Kalyan Yojana may help in warding off household indebtedness or hunger for a while. But, it is equally necessary that any financial stimulus package must look into women's job security, paid sick leave or child care leave, health insurance, unemployment benefits and basic social protections. Further, there is a need for long-term policy formulation to facilitate women's re-entry into gainful employment as well as their holistic development, as the pandemic leaves a deep imprint on every aspect of human lives.

African swine fever and Assam

■ Sangeeta Das, Pankaj Deka

After the National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIH-SAD), Bhopal, has confirmed the first African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreak in the country's northeastern States of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, where the disease have killed thousands of pigs, it has placed the pig-rearers and the officials in stress. The ASF outbreaks date back to the 1900s when it was first detected in Kenya and is still endemic in the African continent. Subsequently, it was detected in several European and American countries. But it wasn't until 2018 when China experienced its first case that it was sweeping through the Asian continent and by 2019, it had spread to every region in China and into neighbouring countries Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand. ASF is not only wiping out the pig farmers but also has a knock-on impact on the agricultural economy. Presently, the ASF outbreak in this pig centric area of NE India that has more than 20 lakh pigs has threatened the pig husbandry. The day is not far, if not controlled, it may reshape the pork market in this re-

gion. With this ample warning, it is the need of the hour to understand ASF, as there is no vaccine and treatment available so far. Thus, practising biosecurity is the current best recommendation to protect our pigs. The State Government along with the veterinarians are mulling on preventive measures to manage, contain and control the spread of the disease.

African Swine Fever is a highly contagious viral disease infecting domestic and wild pigs of all ages, and causes a wide range of clinical signs, typically a haemorrhagic fever and responsible for severe economic losses with mortality rates up to 100%. It is transmitted through direct contact with infected pigs, their excretions and secretions, nasal and conjunctival discharges, contaminated fomites, contaminated clothing and shoes of farm personnel and feeding of contaminated kitchen wastes. The virus is highly resistant and can even survive in fresh pork and processed pork products for long time. Thus it can potentially spread the disease from one infected farm to the entire pig population of the region. The virus can also

be transmitted through arthropod vectors, particularly soft ticks of the genus *Ornithodoros*. However, ASF poses no risk to human health, it's not zoonotic.

The only measure to control any contagious viral disease is by implementing strict biosecurity measures. All the activities and programmes implemented should aim to reduce and avoid the risk of exposure of the farm pigs to the ASF virus. The farmers should routinely inspect the health of pig herds at least twice a day and isolate the sick pigs from the healthy herd instantaneously. They should be vigilant for any signs of disease or unexpected deaths and report to a veterinarian. As people's movement has been the most critical component of virus dissemination inside and outside the farm, a footbath filled with disinfectant (3g potassium permanganate in 10 litres of water) at the entry to farm premise is mandatory. Farm personnel should ensure that shoes, clothes and equipment are disinfected before they come in contact with the pigs. Feed and utensil used by the sick animals should not be used for feeding healthy animals. The healthy pig herds should be fed first followed

by the sick ones. The pig pens and the feeding utensils should be regularly cleaned with bleaching powder (25-50g per litre water) or caustic soda (10g per litre water). Occasionally, bleaching powder and lime can be sprayed in the farm premises. All materials (vehicles/equipment) entering or leaving a farm site must be disinfected thoroughly using formalin (6-10ml per litre water) or other commercially available disinfectants like Virkon S or B-904. All the ASF-infected and potentially infected in-contact pigs must be slaughtered. The carcasses must be burnt or buried (5-6 feet) deeply and the surrounding area should be covered with disinfectants.

At the present time, the purchase and sale of pigs from one farm to another farm is to be restricted and pig movement should be limited. Furthermore, correct nutrition with balanced feed and clean water is crucial for optimal performance and also to tussle against disease causing organisms.

Undoubtedly, it's a crucial time to move toward a comprehensive approach to biosecurity, as well as to review the existing and recently developed tools, mechanisms and practices to address unprecedented

ed diseases like ASF. Another key factor to the success of disease prevention and control is compensation and social support to the affected farming community so that they can lend a hand in disease control programme and get back to standard at the end of the programme. Application of the zoning concept (infected, surveillance and ASF-free zones) may be helpful to prevent further spread of infection through livestock movement controls and to remove sources of infections as quickly as possible through slaughter of potentially infected pigs, safe disposal of carcasses and decontamination.

At the same time, trace back and trace forward investigations with suitable epidemiological tools should be carried out whenever an infected pig herd is found in a locality. In this regard, the joint participation and coordination of all stakeholders along the value chain at different levels like government, industrial, academia, etc., will help tackle this challenge. Now it is just an early warning, and in the absence of an effective vaccine, practising strict biosecurity is the only tool to prevent and react effectively to such emerging diseases of livestock and poultry.

Letters to the EDITOR

Sir, – Within a few short weeks, the global health emergency Covid-19 has fundamentally changed how the world and India will do business in future. In these days of lockdown, the business and economy have been severely hampered putting more emphasis on job security. People with existing considerations will be reluctant to leave their companies and we anticipate a much lower percentage of people open to exploring new opportunities. New opportunities will be exposed in job types such as digital analytics and data science. This will also create a demand for e-learning and remote online virtual learning space within training and professional development. Digital tools will still continue to develop and even more financial investment is being directed to it. The shift will accelerate in the next couple of months and we will witness a lot of changes in one's professional career. Yours etc., PRATITI KATYAYAN, Jorhat.

OPTOMETRISTS

Sir, – Heartfelt thanks to the State Health Ministry for the steps taken against the Covid-19 pandemic. Here, I would like to

Changes in professional career

draw the attention of the Health Ministry towards the vacant posts of optometrist lying in the PHCs and civil hospitals across Assam. Due to the non-availability of optometrist in these hospitals, the common people have to pay a hefty amount for eye check-up in the private eye clinics and hospitals. This is bringing much hardship for the common man in the absence of optometry services in the government hospitals. Filling up of the posts of optometrist in all the PHCs and civil hospitals in Assam will go a long way in providing ophthalmology services to the common people. Yours etc., ARUNAV GOGOI, Demow, Sivasagar.

Post-pandemic age

Sir, – This is with reference to the article, 'Is India ready to reopen?' (AT, May 11). The post-pandemic age is one of uncertainty and fear. India being the largest democracy increases the smog over this future which is very foreign to us. However, I believe the answer lies not in looking forward but in looking back. Simple lifestyle habits like washing our hands and feet before entering the house or even before eating, greeting with a *namaste* instead of the colonial handshake, or a *sattuic* food intake could be beneficial for the society when done by every

citizen of our country. A form of untouchability and *pardah* seems to have reincarnated in our society in the mould of social distancing and the use of the mask. Yours etc., GUTIMALI GOSWAMI, North Kamrup College.

Men's mental health

Sir, – Men's mental health has become a silent crisis over the years. Men have been taught to be tough and 'be like a man' to hide their emotions; starting from their childhood, they are taught that 'Boys don't cry'. They are taught that showing emotions is a sign of weakness. This may result in mental illnesses in some individuals as they grew. According to the World Health Organization, the male suicide rate is twice that of females. In India the ratio of male to female suicides is at 4:3. Men are more likely to commit suicide due to social or economic reasons, while women are more likely to do so for emotional and personal causes. Men have grown learning how to be tough, hide their feelings and not to ask for help. A woman in distress is likely to talk to her friends, while a man is not. Men do not typically reveal weakness or vulnerability. Men are more likely to suffer alone until the pain becomes unbearable, and thus taking action as alcohol or drug abuse or committing suicide.

There must be awareness among men that talking about mental health is not a shameful thing and, as such, they should be influenced and motivated to talk about the issue. Yours etc., ASHUTOSH ROY, Cotton University.

Epitome of courage

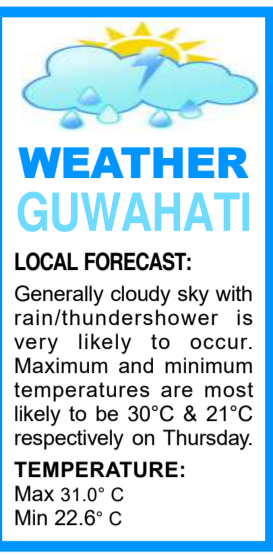
Sir, – It ought to make every Assamese, especially the unemployed, underprivileged educated youth, feel proud and encouraged that a poverty-stricken Assamese girl has been able to stand up as an epitome of courage and conviction through her indomitable will power. Janmoni Gogoi, from a small village in Dibrugarh, has lately gone viral in the social media for the struggle she had started a couple of months ago to support her family. This young peddler carries heavy bags of home-grown vegetables on her bicycle and sells them in the locality. What touches one the most is her sense of obligation towards the society and her family. Such an energetic attitude of the youth does falsify the term 'slackers' often used for the people of Assam. Several persons as well as organizations have generously come forward to stand by this girl at this hour of crisis with possible aids and thus been a part of her struggle. The SP of Dibrugarh arranged a two-

wheeler motorbike for her; a social worker donated a wheelchair for her paralysed father and so on. Evidently, such acts of the kind on the part of these people will encourage many such afflicted individuals to follow her footsteps in the days to come. The magnanimity of such benevolent people of the society really deserves praise. A sound society flourishes only when its citizens are cooperative and prompt to help one another whenever needed. Yours etc., DIPEN GOGOI, Teok, Jorhat.

Washing tumblers

Sir, – Our Government has allowed tea shops to open with only takeaway option. Before the arrival of disposable plastic and paper cups, most tea shops had the practice of washing tumblers with hot water just prior to giving tea to customers. The practice has disappeared now. I request the authorities concerned to consider strict guidelines to such shops to resume washing tumblers in hot water. Further, customers can bring their own containers for takeaway purposes. Yours etc., CHANDAN KUMAR NATH, Sorbhog, Barpeta.

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



3-day total shutdown call at Fancy Bazar

GUWAHATI, May 13: Kamrup Chamber of Commerce president MP Jain has called for a complete 3-day shutdown (quarantine) in greater Fancy Bazar area after detection of 15 COVID-19 positive cases in the area today.

Jain mentioned TRP Road, Kedar Road, MG Road, HB Road, Chamber Road, MS Road, MM Road, SRCB Road and all roads/bye-lanes connected to these roads where the complete shutdown is to be maintained, said a press release.

Call for proper safety gear to GMC workers

GUWAHATI, May 13: The Assam State committee of the Mahadalit Parisangh (Rashtriya) has called upon the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC) to provide proper safety equipment to all the contractual and permanent safai karmacharis in the city.

In a memorandum to the GMC Commissioner, State president of Mahadalit Parisangh (Rashtriya) Bajinath Basfore said that safai karmacharis have been carrying out their duties regularly despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the nationwide lockdown.

Besides proper safety equipment, the organisation also urged the GMC to conduct regular health check-up of the safai karmacharis and to facilitate their "whole body sanitization" after completion of duty daily. — Staff Reporter

Video speech contest on climate

GUWAHATI, May 13: The Climate Cell of the Assam Science Technology and Environment Council (ASTEC) is organising a video speech contest — 'Climate Talk' — for school students of the State.

A release said the participants will be divided into three groups — Group A, B and C. Group-A would include students studying between Class V and VII, Group-B from Class VIII to X and Group-C from Class XI and XII (of any stream).

For Group-A competitors, the theme is 'Understanding Weather and Climate,' while the themes for Group-B and C competitors respectively are 'Climate Change and Biodiversity,' and 'Impacts of Climate Change on Agriculture.'

Interested students can send video clips either in English or Assamese. Duration of the video clips should not be more than two minutes. The clips are to be mailed to climatecell.astec@gmail.com, or sent to the WhatsApp number 7002057484 on or before 5 pm of May 31.

Nature breathes easy at Deepor Beel now

AJIT PATOWARY

Deepor Beel, the lone Ramsar Site wetland of the State, is now breathing normally taking advantage of the gap provided by the monthlong lockdown after decades of atrocious anthropogenic activities virtually forcing it to gasp, said Dr H Bialung, Director (Additional Charge) of the Paschim Bora-gaon-based Institute of Advanced Studies in Science and Technology (IASST).

Since 2016, the IASST is monitoring the health of this wetland in every season of the year, collecting samples from

25 locations at constant intervals, from the bank to the core, so as to have a measure of the physico-chemical parameters of its water and sediments.

Dr Bialung said, "This time, we observed a remarkable recovery of the wetland's water quality, after nearly a month of lockdown. We started collecting water samples from designated spots during the first week of May. You cannot expect the opportunity provided by the lockdown so easily nowadays," he said.

Dr Bialung conceived the idea of this comparative water quality study.

He informed that the most



important parameter measured was the Dissolved Oxygen (DO) level and it was found to be in the range of 5.61-6.82 milligram per litre (mg/L). This indicated Deepor's dramatic regaining of its water quality. A healthy water body

should have its DO level above 6.5 mg/L to 8.0 mg/L.

The IASST scientists engaged in this study also found that the present Deepor Beel water-related data have indicated significant improvement in its water quality concerning

two more parameters, too.

The Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) of the wetland was found to be 8-42 mg/L, while its Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) was found to be 1.2-2.2mg/L. Its pH value is also recovering and it is close to the normal range of 7.68-8.63.

The higher its DO, the more different species of plants and water animals a water body can support. During the past four years (2016-19), the wetland's pre-monsoon (March-April) water quality-related findings were not encouraging. Its average DO range was between 1.55-

5.1mg/L, with the minimum value found in the proximity of the industrial effluent inlet and the garbage dumping site.

Bacteria in water bodies consume oxygen if there exists any decaying organic matter. Excess organic material in a water body thus leads to its 'death' causing an oxygen-deficient situation.

On the other hand, a BOD level of 1-2 mg/L in water is considered to be very good, suggesting lesser amount of organic waste. BOD level 3-5 mg/L is considered as moderately clean. Concurrently, higher COD in water means a larger amount of oxidizable

organic matter, posing a threat to the aquatic life, said Dr Bialung.

IASST research scholar Bhaswati Devi, who collected the water samples aboard a fisherman's boat, said she had a "terrific feeling" when she touched Deepor Beel's clean and cold water, while its transparent water was stunning.

Dr Arundhati Devi, Associate Professor, Environment and Eco-System Research Section, who is leading the IASST water and soil quality research, was also exuberant about these positive developments.

State Cong alleges irregularities in scheme for farmer families

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 13: Principal opposition Congress party has alleged irregularities in selection of beneficiaries' lists under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) in the State and undue interference by the ruling party in the process.

Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) general secretary and senior spokesperson Apurba Kumar Bhattacharya said selection of beneficiary farmer families was done by violating the rules.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed the entire global economy, including that of India and Assam, towards downturn. However, the ruling party and the government have been involved in massive corruption and irregularities in implementation of schemes even during this time of pandemic.

The farmers of Assam have been among the most affected on account of the ongoing lockdown, even as manufacturing, tea industry and trade and com-

merce have also suffered. The agriculture department has failed to perform what was necessary to provide succour to the farmers," Bhattacharya said.

Instead of being the PM-KISAN scheme, it has now turned into a scheme to help the BJP cadres... We want to remind Sarbananda Sonowal that he is the Chief Minister of the entire State and not just the Chief Minister of the BJP and its alliance partners. We call upon him to provide justice to all, says APCC spokesperson Apurba Kumar Bhattacharya

mercial work of identification of beneficiary farmer families has to be done by the agriculture department in consultation with and cooperation from the elected panchayat representatives. However, in reality the lists were compiled by the ruling party and its legislators,

along with cadres of the BJP and the RSS," the senior Congress party leader said.

Bhattacharya alleged that MLAs belonging to the opposition parties were not allowed to take part in the process for compiling the lists of beneficiaries.

"Instead of being the PM-KISAN scheme, it has now turned into a scheme to help the BJP cadres... We want to remind Sarbananda Sonowal that he is the Chief Minister of the entire State and not just the Chief Minister of the BJP and its alliance partners. We call upon him to provide justice to all," the Congress party leader said.

PM-KISAN is a Central sector scheme with 100 per cent funding from the Government of India. The fund under the scheme is directly transferred to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries.

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 13: Criticizing the State government for its 'utter failure' to check large-scale anomalies in the agriculture sector, the Asom Jatiyatatabadi Yuba Chhatra Parishad (AJYCP) has demanded a high-level probe into the allegations of fake farmers getting the benefits of Central and State government schemes meant for genuine farmers.

Alleging that the Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal's slogan of zero tolerance against corruption has vanished into thin air, the Parishad demanded identification of the fake farmers on the list of beneficiaries.

"While the condition of poor and marginalized farmers in the State is

pitiable, specially in the lockdown period, unscrupulous elements are getting the advantage of schemes through wrong means," AJYCP president Rana Pratap Barua and general secretary Palash Changmai said.

The Parishad alleged that large-scale irregularities have been reported during the distribution of tractors under the Chief Minister Samagra Gramya Unnayan Yojana.

"Under the scheme, tractors with low-quality manufacturing were distributed among the beneficiaries instead of the one approved under the scheme. Also, recently, a lot of fake farmers have registered themselves in the list of beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, to get the benefits of the scheme,"

the Parishad alleged.

Asking the government to ensure that the benefits of various schemes under the agriculture sector reach the farmers of the State directly, it stated that the government must think beyond political benefits in this regard. The youth body further alleged that at many places, the workers of the ruling BJP have prepared the list of beneficiaries and have forced the officers of the department concerned to approve the same.

"Such large-scale corruption and injustice to the genuine farmers cannot be accepted at any cost. The government must announce a high-level probe into the matter, or else we would be compelled to start a democratic movement against this," the Parishad members stated.

State Govt to engage voluntary mental health counsellors

MANASH PRATIM DUTTA

GUWAHATI, May 13: To address issues of mental health during the prevailing medical emergency situation, the State health and family welfare (H&FW) department will engage voluntary counsellors in every district of Assam soon.

The volunteers will work with other experts in the field in their respective places as per guidelines set by the Central government. Before engagement they will be trained by experts.

The voluntary counsellors will include persons having master degree or other higher degree in psychology, clinical psychology, counselling psychology, psychiatric social work and social work.

To provide psychological assistance to people in need, the H&FW department has already chalked out a standard operating procedure (SOP). Through this procedure mental health support services will be provided to the people who are directly or indirectly affected by COVID-19.

In this venture which will be carried out under the National Mental Health Programme, the department will engage psychiatrists, clinical psychologists and psychiatric social workers along with psychiatrists, clinical psychologists and psychiatric social workers from medical colleges of the State.

Anyone can avail the service through the 104 medical helpline. As per the SOP, when a call is made to the 104 helpline, the same will be forwarded to the counsellors of the respective district.

In case of inmates of quarantine facilities, isolation wards, migrant labour camps, etc., counselling will be done through video call or face-to-face by strictly adhering to safety guidelines.

In case of a client or a caller requiring psychiatric consultation, the call will be forwarded to psychiatrists. If required, the person in need of help may consult the psychiatry department of the medical college in the district concerned.

Alternatively, a telemedicine consultation facility will also be available under the initiative as per telemedicine practice guidelines of the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Officials concerned will also arrange hospitalisation facility for any person having critical mental illness and rescue operation for homeless mentally ill persons.

The SOP has also suggested upgrading the existing psychiatric and psychological services of Sarathi 104 helpline by engaging more psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, psychiatric social workers and counsellors to offer uninterrupted 24x7 mental health services during the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic.



Zubeen lauds govt role in COVID fight

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 13: Zubeen Garg is now enjoying his time watching movies in his room at Hotel Radisson Blu here where he and three others are being kept in quarantine after they reached Guwahati from Mumbai yesterday.

"We all are fine. Yesterday we took rest after the tiring journey. At present none of us have any health issue and Zubeen da is busy watching movies," Siddhartha Sharma, who also accompanied Zubeen in the bus journey, said.

After a four-day bus journey, Zubeen, who was stuck in Mumbai since March, arrived here in the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday. Soon after, Zubeen, his wife Garima Garg and two other associates were screened at the Sarusajai centre. They were then taken to Hotel Radisson Blu for 14-day quarantine.

Zubeen said that he would follow all the guidelines issued by the government vis-à-vis COVID-19. He had left for Guwahati on May 8. The iconic musician, who had collapsed at a function in Guwahati in February, had gone to Mumbai for advanced treatment.

Zubeen, lauding the efforts of the State Govt in its fight against COVID-19, also thanked Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for facilitating his travel back to Guwahati.

Trade entities play role in COVID fight

GUWAHATI, May 13: Like many other organisations and individuals, New Age Communications and Prasanti Tour & Travel too have been jointly doing their bit in the fight against COVID-19.

According to a joint press release issued by the two entities, their members have distributed sanitizers, face masks and food items among different sections of people in the State during the last few days. On Tuesday, they also distributed face masks and sanitizers among members of the media. The two trade entities also distributed tea and light refreshments among police personnel on duty.



A worker paints circles meant for social distancing at the Guwahati Railway Station on Wednesday. — UB Photos

Webinar on shift from campus classes to virtual classes

GUWAHATI, May 13: Training and Capacity Building (TCB), a division of Quality Control of India (QCI) New Delhi in association with National Accreditation Board for Education and Training (NABET) conducted a webinar — 'Covering the Distance from Campus Classes to Virtual Classes' with Prof SP Singh, Vice Chancellor, Royal Global University as the lead speaker along with Karan Kumar, head, IT, OP Jindal Global University and Anurag Shah, Controller of Examinations & IT, National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT), on Wednesday, said a press release issued here. The webinar was moderated by Vanita Yadav, Director, NABET.

The webinar was attended by more than 600 students, staff and faculty of different universities and schools. Prof Singh addressing the query on understanding the nuances while adapting from campus/classroom learning to online learning, outlined the transition RGU undertook from March 17 with the ac-

tive participation and coaching by the IT team of RGU, much before any inking of a lockdown due to COVID-19. He said the pro-active and well-exposed faculty started to undertake online classes without major glitch, as online classes or internet-backed classroom activity is a much practised norm in teaching pedagogy at RGU.

Faculty and students have been facilitated to avail the various online modes of teaching and learning and digital classrooms through RoyalNet, Zoom, WebEx, GoToMeeting, Skype, Google Classroom, YouTube, etc. Online resources are available on SWAYAM, E-PG Pathshala, UG/PG MOOCs, SWAYAMPARBHA and other platforms were also used, Prof Singh said.

All students of RGU were contacted by phone for feedback on online classes, syllabus completion, availability of study material and difficulties faced. Problems of students were resolved on one-to-one basis. Only very few students across remote areas of the North East where connecti-

ty issues were not resolved, were addressed through hard copies of study material sent to them, the RGU VC informed the participants.

Some practical classes which could not be conducted online would be conducted once the university opens in June as per UGC guidelines and if Assam is still in green zone, Prof Singh said. He also spoke about the initial hiccups faced by some senior faculty above 60 years, which through intensive online training videos rid them of their inhibitions and braced them to take online classes at times with the help of young tech-savvy faculty of the same school.

Joining Prof Singh, both Kumar and Shah reiterated that COVID-19 has changed the conventional norms of education and is instrumental in changing the future of classroom teaching and examinations. Secured online platforms maintaining the sanctity of education is the demand which is being addressed by IT firms across the world, they added.



Food being distributed among needy people by members of the Khalsa Centre North East at Badhagaon in Guwahati on Wednesday. — AT photo

PLANET YOUNG

GUWAHATI, THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2020



“Be caring and sensitive about the environment...”

I, ME, MYSELF

Ketaki Bardalai has been closely involved in working for child disability and development of the NE region.

The people who have influenced me the most.

They have been my father, my husband and all the friends who have done inspiring work.

The turning point of my life...

Was when I came to Guwahati and then began working for Sishu Sarothi.

The happiest moments of my life...

Were the birth of my children. It also makes me happy when our work is recognised.

A change I would like to see in the society.

I would want people to be more sensitive, understanding and less self-centred.

Message for today's youth.

Be caring and sensitive about the environment and the people around you. Accept people with open minds.

My viewpoint

“Is there life in outer space?”



Rahul Kakati, Maharishi Vidya Mandir, Silpukhuri, Guwahati.

According to me, there may be life in outer space. The alien life-form can be unlike anything we know or anything we have seen. Though scientists infer that any form of life needs oxygen, I sometimes think, is oxygen really necessary for life on other planets? Scientists also state that any form of life needs water. But, is water really a necessity for life in outer space? These are just theories based on life on Earth. People even spot UFOs in the sky and say that these are aliens, but we can't say for sure, because, for example, scientists say that we are at the centre of the universe, but how much of the universe is observable to us?



Himangshu Das, Pragjyotish Sr. Sec. School, Guwahati.

Till date, many scientists have explored space, but not the whole universe. Scientists have also discovered many facts about extra-terrestrial life, yet the facts are not proven. Our scientists are trying to search for life beyond our solar system. If there would have been any intelligent or alien life in outer space, then they could have definitely made the human race feel their presence. So, it's a mystery to us. Many people have claimed that they have seen UFOs and have contacted aliens. But, that's not enough to justify the fact that there is life in outer space.



Ambalika Bharadwaj, Maharishi Vidya Mandir, Barsajai, Guwahati.

When we say 'life', the image formed in our brains is of the biosphere – the sphere of the Earth, where all organisms live and grow. Outer space makes me think of astronauts on the moon. The future cannot be seen, but predicted and imagined. According to me, there is life in outer space, which is unaware of us and we are not sure about them. Their lives might be the same as ours or might be the opposite. The universe is big, with nearly 100 billion galaxies, so I believe that there are chances of life in outer space. The UFOs might be an indication of the existence of life in outer space. I think the developing technologies will soon be able to connect us with life in another world.



Adriana Mahanta, Don Bosco School, Panbazar, Guwahati.

I think there is life in outer space. I believe there are different types of creatures on every planet. Mercury might be home to distinctive creepy-crawlies, while Jupiter might be the home of dinosaurs. Saturn might be the planet where some people like us live. The people there might be studying about creation and might be pondering over whether there is life on Earth or other planets. Neptune must be the planet of cartoon characters! I have a feeling that after people die, they are reborn on some other planet.

Google rolls out India-first app globally

To help kids learn better at home, Google has announced an early access to its app Read Along that was first launched in India as Bolo app with an in-app reading buddy named Diya. It's an Android app for children over five years old that helps them learn to read by giving verbal and visual feedback as they read stories out loud. Read Along uses Google's speech recognition technology to help develop literacy skills. It helps kids independently learn and build their reading skills with the help of reading buddy Diya. As kids read out loud, Diya uses Google's text-to-speech and speech recognition technology to detect if a student is struggling or successfully reading the passage. She gives them positive and reinforcing feedback along the way, just as a parent or teacher would.

Shed weight and solve problems

Teen obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure may lead to prematurely aged arteries.

Teenagers who have obesity, type 2 diabetes (T2D), or high blood pressure may be more likely to have signs of premature blood vessel ageing compared to teens without those health conditions, according to a research published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association*.

Researchers evaluated 141 teens with normal weight, 156 who had obesity, and 151 who had T2D over the course of five years, with an average age of 17.6 years at the beginning of the study. At the end of five years, the teens with either obesity, T2D, or high systolic blood pressure were significantly more likely to have thicker and stiffer carotid arteries, the main blood vessel that leads to the brain, according to the study.

Carotid artery health was assessed by non-invasive ultrasound and pulse wave velocity, which measured the thickness of the inner

two layers of the blood vessel called the carotid intima-media thickness. The pulse wave velocity gauges how fast blood flows through the vessels to determine arterial stiffness. Both measures were taken at the beginning of the study and five years later.

The researchers concluded that teens with obesity, T2D, or high systolic blood pressure had greater change in the thickness and stiffness of their arteries, compared to participants in the group with normal weight. This would suggest a greater risk of early heart attacks or strokes among the teens with obesity, T2D, or high systolic blood pressure, according to the study authors.

“Although T2D is treated aggressively in the U.S., obesity needs to be treated just as vigorously because it has the same increased risk for premature ageing of the blood vessels, which is an early sign of cardiovascular dysfunction and a precursor to cardiovascular diseases in adulthood,” said lead study author Justin R. Ryder, Ph.D., in a press release.

A limitation of the research is that the teenagers were not followed into adulthood to track whether the premature ageing of their blood vessels results in heart attacks, strokes, and other cardiovascular conditions.

However, strengths of the study included its large population size and the objective measurements of carotid artery health five years apart.

(Agencies)



Anne's undying endurance

I read Anne Frank's diary two years ago, when I was in Class-VIII. The book keeps reminding me how Anne, being nearly my age, handled her situation with utmost bravery. Her constant positive outlook on life, even through the toughest of tough situations, is heart-warming.

Reading Anne's diary changed me and I am sure it did the same to the other readers. When I was about to read the diary, I thought it would be

Chayanika Saikia, Don Bosco H.S. School, Baghchung, Jorhat.

just another work of historical fiction. But once I finished it, I realised that her story is even more intriguing. Her time in the concentration camps outlined her persistence. She never let the thought of being captured by the

Nazis hold her back. Anne's diary was a hopeful ray of light during the horror of the Holocaust. Despite knowing the dangers that surrounded her family and friends, she was still optimistic and believed in the goodness of everyone.

Anne Frank quotes, “In spite of everything I still feel people are really good at heart.” Maybe they are.

Anne, I just wish you were still around today. You don't have to worry, Anne, you are safe in your world. There's no one chasing your life, no one to cage your freedom.

CONTRIBUTOR OF THE WEEK
Chayanika Saikia, Jorhat.

POEM OF THE WEEK
Ankita Bharadwaz, Baihata Chariali.

SKETCH OF THE WEEK
Ishan Tamuli, Guwahati.

Believe It or Not!

DEATH BECOMES HER!
IN THE VICTORIAN ERA, IT WAS COMMON FOR FAMILIES TO PROP UP DECEASED RELATIVES AND TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THEM!

HUGO, A DOG FROM ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, RAN MORE THAN A MILE AWAY FROM HIS HOME TO VISIT HIS BUDDIES IN DOGGIE DAYCARE!
Submitted By Kibard Ribson, Lafayette, LA.

IN 1824, AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTION IN LONDON, PROFESSOR MICHAEL FARADAY CREATED THE FIRST MODERN RUBBER BALLOONS!
Submitted By Ian Paivon, W Lafayette, OH.

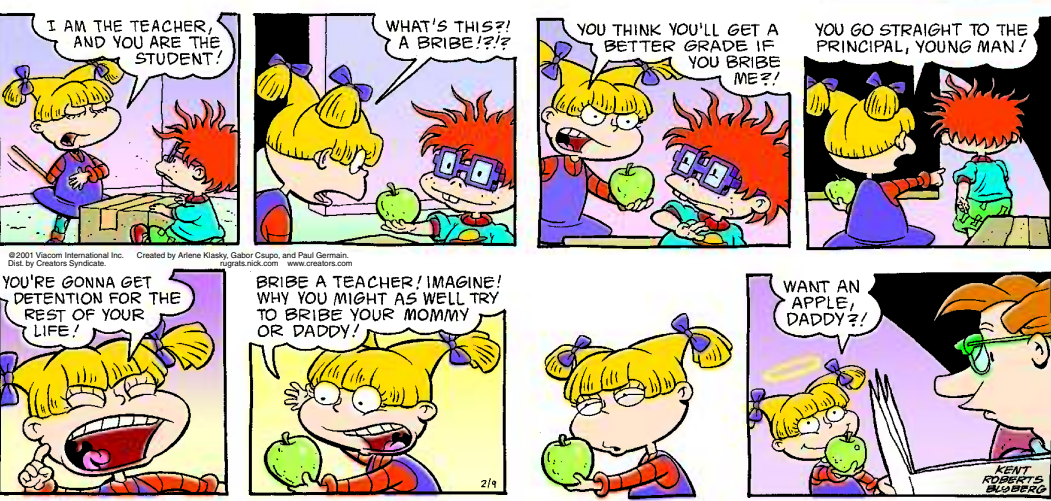
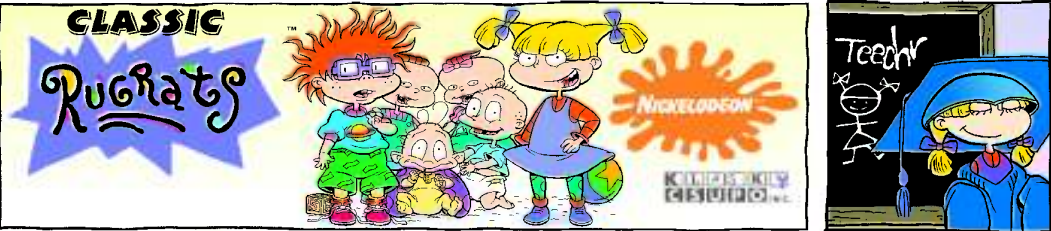
Why What? Which is the biggest ocean carnivore?

The great white shark, also known as white pointer and white death, is considered the most dangerous of all sharks. The great white shark has a conical, instead of a flattened snout, black eyes, and large, serrated, arrow-head-shaped teeth. The upper and lower lobes of the tail are almost equal in size, and the body is blue or brown-grey, not white, except on the underside. The great white shark belongs to the family Lamnidae. It is classified as *Carcharodon carcharias*.



Although the great white shark is notorious as a movie villain, little documented information exists about its behaviour. One of the largest specimens caught was off Montauk, Long Island, New York, in 1964; it was 5.34 m. (17.5 ft.) long and weighed an estimated 2,043 kg. White sharks swallow whole creatures half their size, especially seals, dolphins, turtles, other sharks, chunks of whale, fish, and ship's garbage. Between 1916 and 1969, there were 32 attacks on swimmers, resulting in 13 deaths, attributed to white sharks. On three occasions, white sharks were reported to have attacked boats, sinking one of them in Canada. Off Australian coasts, where most of the big-game specimens are taken, one female, recognised by its scars, returned for 13 years.

Although the white shark exhibits great strength and terrifies humans, most authorities agree that its villainous reputation is undeserved. Some specialists believe it is endangered due to its shrinking food sources and overfishing by trophy hunters. Great white sharks are an enigma, as scientists are still trying to unravel the mysterious lifestyle of these denizens of the deep. They are solitary creatures roaming the ocean in constant search of food. Scientists are still unsure how to tell the age of a great white shark or how long they live, how often and where they breed, and how quickly they grow.





Dear Ishani Aunty,
We were going to do a school play and I was to play the lead role of a queen. Now it has been postponed and I am very disappointed. Help.
— Hela

Dear Hela,
It is more important to be safe from the coronavirus than acting in a school play. When this is over, I am sure you will be glad to get back to your normal activities.

Dear Ishani Aunty,
I am very afraid. Are we all going to die of the coronavirus?
— Trishala

Dear Trishala,
This is not the time to be afraid. We should be prepared to face the future. Sleep for at least eight hours a day, eat healthy meals and keep washing your hands with soap and water. Remain at home, and you shall be safe.

Dear Ishani Aunty,
I had a fight with my best friend because I made a comment on his father. How can I make it up to him?
— Shreyas

Dear Shreyas,
Have a sincere talk with your friend. Beg forgiveness for being insensitive and mean. Promise him you will not do it again.

Unmana Das,
Little Flower School, Guwahati.



Please collect your certificates from our office.

[Send your entries to planet_young@assamtribune.com]

PicSPEAK

NEXT WEEK'S PICTURE



Mini M@ths

	1		2	
3			4	5
		6		7
	8		9	
10		11		12
		13		14
	15		16	

- | ACROSS | DOWN |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. 89 - 20 | 1. 42 + 22 |
| 2. 43 - 24 | 2. 40 - 22 |
| 3. 62 + 12 | 3. 91 - 15 |
| 4. 25 + 23 | 4. 30 + 13 |
| 6. 80 + 3 | 5. 58 + 29 |
| 7. 30 + 37 | 6. 71 + 15 |
| 8. 11 + 45 | 7. 20 + 48 |
| 9. 20 + 18 | 8. 37 + 17 |
| 10. 52 + 32 | 9. 8 + 26 |
| 11. 54 - 10 | 10. 69 + 16 |
| 13. 50 + 5 | 11. 30 + 15 |
| 14. 59 + 38 | 12. 38 + 39 |
| 15. 68 - 21 | 13. 97 - 40 |
| 16. 86 - 20 | 14. 76 + 20 |



Calculate the clues and fill in the grid with the answers.

SOLUTION

9	9	7	7
7	6	9	9
7	7	7	7
8	3	9	9
7	9	3	8
8	8	4	7
9	1	9	9

© Ken Egan - mm1205

JOKES



Ned: "What is a computer's favourite snack?"
Fred: "Microchips!"

Q: "What would be a mouse's favourite game?"
Ans: "Hide and squeak!"

Nitt: "Do you know why the Dalmatian visited the eye doctor?"
Witt: "No. Why?"
Nitt: "He kept seeing spots!"

Q: "Why could the cat not play games on the computer?"
Ans: "Because he ate the mouse."

Library

It is a valuable repository of knowledge.

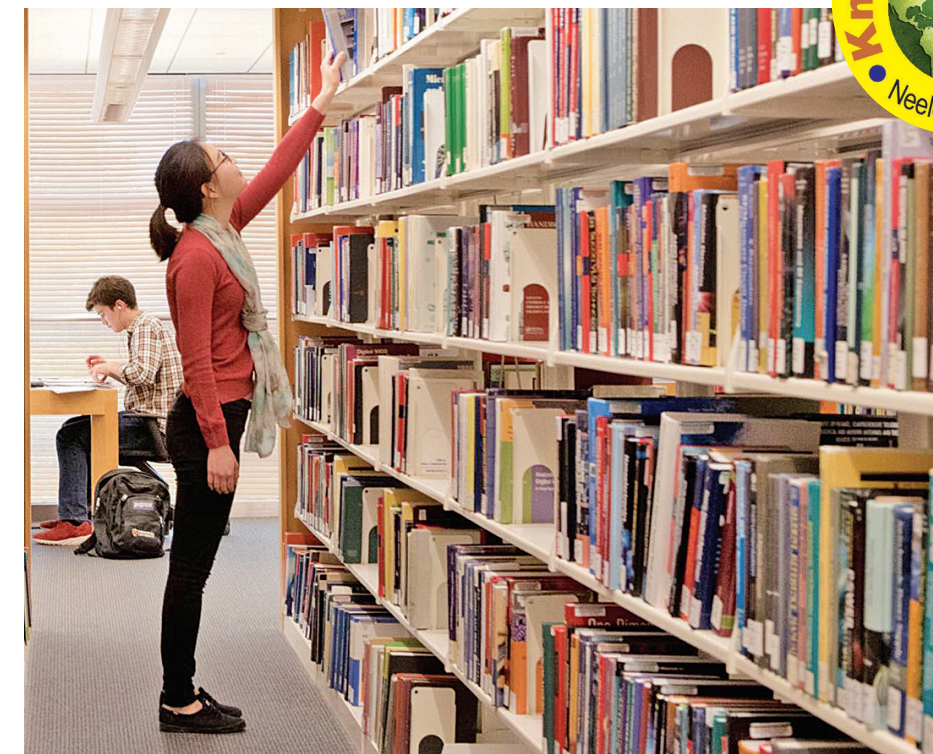
A library is a place where we find a collection of books and other informational materials made available to people for reading, study, or reference. The word 'library' comes from *liber* - the Latin word for "book". Library collections have almost always contained a variety of materials. Contemporary libraries maintain collections that include not only printed materials such as manuscripts, books, newspapers and magazines, but also art reproductions, films, sound and video recordings, maps, photographs, microfilms, CD-ROMs, computer software, online databases and other media. In addition to maintaining collections within library buildings, modern libraries often feature telecommunication links that provide users with access to information at remote sites.

The central mission of a library is to collect, organise, preserve, and provide access to knowledge and information. In fulfilling this mission, libraries preserve a valuable record of culture that can be passed down to the succeeding genera-

tions. Libraries are an essential link in this communication between the past, present and the future. Whether the cultural record is contained in books or in electronic formats, libraries ensure that the record is preserved and made available for later use. Libraries provide people with access to the information they need to work,

play, learn and govern.

People in many professions use library resources to assist them in their work. People also use library resources to gain information about personal interests, or to obtain recreational materials such as films and novels. Students



use libraries to supplement and enhance their classroom experiences, to learn skills in locating sources of information, and to develop good reading and study habits. Public officials use libraries to research legislation and public policy issues. One of the most valued of all cultural institutions, the library provides information and services that are essential to learning and progress.

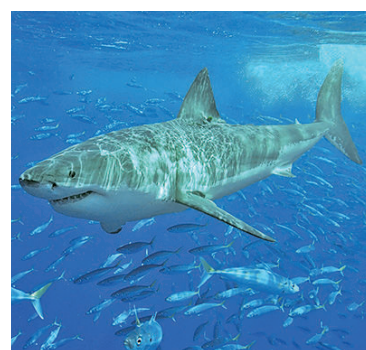
The National Library of India at Belvedere, Kolkata, is the largest library in India by volume and India's library of public records. It is under the Department of Culture, Ministry of Tourism & Culture, Government of India. This library is designated to collect, disseminate and preserve all printed material produced in India. It has a collection in excess of 2.2 million books.

In Assam, there are district libraries in almost all district headquarters. The District Library in Guwahati is one of the biggest libraries in the State. In Guwahati, there are several other public libraries and these include the Bishnu Nirmala Sishu Puthibharal, and the Nabin Bordoloi Library. The Student and Research Library at Gauhati University is one of the biggest student libraries in the State.

(only4_pol@yahoo.co.uk)

Quiz

1 The great whites and the hammerheads are what type of animals?



2 On which continent are bees not found?



3 Can frogs swallow with eyes open?



4 What would a giant panda mostly eat?



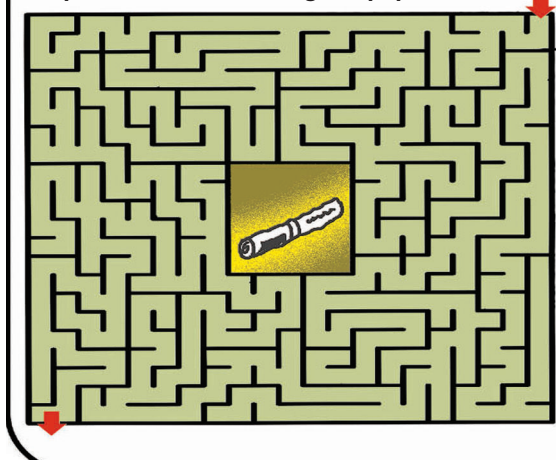
5 Are rabbits born with fur?



Kids' Stuff BRAIN TEASERS

AMAZING PAPER DELIVERY

Jason delivers the local newspaper. Today he's not feeling too well. Can you help him finish delivering the papers?

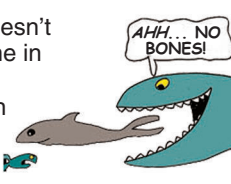


FUN WITH FACTS

The strongest bone in your body is the jawbone.



A shark doesn't have a bone in its body. Its skeleton is made up of cartilage.



The word 'dinosaur' means "fearfully-great lizard" in Greek.



Funky Facts

1. Are spiders insects?

2. True or false: All spiders produce silk.

3. Yes or no: Can spiders chew?

IT'S TRUE!
Lots of spiders make a new web every day and often eat the old one!

Answers: 1. No. They are Arachnids, 2. True, 3. No.

ANSWERS

1. Sharks, 2. Antarctica, 3. No, 4. Bamboo, 5. No.

SU DO KU

Fill all the missing numbers in the grid. Every column, row and box must contain each of the numbers from 1-4 but only once.

3			
1	2		3
		3	
4		2	

SOLUTIONS

1	2	3	4
4	3	1	2
3	4	2	1
2	1	4	3



daveallen@funny-business.com.au

wordwatch

Pick the words closest in meaning.

1 Monochromatic a) Glistening b) Dull c) Silver d) Done in one colour	4 Self-effacing a) Witty b) Unselfish c) Weak d) Humble
2 Candid a) Quick b) Alert c) Frank d) Protective	5 Feisty a) Spirited b) Impulsive c) Vicious d) Sturdy
3 Curt a) Clear b) Polite c) Prompt d) Abrupt	Answers: 1. d) Done in one colour, 2. c) Frank, 3. d) Abrupt, 4. d) Humble, 5. a) Spirited.

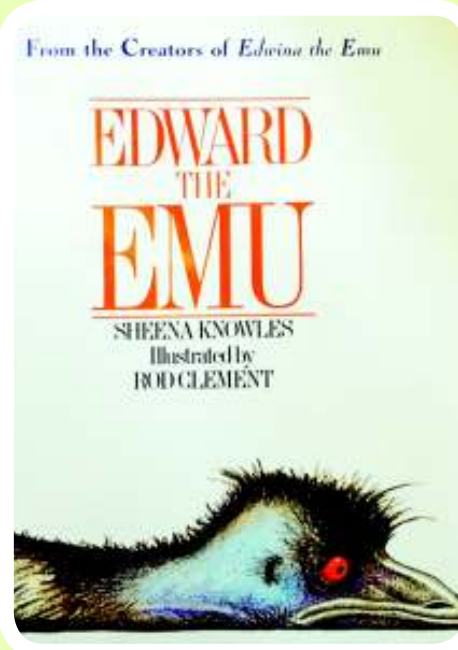
BOOK NOOK

Edward the Emu

By Sheena Knowles

Tired of his life as an emu, Edward decides to try being something else for a change. He tries swimming with the seals, he spends a day lounging with the lions, and even slithers with the snakes. But Edward soon discovers that being an emu may be the best thing, after all.

Sheena Knowles's upbeat, rhyming text and Rod Clement's expressive illustrations are sure to make you laugh out loud, enjoying this whimsical picture book.



Know your masterpieces
Kacen Callender

Kacen Callender is an author of children's fantasy books. She has won the Stonewall Book Award and Lambda Literary Award.

- Her books include:
- ▶ Hurricane Child.
 - ▶ King And The Dragonflies.
 - ▶ Felix Ever After.
 - ▶ King Of The Rising.



The Wild Robot

By Peter Brown

When robot Roz opens her eyes for the first time, she discovers that she is alone on a remote, wild island. Why is she there? Where did she come from? And, most importantly, how will she survive in her harsh surroundings? Roz's only hope is to learn from the island's hostile animal inhabitants. When she tries to care for an orphaned gosling, the other animals finally decide to help, and the island starts to feel like home. Until one day, the robot's mysterious past comes back to haunt her...



Aliza and the magical island

Once upon a time, there lived a princess name Aliza. One day, Aliza and the king set out into the sea on a ship. In the middle of the sea, a storm rocked their ship and Aliza fell into the water. She was swept away to a faraway, magical island. As Aliza picked herself up and walked ahead, she saw a dog that was in a lot of pain. Feeling sad for him, she gave him some water and tended to his wounds. When the dog recovered, he said, "Thank you for your help. Now you must go ahead on your journey and when you return, I will reward you."

Soon Aliza met a dying mulberry tree. Upon seeing her, the tree asked her for water. Aliza brought some water and poured it onto the tree. The tree said the same thing as the dog. As Aliza walked ahead, she saw a trapped butterfly. On freeing the butterfly, it also said the same thing as the dog and the tree.

Soon Aliza reached a beautiful castle made of diamonds. There lived three fairies - how she got lost and told them that she wanted to go back home. The fairies said, "If you want to go home, you have to work here for a year. There are three rooms in our castle, you have to clean only two of them. Do not open the third door." Aliza followed their orders diligently.

After one year, the fairies said, "You have worked very hard, you should get

Akshita Kashyap,
Holy Flower Sr. Sec. School, Teok, Jorhat.



rewarded. Open the third door!" Aliza opened the third door and the room was full of gold and silver. They said, "Today, you will sleep over silver and tomorrow, you will sleep over gold". On the third morning, Aliza saw that her clothes and ornaments had been converted to gold and silver. The fairies said that she could go back home the same way that she

had come. On her return journey, Aliza met the butterfly. It gave her a pair of magical shoes, which allowed her to travel wherever she wanted. The tree gave her a magical leaf, with which she could wear whatever dress she liked. And at last, she met the dog. It gave her a wish-granting necklace.

Aliza requested the magical shoes to

take her to her palace. On reaching home, everyone was delighted, except the evil stepmother. She became jealous of Aliza's story and her rewards. The stepmother, together with her own daughter Alvena, planned to visit the island. But, on their way, when they met the dog; instead of showing him kindness, they rudely stated, "We are a queen and a princess. Why should we help you?" Soon they met the mulberry tree and the butterfly and left them both with the same answer.

Finally, they found the palace. They lied to the fairies that they were lost. The fairies gave them the same directions as Aliza. However, as the evil stepmother and daughter knew the mystery behind the third door, they opened it in no time. But instead of finding gold and silver, they were attacked by insects. Petrified, they decided to go back. However, on their return journey, they were cursed by the butterfly and the tree that they could never return to their palace and could never wear nice dresses any more. Finally, they met the dog. He cursed them that nothing would ever go right in their lives. As a result, they had to stay and suffer on the island. Meanwhile, Aliza lived happily ever after.

(Moral: If we wish to be happy in our lives, we should always be kind and helpful towards others. And if we are greedy and conceited, we cannot live a happy life.)

Picture crossword

Across: 1. Stretcher, 4. Skirt, 6. Farm, 7. Tooth, 9. Balloon, 10. Sparrow, 13. Cardigan, 14. Kayak.
Down: 2. Elk, 3. Carpet, 4. Shrimp, 5. Barrel, 8. Tabla, 10. Sack, 11. Radio, 12. Organ.

SOLUTION

IDIOM OF THE WEEK

There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and lip

There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip' is an old English proverb. It implies that between the time we decide to do something and the time we do it, things often go wrong.

A Latin form is found in Erasmus's *Adagia*, I.v. 1 (*Multa cadunt inter calicem supremaque labra*),



which appears to derive from an epigram by Palladas in *The Greek Anthology* (X 32).

The proverb supposedly comes from a Greek legend in which one of the Argonauts returns home to his winery. A local soothsayer had previously predicted that the Argonaut would die before he tasted another drop of his wine, thus, the Argonaut calls the soothsayer and toasts him, for the Argonaut had survived his journey. The soothsayer replies to the toast with a phrase corresponding to the English proverb. As he completes his test, the Argonaut raises a cup filled with wine to his lips but is called away to hunt a wild boar. The Argonaut is killed hunting the boar.

The first occurrence of the proverb in English, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is in Thackeray's *Pendennis*, 1850.

Welcome back!

Dear Bhaity, Bhonti,

Welcome back, dear children! In these weeks, you were never far from our thoughts. We continued to feel inspired by your creations. And now, we are all back, the journey continues.

Author C.S. Lewis wrote, "Hardships often prepare ordinary people for an extraordinary destiny." As the whole of mankind unites to battle this invisible foe, it is up to each one of us to play our part. We appeal to all of you to maintain social distance, wash and sanitise your hands frequently, and avoid leaving the house as far as possible. There is also the need to sincerely carry on your online studies and keep yourself engaged in creative, meaningful activities. You must be particularly careful around elderly members of the family - as they are more vulnerable.

Remember, the whole world is together in this. Remain optimistic and proactive. Often, the most sense you need at this time is common sense. So, once again, we eagerly await your creative gems.

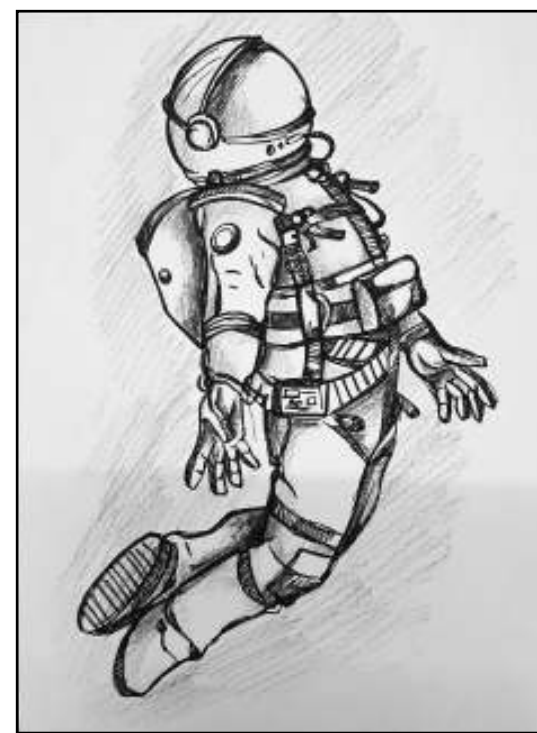
With love, as always,

Kakaiduu

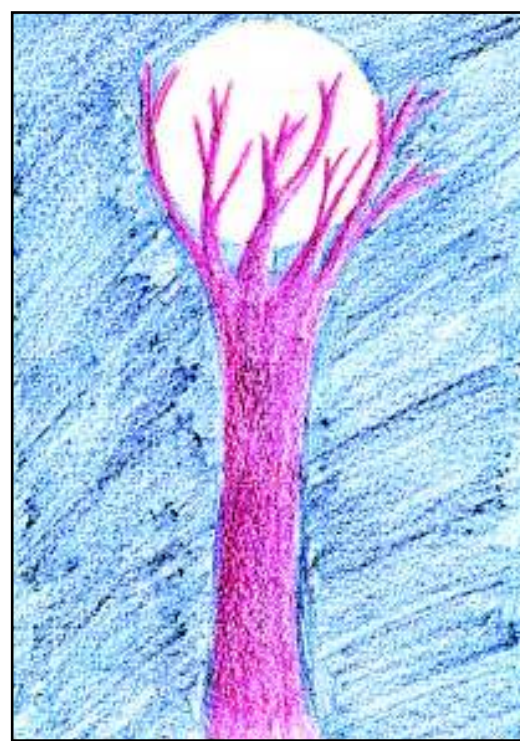


Sketch of the week

Ishan Tamuli,
Maria's Public School, Guwahati



Maharnab Choudhury,
International School, Guwahati



Aadrita Bharadwaj,
Gurukul Grammar Sr. Sec. School, Guwahati

Chirping of the birds

Echoed so deep,
As if in a rhythm
They were singing.
The sun was in the horizon,
Looking fresh and vigorous,
Amidst the thick, white fog,
That held it tight.
The trees were enjoying
A dance in the
Chilly breeze.
The air was clean,
That refreshed my mind.
The dewdrops that dived
From the nearest tree,
Kissed my hair
In a gentle manner.
The clouds above, hid
Behind the screen of thick fog.
A breeze it was –
That raised a question
In my mind–
“Is this what a morning
In a village looks
And feels like?”

Gargi Gogoi,
Maria's Public School, Guwahati.



Heemav Kashyap,
Don Bosco School, Guwahati

Poem of the Week

Ankita Bharadwaz,
Ramanujan Academy, Baihata Chariali.

Happiness

The world is filled with uncountable stuff,
So that we can show ourselves happy enough.
Being surrounded by friends or loving partners,
We all want to prove ourselves as the happiest creatures.
We can be happy if we want,
No matter how many difficulties we have to confront.
I don't want to deny that very true fact,
But on this Earth, it is also true that
Each one of us is successfully fooled by others' false acts.
All of us feel that
Deep inside, we are all alone,
On lazy, lonely and deprived nights, we all silently cry.
We frantically try to find the hidden meaning of life,
But in vain,
As, at last, we are thrown to our hard, present times again.
It is a truth that everyone feels,
But nobody wants to deal with it.
We all love to wear the 'happy' mask,
So that in this modern world, we can maintain our peace.



Dimbeswar Kujur,
Laina Chengelijan L.P.S. Kakopathar, Tinsukia



Yash Khemani,
Shrimanta Shankar Academy, Guwahati

Love yourself

I can't enjoy myself when others laugh,
They question why I am so dull and rough.
All these luxuries push me into this maze,
Having everything, it feels like nothing,
When surrounded by this thick haze...

I close my eyes, trying to forget the pain.
Thousands of thoughts pour down like rain.
Thoughts like phrases, looking for an ending,
Thoughts that others don't find overwhelming.
Questions that never find an answer,
Dreams that often remain uncovered...

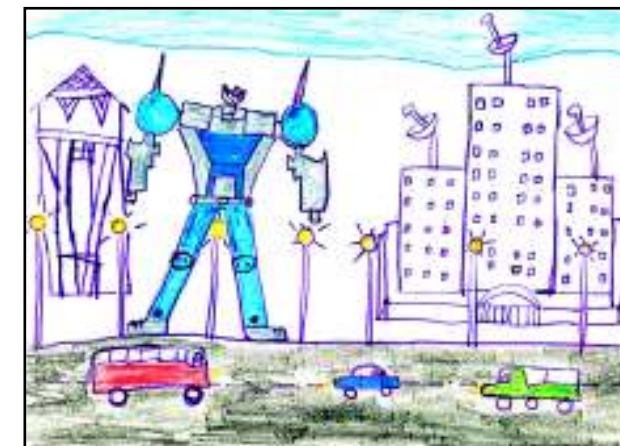
Now, I wonder why,
Why have I become so selfish?
No, never with others,
But with the one I should have been modest,
I was never the closest.

Living a life for others,
Why isn't there anything
For my biggest admirer;
Me, myself, my own true lover...?

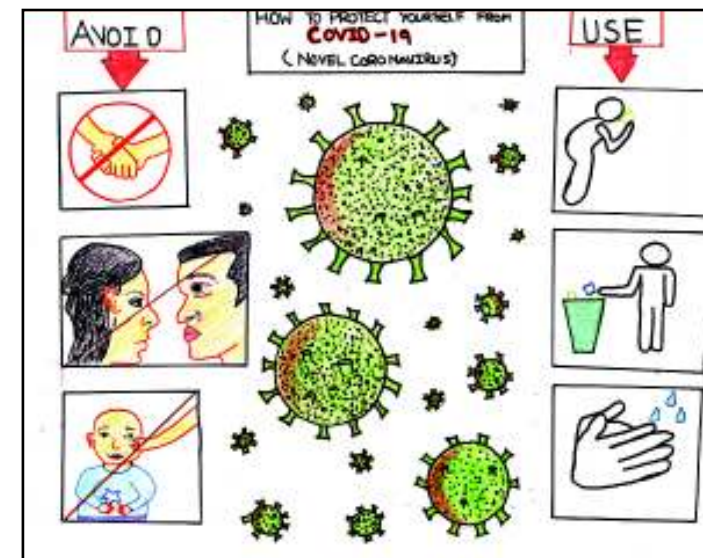
Sarah Ishika Dowerah,
Delhi Public School, Numaligarh.



Nandini Bharali,
Don Bosco H.S. School, Baghchung, Jorhat



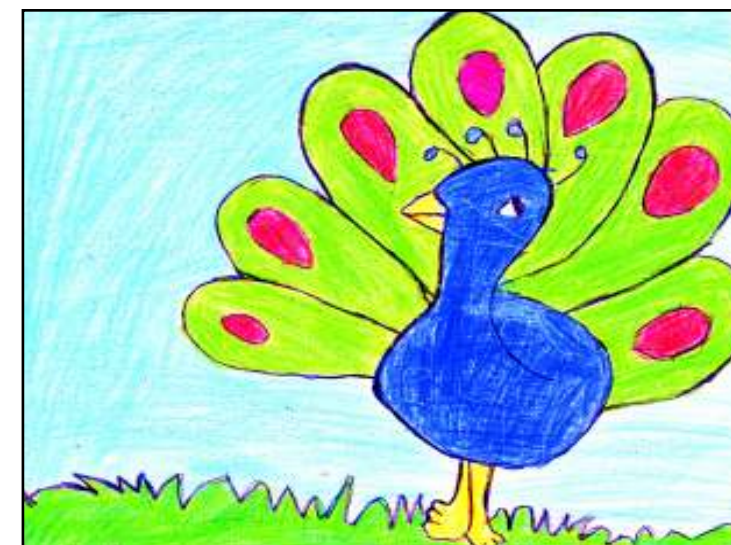
Mayur Barman,
Maharishi Vidya Mandir Sr. Sec. School, Silpukhuri, Guwahati



Pori Nath,
Maharishi Vidya Mandir-IV, Barsajal, Guwahati



Mrigaj B. Sarma,
Narayana School, Guwahati



Harshita Misra,
St. Mary's H.S. School, Guwahati



Shivangi Bhattacharjee,
Maria Montessori House of Children, Guwahati



Aadishree Nath,
Tezpur Gurukul, Tezpur



Aradhya Bharadwaj,
Gurukul Grammar Sr. Sec. School, Guwahati