

p2 'Over 580,000 surgeries in India may be cancelled'

p5 Machkhowa bank branch sealed, staff quarantined

p11 2 hurt in accidental firing in Nagaon market

NEWS Capsule

EPFO penalty

NEW DELHI, May 15: Retirement fund body EPFO has decided not to impose any penalty for delay in payment of employees' provident fund contributions by firms during the nationwide lockdown. - PTI

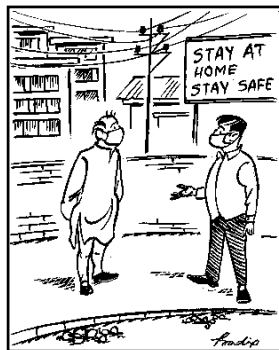
Trade strike

NEW DELHI, May 15: Ten central trade unions on Friday gave a call for a nationwide strike on May 22 to protest against the suspension of labour laws by some States during the lockdown period. - PTI

Rafale jets

NEW DELHI, May 15: The first four of the 36 Rafale jets are expected to land in India by last week of July as the coronavirus pandemic delayed their scheduled delivery by around 11 weeks, official sources said on Friday. - PTI

JOCOSERIOUS



As with floods, we now have to learn how to co-exist with coronavirus...

Rs 1.63 lakh cr agri package announced

Centre to amend Essential Commodities Act

NEW DELHI, May 15: In the third tranche of the COVID-19 economic package, the government on Friday announced a slew of measures for agriculture sector, including a Rs 1.63 lakh crore outlay, and amending the stringent Essential Commodities Act to remove cereals, edible oil, oilseeds, pulses, onions and potato from its purview.

Also, a new law will be framed to give farmers the option to choose the market where they want to sell their produce by removing inter-State trade barriers and providing e-trading of agriculture produce.

Announcing the third tranche of an overall package of Rs 20 lakh crore to deal with the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said foodstuffs, including cereals, edible oils, oilseeds, pulses, onion, and potato, will be deregulated after the amendment to the six-and-half-decade old Essential Commodities Act.

The Act empowers the government to regulate price as well as stocks of

commodities.

The minister said after the amendment, stock limit will be imposed only under very exceptional circumstances like national calamities and famine when there is a surge in prices.

Further, no such stock limit shall apply to processors or value chain participants, subject to their installed capacity, or to any exporter, depending on the export demand.

Sitharaman said farmers currently are bound to sell agriculture produce only to licensees in APMCs (Agricultural Produce Market Committees) while no such restriction of sale applies for any industrial produce.

These restrictions hinder the free flow of agriculture produce and lead to lower price realisation for farmers.

To deal with the situation, a Central law will be formulated to provide "adequate choices to farmer to sell produce at an attractive price, barrier-free inter-State trade and framework for e-trading of agriculture produce," she said.



A man repairing a boat ahead of the monsoon in Majuli on Friday. - UB Photos

CM for extension of lockdown by two weeks

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 15: Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal today said the State government is for extension of lockdown by at least two weeks, about which it had informed the Centre.

"During the video conferencing with the Prime Minister, we have recommended to the Centre to extend the lockdown period by two more weeks.

SEE PAGE 6

SEE PAGE 6

State incurring Rs 1,000-cr loss daily

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 15: Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal today said that the State is incurring a daily loss of Rs 1,000 crore during the lockdown period, even as he expressed optimism that the economic package of Rs 20 lakh crore announced by the Central government would get the State's economy back on track.

Referring to a survey done by the Confederation of Indian Industry, which

pegged the daily loss of the State at Rs 1,000 crore, the Chief Minister said that the stimulus announced by the Centre would bail the State out of the current crisis and also largely benefit the MSME sector, which forms the backbone of the industrial sector of the State.

"The MSMEs form 99.9 per cent of the industries in the State and the industrial sector contributes 39 per cent of the State's GDP.

SEE PAGE 6

No shortage of essential items in NE States

SPL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, May 15: Officials representing the north-eastern States on Friday told the Centre that there is no shortage of essential supplies or medical equipment in their respective States to tackle COVID-19 cases.

Union minister Dr Jitendra Singh today held a video conferencing with the Delhi-based Resident Commissioners of the eight northeastern States, besides Jammu and Kashmir, to get COVID-19

related feed-backs.

One after the other, each of the Resident Commissioners conveyed to the minister that there is no shortage of essential supplies or medical equipment in their respective States and thanked the minister's office for continuous follow-up of their issues. They also spelled out how they were effectively trying to streamline the movement of migrant labourers and students, official sources said.

SEE PAGE 6

COVID-19 STATUS	
WORLD	
Confirmed cases	4,569,379
Cured/Discharged	1,724,919
Death	304,798
INDIA	
Confirmed cases	81,970
Cured/Discharged	27,919
Death	2,649
ASSAM	
Confirmed cases	85
Cured/Discharged	41
Death	2

Data as on Friday

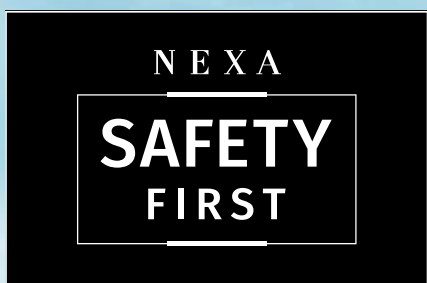
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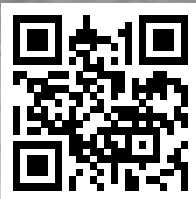
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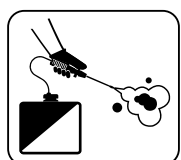
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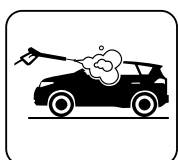
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Tensions rise as Texas Gov readies to lift more rules

AUSTIN, May 15: Two weeks into the reopening of Texas, coronavirus cases are climbing. New outbreaks still crop up. And at Guero's Taco Bar in Austin, which offers the occasional celebrity sighting, a log of every diner and where they sat is begrudgingly in the works.

"It seems like a huge invasion of privacy," said owner Cathy Lipincott, who is nonetheless trying to comply with Austin's local public health guidelines by asking, but not requiring, customers to give their information.

Few states are rebooting quicker than Texas, where stay-at-home orders expired on May 1. With cases still rising, including single-day highs of 1,458 new cases and 58 deaths on Thursday, Republican Governor Greg Abbott has defended the pace by emphasising steady hospitalisation rates and pointing out that Texas' 1,200 deaths are still behind similarly big states, including California and Florida.

But on the cusp of even more restrictions ending on

Monday, including gyms cleared to reopen, a political confrontation is growing over attempts by big cities to keep some guardrails.

The dispute underscores the gulf between Democrats who run city halls and Grand Old Party (GOP) leaders who call the shots in the capital in Texas, where unlike in other states, the Governor's orders supersede all local mandates during the pandemic.

The renewed tensions come at a moment when Dr Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, warned Congress this week of "needless suffering and death" if the US moves too quickly.

Nevertheless, Wisconsin's courts tossed out the state's stay-at-home orders, throwing communities into chaos as some bars opened immediately while strict local restrictions are kept elsewhere.

In Georgia, Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms has also expressed unease with the speed that Republican Governor Brian Kemp has reopened the state. — AP

A cautious New York begins limping back to economic life



ALBANY, May 15: Shuttered sectors of New York's economy will begin inching back to life on Friday with more construction, manufacturing and curbside retail pickups allowed in parts of the state that are hours away from pandemic-stricken New York City.

The smaller cities and rural regions

of upstate New York have been spared the brunt of the coronavirus outbreak.

Governor Andrew Cuomo is allowing many of those areas to gradually reopen first, industry by industry.

The first wave of businesses includes retail "though only for curbside or in-store pickup" along with

construction and manufacturing.

In the largely-rural Mohawk Valley, DANVANN Construction and Development is set to begin an excavation job on Monday at a lake on the southern edge of the huge Adirondack Park.

"I've been lounging around the house a lot, and I'm ready to get busy," said employee Justin Brown. "I'd rather be working."

Job site rules will be different next week, with workers keeping their hands disinfected and their faces covered, said company owner Dan Roth, who has been paying his four idle employees.

They'll also "have to stay 6 feet away from each other as best as you possibly can," he said.

Cuomo's administration divided the state into 10 regions that will reopen on different timetables. Restrictions can't be eased until a re-

gion meets seven benchmarks demonstrating that COVID-19 deaths and hospitalisations are down and that there are enough hospital beds if the outbreak flares up again. Each region must have a programme of testing and contact tracing.

The five regions of New York poised to open on Friday cover a wide strip down the middle of the state.

Excluded are New York City, Long Island and the Hudson Valley on the state's east side, and the Buffalo region to the west.

It might resemble a soft opening.

A lot of manufacturing, construction and retail deemed essential has continued in New York during the lockdown. And curbside retail pickup has been available for food, wine and some other retail goods. In Rochester, Tanvi Asher has been filling orders online for her Shop Peppermint and Salty

Boutique clothing stores.

She already has signs telling customers to stay in their cars while a worker brings packages to them.

She will be open for curbside pickup on Friday. But business is only about 25 per cent of what it was before the pandemic, and she doesn't expect a rebound until customers can browse the racks.

"Sadly, the truth is if I don't open, we will close forever," she said.

"So, at some point we're going to have to open." If new COVID-19 cases remain under control during the initial reopening, regions can open more types of businesses in a couple of weeks.

The next phase will include office jobs like professional services and insurance, as well as retail. Restaurants are included in the phase after that, and then finally arts, entertainment, recreation and education. — AP

Meet 'halfway' in fight against nCoV

BEIJING, May 15: China on Friday reacted guardedly to US President Donald Trump's threat to "cut off" the bilateral relationship between the world's top two economies and asked America to meet it halfway in the fight against the coronavirus.

Relations between the two countries nosedived after the coronavirus outbreak, which originated from the central Chinese city of Wuhan, and spread to other parts of the world.

The pandemic has claimed over 85,000 lives in the US, the highest in the world.

Trump, who has been pressing China to agree for an inquiry into the origin of the virus, including the allegation that it emerged from a biolab in Wuhan, further hardened his rhetoric on Thursday by threatening to cut off US ties with Beijing.

Reacting to Trump's threat, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian reacted guardedly, saying that the relationship is in the fundamental interest of the two countries.

"To maintain the steady development of China-US relations is in the fundamental

interests of the people in both countries, and is conducive to world peace and stability," Zhao said.

"At present, China and the US should continue to strengthen cooperation against the epidemic, defeat the epidemic as soon as possible, treat patients, and restore economy and production. But it requires the US to meet halfway with China," Zhao said.

There has been increasing pressure on Trump from American lawmakers to take action against China.

"There are many things we could do... We could cut off the whole relationship," Trump said on Thursday in an interview with Fox Business News.

"You'd save USD 500 billion if you cut off the whole relationship," Trump said that his relationship with Chinese President Xi Jinping is "very good" but added: "Right now I just don't want to speak to him."

Trump's threat followed after China on Tuesday released a new list of US products which will be exempted from the second round of additional tariffs on American products.

Trump launched a trade war with China in 2018, demanding Beijing to reduce a massive trade deficit of over USD 539 billion. — PTI

US permits medics on H-1B work visa to practice telemedicine

WASHINGTON, May 15: The US has relaxed regulations to allow doctors on the H-1B work visa to practice telemedicine and help local hospitals to meet the surging demand for healthcare professionals due to the coronavirus pandemic in America, the worst hit country by the COVID-19 outbreak.

The US has nearly 1.45 million cases of confirmed COVID-19 cases and over 86,000 people have died due to the

highly-contagious disease.

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has issued new guidelines enabling physicians holding the H-1B visas to practice telemedicine and providing local hospitals with the necessary flexibility to meet increased demand for medical treatment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ graduate-level

workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise in specialised fields, which include dentistry.

The updated guidelines come after a bipartisan group of lawmakers urged the USCIS to permit doctors with the H-1B visas to make select changes to better assist in the coronavirus response efforts. Medical facilities, particularly those in rural regions, rely on the H-1B visa programme to fill critical vacancies. — PTI



Smoke billows from a chemical plant following an explosion in Porto Marghera, Venice, Italy on Friday. Two people were reportedly critically injured. — AP/PTI

'Over 580,000 surgeries in India may be cancelled'

LONDON, May 15: More than 580,000 planned surgeries in India might be cancelled or delayed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a study conducted by an international consortium.

The study, published in the *British Journal of Surgery*, has projected that, based on a 12-week period of peak disruption to hospital services due to COVID-19, around 28.4 million elective surgeries worldwide will be cancelled or postponed in 2020.

This will lead to patients facing a lengthy wait for their health issues to be resolved, according to the research conducted by the CovidSurg Collaborative, a research network of over 5,000 surgeons from 120 countries focused on the impact of COVID-19 on surgical care.

The study was led by members based in the UK, Benin, Ghana, India, Italy, Mexico, Nigeria, Rwanda, Spain, South Africa and the US.

The modelling study indicates that each additional week of disruption to hospital services will be associated with a further 2.4-million cancellations.

The researchers, including those from the University of Birmingham in the UK, collected detailed information from surgeons across 359 hospitals and 71 countries on plans for cancellation of elective surgery. This data was then statistically modelled to estimate totals for cancelled surgery across 190 countries.

The researchers project

that worldwide 72.3 per cent of planned surgeries would be cancelled through the peak period of COVID-19 related disruption, adding that most cancelled surgeries will be for non-cancer conditions.

In India, 5,84,737 patients may face surgery cancellations or delays over a 12-week period around the time the novel coronavirus disease peaks, according to the study estimate.

Orthopaedic procedures will be cancelled most frequently, with 6.3-million orthopaedic surgeries cancelled worldwide over a 12-week period, the researchers said.

The study is also projected that globally 2.3 million cancer surgeries will be cancelled or postponed, they said.

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, elective surgeries have been cancelled to reduce the risk of patients being exposed to COVID-19 in hospital, and to support the wider hospital response, for example by converting operating theatres into intensive care units," said Aneel Bhangu, from the University of Birmingham.

"Although essential, cancellations place a heavy burden on patients and society. Patients' conditions may deteriorate, worsening their quality of life as they wait for re-scheduled surgery. In some cases, for example cancer, delayed surgeries may lead to a number of unnecessary deaths," said Bhangu. — PTI

Nepal reports 9 new cases

KATHMANDU, May 15: Nepal on Friday reported nine fresh cases of COVID-19, mostly from a district adjacent to the Indo-Nepal border, taking the total number of infections to 258, the health ministry said.

Nepal, which currently is under a nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of deadly coronavirus, is among the nations that has the least number of cases of the deadly COVID-19 with no deaths.

"The number of coronavirus infected cases has reached 258 in Nepal on Friday with nine more people tested positive," Dr Samir Kumar Adhikari, who is the joint spokesman at Nepal's Ministry of Health and Population, said.

"A 37-year-old man from Makwanpur and other eight males aged between 18 and 36 from Nainpur village of Banke district have been tested positive for COVID-19. He said that eight people from Banke district near the Nepal-India border, who tested positive for the virus, are those who returned home from India three days ago despite the lockdown in place. — PTI

COVID-19

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Grave diggers wearing protective suits bury a COVID-19 victim as relatives and friends stand at a safe distance, in the section of a cemetery reserved for coronavirus victims in Kolpino, outside St Petersburg, Russia on Friday. — AP/PTI

Hong Kong shop offers 'tear gas' flavour ice cream

HONG KONG, May 15: Tear gas is among the new flavours at a Hong Kong ice cream shop.

The main ingredient is black peppercorns, a reminder of the pungent, peppery rounds fired by police on the streets of the semi-autonomous Chinese city during months of demonstrations last year.

"It tastes like tear gas. It feels difficult to breathe at first, and it's really pungent and irritating. It makes me want to drink a lot of water immediately," said customer Anita Wong, who experienced tear gas at a protest.

"I think it's a flashback that reminds me of how painful I felt in the movement, and that I shouldn't forget."

The flavour is a sign of support for the pro-democracy movement which

is seeking to regain its momentum during the coronavirus pandemic, the shop's owner said. He spoke on condition of anonymity to avoid repercussions from the pro-Beijing government.

"We would like to make a flavour that reminds people that they still have to persist in the protest movement and don't lose their passion," he said. He tried different ingredients, including Wasabi and mustard, in an effort to replicate the taste of tear gas. Black pepper, he said, came closest to tear gas with its throat-irritating effects.

"We roast and then grind whole black peppercorns and make them into gelato, the Italian style. It's a bit hot, but we emphasise its aftertaste, which is a sensation of irritation in the throat. It just feels like breathing in tear gas,"

the 31-year-old owner said. More than 16,000 rounds of tear gas were fired during the protests, according to Hong Kong authorities, many in

legislation that would have allowed criminal suspects to be extradited to mainland China to face charges. While the Bills were withdrawn, demonstra-



tions continued over concerns Beijing is eroding the civil liberties granted to the former British colony when it was returned to Chinese rule in 1997. — AP

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E-Tender is hereby invited from registered Companies/Firms/Agencies/Contractors having minimum 02 years experience for providing vehicle on hiring basis in the office of the Defence Estate Officer, Guwahati Circle, P.O.- Satgaon, Narangi Military Station, Old Army School Building, Guwahati-27. Kindly visit the website <http://eprocure.gov.in> for the details and uploading of Tender documents/bids.

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Corrigendum No.1

Due to administrative reason the following changes is hereby made against Tender No. DCBL072020/MLG & DCBL082020/MLG vide E-Tender Notice No. DCBL/05/2020/MLG. Please read as: Closing Date & Time: 12-06-2020 at 15:00 hrs. instead of 28-05-2020 and Opening Date & Time: 12-06-2020 at 15:30 hrs. instead of 28-05-2020. All other terms and conditions are remain same.

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MAINTENANCE AND PROVISION OF RAISING/EXTENSION OF PF AT LUMDING DIVISION

E-Tender Notice No. Sr.DEELM/GM/01 of 2020-21, dated: 08-05-2020. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work: Name of work: Maintenance and round the clock monitoring of 4 Nos. tunnels namely Baromura (Tunnel no-5), Atharomura (Tunnel no-4), Longthorai (Tunnel no-3) of Agartala section & Pancharthal (Tunnel no-1) of Dharmanagar section including operation of DG set and comprehensive annual operation & maintenance of indoor & outdoor electrical appliances in connection with Dharmanagar - Agartala section for a period of 2 years (730 days). Tender Value: ₹1,59,54,836/-; Earnest Money: ₹2,29,800/-; SN-2. Tender No: EL/LM/19-20/42-RT-2; Name of work: Provision of raising/extension of PF at stations Langcholet, Nailung, Daldali, Rangapahar, Khothkoti, Naojan, Barpathar, Chongajan, Bhilgaon, Jamguri, Panikhati, Thakurkuchi, Panbari and Bar Longter along with provision of FOB at Panikhati, Thakurkuchi, Panbari and Barpathar in Lumding Division (Electrical Portion). Tender Value: ₹1,49,51,798/-; Earnest Money: ₹2,24,800/-; All above E-tender will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 01-06-2020 and opened at 15:30 hrs. on 01-06-2020. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. of 01-06-2020 in website <https://www.ireps.gov.in>

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Calcutta HC relaxes dress code for lawyers

KOLKATA, May 15: The Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court has allowed change in dress code of lawyers in view of the medical exigencies due to the COVID-19 outbreak, a senior official said today.

On a recommendation of the committee for all COVID-19 related matters, Calcutta High Court Chief Justice TBN Radhakrishnan directed that advocates of the HC and the subordinate courts will wear "plain white shirt or white salwar kameez or white saree, with a plain white neck band" during the hearings conducted through video conference.

The direction came after Chief Justice of India (CJI) SA Bobde had on Wednesday said the judges and the lawyers should not wear coat and gown for the time being as they make it "easier to catch virus".

The dress code will remain in force "till medical exigencies exist or until further orders," Calcutta High Court Registrar General Rai Chattopadhyay said in a notification. - PTI

Badrinath temple opens

DEHRADUN, May 15: The sacred portals of Badrinath were opened early today with only a select group of priests and Devasthanam Board officials attending the low-key ceremony.

The gates of the Himalayan temple were opened at 4.30 am by its chief priest Rawal Ishwari Prasad Nambudiri in the presence of a limited number of shrine board officials, who wore masks and maintained social distance through the process, said media incharge of Devasthanam Board Harish Gaud. After the gates were opened, the first puja was performed on behalf of Prime Minister Narendra Modi praying for the welfare of mankind.

Though the crowd of devotees was missing from the opening ceremony, the temple was decorated with 10 quintals of flowers and glittering with lights, Gaud said. - PTI

'India must gear up to face community transmission'

BENGALURU, May 15: India must gear up to face the possibility of community spread of the COVID-19, a prominent health expert said today, cautioning that there could be more widespread transmission of the novel coronavirus due to easing of the lockdown.

On some experts suggesting that there is already community transmission (stage 3) of the virus in the country, president of Public Health Foundation of India, Prof. K Srinath Reddy maintained that it is a matter of definition.

Because, if one looks at the spread to people without history of travel or history of contact, certainly there are several such cases, he said.

"But most of them are concentrated around the original points of entry of the foreign travellers or the travel routes of their contacts. So, these people who are describing it as stage 2 are saying this is traceable local transmission, it is not unpredictable community transmission, he told this news agency.

Therefore, we are avoiding the term community transmission. It is a matter of definition and language; we need not debate that really, Reddy, who formerly headed the Department of Cardiology at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), said.

But he said it should be recognised that community transmission has occurred in virtually every country which experienced this pandemic in a major form and India should also be prepared for it and act as though it is happening and take all precautionary containment measures.

There is not only risk, but actually threat of community transmission, said Reddy, who presently serves as an Adjunct Professor of Epidemiology at Harvard.

According to him, nations in South East Asia, including Malaysia, and India in particular, have kept the COVID-19 death rates per million of the population low compared to countries where the pandemic broke out around the same time.

He said the low death rate in India could be the benefit of multiple factors such as younger age group, more rural population, temperature and climatic conditions as well as the benefits the containment measures which preceded lockdown, and then got much more consolidated with the lockdown.

"Its quite possible that all of these factors have been helpful and we have seen that benefit, Reddy said.

But we need to continue to consolidate that. There are some risk factors, when

the lockdown opens there will be much greater mobility of people, there could be more widespread transmission of the virus, so we have to maintain physical distancing as much as possible, continue wearing masks and hand-washing as precautionary measures, he said.

Things are going to be difficult in overcrowded areas, especially slum areas.

We will have to try and provide as much facilities as possible, particularly for elderly people and to people with co-morbidities, whether they can be provided temporary shelter elsewhere with good social care.

Fortunately, he said, most of the infections are restricted to large cities and areas radiating around them.

Referring to return of migrant workers, he said care must be taken to see that they themselves do not fall victim to the epidemic, and at the same they don't infect others. "But most important thing is to protect the rural areas (from COVID-19) because two-thirds of India is in rural areas, and the transmission of the virus is low there because mobility is low, Reddy said.

Several precautionary measures have to be taken in order to contain the virus because the risk of transmission will certainly increase with the lifting of the lockdown. - PTI

Teacher creates COVID-19 nursery rhyme

AURANGABAD, May 15: In a bid to create awareness about the COVID-19 pandemic among children in slums, a teacher in Maharashtra's Aurangabad city created a nursery rhyme in Marathi to teach them the 20-second hand-washing routine.

While frontline workers tackle COVID-19 on a war footing, teachers like Sunita Nagkirti are tasked with creating awareness about the pandemic in hotspot areas, especially slums.

A video of Nagkirti teaching a group of children the 20-second hand-washing technique using a nursery rhyme was posted on Twitter by state sports commissioner Om Prakash Bakoriya. The teacher, who is associated with the state's scout and guide programme at Ravindra School here, has been travelling to slums to educate people about the pandemic and do's and don'ts they need to follow to prevent it. - PTI

Pune slum fights virus with self-discipline

PUNE, May 15: Even as several congested areas in Maharashtra's Pune city turned into COVID-19 hotspots, the slum pocket of Janata Vasahat has managed to fight the virus with coordinated efforts of its residents and authorities.

Situated along Sinhgad Road, Janata Vasahat is spread over a 2 to 3 km area and has a total population of 60,000. The locality has only reported two cases of COVID-19 so far, and the Pune Municipal Corporation plans to keep it that way.

Pune Municipal Commissioner Shekhar Gaikwad attributed the success of controlling the spread to containment measures undertaken by the civic body and the geographical location of the slum.

"Nestled between a hillock called Parvati and a water body off Sinhgad Road, Janata Vasahat only has one entry and exit point, restricting people's movement in the area," the

senior official said.

A couple of doctors from the civic body were active in the area and were working tirelessly to detect persons suffering from mild symptoms of COVID-19, he said. "So, early detection and tracking are crucial to the success we have achieved in this locality," he added.

The coordinated efforts of youth volunteers, corporators and the police in ensuring social distancing had also paid off, Gaikwad said.

When coronavirus cases started emerging from slums in Pune, the local police in Janata Vasahat tightened vigilance and started creating awareness as well.

Self-discipline exercised by residents of the locality along with coordination among the local groups, police and civic staff had kept the situation under control, said senior inspector Devdas Gheware of Datta Wadi Police Station in the locality. - PTI

And now, interactive dashboard to curb community infection

NEW DELHI, May 15: Researchers at IIT Gandhinagar have developed an interactive COVID-19 dashboard that they say can help administrators, hospitals as well as public in planning optimised testing for the novel coronavirus, and containing community infection in various post-lockdown scenarios.

The dashboard provides different epidemiological scenario-specific information at a city-scale, said the researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar (IITGN).

It is aimed at helping various stakeholders in optimised testing efforts and post-lockdown operations to contain community infection, they said.

The dashboard called "MIR AHD Covid-19 Dashboard" integrates the complex social and transportation patterns with state-of-the-art epidemic spread models, in addition to testing and quarantining rates, and contact tracing rates.

"MIR AHD Covid-19 is intended to disseminate information to stakeholders and the public that can help them make research-backed decisions during the time of crisis," said Udit Bhatia, Assistant Professor of Civil Engineering at IITGN, and one of the lead researchers of the project.

"This model relies on our US patented technology that takes into account the travel preferences in the town and ranks different road segments according to their relative importance in the network,"

Bhatia told this news agency. He noted that the team is discussing the project with different government agencies who can utilise this dashboard to handle different scenarios.

The researchers, including Prasanna Venkatesh B from IITGN, noted that in densely populated areas, intra-community and inter-community interactions become an important accelerator in disease spread. For policymakers and administrators, they said, the dashboard can simulate the rate of COVID-19 spread in various zones of a city under different lockdown strategies that have been implemented or under consideration to apply.

board is that it provides information to the stakeholders about the most critical intersections in the city if it decides to implement "drive-through testing," according to the researchers.

For the general public, the dashboard provides real-time information on the number of cases for all the districts, they said.

The dashboard can provide maps of the red, green and orange zone, and COVID-19 hospitals, according to the researchers, including Deep Chakrabarti from King George's Medical University, Uttar Pradesh.

It also provides location of government testing laboratories and an interactive slider to choose travel paths in case the users want to avoid travelling through a particular zone, they said. - PTI



National DENGUE

Day 16th May, 2020



Symptoms of Dengue

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

Steps to prevent Dengue

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



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

Treatment for Dengue is available in all Govt Hospitals and lab facilities for testing is also available free of cost

For more information contact your nearest Health Centre or dial 69133 47771/2/3

MESSAGE FOR TODAY

Live for each second without hesitation.

— ELTON JOHN

The Assam Tribune

New normal

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, which at this moment has afflicted over four-and-a-half million people and caused over three lakh deaths, wherever feasible numerous companies across the globe have resorted to measures such as 'work from home' to maintain productivity during lockdowns. Many private Indian companies too had taken this step, as had the Central and State governments. It may be recalled that a couple of months back, at the commencement of the lockdown, the Indian Government had advised private companies to implement 'work from home' policy for their staff as part of encouraging 'social distancing' to curb the spread of coronavirus infections, going as far as to examine relaxations under the companies law to facilitate such a measure. A similar step to keep government functions active with staggered work hours and partial numbers of employees attending office has been operative throughout the lockdown. Now, apparently, the Central Government plans to retain this measure even after the lockdown is lifted, with the Department of Personnel and Training coming up with a draft framework to enable 'work from home' for the 48.34 lakh Central Government employees during the foreseeable future. This has become apparent from the Department's assertion that it is quite likely that for the near future, the Central Secretariat will continue to go for staggered attendance and variable working hours to maintain social distancing at workplace.

Accordingly, a new set of standard operating procedures has been finalized for the employees to ensure smooth functioning of the Government. While such procedures might seem appropriate as long as the pandemic last, it remains moot whether the 'work from home' strategy can be retained once 'normalcy' returns. One must bear in mind that the world had seen pandemics in the past which had appeared to be game changers in the way society functioned, yet life had ultimately returned to normal and the usual path of development and change had been taken. For one thing, the 'work from home' strategy is highly limited, with work that requires physical presence being as intrinsic to economic well-being as paperwork done in offices or through the internet. For another, it has been noticed that due to a number of factors, such as lack of monitoring or the boost provided by office environment, productivity is reduced when employees work from home. Moreover, it has also been seen that prolonged work from home can induce psychological problems amongst employees and lead to mental issues such as depression. Thus it is doubtful whether once the pandemic is over, as it most certainly would sooner or later, work from home would remain the 'new normal', as some prophets are foretelling! Man is essentially a social animal and the traits associated with this would no doubt return once the pandemic ceases to be a threat.

Agri anomalies

Large-scale anomalies over the list of beneficiaries in the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme in Assam has compelled the State Government to institute an inquiry into the matter and go for hundred per cent re-verification of beneficiaries. The developments are all the more unfortunate, given the stalemate that had hit the State's agri sector in the wake of the Covid-19-induced prolonged lockdown. The alleged anomalies widely reported in the media go to show how even some basic things like selection of beneficiaries under a Centrally-sponsored project get embroiled in irregularities due to the presence of unscrupulous elements in the departments. One may recall that the re-verification of beneficiaries for the scheme had started in the State from November last year as per direction of the Centre. Initially the Centre had directed the State to carry out 5% re-verification of the total beneficiaries in each State, but the magnitude of the reported irregularities – with seven lakh fraudulent names already detected – has forced the State Government to cover cent per cent beneficiaries under the drive. This is not the first time that selection of beneficiaries has come under a cloud in the State; rather, cutting across departments, this has been a conspicuous trend for years. Often, it is the undeserving supporters of the ruling party that get the dominant share of the benefits to the deprivation of genuine beneficiaries. As reported in the media, a large number of names, including family members of government officials and political leaders, were accommodated in the beneficiary list. Be that as it may, the authorities must now do the needful to get to the roots of the anomalies and fix responsibility on the guilty.

Given that agriculture plays a key role in the State's economy and a large segment of the populace is engaged with agriculture and allied activities, post-lockdown, the well-being of the sector will have a definite bearing on the general economy of the State. The current situation warrants the Government, the Agriculture Department in particular, to come up with a pragmatic and innovative approach to ensure that the farming sector quickly overcome the damage suffered during the shutdown. The State's farming community needs a lot of interventions in the form of technology, market linkage, institutional finance, etc., where the Government has to play a major role. A vast segment of the agriculturalists are small and marginal farmers and they have remained distanced from such interventions for years. The reasons behind this sorry state of affairs are not hard to fathom. The anomalies in the selection of beneficiaries itself is a glaring example where the fault-line lies. In view of agriculture's role in our rural economy, a holistic approach through convergence of a number of departments such as Agriculture, Veterinary, Fishery, Irrigation, etc., can be an ideal way to facilitate integrated and sustainable development.

Too many cooks...

PLAIN-SPEAK
Arup Kumar Dutta

Following the novel coronavirus outbreak, designated as the Covid-19 pandemic, almost everyone around me, known or unknown, have become doctors – experts on what this affliction is and how it can be combated! I, and I am certain many others, are constantly being bombarded with 'information' on what I should do to avoid being infected, and what the consequences would be if I do not.

This 'information' comes every day from a hundred and one directions – for instance, from 'daily briefings' of politicians, faithfully transmitted by the idiot box, print media and the internet, though they have to offer very little by way of enlightenment. By now it has been well established that, till the time an effective drug to fight the virus, or a vaccine to inoculate individuals against it, is discovered, the sole recourse of humanity is to maintain social distance from one another and stay at home as much as possible.

Yet politicians continue to spout their pearls of wisdom either every day, or sporadically, calling upon their 'brothers and sisters' to observe the by now unforgettable mantras of 'self-quarantine', 'stay at home' and 'social distancing', even as they urge the populace to show from time to time their resounding gratitude to the 'Covid warriors' at the frontline of the battle. They also utilize these briefings to publicize the indefatigable manner in which they are engaged in 'serving the people', while juggling figures to show that they are pouring in huge amounts from the exchequer to financially help those who are in economic distress due to the pandemic.

Such briefings also occasionally expose the asinine character of most politicians. For instance, it helps to reveal the idiocy of US President Donald Trump when he suggests that since surface cleaning disinfectants are effective against viruses, perhaps these can be injected into infected patients to cure them!

A great deal of 'information' comes from 'briefings' by bureaucrats too, which are invariably designed to bolster the 'information' provided by the politicians. For instance, government spokespersons

assert that the number of positive Covid-19 cases in India were stabilizing and that the lockdown has successfully 'flattened the curve', and that India was nowhere close to the kind of escalation of coronavirus cases that it witnessed during the pre-lockdown phase. Yet, contradicting such assertions, non-government agencies simultaneously assert that India continues to show a rising trajectory and that the affliction would peak somewhere between June and July!

Of course, a plethora of 'experts' on TV channels, both national and regional, day in and day out, also spout forth their 'information' and advice. Truth to tell, I am not an aficionado of the electronic media, preferring to get my 'information' from the print media, and thus rarely depend on the idiot box for illumination. But, ever since the pandemic sneaked into India and to the Northeast, I have perforce had to turn on TV news channels every now and again.

This invariably takes me back to the time when India had only one channel, Doordarshan. No matter that the solitary channel purveyed the point of view of the State, yet, if

you sifted through the propaganda, you could at least get some inkling of the news of the day. But today the welter of channels appear to be merely platforms for 'experts' to indulge in glaring matches, with apparently viewer ratings dependent on how loud a channel is. Believe me, those divergent viewpoint-wielders yelling at each other can hardly shed much light on the developments related to Covid-19, though everyone in the all too many panels are ostensible experts on the subject.

Moreover, a bulk of the 'informa-

Believe me, those divergent viewpoint-wielders yelling at each other can hardly shed much light on the developments related to Covid-19, though everyone in the all too many panels are ostensible experts on the subject.

tion' directed at me comes from the so-called social media, which to my mind is actually antisocial media. Although I do not subscribe to most of the platforms, confining myself for unavoidable reasons only to WhatsApp and WeChat, my phone becomes cluttered every day with a myriad of 'forwards'. No doubt many of these do not have any relation to Covid-19 and some of them are brilliantly witty, yet ever since the pandemic broke out, a majority of current postings are on the virus. The 'information' provided is of very little help to me in getting better acquainted with this unseen killer, more often than not serving as outlandish diversions.

Let me just give a solitary example from the hundreds I have re-

ceived. The author of that particular post advises that I perform every action, like turning a doorknob or pushing the switch on a lift, with the wrong hand, the inference being that if the virus is present on any of those items, it will transfer to that hand. The author assumes that I would be using my right (or left for southpaws) hand for unwittingly scratching my nose or touching my mouth, thus the suggestion of using the wrong hand!

There is a saying, 'too many cooks spoil the broth,' which appears to exactly describe the predicament of individuals like me. The implication of this saying is that too many suggestions, coming from different directions is apt to create confusion, thereby having an adverse impact on the outcome. To say that, at this precise moment, I am confused about many aspects of Covid-19 despite being exposed to so much information would be an understatement.

I will give a solitary example of just one confusing aspect of the Covid-19 pandemic. It has become obvious by now that humanity's salvation as far as combating Covid-19 is concerned will be our ability to find a vaccine or a drug as quickly as possible. But different sources yield different time frames as well as methodology as to how this will be attained.

For instance, scientists at the Jenner Institute of Oxford University claimed sometime back that they will be able to come up with a vaccine, designated as ChAdOx1, for the coronavirus by September this year. In fact, so confident were they that the tests on humans being now conducted with the vaccine will yield positive results that they have already

given the go ahead for its commercial production so that millions of doses are available by then.

But, to throw cold water on the hope this announcement had roused, no less a person than Bill Gates, whose foundation is funding a number of Covid-19 vaccine research concepts, has asserted that the Jenner vaccine is unlikely to work, and a viable vaccine is still at least 12 to 18 months away!

As for the methodology, we are being informed that tests are being conducted by Indian Council of Medical Research, dubbed as Project Placid – Phase II Open Label Randomized Controlled Trial, to assess the safety and efficacy of convalescent plasma. Yet another source informs us that at least two different sets of research are being conducted in Israel and the Netherlands, which have shown that antibodies could play a vital role in curtailing the spread of Covid-19. Israel Institute of Biological Research (IIBR) has claimed that it has successfully isolated one such antibody that prevents the viral infection from spreading by attacking and neutralizing the virus inside the carrier.

Also, by now different sources are advocating the use of different drugs to combat the virus. While some experts in the US are placing their bets on an anti-malaria drug called hydroxychloroquine, in other places sepsivac, a drug to treat leprosy, HIV drugs such as lopinavir and ritonavir, and other different drugs such as Favilavir, Remesdivir are being tried out by doctors desperately clutching at straws.

Yes, too many cooks are spoiling the coronavirus broth! And, I suspect, I am not the only one who is totally befuddled for, because the Covid-19 so far has proved to be so unpredictable, the entire scientific and medical community is as bewildered as I am!

Covid-19 outbreak and e-learning trends

■ Banasmita Sarma

At present, the whole world is facing the serious repercussions created by the outbreak of Covid-19. This pandemic has spread very fast covering a wide range of geographical areas across the world. Within a very short period of time the disease has become a worldwide problem. Movement of people has been largely restricted by the governments as it has been considered very important to counter the threat. It is obvious that it has ravaged the economy of the whole world. Every sector is suffering from serious adverse impacts. The education sector is also facing tremendous challenges during this time.

E-learning is not a new word. Students as well as teachers of this digital era are pretty much aware of the term and its uses. But the sudden outbreak of this trouble has forced people to reap the benefits of e-learning as much as they can. Because of the lockdown, the students and educational institutions found themselves in a quandary. But now it has been seen that they are increasingly opting for digital

learning. Not only for higher studies but it is proved to be beneficial also for the school students. It has been seen that even in primary schools, lessons are being imparted through online learning systems using WhatsApp or other such applications. But here the questions come: Is it possible for schools and educational institutions of remote areas or villages to use e-learning methods in an effective manner? What about the proper network and internet access facilities in those areas? How will the students of those educational institutions be able to adapt to such methods? How far the online learning system is going to be useful for those sections of our society?

This needs to be questioned while most of us talk about an egalitarian society. It is true that only a few numbers of private schools as well as colleges and some institutes have tried to offer online learning facilities and they are still giving it to their students. But several other low-income schools and colleges, including both government and private, have completely closed it for not having proper access to internet facilities. Another bitter

truth is that several students are also deprived of their daily meals which they used to have during regular days at school. They are no doubt subject to both economic and social stress. However, it needs to be mentioned here that keeping in mind the increasing demand, various online learning platforms have even offered free access to their services and libraries, etc. These steps have helped the students to be in an advantageous position by bridging the gap. Some modes of e-learning include webinars, virtual classrooms, video-based learning, collaborative learning, mobile learning, etc.

Learning is a cognitive process. Cognition is the process of acquiring knowledge. For learning, the dissemination of knowledge is of utmost importance. During this pandemic situation, it has become important for all to disseminate information so that we can help each other to stay abreast. Undoubtedly, online learning systems can serve the purpose very well. Therefore, it is high time that we should try to explore it as much as we can. Online learning also has some other benefits too. It is not restricted to a particular environment. Students can have access to

it from anywhere they want. Apart from that, they can indulge themselves in learning at any time they want. There are no such time-bound, restricted and formal environments which are very much essential in schools and colleges. Sometimes it can be expected that such benefits can help in accelerating the learning process.

Some people believe that a sudden and rapid change to online learning has both negative and positive impacts. As because it is unplanned and ad hoc in nature, students as well as teachers are sometimes not very well trained in this regard which can directly affect the learning process. Without proper training and proper access to technology, online learning and teaching may not always prove to be very user-friendly. Moreover, it cannot be denied that face-to-face learning is very much effective and interactive. Face-to-face learning or teaching needs proper planning while online learning most of the times becomes a one-way interaction. The fact is that a number of people are already very familiar with this e-learning process while others are not. At this current phase, it seems that it is enforced upon the stu-

dents, as no other option is easily available. It has its own constraints. It does not take into account the issues like charismatic influences of the teacher or his/her teaching methods and styles which are often very crucial in the traditional learning pattern. Some students may not be able to cope up with this new mode and may not be very familiar with the technological options as well. But in spite of having some limitations in such tough times, e-learning has proved to be a futuristic kind of challenge for all and gaining importance every day. It has made learning a seamless process by integrating various needs and desires of students.

Due to the outbreak of Covid-19, governments are forced to suspend the schools, colleges and classroom teaching to counter the threat. At this present state of affairs, e-learning is trying to fill the gap as quickly as possible. In fact the whole education system is trying to form a common platform so that the students do not suffer during this crisis situation. It can be predicted that this online teaching-learning system will definitely continue after the improvement of such daunting conditions for the human race.

Letters to the EDITOR

Sir, – Amid the lockdown period, the use of online video conferencing apps has increased manifold. People are using the video conferencing apps both for official and unofficial works. Among these kinds of apps, Zoom app is getting huge popularity due to its interesting features and easy handling. But, nearly a month ago, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India, warned the Zoom app users that the video conferencing app is not a safe platform. This app has some security loopholes which make the users vulnerable to cyber-attack including leakage of sensitive information of the users. Along with the warning, the MHA also issued some advisory guidelines for the Zoom app users to be followed for having safe and secure access through the app. Many other countries have also expressed

Security threats on Zoom app

concern over the security of the application and some countries have even banned the application. In recent days, many cases of Zoom app hacking and data leakage through the app have already been reported. Even then, many Zoom app users are not much aware of the advisory guidelines and irresponsibly using the app without following proper online security measures. Hence, it is time for every Zoom app users to act responsibly and follow all the online security measures so that no user of the app becomes victim of any cyber-attack or data leakage. Yours etc., PHANINDRA BARMAN, Sandheli, Nalbari.

Lurking threat

Sir, – After the relaxation of lockdown, various public and private institutions have started working in the State, maintaining the norms of social distancing and health hygiene. The Gauhati High Court, State secretariat, banks, insurance companies, etc., are seen functioning with limited number of lawyers and officials. In normal situation, a good number

of people coming from different places through all the courts besides the presence of judges, lawyers and other office staff. The State secretariat, Deputy Commissioners' offices, district transport offices, supply offices, etc., are also visited by a large number people in normal situation. Today after the relaxation of lockdown, besides a percentage of officials, junior staff, government and other lawyers, the top authorities of the institutions are required to move to their courts and offices. Lately, the State Health Minister cautioned the residents of Guwahati city about the lurking threat of the coronavirus. Considering the gravity of the situation, the minister has asked the city residents to remain inside their house unless necessary. Now, all the institutional heads in the capital city are duty-bound to think over the matter seriously for the well-being of all those visiting the institutions. Yours etc., PRASANTA KUMAR BARMAN, Rehabari, Guwahati.

Corona warriors

Sir, – The ongoing annihilation by the novel coronavirus has become intractable day by day. It is evident from the fact that till today nearly 45,60,000 people have been affected and more than three lakh deaths have been recorded so far and still counting. At this hour of crisis, the doctors, nurses and the police have taken the front seat to fight the battle against this pandemic. The media, IT professionals, the employees related to essential services are also proved themselves to be the corona warriors. But we also cannot forget the role of our cleaners who are actually putting their life at high risk so that the general public should be saved from coming into direct contact with the virus. We should be grateful to them, they are there where we the normal people hesitate to go. They are working day and night so that our life is out of any hazard. Therefore, through the columns of your esteemed daily, I would like to appeal to the authority concerned to take

utmost care of these people and take necessary measures for their safety as much as possible. Yours etc., JILMIL BORDOLOI, Guwahati.

Use of mask

Sir, – Through your esteemed newspaper, I want to raise the issue of not complying with the State Government directive of mandatory use of mask while venturing out in public. It has been observed that many people still go out in public without wearing masks or face covers. Especially the labourers who are working at the roadside construction sites like flyover construction and road divider construction are the serial offenders. I urge the police and civil administration to penalize the contractors of these sites with a fine of Rs 500 per offender, so that they are bound to keep a strict vigil over the issue. Yours etc., ARUP SAIKIA, Bhagaduttapur, Guwahati.

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

Allahabad Bank branch sealed, staff quarantined

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 15: The Machkhowa branch of Allahabad Bank in Guwahati has been sealed and its staff quarantined after it emerged that some of the COVID-19 patients detected in Fancy Bazar had visited the financial institution for transaction.

"Some COVID-19 positive patients have recently transacted money at Allahabad Bank, Machkhowa Branch. Hence, in the interest of maintenance of public hygiene and to prevent further spread of COVID-19 virus, all kinds of transactions as well as administrative functions of the bank is hereby prohibited with immediate effect," an administration order said.

The branch head has been asked to suspend all kinds of activities immedi-

ately and the officials of the branch will be home quarantined till their swab test reports are done. Samples are being



The Allahabad Bank Machkhowa Branch that was sealed. - UB Photos

collected from all the bank officials.

Sixteen persons had tested COVID-19 positive in and around Fancy Bazar. Swab samples of around 390 of their contacts were taken and sent for tests at

RMRC Lahowal. The results are likely to be known by tonight or tomorrow.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the Gauhati Medical College & Hospital (GMCH) will resume its normal functioning from tomorrow.

"I visited GMCH to discuss the reopening from tomorrow. We've taken 2,200 samples of doctors, nurses, staff and people in surrounding areas and all have tested negative. In view of this, we're resuming operations. The surrounding containment zone has been freed," Sarma said.

The Regional Dental College Hostel remains as containment zone as the results of the second test of the boarders are yet to arrive. On the other hand, one more COVID-19 patient, after testing negative successively, has been discharged from SMCH today taking the total number of recovered patients to 41.

Cong seeks help for Assam youths stranded in TN

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 15: Leader of the Opposition in the Assam Legislative Assembly Debabrata Saikia today called upon the Tamil Nadu government to provide assistance to some youths belonging to Assam who are currently stranded in the southern state.

In a letter to Special Nodal Officer of the Greater Chennai Corporation, Saikia stated that some workers, hailing from Assam, are stuck in Chennai.

"I have received telephonic request from some youths of Assam that they have come to Assam House, Chennai, anticipating Shramik Special train to be arranged by the government. However, they are (sic) informed that no such provision of Shramik Special train or any other train has been planned by Tamil Nadu government or Assam government. The stranded youths are in (a) catch-22 situation and many of them are camping at Assam House, Chennai, after Chennai Police allowed

them to be at that place," Saikia stated.

He added, "As the space at Assam House, Chennai, is limited, the local police directed some of the youths to Guru Nanak College/Institute who are staying there. They have now complained that they do not have enough food, etc., for all the people in both the places. As such, I request you kindly to provide relief, shelter and other necessary items for these stranded youths, as per Government of India's guideline, till they can be transported back to Assam. Further, I would request you to assist for their transportation to Assam, whenever the train service is provided from Chennai, Tamil Nadu, to Assam."

Saikia has urged the Tamil Nadu administration to take up the matter on a priority basis.

He has also sent copies of the letter to the Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu, the Chief Secretary of Assam, the District Collector of Chennai and the Commissioner of Police of Greater Chennai area.

WEATHER GUWAHATI

LOCAL FORECAST:
Partly cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain/thundershowers. Maximum and minimum temperatures are most likely to be 31°C & 21°C respectively on Saturday.

TEMPERATURE:
Max 30.2°C
Min 21.7°C

NDRF conducts sanitization, feeds people

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 15: Rescuers of 1st Battalion, NDRF Guwahati, today carried out a sanitization drive at the BSNL office here and the office of the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India, Guwahati.

The teams sprayed out disinfectants consisting of sodium hypochlorite.

As part of its disaster mitigation measures, the NDRF is conducting a number of sanitization drives in several parts of the State.

Rescuers of 1st battalion of NDRF also distributed food to more than 350 needy people in Borgaon and Niz Sundry Ghopa at Changsari in Kamrup district. The rescuers distributed food to the people in collaboration of Amrit Bhog Bhandara, Guwahati.

During the programme, the rescuers explained the importance of social distancing, hand washing, sanitizer use and adherence to lockdown norms.

HOUSEFED donates Rs 5L to CM's fund

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 15: HOUSEFED Chairman Ranjit Dass today handed over a cheque of Rs 5 lakh to Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal as HOUSEFED's contribution to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund for its fight against the coronavirus. Managing Director of HOUSEFED DJ Borkotoki was also present on the occasion, an official release said.

Appeal to elderly persons on COVID

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 15: President of Guwahati Senior Citizens' Association (GSCA) DN Chakravarty has appealed to all the elderly persons of Assam to observe all the rules as enunciated by the Prime Minister to remain free from the scourge of the coronavirus.

He said it would be advisable for all the elderly citizens to remain confined to their homes till the pandemic is over.

Gogoi for lockdown withdrawal except in hot spots

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 15: Former Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi is in favour of withdrawal of the nationwide lockdown post-May 17, except in the "hot spots". "I am in favour of withdrawing lockdown after completion of the third phase on May 17, except in hot spot areas, in strict compliance with prescribed guidelines. Most of the countries in the world are lifting lockdown," he said.

He said though a month and a half have passed since the nationwide lockdown was imposed, the number of COVID-19 positive cases and the number of deaths have gone up in the country. Gogoi, however, admitted that the recovery rate of COVID-19 positive cases in India is better as compared to advanced countries and the fatality rate here is also lower.

"At the same time, because of the

lockdown millions of people lost their jobs and livelihoods and became poor. It has become extremely difficult for them to meet their need of two square meals a day," he said. He cited data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) and alleged that 110 million jobs had been lost across the country during the month of April.

"It is really disheartening to see lakhs of migrant labourers from different parts of the country walking hundreds of miles with luggage on their back and head with children in their arms. A few days back a goods train ran over 17 tired labourers who were sleeping on the railway track at Aurangabad. It is really shameful for the country which is supposed to be one of the economic superpowers as Prime Minister Modi used to say," Gogoi said.

He accused the Centre of failing to draw a proper roadmap regarding the

problems faced by the masses at this time of crisis. "Now questions have been raised as to whether the lockdown is going to do more harm than good. While the Modi government could waive off the loans of defaulters to the tune of Rs 68,000 crore, it cannot spend even Rs 500 for each labourer and cannot provide free train journeys for the needy people to their respective states," Gogoi rued.

He said that protecting livelihood of people is as important as protecting lives. "We have to live with coronavirus as we have been living with floods, TB and other dangerous diseases. The role of the government has led to economic bankruptcy whereby millions of people are losing jobs and livelihoods," Gogoi said, adding that daily wage earners, small traders and self-employed people have been among the worst suffer-

ers during the current lockdown.

"The State government is blindly following the directions of the Government of India even though the situation is quite different in Assam. That is why our demand has been that the states should be taken into confidence by Government of India," Gogoi said, calling for decentralisation of decision making to the grassroots level to tackle COVID-19 and the lockdown's economic implications.

"The government has not yet started the survey to find out details regarding the losses suffered by each individual or group which is very necessary to provide financial help for survival of those people. Though the government has been engaging in discussions with various groups, we do not know which of the suggestions have been accepted and how those will be implemented. Mere discussion is meaningless if follow-up action is not taken up," Gogoi said.

Drive for online info on COVID for PwDs

MAMATA MISHRA

GUWAHATI, May 15: At a time when access to information is most crucial to fight and survive the crisis triggered by COVID-19, the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Assam has launched a drive to develop online resources for differently able persons.

With a multi-pronged approach, the Office of the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities has started its own YouTube channel for providing COVID-19-related information, notifications and standard operating procedures (SOPs) in sign language.

Information on the pandemic is also being printed in Braille for visually challenged persons.

It is also supporting the Guwahati Blind School and the BDS Government School for Hearing Impairment in creating their audio lessons and sign language-based video lessons for their students, so that academic activities are re-

sumed amid the lockdown.

The academic content created by the teachers of both the schools is also being uploaded on two separate YouTube channels for the benefit of other such students across the State.

Kausar Hilaly, State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities told *The Assam*

missioner for persons with disability, Assam'. It will be a resource centre for information of various kinds for the differently able persons. At present, we have uploaded videos of the standard operating procedure, do's and don'ts during COVID situation, health department guidelines, lockdown instructions, etc," he said.

"Moreover, to address the education-related issues, we are creating a resource library separately for the visually challenged and the hearing impaired. All teachers have been asked to

make video and audio lessons for online classes. The lessons will be a permanent resource at our hands that can be accessed any time from any place. We plan to continue this exercise in future as well," Hilaly said.

Students can access the online content on two channels, Guwahati Blind High School' and 'BDS Govt School for HI Guwahati Official'.



A screenshot of the online content.

Man wearing six PPE kits raises safety concerns

CITY CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI, May 15: A mentally challenged man was seen roaming on the road wearing six personal protective equipment (PPE) in Lokhra area on Thursday night. The incident has created much concern about public safety.

Some people claimed that the man had collected the PPE kits from a dustbin. The video of the incident went viral on social media immediately.

A source at Basistha Police Station said the unidentified person collected around six PPE kits from a dustbin. "But we are not sure whether these were used PPE kits or not. A team of health officials reached the spot after being informed. The person was taken to hospital and is under observation of the health authorities."

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup (Metro) Biswajit Pegu said an inquiry would be initiated into the incident as waste related to COVID-19 needs to be disposed following a laid-down protocol.

An official in the Pollution Control Board, Assam said the Common Biomedical Waste Treatment Facility (CBWTF) of Fresh Air

at Panikhaiti collects all COVID-related waste from the hospitals of the city. However, according to guidelines the PPE kits should be disposed of (buried) by the hospitals at a proper place.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board, there should be separate colour-coded containers in wards for proper segregation of waste as per biomedical waste management rules.

As a precaution, double-layered bags (using two bags) should be used for collection of waste from COVID-19 isolation wards for adequate strength and to ensure there is no leakage.

There is also a dedicated collection bin labelled "COVID-19" to store COVID-19 waste which is kept separately in a temporary storage room prior to being handed over to authorised staff of CBWTF.

In addition to mandatory labelling, bags/containers used for collecting biomedical waste from COVID-19 wards, should be labelled "COVID-19 Waste". This marking would enable CBWTFs to identify the waste easily for priority treatment and disposal immediately upon its receipt.

Shramik Special train with 1,400 people reaches Guwahati

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 15: A Shramik Special train from Chennai reached the Guwahati Railway Station this evening.

Around 1,400 persons from Assam and Meghalaya, who were stranded in south India, arrived by the train, officials said. Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma was at the station to receive the passengers and oversee the arrangements.

The passengers were later taken for screening and quarantine, as per the government's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

Officials and health teams from Meghalaya were also there to make arrangement for taking the passengers from that state to their respective destinations.

Meanwhile, another Shramik Special train, originating in Coimbatore, will reach Guwahati tomorrow afternoon, sources added.

Sanitizers, gloves, masks distributed

CITY CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI, May 15: The Panjabari Nabajyoti Yubak Sangha distributed hand sanitizers, gloves and masks to street vendors, shopkeepers and rikshaw-pullers of the city with the help of its members and Satgoan police today.

Cotton student body plea to VC

CITY CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI, May 15: The Cotton University Students' Union on Friday sent a memorandum to the Vice Chancellor of the university regarding online classes and examinations.

The students appealed to the Vice Chancellor that formal classes should be held for two months before commencement of any examination as several students are not being able to benefit from the online system of learning.

Draft Electricity Amendment Bill, 2020 strongly opposed

GUWAHATI, May 15: The Coordination Committee of Electricity Employees, Engineers and Pensioners (CCOEEE&P), a joint forum of the Assam State Electricity Board (ASEB) employees, engineers and pensioners, has vehemently opposed the draft Electricity Amendment Bill, 2020.

The committee has also submitted a memorandum to Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal urging him to oppose the draft Bill as it goes against the interest of the country's people.

The committee said in a statement here today that it would fight the draft Bill tooth and nail.

It needs mention that the Union Ministry of Power

(MoP) notified the draft Bill on April 17, 2020, initially giving the stakeholders only 21 days' time to submit their comments, objections etc, on it. But the Union Ministry had to extend the time for the purpose, till June 5, 2020.

The committee has alleged that the draft Bill was notified 'unethically' taking advantage of the countrywide lockdown. The MoP has for long been trying to amend the Electricity Act, 2003. But its attempts at amending this piece of legislation have been facing stiff resistance from the National Coordination Committee of Electricity Employees and Engineers (NCCOEEE) and most of the state governments have also been vetoing such attempts.

The Bill mainly aims at pri-

vatizing the state-run power distribution companies (DISCOMs) and abolishing the cross-subsidy system. This will result in hike in power tariff, making power consumption unaffordable for the low and lower income group consumers. Besides, the draft Bill has sought to create an Electricity Contract Enforcement Authority with the design to dilute the powers of the state and Central electricity authorities.

On top of all the proposals, the draft Bill has sought to curtail the powers of the state governments, going against the very essence of the Indian Constitution, said the committee.

The committee has appealed to the people of the State to resist the draft Bill in the greater interest of the country.

Major reshuffle in police dept

CITY CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI, May 15: In a major reshuffle, the State government has posted Rosie Kalita as Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime), Guwahati, in place of Jayant Singh who has been transferred and posted as Superintendent of Police, Dima Hasao.

Meanwhile, Sumeet Sharma, Superintendent of Police, (Vigilance & Anti Corruption-1), Guwahati, is allowed to hold the additional charge of Superintendent of Police, (Chief Minister's Special Vigilance Cell), Guwahati, in addition to his existing duties and until further orders. Rosie Kalita was holding this post prior to being posted as DC, Police (Crime), Guwahati.

Bir Bikram Gogoi, who was the Superintendent of Police of Dima Hasao, has been transferred and posted as Commandant, 23rd AP (IR) Battalion, Karbi Anglong, with effect from the date of taking over charge against an existing vacancy.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (HQ), Dima Hasao, Surya Kanta Morang, has been transferred and posted as Deputy Superintendent of Police, 21st AP (IR) Bn, Katlichera, Hailakandi, with effect from the date of assuming charge against an existing vacancy.

Borkiri Terang, Assistant Commandant, 2nd APBn, Makum, has also been transferred and posted as Deputy Superintendent of Police, (HQ), Dima Hasao.



NO COWING DOWN: A cow walks past security personnel on duty in a containment zone, in Guwahati on Friday. - UB Photos

Aaranyak, Legal Services Authority provide face masks for use at Zoo

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 15: Aaranyak today joined hands with the Assam State Legal Services Authority (ASLSA) to provide 500 cotton homemade masks for use at the Assam State Zoo by its team members.

A brief ceremony was held in this connection at the Zoo through video conferencing this morning, which was attended by the Executive Chairman of ASLSA, Justice N Kotiswar Singh of the Gauhati High Court.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown before us a new world and new challenges and

we have to face it with new ideas," said Justice Singh.

"The time is very difficult. However, we have to discharge our responsibility and continue with our designated activities in spite of the difficulties posed by the unprecedented challenge of the global pandemic," he further said.

Nayan Sankar Barua, Member Secretary of ASLSA, Mitali Thakuria, District & Sessions Judge of Kamrup, and Dr Bibhab Talukdar, CEO of Aaranyak, handed over the masks to Tejas Mariswamy, Divisional Forest Officer and Dr Sankar Sarma, Forest Veterinary Officer posted at the Assam State Zoo.

The event was also attended by Additional District Judge Millikan Dutta, Deputy Secretary of ASLSA Tripti Arie and Under Secretary Ayushree Shrivastava, Manas Bhat-tacharya, Manager of Legal & Advocacy Division of Aaranyak and Jayanta Pathak, Manager, Environmental Education and Capacity Building Division of Aaranyak.

The ASLSA officials wanted to know the kind of legal challenges that zoo officials or wildlife officials face while exercising their duties.

They pledged cooperation with the Assam State Zoo and wildlife officials in this regard.

No. FAAMCH/PRGR/1584/2020/914

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tenders affixing non-refundable court fee stamp of Rs. 8.25/- (Rupees Eight and Twenty five paisa) only from the reputed & experienced Manufacturer/Authorized Stockiest/Distributors or Authorized Dealers/Sub-Dealers are invited for supply of **PROTECTIVE GEAR ITEMS** at F.A.A. Medical College Hospital, Barpeta.

The tender documents containing detailed information/terms and conditions for the purpose can be obtained from the Office of the Superintendent, from **15.05.2020 to 03.06.2020 between 11 AM to 3 PM** with non-refundable payment of Rs. 1,000/-. The tender documents are non-transferable.

The last date and time of submission of tender is 4th June, 2020 upto 12:30 PM. and the tender will be opened on the same day at 1.30 PM in presence of the intending suppliers or their authorized representatives. The tenders are to be submitted in the office of the Superintendent, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed Medical College Hospital, Barpeta on all the working days during office hours.

Sd/- Superintendent

F.A.A. Medical College Hospital Barpeta, Assam
Janasanyog/CF/494/20

No. FAAMCH/ICMR/Pathology (Project)/563/2019

ADVERTISEMENT

Interested and eligible candidates may walk-in for interview/written test for the temporary post under extramural projects sponsored by ICMR in Department of Pathology. FAA Medical College & Hospital, Barpeta

Name of the project: (1) A PROSPECTIVE-ANALYTICAL STUDY ON THE ALTERATION OF IMMUNOCYTOLOGICAL AND IMMUNOMODULATORY FACTORS DURING ACTIVE AND REMISSION PHASE OF PSORIATIC PATIENTS AND THEIR CORRELATION WITH DISEASE SEVERITY AND CLINICAL OUTCOME: A HOSPITAL BASED STUDY

Posts: Laboratory Technician (1 No.)

Essential Qualification: 12th pass in Science Subjects with 2 years Diploma in DMLT

OR

12th pass in Science Subjects with 1 year DMLT and 1 year required experience in a recognized institution/organization

Salary: Rs. 18000/- per month (consolidated)

Age: Below 35 years

Applicants may walk in for the interview on 20.05.2020 in the Conference Hall College Building at FAA Medical College & Hospital at 10:00 AM with bio-data and supporting documents in originals. No TA/DA will be paid for attending interview.

For details and any changes in the interview date please visit our website: www.faacassam.co.in.

Terms and Conditions:

- The posts are purely temporary and co-terminable with the project. The Govt. of India/ FAA Medical College & Hospital, will not take any guarantee for/will not be responsible for any confirmation / regularization of the posts in future.
- Age relaxation is admissible in respect of SC/ST/OBC candidates, Retrenched Govt. Employees, Departmental Candidates (including projects) and Ex-servicemen in accordance with the instructions issued by the Central Govt. from time to time. Age concession to the extent of service rendered in other research projects will also be admissible for experienced and skilled persons. OBC candidates will have to produce "Non Creamy Layer" Certificate.
- Candidates must possess the essential qualification as mentioned in the advertisement on the day of the interview/written test.
- Candidates should come with up-to-date bio-data, 2 copies of recent passport size coloured photograph and self-attested photocopies of certificates in support of age, educational qualifications, caste and experience along with the original documents.
- The applicants must provide a valid Email ID and Contact Number.
- Candidates must reach the Center and register themselves before 10.00 AM.
- The candidate will have to stay and work in any other places of North East India wherever posted/transferred in connection with the scheme/project work as deemed necessary.
- No TA/DA etc. will be provided for attending the interview.
- The decision of selection committee will be final in all regard. Canvassing in any form or bringing political or other outside influence with regard to selection/recruitment shall liable for disqualification.
- The result of the interview will be uploaded in the office website www.faacassam.co.in

Sd/- Principal-cum-Chief Superintendent
Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed Medical College & Hospital,
Barpeta

Janasanyog/D/575/20

No. FAAMCH/ICMR/Physiology (Project)/564/2019

ADVERTISEMENT

Interested and eligible candidates may walk-in for interview/written test for the temporary post under extramural projects sponsored by ICMR in Department of Physiology. FAA Medical College & Hospital, Barpeta.

Name of the project: (A STUDY TO EVALUATE IMPACT OF AMBIENT AIR POLLUTION ON THE RESPIRATORY HEALTH OF SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN IN BARPETA DISTRICT, ASSAM, INDIA.

Posts: Laboratory Technician (1 No.)

Essential Qualification: 12th pass in Science Subjects with 2 years Diploma in DMLT

OR

12th pass in Science Subjects with 1 year DMLT and 1 year required experience in a recognized institution/organization

Salary: Rs. 18000/- per month (consolidated)

Age: Below 35 years

Applicants may walk in for the interview on 20.05.2020 in the Conference Hall College Building at FAA Medical College & Hospital at 10:00 AM with bio-data and supporting documents in originals. No TA/DA will be paid for attending interview.

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Sd/- Principal-cum-Chief Superintendent
Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed Medical College & Hospital,
Barpeta

Janasanyog/D/587/20

'Local epidemiology should guide action in new normal situation'

NEW DELHI, May 15: As COVID-19 cases continue to rise in South-East Asia, the WHO today cautioned countries in the region to take "evidence-informed action" and conduct careful assessment of the local epidemiology before winding down the health and social measures taken to combat the virus.

The region has nearly 1,22,000 cases and 4,000 deaths due to COVID-19. In India, the death toll rose to 2,649 and the number of cases climbed to 81,970, according to latest data.

Countries in the region are in various transmission scenarios and the cases are increasing. In every transmission scenario, the core public health measures remain rapidly detect, test, isolate, care and trace contacts, said Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director of WHO South-East Asia.

Singh said moving forward "we need to scale up these measures". She said the focus should be on the local epidemiology of COVID-19, to identify hot-spots and clusters, and the capacity of systems and responders to find, isolate and care for cases, and quarantine contacts.

"Countries in the region must continue to take evidence-informed action and conduct careful risk assessments while winding back public health and social measures," the WHO regional director said. In the coming period, all efforts should be made to control and suppress spread of COVID-19, she said.

The regional director, who held a virtual briefing with health officials of the 11 member-countries for the forthcoming virtual 73rd World Health Assembly session, said despite the region being the first to get an importation of COVID-19 on January 13 in Thailand, early and aggressive measures have helped keep the number of cases low as compared to other parts of the world. - PTI



Migrants on a cargo vehicle on the Mumbai-Nashik highway on way to their native places, during the lockdown to break the chain of transmission of the virus, in Thane on Friday. - PTI

Can't stop or monitor movement of migrant workers on roads: SC

NEW DELHI, May 15: The Supreme Court today said it is impossible for courts to monitor or stop the movement of migrant workers across the country and it is for the government to take necessary action in this regard.

The Centre told the top court that migrant workers across the country were being provided transportation by the government to their destinations, but they have to wait for their turn rather than start walking on foot amid the coronavirus pandemic.

A bench headed by Justice L. Nageswara Rao refused to entertain an application seeking a direction to the Centre to ask all district magistrates to identify stranded migrant workers and provide shelter and food to them before ensuring their free transportation

to native places in view of the recent incident at Aurangabad in which 16 workers were mowed down by a goods train.

The bench, which also comprised Justices SK Kaul and BR Gavai, asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta whether there was any way to stop these migrants workers from walking on the roads.

Mehta said states are providing inter-state transport to the migrant workers, but if the people start walking on foot instead of waiting for transportation, then nothing can be done.

He said authorities can only request these people not to start walking on foot as using any force to stop them would be counter-productive.

Mehta told the bench, which was hearing the matter through video-conferencing, that subject to the agreement between state governments, everybody would get a chance to travel to their destinations.

Advocate Alakh Alok Srivastava, who had filed the plea, referred to recent incidents of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh where migrant workers were killed in accidents on highways. "How can we stop it?" the bench observed, adding that states should take necessary action on these issues. - PTI

Programme for Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and Brucellosis will look at 100 per cent vaccination of cattle, buffalo, sheep, goat and pigs against FMD at an outlay of Rs 13,343 crore.

Further, a Rs 15,000-crore Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund has been announced to support private investment in dairy processing, value addition and cattle feed infrastructure.

The government has launched a Rs 4,000-crore fund to promote herbal cultivation in about 10 lakh hectares of area, Sitharaman said, adding another Rs 500 crore has been earmarked for beekeeping initiatives that will help two lakh beekeepers. - PTI

Besides, the ongoing National Animal Disease Control

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No. DPU/BLDG/01/2020/193

PRESS NOTICE INVITING REBID

The Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B), Diphu Circle- 1, Diphu on behalf of Governor of Assam invites Item Rate Rebid amounting to Rs. 80,89,761.00 (approx) for the work "Construction of Stone Masonry Retaining wall cum brick boundary at back side of Circuit House, Diphu" for the year 2019-20 in the district of Karbi Anglong. Details may be seen in the website www.assamtenders.gov.in and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours from 15.05.2020 to 29.05.2020. The contractors with registration for the year 2019-20 may participate in the bidding process.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, PWD (R&B)
Diphu Circle-1, Diphu

Janasanyog/CF/343/20

No. CE/DEV/TB/722/2019/20/5

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Chief Engineer P.W.D. (Roads), Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3 invites Bids online on behalf of Governor of Assam for the following works under SOPD (TSP) for the year 2019-20 for Sonitpur District from approved & eligible Contractors amounting to Rs. 589.82 lakhs (approx) including GST & other Tax etc.

Details may be seen at website www.assamtenders.gov.in from 18.05.2020 and also at the office of the undersigned (Development Branch), Chandmari, Ghy-03. Amendment/ Addendum to the SBD, if any, and further notifications shall appear in this website and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The contractor/bidder must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of PWD, Assam website www.assamtenders.gov.in

Name of Work:-

- Construction of sand gravel wearing road from Tenga Bill Borbill via Gaojeng bill to Urohilaga under SOPD (TSP)
- Construction of Sand Gravel wearing road from Mainaashree via Gerguajuli to Jugi Bill Center under SOPD (TSP).

Sd/- Chief Engineer PWD (Roads),
Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3.

Janasanyog/CF/335/20

No. FAAMCH/MRU/Tender/285/2018/

EXTENSION NOTICE FOR SHORT BID OF TENDER

It is informed that the last date of the earlier tender no. FAAMCH/MRU/Tender/285/2018/1922 Date: 17.03.2020 was 31.03.2020, but due to some unavoidable condition the last date will be extended upto 21.05.2020 with the same terms and conditions. The Manufacturer/Authorized Stockiest/Distributors or Authorized Dealers/Sub-Dealers are invited for supply of the Supply, Installation & Commissioning of Slide Centrifuge(LBC method) at Multi-Disciplinary Research Unit, F.A.A. Medical College Hospital, Barpeta in sealed tenders affixing nonrefundable Court fee stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight & twenty five paisa). The list of the items along with detailed terms & conditions may be collected on payment of Rs. 500/- (Non-Refundable) only from the office of the Principal-cum-Chief Superintendent FAAMCH, Barpeta during office hours.

The last date and time of submission of tender is 21st May 2020 up to 11.00 A.M. and the tender will be tentatively opened on the same day at 11.30 A.M. in presence of the intending suppliers or their authorized representatives. The tenders are to be submitted to the office of the Principal-cum-Chief Superintendent, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed Medical College Hospital, Barpeta on all the working days during office hours.

Sd/- Principal-cum-Chief Superintendent
F.A.A. Medical College Hospital
Barpeta, Assam

Janasanyog/CF/460/20

No. CE/BLD/ELECT/17/2015/118

PRESS NOTICE

The Chief Engineer P.W.D. (Buildings), Assam on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites fresh bid for the following project under P.W.D. (Bldg.), Assam from reputed national contractors having requisite experience in similar nature of work. Details may be seen at e-procurement portal website i.e. www.assamtenders.gov.in

Package No.	Name of Work	Approx. value of work (Rs. in Lakh)	Time of Completion	Bid Security	Bid Security drawn in favour of	Cost of Bid (in Rs.)
ALA	"Providing & Installation of UPS decorative lights and Networking for E-Vidhan Sabha at proposed New Assam Legislative Assembly Building	Rs.297.14754	6 (Six) Months	Rs.5,94,295/- for General & Rs.2,97,147/- for Reserve Categories	E.E. PWD, Guwahati Electrical Division, Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3	8900/-

Janasanyog/C/476/20

Sd/- Chief Engineer, P.W.D. (Building), Assam
Chandmari, Guwahati-3

No. BN.64/2019/

PRESS NOTICE

The Chief Engineer, P.W.D. (Buildings), Assam on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites fresh bid for the following project under P.W.D. (Bldg.) Assam, from reputed national contractors having requisite experience in similar nature of work. Details may be seen at e-procurement portal website i.e. www.assamtenders.gov.in

Press Notice invited vide No: BN/64/2019/33 dated 28th April, 2020 is hereby cancelled.

Package No.	Name of Work	Approx. value of work (Rs. in Lakh)	Time of Completion	Bid Security	Bid Security drawn in favour of	Cost of Bid (in Rs.)
ALA	"Construction of Main Gate (Entry & Exit), front boundary wall and raising low site in front of the New Assam Legislative Assembly Building depicting all Assamese Cultural Heritage etc. at Dispur, Guwahati-6	Rs.409.57804	6 (Six) Months	Rs.8,19,156/- for General & Rs.4,09,578/- for Reserve Categories	E.E. PWD, P.C.C. Building Division, Dispur, Guwahati-6	12000/-

Janasanyog/C/479/20

Sd/- Chief Engineer, P.W.D. (Building), Assam
Chandmari, Guwahati-3

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM
EDUCATION (SECONDARY) DEPARTMENT
TET EMPOWERED COMMITTEE FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION

NOTICE

No RMSA/Re-Evaluation TET/536/2015/151

Date: 15/05/2020

In relation to the earlier notification vide no. RMSA/Re-Evaluation TET/536/2015/150 dated 06/03/2020. 10(Ten) days extension till 26/05/2020 has been given to the candidates to submit the re-evaluation application only through Postal mode due to the lockdown of pandemic COVID-19.

Candidates may send the re-evaluation application along with the Demand draft of Rs.300/- (Three hundred) only through postal mode to the "The Member Secretary, TET Empowered Committee for Secondary Education, O/O Mission Director, Rashtriya Madhyamik Siksha, Abhijan, Assam, Kahlipara, Guwahati-19". Physical/Personal submission of re-evaluation or any application related to TET will not be accepted at State Mission Office of RMSA, Assam Kahlipara, Guwahati-19. Applications have to be reached at aforesaid address on or before 26/05/2020, beyond this stipulated period no prayer shall be entertained whatsoever.

Janasanyog/CF/347/20

Sd/- Member Secretary
TET Empowered Committee
for Secondary Education.**State incurring ...**

(Contd from page 1)

"The Centre, in its economic package, has allocated Rs 3 lakh crore for the MSME sector of the country, which has come as a timely succour," he told media-persons here today.

He informed that there are over one lakh MSMEs in the State, providing direct and indirect employment to 40 lakh people.

Sonowal further pointed out that the 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat

Abhijan' announced by the Prime Minister will provide a major boost to local manufacturing, laying special stress on "production, procurement and marketing" of the local products.

"The tea and the agriculture sectors will also be immensely benefitted by the announcement made by the Centre vis-à-vis Provident Funds," he said.

Sonowal said that the State government is still in the process of assessing the number of

migrant workers who could permanently return to the State post-lockdown and is drawing out a plan to engage them in various sectors. "We are considering them as assets and not liabilities. We have a plan to enhance their skills and engage them in sectors that have been recommended as possible employment generation sectors by an economic expert panel constituted by the State," the Chief Minister added.

He said, the process of Shramik Special trains is continuing.

Dr Jitendra Singh said that his office is in regular touch with all the State and UT governments and the Resident Commissioners have been asked to follow up with his office and the Centre, issues related to their respective States.

Dr Jitendra Singh briefed the representatives of the States about the various arrangements made in the last two to three days for the movement of people living in different parts of the country to reach their respective native places.

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No shortage ...

ya Murthi of Tripura - furnished their inputs.

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**WEATHER
NORTHEAST**

Forecast for NE: Rain/thunder-shower is very likely to occur at many places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura.

Warning: Thunderstorm with lightning is very likely to occur at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh. Thunderstorm with lightning and gusty wind with speed (30-40) kmph is very likely to occur at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. Heavy rain is very likely to occur at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura.

Temperatures:

	Max (°C)	Min (°C)
Dibrugarh	31.4	22.1
Tezpur	28.6	22.4
Silchar	33.0	23.8
Dhubri	28.6	23.6
Jorhat	27.5	21.5
N Lakhimpur	32.0	21.6
Shillong	23.5	-
Cherrapunjee	24.6	16.0
Aizawl	27.2	17.2
Kohima	24.0	15.3
Pasighat	32.3	21.0
Itanagar	28.7	20.5
Imphal	30.4	17.8
Agartala	34.5	25.7

833 stranded Mizoram residents return

CORRESPONDENT

AIZAWL, May 15: A Shramik Special train today brought back 833 stranded Mizoram residents from Chennai, after traversing more than 30,000 km.

The train reached the Bairabi Railway Station in Kolasib district at 11 am. The passengers were received by Kolasib DC Dr H Lalhangliana, other government officials and police personnel in personal protective equipment.

The passengers came from Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. The train had left Chennai at 11.10 pm on Wednesday. Though 975 people from Mizoram are reportedly stranded in the two States, 833 have returned and the remaining 142 have chosen to remain there due to personal reasons.

Among the returnees, 330 are from Aizawl, 75 from Champai, 19 from Hnahthial, 12 from Khawzawl, 44 from



Kolasib, 48 from Lawngtlai, 48 from Lunglei, 76 from Mamit, 28 from Serchhip and 127 from Siaha districts.

From the train station, they were taken to their respective districts by buses where they will be quarantined for 14 days.

Before they departed from the station, the passengers

were subjected to thermal screening. Officials said those returning from the red zones would undergo rapid tests.

Most of the returnees are students and workers employed in private firms. They said they had landed in trouble due to the lockdown as they became jobless and were

unable to pay rent, and on a few occasions, they also faced discrimination due to their facial features. Some of them, whose employers were kind, received their salaries for the month of March, while others had no such luck.

A cancer patient who arrived on the special train was

transported from the station in an ambulance.

So far, over 9,000 Mizoram residents stranded in different States and Union Territories (UTs) have reported to the State Government. Officials said stranded residents from other States/UTs would be brought back later.

Meghalaya Cabinet nod to agricultural reforms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

SHILLONG, May 15: The Meghalaya Cabinet today approved a Bill to introduce reforms in the agricultural sector by amending a 20-year-old legislation. Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong said the Cabinet discussed the 1980 Act on agriculture and felt that vital aspects were left out from its purview that need to be amended.

The Meghalaya State Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 will include livestock and aquaculture and facilitate their marketing.

He said the Assembly

which is scheduled to reconvene on May 20, would take up the Bill for consideration and passage. The Cabinet also held discussions on the Chief Minister's Economic Task Force. The executive committee of the task force comprising Cabinet ministers will be headed by Chief Minister Conrad Sangma. There will be six working groups headed by senior officials.

Tynsong said till Friday evening, 2,712 samples were sent for testing and 2,597 test results have come out negative, while 102 results were awaited. At present, there is one active case in the State.

On the other hand, 4,681 returnees to the State have been quarantined.

Meghalaya Class XII exams

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

SHILLONG, May 15: The Meghalaya Government today announced that the Class XII examinations on the remaining subjects, under the Meghalaya Board of School Education, would be held from June 8.

Education Minister Lakhmen Rymbui said that the examinations on Mathematics, Physical Education, Western Music and Statistics would be conducted on June 8, 9 and 10. "I know these are trying times, but we have to move on. No pandemic can thwart the aspirations of students. Follow the dos and don'ts," Rymbui said.

The State Education Department had postponed these examinations on March 22 ahead of the nationwide lockdown induced by the COVID-19 pandemic. These examinations were earlier scheduled from May 23 to 25.

NSCN (I-M) militant held

ITANAGAR, May 15: An NSCN (I-M) militant was arrested in connection with the killing of Khonsa West MLA Tirong Aboh and 10 others in Arunachal Pradesh was arrested by security forces from Longding district, an official said.

Army personnel, in a joint operation with district police, apprehended the rebel identified as self-styled 'Sergeant Major' Puman Wangsu from a forest near Longphong village in the district, Kohima-based Defence spokesman Lt Col Sumit Kumar Sharma informed. - PTI

Arunachal, Manipur welcome PM's economic package

CORRESPONDENT

ITANAGAR, May 15: Arunachal Pradesh has welcomed the Rs 20-lakh-crore economic package announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to overcome the challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic in the country.

"This huge economic package of Rs 20 lakh crore in the form of an Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan Package or Self-Reliant Movement Package is one of the biggest economic reliefs announced in the world after the USA and Japan amid the COVID-19 pandemic," Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein said here today.

In a press conference here, Mein referred to the subsequent announcements made by the Union Finance Minister and said, "These announcements will go a long way in addressing the issues faced by the businesses, MSMEs, small traders and entrepreneurs, street vendors, farmers and migrant workers. It will also benefit the people of our State."

The Deputy Chief Minister said that in the State, a high-level committee has been constituted under the Finance, Planning and Investment Department to look into the issues faced by small businesses, traders and entrepreneurs of the State, and to coordinate with the Central Government.

Imphal Correspondent adds: Manipur Chief Minister

N Biren Singh has welcomed the Rs 20 lakh crore economic stimulus package announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi aimed at uplifting the economy battered by the nationwide lockdown and the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a video message which was made available to the media here, the Chief Minister stated that it was a bold step taken by the Central Government as the package is equivalent to 10 per cent of India's GDP.

Elaborating on the key points announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in this regard, Biren Singh expressed the hope that the State would also benefit in multiple sectors. Manipur has the highest number of MSMEs in the North East region and hence, it will benefit largely. Redefining the MSME sector will also create huge opportunities for the people of the State as the investment limit has been revised upwards to Rs 1 crore as compared to Rs 25 lakh earlier.

As the Centre has decided on one-time liquidity infusion of Rs 90 crore for all power distribution companies, the Manipur State Power Distribution Company Limited is likely to get a huge relief in repaying dues, the Chief Minister said. He further said that as the Fisheries Department is being upgraded to a major department as per the announcement, Manipur can reap benefits from it.

NHRC seeks report from Haryana Chief Secy, police

SPL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, May 15: Taking suo motu cognizance of the attack on a girl hailing from Manipur, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued a notice to the Chief Secretary of Haryana and the Commissioner of Police, Gurugram, seeking a detailed report on the incident within four weeks, along with the status of the police investigation.

The NHRC also called for records of registration of the FIR, and sought to know the victim's present health condition and the status of the medical treatment being provided to her.

The suo motu cognizance was taken on the basis of media reports that the 20-year-

old girl from Manipur was subjected to racial discrimination, and brutally attacked by some local people at Faizapur, Gurugram, in Haryana while she was passing through the locality on Sunday afternoon.

Attack on Manipur girl

NHRC sources said that the girl was saved by some other people. Significantly, police officials who reached the spot, reportedly asked the victim to settle the issue. However, she called the North East Support Centre and Helpline (NESCH), whose members reached the spot at 8.30 pm on that day. It was only then that the vic-

tim's statement was recorded for registration of an FIR.

The NHRC observed that the media reports, if true, point towards a serious issue of violation of human rights of the victim. Instead of initiating the requisite legal process, the police had asked the victim to compromise. The Commission observed that it was disgusting that a woman from the North Eastern part of her own country had been subjected to racial discrimination and physical assault by a local family in the NCR region.

Apparently, the police personnel failed to take necessary action, the NHRC observed, adding that they should have realised the impact of trauma and mental agony the woman was undergoing due to the tragic incident.

Quarantine centre sealed

IMPHAL, May 15: A community quarantine centre in Imphal East district was sealed after a man who was lodged in the facility, tested positive for COVID-19, an official said today.

Imphal East DC Rangitabali Waikhom said the Jamia Galina Aziz Girls' School, a designated quarantine centre, was declared a containment zone and the building completely sealed as per the Manipur Epidemic Diseases COVID-19 Regulations 2020.

The order issued by the DC said "the said building is completely sealed and any person/institution/organisation found

violating any of the containment norms shall be deemed to have committed an offence punishable under Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code." People are prohibited from entering the building, it said.

A 31-year-old man who had been quarantined in the centre since May 13, tested positive for COVID-19 on Thursday. The patient is now lodged at an isolation ward of the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences here. He had come from Mumbai along with four others in a hired vehicle and reached the State on May 13.

A Health Department re-

lease said contact tracing of the patient has already started.

Meanwhile, Manipur Police has detained 870 persons and seized 696 vehicles for violating lockdown norms in the State. All the detained persons were produced before courts and a fine of Rs 1.03 lakh was imposed on them, a statement issued by Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) L Kailun said.

The ADGP said the police would continue to take legal action against lockdown violators under the National Disaster Management Act 2005. - PTI

Campaign against COVID-19 in Dimapur

CORRESPONDENT

DIMAPUR, May 15: The Christian Forum Dimapur (CFD) has initiated a COVID-19 campaign - Protect Yourself to Prevent Others - by launching car stickers and face masks, to be distributed among frontline workers and needy people, at the Bishop's House here today.

Agricultural Production Commissioner Y Kikheto Sema, who is the Dimapur district in-charge for COVID-19 related activities, launched the stickers and masks. Dimapur DC Anoop Kinchi, Commissioner of Police Rothihu Tetseo and Chief Medical Officer Dr Tiasunep Pongener were also present on the occasion.

CFD chairman Moses Murry, in his welcome address, said that the forum would distribute 50,000 face masks to frontline workers and needy people, besides creating awareness on novel coronavirus.

"Our fight is against an unseen virus and we have to fight with our faith in God



Government officials and members of Christian Forum Dimapur displaying car stickers and face masks during the start of a COVID-19 campaign in Dimapur on Friday. - Photo: Bhadra Gogoi

along with the available human resources," he said.

Expressing concern over the increasing number of COVID-19 positive cases in neighbouring Assam, Murry appealed to the authorities concerned to conduct proper and stringent checking in the State borders.

The diocese of the Kohima Catholic Church Bishop, James Thoppil, donated 25,000 face masks in the function.

Agricultural Production Commissioner Sema ap-

pealed to the church leaders to help the Government use the church infrastructure, especially church rest houses, to accommodate people returning to Nagaland from various States.

Sema lauded the associations of private schools and colleges of Dimapur for helping the Government by opening their hostels for accommodation purposes. He also praised the non-Nagas of Dimapur, including the Marwari Samaj, for helping their people in meeting accommo-

dation, food and other needs. Dimapur DC Kinchi said that though a large number of people would be arriving in Dimapur, everything would be fine if the people were disciplined. He advised the people not to panic.

Appreciating the Commissioner of Police for successfully implementing the odd-even system in traffic regulation, the DC said that the traffic in Dimapur has been controlled to a large extent.

Commissioner of Police Tetseo stressed the role of

religious institutions in educating the people and offering a healing touch at this critical juncture. He said many stranded people would be arriving without proper food - depressed and worn out. Spiritual healing through the church would ease their emotional stress to some extent, he pointed out.

Chief Medical Officer Dr Pongener said that the only defence against coronavirus is to follow three rules - wear masks, keep hand hygiene and maintain social distancing.

Ministry of Road Transport & Highways National Highways Authority of India					
PUBLIC NOTICE					
USER FEE APPLICATION ON 4 / 6-LANE NAZIRAKHAT TOLL PLAZA AT CH. 179.600 (179.300) ON NH-37					
The public are hereby informed that pursuant to Fee Notification published in the Gazette vide S.O. No 743 (E) dated 17th February, 2020 published in the Gazette of India Extraordinary, Part-II, Section-3, Sub-section (ii) on 17.02.2020 by MoRT&H, the user fee for section from Km.1119.814 to Km. 1124.514 (Naibari-Bijni to Guwahati) of NH-31 & Km.146.000 to Km.205.000 (Guwahati to Nagaon section (including Guwahati Bypass) of NH-37 in the State of Assam is proposed to start w.e.f. 08.00 Hrs on 18-05-2020 at 4 / 6-lane Nazirakhat Toll Plaza at the following rates:					
Sl No	Type of vehicle	Fee rate for vehicle for one way trip (in rupees)	Fee rate for vehicle for return trip in a day (in rupees)	Fee rate for vehicle for monthly pass valid for 50 journeys in a month (in rupees)	Fee for one way trip of commercial vehicles registered in the District (in rupees)
1.	Car, Jeep, Van or Light Motor Vehicle	110	165	3645	55
2.	Light Commercial Vehicle, Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	175	265	5885	90
3.	Bus or Truck (Two Axles)	370	555	12335	185
4.	Three Axle Commercial Vehicles	405	605	13455	200
5.	Heavy construction Machinery (HCM) or Earth Moving Equipment (EME) or Multi Axle Vehicle (MAV) (four to six axles)	580	870	19345	290
6.	Oversized Vehicles (seven or more axles)	705	1060	23550	355
Note : 1. The rate for monthly pass applicable for local non commercial vehicle residing within a distance of 20 Km. from the toll plaza for the year 2020-21 shall be Rs. 270/-. 2. The fee rate mentioned at Column 6 is for single trip and is applicable for Commercial Vehicles (excluding vehicle plying under National permit), registered within the District where the fee plaza is located. 3. Return journey valid for 24 hours from the time of payment.					
BUILDING A NATION, NOT JUST ROADS					

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Adv. No. iiitg/mtech/2020/1 Sd/- Director

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SHUT DOWN NOTICE

It is for general information to all our valued consumers that due to construction of New 11 KV line at MT Road from upcoming 3311 KV Geeta Mandir DSS, power supply of a portion of 11 KV Geetanagar Feeder under Zoo Road ESD will be interrupted from 11:00 hours to 13:30 hours w.e.f. 16-05-2020 & 18-05-2020 to 21-05-2020. The effected areas will be Kanya Mahabidya Path, Giri Path, Anundoy Path, Anupam Path, Bhagadutta Path, and adjacent areas.

The undersigned reserve the right to change the lines at any time before or after completion of the work. Inconvenience caused to our valued consumers is sincerely regretted.

Sd/- Asstt. General Manager
Guwahati Electrical Division(E) APDCL(LAR), Dispur, Guwahati-6

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CIN : U40101ML1976G0001658

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER
NIT No: KHEP/ C&P (E)/2020/350 Dated.13.05.2020.

NEEPCO Ltd invites e-tender in prescribe format with 120 (One hundred twenty days) validity from Manufacturer/Authorized dealer/Reputed contractor under the single stage two-envelope bidding system for "Design, Manufacturing, supply & delivery of stainless CF8M gate valves for oil coolers of Khandong & Koplii-II Power Station of Koplii Hydro Electric Plant, NEEPCO Ltd, Umrangso, Assam, PIN 788931." For Detailed qualifying criteria in bidding system are elaborated in detail NIT No KHEP/C&P/2020/350 Dt. 13.05.2020 which will be available at CPP Portal <http://etenders.gov.in> or NEEPCO's official website www.neepco.co.in. Any subsequent changes / modifications/notification to this tender shall be up loaded on these websites only.

DTM (E), C&P, KHEP: NEEPCO Ltd, Umrangso

NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION ASSAM

No: NHM-18019/1/2020-PROC-NHM/ECF-139830/P-9 Dtd.: 13/05/20

e-TENDER NOTICE (NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING)

Tenders in two Bid System (Technical Bid & Price Bid) affixing Court Fee Stamp of Rs. 8.25 (or IPO of Rs. 10.00 in favour of "State Health Society, Assam" for bidders located outside Assam) are invited from manufacturers/importers or authorized distributors/ dealer for supply of the "Sodium Hypochlorite solution 10.0% IP/BP/USP & Malathion; 50%- 55 % concentration" on an urgent basis. The complete set of tender documents may be downloaded from assamtenders.gov.in or the official website of NHM <https://nhm.assam.gov.in>.

Important dates related to the Tender:

1. Tender publication date : 14/05/2020 from 1.00 pm.
2. Tender submission start date : 14/05/2020 from 1.00 pm.
3. Tender submission last date : 19/05/2020 up to 1.00 pm.
4. Tender opening date : 19/05/2020 at 3.00 pm.
5. Tender dropping place (Technical) : O/o the Mission Director, National Health Mission, Assam, Saikia Commercial Complex, Christanbasti, Guwahati-781005.

Sd/-
Mission Director, NHM, Assam

NEWS IN BRIEF

Python at Assam varsity

SILCHAR, May 15: A python seen strangulating a goat inside the Assam University Silchar campus on Thursday triggered panic in the area. Prof Parthankar Choudhury of the Department of Ecology and Environment Sciences said the goat was found dead after the python strangulated it near the the Girls Hostel No.1. The python strangulated the goat and tried to swallow it, but on being unsuccessful, it left the goat and moved away, Choudhury said. — Staff Correspondent

Ban on tobacco

JORHAT, May 15: The Jorhat District Magistrate by an order passed on Thursday under Section 144 of CrPC and Section 34 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, prohibited the manufacture, sale and use of chewing tobacco in the entire district. The ban will remain in force until further orders. Violation of the ban will be dealt with under Section 188 of the IPC. — Staff Correspondent

Kokrajhar MP at Srirampur

GOSSAIGAON, May 15: Kokrajhar MP Naba Kumar Sarania visited the Assam-Bengal inter-state border at Srirampur recently. Sarania expressed surprise that though hundreds of people are entering Assam every day, their health check-up is being done at Kokrajhar, 60 km away. At Srirampur, he urged the local administration to maintain cleanliness around the health camps. He also visited the ITI Ballamguri quarantine camp, where 156 persons have been kept. Sarania also visited the house of Asan Ali Sheikh, the first COVID-19 infected youth of Kokrajhar district. He met villagers of Palashguri under Zamduar BTC constituency where some houses were damaged in a storm. — ANN Service

Mahila Cong demands aid

NALBARI, May 15: Assam Pradesh Mahila Congress Committee president Nandita Das, who is also the MLA of Boko, has called upon the government to provide adequate protective measures to doctors, nurses and other health workers fighting against COVID-19. Das alleged that there is shortage of PPE kits and requested the government to utilise the fund of Assam Arogya Nidhi. She said cleaners and ambulance drivers should also be provided PPE kits. Members of the Mahila Congress later visited Darangpara in Nalbari district to distribute food items among poor potters of the village. — Correspondent

Nurses Day observed

TIHU, May 15: International Nurses Day was observed at the Pipilbari Khudra primary health centre under the aegis of the Pipilbari Gaon Unnayan Samiti. Doctors, nurses and health workers were felicitated at a meeting. Dr Chiranbij Barua, three nurses and three health workers of the centre were greeted with a *gamosa*. Members of the Pachim Nalbari Press Club and Nalbari Zila Karmachari Parishad were also present. — ANN Service

Masked wedding!

PATACHARKUCHI, May 15: Saranga Sarma, a groom from Barpeta, tied the knot with Barasha Goswami of Gobindapur village here, observing all the norms of the lockdown. Both the bride and groom wore masks and used hand sanitizers while performing the religious formalities with a limited number of relatives. There was no music and party. After the wedding, the groom distributed masks and relief items to around 100 people of the locality. — ANN Service

Houses gutted by lightning

DIPHU, May 15: One person was injured and three houses were gutted in a fire following a lightning strike on Wednesday at Mokoilum village in West Karbi Anglong district. The incident occurred around 10 am, leaving an elderly man, identified as Rowel Hanse, seriously injured. The man was admitted to a medical sub-centre, where his health was reported to be out of danger, said Prophetic Tisso, president of the Jirikindung Block Primary Health Centre management committee. — Correspondent

4 held for cannabis smuggling

UDALGURI, May 15: Four smugglers from Udalguri district were arrested by the 61st battalion of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) for smuggling cannabis at Ten Kilo area of West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh on the night of May 13. The three have been identified as Nur Hussain (19), Mofik Ali (22), Karim Ali (20), all from Aminpara village, and Haydar Ali (19) of Jhargaoon village under Rowta Police Station in Udalguri district. Two vehicles (AS-27-C-5364 and AS-12-BC-4036), carrying 54 bags of cannabis and also Rs 72,200 in cash, along with four mobile phones were also seized. — Correspondent

Section 144 in Sivasagar

SIVASAGAR, May 15: Sivasagar District Magistrate Lakhinandan Gogo has imposed Section 144 of the IPC, banning pillion riding, except by persons above 60 years and below 12, women and persons from government and security agencies. Any violation will invite penalty under Section 188 of CrPC. The District Magistrate also banned public demonstrations, meetings and gatherings of more than five persons for an indefinite period till further orders. Fishing in the district has also been banned from April 1 to July 15 under the Assam Fishery Act as it is the breeding season. — Correspondent

Indian gaur rescued

DERGAON, May 15: An Indian gaur was rescued after being tranquilised and was later released at the Nambur Doigrong Wildlife Sanctuary in Golaghat district on Thursday. The gaur, spotted at Trafat Gaon in Golaghat, was rescued by the Golaghat Forest Division and a team from the Wildlife Trust of India. Forest range officer Pushpadhar Borgohain said the gaur was healthy, the animal was released into the wild. — Correspondent

Donation to Arogya Nidhi

GUWAHATI, May 15: The National Publishers Sales Team Association-North East (NPSTA) has contributed a sum of Rs 60,506 to the Assam Arogya Nidhi to help the State government fight the COVID-19 pandemic, a press release stated.



A farmer ploughs his field for planting Bao paddy in Damara Jaan Pathar at Mohemari village of Dhakuakhana on Friday. — Photo: Farhana Ahmed

46 stranded passengers reach Barak Valley by Shramik Express

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

SILCHAR, May 15: As many as 46 stranded passengers belonging to Barak Valley disembarked from the Chennai-Bhairavi Shramik Express 06129 which reached Badarpur on Friday.

This is the first lot of passengers who reached Barak Valley by train, after being stranded outside the North East since enforcement of the lockdown.

While officials from the Cachar district administration claimed that nine passengers were received and taken for swab sample collection at the ISBT via bus from the railway station, the Karimganj administration received 37 passengers who came by the train. However, there were no passengers on the arrival list for Hailakandi district, sources informed.

As per the new SOP on COVID-19

for passengers reaching by trains at different destinations, *diyung* persons, minors, pregnant women and elderly persons above 75 years are to be sent for home quarantine after collection of swab samples.

Accordingly, out of the nine passengers, one *diyung* person was sent home while eight others have been kept at institutional quarantine centres.

Karimganj Deputy Commissioner Anbamuthan MP said swab samples of the passengers belonging to Karimganj district were being collected and sent to the Silchar Medical College and Hospital (SMCH) for tests.

MP hopeful of package for paper mills: At a time when small and medium industrial units are hoping to get support from the government after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of Rs 20 lakh crore pack-

age, employees of the closed paper mills are also hoping for some respite.

Responding to a question on will the mega package solve the crisis faced by the Cachar and Nagaon units of the Hindustan Paper Corporation, Silchar MP Dr Rajdeep Roy said that being a resident of Cachar district, he was hopeful that the government would grant a survival package for the two paper mills, which have been closed since October 2015 and March 2017 respectively.

He urged local youths to chalk out indigenous business strategies and assured that facilities have been smoothed for banks to offer loans and the government would grant them guarantees.

Manabendra Chakraborty, president of the Joint Action Committee of Recognised Unions, said that the announcement by the Prime Minister

to boost the economy and to make the country self-reliant was the need of the hour and they have welcomed it with great expectations.

"What the Prime Minister has announced is the need of the hour, especially after the body blows to the economy by the COVID-19 pandemic. We also hope that the Prime Minister is aware of his promise made at Kalinagar in 2016 to revive the mills and restart production. The heavy industry provided employment to over two lakh people and boosted the rural economy. Before its closure, the Cachar Paper Mill was a mini-ratna industry and the paper was exported worldwide earning huge revenue for the government. We hope that with proactive initiative by the Prime Minister, the mills would reopen and add to his vision of self-reliance," Chakraborty said.



Members of the Seemanta Chetana Mancha, Gossaigaon Nagar Committee, distributing masks and sanitizers among sanitation workers at a programme held at Sonari Patty in Gossaigaon on Friday. — Photo: Khanindra Nath Das

Agri entrepreneurs shine during lockdown

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

JORHAT, May 15: A few agri entrepreneurs of the North East Agriculture Technology Entrepreneurs Hub (NEATEHUB), an Atal Incubation Centre at Assam Agricultural University Incubator at AAU, Borbha, have shown their ability to innovate and stay in business despite the lockdown.

A young entrepreneur, Alok Hazarika — an incubatee at NEATEHUB — is supplying a whopping 3,500 kg of fresh vegetables daily to Guwahati and Jorhat. Alok's start-up Mohabaahu Fresh started receiving orders online through mobile-apps and portal, said NEATEHUB official Nibir Akash Baruah.

Hazarika recently received an order for export of about 20,000 kg of vegetables to Kuwait, the official said, adding that trust and consistent

supply of quality vegetables have been Hazarika's hallmark for success.

Another incubatee of NEATEHUB, Manoj Basumatary, popularly known as the "Pig Man" on social media due to his achievements in pig farming, has supplied quality feed to farmers across Assam dealing with livestock. Basumatary's start-up Symbiotics Food Pvt Ltd has supplied over 15,000 kg of feed to farmers on a cost-to-cost basis during the lockdown.

Nitin Ronhang, a farmer-turned-entrepreneur from Sonapur, has been ensuring doorstep delivery of vegetables, fruits, and fish in different parts of Guwahati. Ronhang's products are sold under the brand name Freshdo and he has been selling 500 kg of fruits and vegetables and about 1,000 kg of fish daily. The fruits and vegetables sold

by Ronhang are bought from local farmers who produce pesticide-free products which resulted in the goods of Freshdo seeing a rise in demand.

The entrepreneurs are founders of agri-based start-ups and are supported by NEATEHUB through services such as business mentoring, seed funding, marketing support, access to technical experts, physical co-working spaces, etc.

NEATEHUB, established with financial assistance from NITI Aayog, and the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Flagship scheme Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana-Remunerative Approaches for Agriculture and Allied Sectors Rejuvenation (RKVY-RAFTAAR), is one of a kind institute in the North East. At present, the incubator has about 40 active entrepreneurs under its umbrella.

Golden jubilee Bihu progs cancelled

CORRESPONDENT

DOOMDOOMA, May 15: The Golden Jubilee Celebration Committee of the Doomdooma Rajahua Rongali Bihu Sanmilan has cancelled all its programmes scheduled to be held this year, due to the COVID-19

pandemic.

On Thursday, only flag hoisting and *smriti tarpan* programmes were carried out at the Doomdooma town field by a few members of the committee, following all norms of the lockdown including physical distancing.

Arjun Baruah, president of

the committee, hoisted the flag while working presidents Mrigen Saikia and Anuj Kalita jointly initiated the *smriti tarpan*. Joint secretaries of the committee, Dhiraj Gohain and Rana Sonar felicitated the distinguished guests present at the programme with a *bihuan*.

98 Delhi returnees quarantined at Tinsukia

CORRESPONDENT

DOOMDOOMA, May 15: As the first special train from New Delhi arrived at Dibrugarh on Thursday morning, the Tinsukia district administration has brought 98 Tinsukia district bound passengers under strict quarantine guidelines after initial screening at Banipur (Dibrugarh) Railway Station.

All the 98 passengers were brought to the Sports Authority of India (SAI) complex at Borguri Tinsukia for subdivision wise segregation. Seven passengers from Sadiya and 27 from Margherita subdivisions were sent to their respective quarantine centres. The passengers belonging to Tinsukia subdivision which includes Doomdooma Revenue Circle also were given options to select government-supported quarantine centres which included SAI Complex Borguri, Manab Kalyan Bhanwan, Manab Kalyan Prarthana

Bhawan and Jyoti Hotel besides self-financed luxury hotels like Royal Highness and Kiran Residency.

Dr Sanjeeb Phukan, the Circle Officer of Tinsukia who is supervising the placement of passengers informed that out of 64 passengers, SAI Complex accommodated 17 persons, Jyoti Hotel 35 and Royal Highness 12. The collection of swab samples of all the persons began today from the respective quarantine centres and these persons have to remain in *in-situ* quarantine till the arrival of the reports. If tested negative, the person may be allowed to go for home quarantine for 14 days including the days of institutional quarantine, stated Dr Phukan.

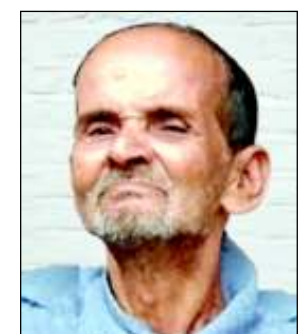
The passengers bound for Sadiya and Margherita will be quarantined at Digboi College, Margherita College and Ledo College for Margherita.

Rajeswar Sarma: a tribute

Even though death is inevitable but the loss of a dear one gives us colossal pain. Without the eldest member of the family the house becomes a ship without the helmsman. On May 6, 2020 at the age of 84, my grandfather Rajeswar Sarma left for his heavenly abode.

He was born in a prominent 'pandit' family of Jugurkuchi to late Bhogdatta Sarma and late Damayanti Devi in 1936. Being a member of a respected joint family the qualities he received was visible in his good deeds and the way he served the society throughout his life. He was a man who considered every person as his own family.

Initially, he started working at Badalmari ME School of Goalpara district. But later he came back to his birth place Jugurkuchi and in 1975, joined Borbori High School as a teacher and worked for



more than 30 years. My grandfather was so lovable and full of humour. The locals of Borbori today realise that a humorous man like him are not found so easily today. He got solace and satisfaction in helping people in need.

He left behind his wife, daughter, son, daughter-in-law, son-in-law and his grandchildren with many dear ones.

Today, on the day of his *adyashradha*, we pray to the Almighty to grant peace to his departed soul.

— Luna Basistha

Nagaon man gets Rs 77 lakh power bill

A CORRESPONDENT

NAGAON, May 15: How much electricity could a domestic consumer utilise in a single month?

Abhijit Saikia, a resident of Lakhinagar area of Nagaon, was in for a rude shock when he received a monthly electricity bill of Rs 77,20,775 from APDCL, Nagaon. The office of the APDCL, Nagaon, had sent the bill of Rs 77,20,775 to Saikia as a correction of his former bill that had a bill amount of Rs 3,000.

According to Saikia, he received an electricity bill where the amount was Rs 3,000 for consuming 509 units. But when he checked his digital meter, he found that the consumption was only 107 units. Saikia immediately approached the Haiborgaon-based APDCL division office and lodged a complaint for correction of the bill amount. The office assured him that a new bill with correction would be issued soon.

But Saikia later received his new bill, where he was asked to pay Rs 77,20,775 against consumption of 99,999 power units during the month of April.

Meanwhile, another division of APDCL, Nagaon, has allegedly issued an electricity bill of Rs 1,67,000 for a single month to Prabal Sarma, a resident of Panigaon Chariali in Nagaon. In Samaguri too, the APDCL allegedly issued an electricity bill of Rs 16,000 to a widow Binu Borah.

OBITUARY

Udai Shankar Mahanta

CORRESPONDENT

MORIGAON, May 15: Udai Shankar Mahanta, a resident of ward no.4 of Morigaon town, breathed his last on Thursday at Morigaon Civil Hospital following a cardiac arrest. He was 68.

Mahanta, a retired teacher of Monoha HS School, was an exponent of Satriya dance and music. He was associated with various cultural activities under the Morigaon unit of the Asom Satra Mahasabha. After his retirement in 2012, he was involved in the teaching of Satriya music at Gajala Satra at Jajori. He leaves behind his wife, a son and a daughter.

Umakanta Mohan

CORRESPONDENT

SIVASAGAR, May 15: Umakanta Mohan (90), former principal of Ramchandra Agarwala HS School, Moran, a former correspondent of *Dainik Janambhumi* and a sports organiser, died of old-age ailments at his Moran Khatkhathi residence on Thursday.

He was a social worker and a distinguished teacher. Hundreds of students and wellwishers gathered at his residence to pay homage to the departed soul.

His body was taken to Ramchandra Agarwala HS School and principal Arunima Duwora led the tribute programme by offering a floral wreath. Minister Jogen Mohan, MLA Chakradhar Gogoi, former MP Pawan Sing Ghatowar, and office bearers of the AAPCU, Moran Sports Association, ACMS, AASU, ATASU, ATTSA have condoned his death.

Bid to make NTCA a non-functional entity flayed

AJIT PATOWARY

Leading environment activist Rohit Choudhury has complained that a small but powerful coterie of officials in the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), in collusion with vested interest circles, is out to make the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), a statutory body, which is responsible for overseeing the agenda for tiger conservation in the country, non-functional. These lobbies are planning to merge the Regional Offices of the NTCA, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) and Forest Survey of India (FSI) in the name of 'better planning and coordination'.

The exercise undertaken at the Directorate General of Forest (DGF) level, is in fact aimed at scuttling the autonomy and independence of the NTCA and at reducing it into a non-functional entity, Choudhury alleged. If the argument of this lobby that the merger of the above bodies and placing them under a single regional of-

fice headed by the Deputy Director General, Forest (DDGF) would result in better planning and coordination, the NTCA would not have been created by the Government of India in the first place, argued Choudhury in his letter to the Minister, MoEFCC recently.

He also reminded the Union Minister that the Parliament of India felt the need of the specialised agencies to conserve biodiversity and for fostering sustainable development. Accordingly, the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 was amended in 2006 and the statutory bodies like the NTCA, Central Zoo Authority (CZA) and WCCB were created with well-defined mandates, powers and authority.

The present reorganisation move initiated by certain vested interest circles goes against the judgment and will of the Parliament, he said. He said further that today, India is considered a global leader in the field of tiger conservation mainly because of the pioneering leadership of the NTCA. Since its creation in 2006, the NTCA



made the tiger-related biodiversity crisis turnaround by reintroducing the species in Sariska and Panna Tiger Reserves, from where this majestic species had locally gone into extinction. The NTCA took the overall tiger conservation agenda to a new height.

The centrally-sponsored 'Project Tiger' scheme implemented by the

NTCA, is one of the most successful conservation schemes of the country. Despite the shoestring budget, this scheme has been largely successful in doubling the tiger population of the country from 1411 in 2006 to 2967 in 2018. This can be attributed to the science-based management inputs, monitoring, voluntary village relocation, ecotourism initiatives designed and implemented by the NTCA in the tiger landscapes, said Choudhury.

The reason behind the above move to reduce the NTCA into a non-functional entity, Choudhury said, is to make the NTCA officers ineffective in matters of issuing the assessment reports on matters related to conversion of the Tiger Reserve lands or tiger corridors for non-forestry activities. The NTCA officers would lose their power if they are placed under the control of the Deputy Director General of Forest, Inspector General of Forest or Deputy Inspector General of Forest, Choudhury said.



CAPSULE

Biocon shares
NEW DELHI, May 15: Shares of biotechnology major Biocon on Friday fell 2 per cent after the company reported a 42 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit for March quarter. — PTI

Filatex India
MUMBAI, May 15: Filatex India Ltd, a leading player in manmade fibers, has resumed partial operations at its Dadra plant to meet the urgent requirement of yarns that will be mainly used in production of face masks, personal protective clothing and some specific urgent requirements of fabrics. — PTI

Tech Mahindra
NEW DELHI, May 15: Makers Lab, the research and development arm of Tech Mahindra, on Friday said it has leveraged Artificial Intelligence to conduct research and find potential therapeutic drugs for treatment of COVID-19. — PTI

DigitalOcean
NEW YORK, May 15: The US-based Cloud infrastructure provider DigitalOcean has closed a \$50 million Series C funding round led by existing investors Access Industries Andressen Horowitz (a16z). — IANS

Manappuram
NEW DELHI, May 15: Shares of Manappuram Finance on Friday closed with over 3 per cent gains after the company reported nearly 44 per cent increase in net profit for the quarter ended March 2020. — PTI

NOTICE FOR CANCELLATION OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
No. AASCS(CA)/1/2014-PT-II/23
Eol No. AASCS(CA)/1/2014/PT/117 dated 21.12.2018
Due to inadequate number of bids in the technical evaluation for the Expression of Interest in connection with the empanelment of Chartered Accountant for Assam Administrative Staff College Society, it is hereby cancelled. For further information please visit at website www.aasc.assam.gov.in.

PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDER
The Chief Engineer P.W.D (Roads), Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3 invites Bids on behalf of the Governor of Assam for 1 (One) no of Package for Road and Bridge Projects under SOPD-G for the year 2019-20 in Golaghat Legislative Assembly Constituencies of Assam, amounting to Rs. 10.00 Crs (approx) from approved & eligible Contractors enlisted with APWD.

NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION ASSAM
No. NHM-18012/6/2020-PROC-NHM/ECF-139831/P-18 Dtd: 14-5-20
e-TENDER NOTICE (NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING)
Tenders in two Bid System (Technical Bid & Price Bid) affixing Court Fee Stamp of Rs. 8.25 (or IPO of Rs. 10.00 in favour of State Health Society, Assam) for bidders located outside Assam) are invited from manufacturers/importers or authorized distributors/ dealer for supply of the "Triple Layer Mask, N-95 Mask, Personal Protection Equipment (PPE-cover all) Kits, Face shield, Nitrite Examination Gloves" on an urgent basis in view of COVID-19 pandemic. The complete set of tender documents may be downloaded from assamtenders.gov.in or the official website of NHM nhm.assam.gov.in.
Hard copy of the Technical bid is to be submitted with the sample within the last date of Tender dropping.
Important dates related to the Tender:
1. Tender publication date : 15/5/2020 from 1.00 pm.
2. Tender submission start date : 16/5/2020 from 1.00 pm.
3. Tender submission last date : 25/5/2020 up to 1.00 pm.
4. Tender opening date : 25/5/2020 at 3.00 pm.
5. Sample submission date (physically) : 25/5/2020 by 1.00 pm.
6. Tender dropping date (Technical) : O/o the Mission Director, National Health Mission, Assam, Saikia Commercial Complex, Christanbasti, Guwahati-781005
7. Place of Sample submission : O/o the Mission Director, National Health Mission, Assam, Saikia Commercial Complex, Christanbasti, Guwahati-781005 at Procurement Cell (3rd floor, Room No. 312 & 313)
Sd/- Mission Director, NHM, Assam

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World Bank okays \$1-bn loan to India

NEW DELHI, May 15: The World Bank on Friday approved a USD 1 billion loan to support India's efforts for providing social assistance to the poor and vulnerable households, severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The "Accelerating India's COVID-19 Social Protection Response Program" will support the government's efforts towards a more consolidated delivery platform accessible to both rural and urban populations across state boundaries.

This takes the total commitment from the World Bank towards emergency COVID-19 response in India to USD 2 billion.

A USD 1 billion support was announced last month

towards immediate support to India's health sector.

The multilateral lending agency is also in discussions with the government to provide assistance to the country's micro, small and medium enterprises, said World Bank Country Director in India Junaid Ahmad in a webinar with media.

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic around the world has required governments to introduce social distancing and lockdowns in unprecedented ways, he said.

These measures, intended to slowdown the spread of the virus have, however, impacted economies and jobs especially in the informal sector. India with the world's largest lockdown has not been an exception to this trend.

Of the USD 1 billion commitment, USD 550 million will be financed by a credit from the International Development Association (IDA) the World Bank's concessional lending arm and USD 200 million will be a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), with a final maturity of 18.5 years including a grace period of five years.

The remaining USD 250 million will be made available after June 30, 2020. The program will be implemented by the Union Ministry of Finance.

In a release, the World Bank said the new support will be funded in two phases an immediate allocation of USD 750 million for fiscal

year 2020 (fiscal year starting July 1, 2020) and a USD 250 million second tranche that will be made available for fiscal year 2021.

Ahmad further said the COVID-19 pandemic has also put the spotlight on some of the gaps in the existing social protection systems.

This platform draws on the country's existing architecture of safety nets the PDS, the digital and banking infrastructure, and Aadhaar while positioning the overall social protection system for the needs of a 21st century India.

"What COVID-19 has done is that it has actually gotten the government to create linkages between the system and begin to move the social protection system

of India, what I think will be the 21st century system.

"It is in this context we have put in USD 1 billion following USD 1 billion in health and in anticipation of a third programme which will be around the small and small enterprises..." he said.

Ahmad further said the World Bank was in the process of discussing a MSMEs programme with the government.

He said liquidity has come into the market through the monetary and fiscal policies and "the challenge now is to take that liquidity and bring it into the hands of the MSMEs... We will be coming in to support that. Where exactly and how much is something that we are in discussion with the government". — PTI

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He said liquidity has come into the market through the monetary and fiscal policies and "the challenge now is to take that liquidity and bring it into the hands of the MSMEs... We will be coming in to support that. Where exactly and how much is something that we are in discussion with the government". — PTI

Tata Motors to consider raising Rs 1,000 crore

MUMBAI, May 15: Tata Motors on Friday said that the concerned committee of its Board will consider issuing rated, secured, redeemable non-convertible debentures (NCDs) aggregating to Rs 1,000 crore.

In a regulatory filing on the company said that it is "desirous" of offering NCDs

worth up to Rs 1,000 crore.

"We would like to inform you that the company is desirous of offering Rated, Listed, Secured, Redeemable, Non-Convertible Debentures aggregating Rs 1000 crores and in this regard is holding a meeting of its duly constituted Committee of the Board on May 20, 2020," it said. — IANS

NIPER Guwahati develops new products to fight COVID-19

SPL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, May 15: The Guwahati-based National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER-G) have developed two new products to fight spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Official sources here said that the first product is a 3D-printed hands-free object that could be used to help open or close doors, windows, drawers (both vertical and horizontal), and refrigerator handle, or press elevator buttons, and laptop, desktop keyboards. The researchers came up with the design for the fabrication of the 3D-printed object after detailed analyses of several resources for risk measurement and on how virus spread through bare hands. It is also low-cost, easy to wear, has good chemical stability, non-fragile and is easy to clean with the existing sanitizers or any alcoholic disinfectant.

The second product is a 3D-printed antimicrobial face-shield to control the spread of novel coronavirus. It was designed after a thorough study to understand how virus spread through oral, ophthalmic, olfactory and other body cavities.

A meeting was held through video conferencing on Thursday under the chairmanship of Dr P D Vaghela, Secretary, Pharmaceuticals to review NIPERS performance in research and innovation activities, especially with regard to the ways in which NIPERs have and can contribute in country's fight against COVID-19 pandemic.

Director, NIPER-Guwahati, Dr USN Murty, informed that the NIPER-G endeavoured to help the country in fighting coronavirus through quick validated prototype development and deployment. He said that NIPER -G has also made a skin-friendly herbal sanitizer.

3rd tranche to deal with giving relief to agriculture and allied industries

3rd tranche of ₹ 20 lakh crore comprehensive economic stimulus package

- Setting up of Rs 1 lakh cr agriculture infra fund for farm-gate infrastructure like cold chain, yards, etc.
- Rs 10,000-cr scheme for formalisation of micro food enterprises
- Rs 20,000 cr for aqua culture, infrastructure for fisheries to help raise fish production, exports
- Rs 13,343-cr fund launched to ensure 100% vaccination of 53 cr cattle for foot-and-mouth disease
- Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund of Rs 15,000 cr to support investment in dairy processing
- Rs 4,000 cr for promotion of herbal cultivation to bring 10 lakh hectares of land under herbal growing in next 2 years
- Rs 500 cr allocated for beekeeping initiatives to benefit 2 lakh beekeepers in rural areas
- Rs 500-cr additional fund provided to extend

Operation Green to all fruits, vegetables; 50% subsidy on transportation, storage

- Government to amend Essential Commodities Act, cereals, edible oil, oilseeds, pulses, onions and potato to be deregulated
- No stock limit to apply to processors or value chain participants following amendment to the Essential Commodities Act
- Central law will be formulated to provide ample choice to farmers to sell crops at attractive price. The law will also enable barrier-free interstate trade and framework for e-trading of agricultural produce.
- Facilitative legal framework will be created to enable farmers for engaging with processors, aggregators, large retailers, exporters etc. in a fair and transparent manner. Risk mitigation for farmers, assured returns and quality standardisation shall form integral part of the framework

India's GDP growth rate pegged at 0.9-1.02%: Creditchat

NEW DELHI, May 15: India's GDP for the financial year 2020-21 is likely to grow in the range of 0.9 per cent to 1.02 per cent, according to a report by Creditchat.

"In case the lockdown gets extended till May end (which is a more likely scenario in some states), we will only be able to see any green shoots of recovery towards the end of Q3, the GDP will range from 0.9 per cent to 1.02 per

cent," it said.

Several states have extended the lockdown and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address to the nation on Tuesday hinted at a relaxed lockdown 4.0'. The third phase of the nationwide lockdown ends on May 17, Sunday.

On the economic package being announced by the government, Meghna Suryakumar, CEO of Creditchat said: "If the stimulus works it will

be between 1 to 1.02 per cent, I believe 1 per cent GDP growth is what everybody is looking at."

The coronavirus pandemic and the nationwide lockdown has brought the Indian economy to almost a halt and industry bodies and economists has anticipate huge job losses, shutting down of businesses in case adequate government support does not come in. — IANS

WTO head quits

UNITED NATIONS, May 15: Roberto Azevedo has suddenly announced that he was quitting as the head of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) at a time when global commerce is facing a crisis because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the organisation has come under intense criticism.

Azevedo told a virtual meeting of WTO members on Thursday that he was stepping down as director-general on August 31, a year ahead of the end to his second term.

In a statement issued in Geneva, he said that he was leaving office early to give his successor ample time to prepare for the 12th Ministerial Conference of the WTO next year.

The meeting is expected to be crucial to the future of the organisation during a time when the global trade system is showing signs of fracturing.

A former Brazilian diplomat and vice-minister for economics and technology, Azevedo became WTO director-general in 2013 and assumed a second four-year term in 2017.

Amid the calls from various sides for changing the WTO, Azevedo spoke of the "new normal" that will emerge from the pandemic and in facing it the organisation has "to be able to respond to members' needs and priorities." — IANS

India's merchandise exports plunge

NEW DELHI, May 15: The COVID-19 global outbreak heavily dented India's merchandise exports in April, as they plunged by over 60 per cent on a year-on-year basis to \$10.36 billion from \$26.07 billion reported for the corresponding period of the previous year.

"The decline in exports has been mainly due to the ongoing global slowdown, which got aggravated due to the current Covid-19 crisis. The latter resulted in large scale disruptions in supply chains and demand resulting in cancellation of orders," the Ministry of Commerce and Industry said in a statement.

"Except for 'Iron Ore' and 'Drugs & Pharmaceuticals' which registered a growth of 17.53 per cent and 0.25 per cent respectively, all other commodity or commodity groups have registered negative growth in April 2020 vis-a-vis April 2019.

"Similarly, imports declined by 58.65 per cent to \$17.12 billion in April from \$41.40 billion reported for the corresponding month of 2019.

"Oil imports in April 2020 were \$4.66 billion, which was 59.03 per cent lower in Dollar terms, compared to \$11.38 billion in April 2019," the statement said.

Consequently, India's trade deficit narrowed to \$6.76 billion on a year-on-year basis in April from \$15.33 billion reported for the corresponding month of last year. — IANS

RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION, NEW JALPAIGURI
(Electrical Department)

e-Tender Notice

1. e-Tender No.	GDRE-EL-NJP-TENDER-20-06
2. Tender Type	Open
3. Tendering Section	ELECTICAL
4. Bidding System	Single Packet
5. Bidding Style	Single Rate
6. Bidding Unit	Above/Below/Par
7. Advertised Value	₹ 91,91,015.00
8. Tender Doc. Cost (INR)	₹ 5,000.00
9. Earnest Money (INR)	₹ 1,83,800.00
10. Tender Closing Date & Time	15.06.2020 at 12.00 Hrs at NJP
11. Period of Completion	04 Months (120 Days)
12. Validity Offer	45 (Forty five) Days
13. Name of work	Supply & Erection and distribution of different types of Caution Boards and safety items in GHY (excl) - LMG (incl) section of Gr.257 (Phase-I) under RE Project.
14. Eligibility Criteria	: Mentioned in Tender Document page No.7 E-Tender NIT and Special Terms & Condition of Contract at Page -27 to 30 in Tender Document.
15. Website particulars & notice where complete details of tender can be seen etc.	: www.ireps.gov.in
16. Special Condition	: JV firms are not allowed to participate in this case.

Chief Project Director (Elect.)
Railway Electrification/New Jalpaiguri
For & On behalf of President of India

PR/342/2020 Adk
"Serving Customers with a Smile"

CANCELLATION OF TRAIN SERVICES IN THE WAKE OF COVID - 19

In continuation to earlier notifications, due to the measures taken in the wake of COVID-19, cancellation of all passenger train services is extended as follows.

- All originating long-distance Mail / Express (including intercity trains) and all originating passenger trains shall remain cancelled from 18-05-2020 to 30-06-2020.
- All narrow gauge (NG) trains will remain cancelled upto 30-06-2020.
- Movement of Sharmik special trains which are under operation with effect from 01-05-2020 will continue as required by the state governments.
- Special train services started from 12-05-2020 on specific routes will continue to run. These special services shall be in addition to the Sharmik special trains.
- Freight and parcel train operations shall continue.

Inconvenience caused to the passengers is deeply regretted.
General Manager (Operations)
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Be safe and keep others safe

NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION ASSAM
No. NHM-18012/6/2020-PROC-NHM/ECF-139831/P-18 Dtd: 14-5-20
e-TENDER NOTICE (NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING)
Tenders in two Bid System (Technical Bid & Price Bid) affixing Court Fee Stamp of Rs. 8.25 (or IPO of Rs. 10.00 in favour of State Health Society, Assam) for bidders located outside Assam) are invited from manufacturers/importers or authorized distributors/ dealer for supply of the "Triple Layer Mask, N-95 Mask, Personal Protection Equipment (PPE-cover all) Kits, Face shield, Nitrite Examination Gloves" on an urgent basis in view of COVID-19 pandemic. The complete set of tender documents may be downloaded from assamtenders.gov.in or the official website of NHM nhm.assam.gov.in.
Hard copy of the Technical bid is to be submitted with the sample within the last date of Tender dropping.
Important dates related to the Tender:
1. Tender publication date : 15/5/2020 from 1.00 pm.
2. Tender submission start date : 16/5/2020 from 1.00 pm.
3. Tender submission last date : 25/5/2020 up to 1.00 pm.
4. Tender opening date : 25/5/2020 at 3.00 pm.
5. Sample submission date (physically) : 25/5/2020 by 1.00 pm.
6. Tender dropping date (Technical) : O/o the Mission Director, National Health Mission, Assam, Saikia Commercial Complex, Christanbasti, Guwahati-781005
7. Place of Sample submission : O/o the Mission Director, National Health Mission, Assam, Saikia Commercial Complex, Christanbasti, Guwahati-781005 at Procurement Cell (3rd floor, Room No. 312 & 313)
Sd/- Mission Director, NHM, Assam



TOP GAINERS TOP LOSERS

Bharti Airtel	2.68	M&M	-4.70
Asian Paints	2.08	Axis Bank	-3.30
Tata Steel	1.81	IndusInd	-2.24
NTPC	1.73	Hero Motor	-2.06
Reliance	1.63	Sun Pharma	-1.63

NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION ASSAM
No. NHM/C-CW/CCU/NCD/3852/18/103 Dated Guwahati the 14/05/2020

INVITATION FOR E-BID (IFEB)
The Office of the Mission Director, National Health Mission, Christian Basti, Guwahati-5 invites bid for the works **ON TWO BID SYSTEM** on **Turn Key Basis** under NHM as detailed below:-

Name of Work	Estimated Cost (In Rs.)	Bid Security (In Rs.)	Cost of Tender Document (In Rs.)	Period of Completion (from the date of issue of work order)
Construction of cardiac Care Unit and Day Care Cancer Facility at Bongaigaon Civil Hospital in Bongaigaon District" under NHM, Assam.	Rs.75,00,000.00	2% for General Category & 1% for SC/ST Category	Rs. 10,000.00	9 (Nine) Months

1. This Tender is invited as an advance action in anticipation of obtaining the required formal approval.
2. Eligibility Criteria:-
(a) Registered APWD (Bldg) Class-I-(A)/(B)/(C)/CPWD/Reputed Construction Company/Agency regd. under Govt./ Public Sector undertaking.
(b) Contractor must have satisfactory completed:-
i). Four Similar works, each of value not less than 25% of the estimated cost put- on Tender OR
ii). Three similar works, each of value not less than 40% of the estimated cost put- on tender OR
iii). Two similar works, each of value not less than 50% of the estimated cost put- on tender OR
iv). One similar works of value not less than 80% of the estimated cost, all amounts rounded off to a convenient full figure in the last 5 years ending on the last day of the month previous to the one in which the tenders are invited.
(c) Contractor must have achieved average Annual Turnover of at least 30% of estimated cost in any **TWO YEARS** during last 5 years ending 31st March of the previous Financial Year.
(d) The Contractor having PAN Card/GST Registration/ Labour License/registration under EPF & MP Act, 1952 etc. are eligible to Participate in the bid process.
(e) **The intended bidders are asked to verify the site for the work prior to quoting their rates.**
3. Cost of tender document should be drawn in favour of **State Health Society, Assam**, payable at **Guwahati** in the form of Pay Order/Demand Draft.
4. Bid security with a validity of 225(i.e.180+45) days should be in the form of **FDR/CDR/TDR** and drawn in favour of the **State Health Society, Assam**, payable at **Guwahati**.
5. The Contractor/bidder must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of the Govt. of Assam ([website http://assamtenders.gov.in](http://assamtenders.gov.in)). Contractors/Bidders can download documents free of cost Contractors/Bidders have to necessarily download the bidding document from the ETS using their own ID (Digital Signature Certificate). Bid documents not procured (downloaded) through the ETS/not using the contractor's own user ID will be considered invalid and summarily rejected. Contractors submitting bids online have to submit copy of the documents of technical bid manually along with cost of tender document before the expiry of the sequence 'Online Bid Submission' date and time as mentioned in the tender schedule. Bid will be rejected/ cancelled if financial Bid submitted off-line/hard copy.
6. The tender will be available through the link <http://assamtenders.gov.in> from **16/05/2020**.
7. Tender Schedule:

Sl No.	Name of Event	Start Date	Start Time	End Date	End Time
1	Tender Download	16.05.2020	12.00 HRS	01.06.2020	14.00 HRS.
2	Tender Submission	16.05.2020	12.00 HRS	01.06.2020	14.00 HRS.
3	Technical Bid Opening	02.06.2020	15.30 HRS.	-	-
4	Financial Bid Opening	-	-	-	-</

PRESS NOTICE / IFB

No. CS/EGTRD/SOPD(G)/2019-20/717/1

The Superintending Engineer, PWD, (Roads), Guwahati ARIASP Circle, Ghy-21 on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites 2 (two) nos. item rate Bids from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Assam PWD (Roads) for the works. Details may be seen at website <http://assamtenders.gov.in> and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, PWD (Roads)
Guwahati ARIASP Circle, Guwahati-21
Janasanyog/CF/322/20

PRESS NOTICE / IFB

No. CS/DTRD/SOPD(G)/2020-21/53/1/Pl./10

The Superintending Engineer, PWD, (Roads), Guwahati ARIASP Circle, Ghy-21 on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites 9 (nine) nos. item rate Bid from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Assam PWD (Roads) for the works. Details may be seen at website <http://assamtenders.gov.in> and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours.

Superintending Engineer, PWD (Roads), Guwahati
ARIASP Circle, Guwahati-21
Janasanyog/CF/331/20

No. SE/NRC/TB/NIT/44/2019-20/55

PRESS NOTICE INVITING RE-TENDER

The Superintending Engineer, PWD, Nagaon Road Circle, Nagaon on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites bid from Assam PWD registered contractors for construction / improvement of roads under SOPD(G) for the year 2019-20 for 3(Three) Nos. of works of Raha LAC in Nagaon District of Assam amounting to Rs.280.09 Lakhs (approx.). Details may be seen at website <http://assamtenders.gov.in> and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, PWD
Nagaon Road Circle, Nagaon
Janasanyog/CF/345/20

No. NIT/ACE/EZ/SOPD(G)/113/2018/45

PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Additional Chief Engineer P.W.D (Roads), Eastern Zone, Dibrugarh on behalf of Governor of Assam invites bid from the approved and eligible contractors [Class I (A & B)] registered with Assam PWD (Roads) for Construction of Roads under SOPD(G) for the year 2019-20 for 3 (Three) Nos of road work amounting to Rs.742.24 Lakhs (Approx. inclusive of GST & Labour Cess). Details may be seen at website <https://assamtenders.gov.in> and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours.

Table I

Sl. No.	Name of LAC	Nos of works	Appx. Amount Rs. in Lakhs
1	Mahmora LAC	1	205.000
2	Amguri LAC	1	265.340
3	Majuli LAC	1	271.900
Total Rs			742.240

Sd/- Additional Chief Engineer P.W.D (Roads),
Eastern Zone, Dibrugarh
Janasanyog/CF/324/20

NOTIFICATION

It is for general information of all Class-I (C) registered Contractors under the Additional Chief Engineer (PHE), Lower Assam Zone, Bamunimaidam, Ghy-21, that, a database of all Class-I (C) registered Contractors need to be prepared for taking up various works for implementation of JAL JEEWAN MISSION (JJM). For preparing the database, some particular information about each registered contractors are required in prescribed format. The prescribed format can be obtained from the office of the undersigned in any working day upto 29.05.2020. The filled up format along with all necessary enclosures shall be received by the office of the undersigned upto 08.06.2020.

All the Class-I (C) registered contractors are requested to submit the information within the stipulated time frame or their name/ farm shall not be considered for empanelment of Implementation Support Agency (ISA) in JJM.

Sd/- Addl. Chief Engineer (PHE)
Lower Assam Zone, Ghy-21
Janasanyog/D/580/20

No. CE/DEV/TB/417/2019-20/5

PRESS NOTICE FOR INVITING TENDER (RE-BID)

The Chief Engineer, PWD, (Roads), Assam, Chandmari, Ghy-3 on behalf of Governor of Assam invites Bids online from approved and eligible registered Contractors of A.P.W.R.D. for 3 (three) Nos. of Packages amounting to Rs. 1104.06 lakh only (approximately) under SOPD-G for the year 2019-20 under Rangapara LAC under Tezpur Sootea and Rangapara Road Division, Tezpur.

Details can be seen at website- www.assamtenders.gov.in from 18.05.2020 and also at the office O/o the undersigned (Development Branch), Chandmari, Ghy-03.

The earlier press notice invited vide No. CE/DEV/TB/417/2019-20/3 Dated 21.03.2020 is hereby cancelled due to lockdown for COVID-19 Pandemic.

Note:- The approximate N.I.T. Value is inclusive of GST, L.C. etc.

Sd/- Chief Engineer PWD (Roads),
Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3.
Janasanyog/CF/333/20

No. NIT/ACE/EZ/SOPD(G)/113/2018/47

PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Additional Chief Engineer P.W.D (Roads), Eastern Zone, Dibrugarh on behalf of Governor of Assam invites bid from the approved and eligible contractors [Class I (A & B)] registered with Assam PWD (Roads) for Construction of Roads under SCSP for the Year 2019-20 for 1 (One) No. of road work amounting to Rs. 235.3 Lakhs (Approx. inclusive of GST & Labour Cess). Details may be seen at website <https://assamtenders.gov.in> and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours.

Table I

Sl. No.	Name of LAC	No of works	Appx. Amount Rs. in Lakhs
1	Dibrugarh LAC	1	235.300
Total Rs.			235.300

Sd/- Additional Chief Engineer P.W.D (Roads),
Eastern Zone, Dibrugarh
Janasanyog/CF/318/20

No. CE/DEV/TB/504/2019-20/24

PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Chief Engineer P.W.D. (Roads), Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3 invites Bids on behalf of Governor of Assam for 5 (Five) nos of Packages for Road and Bridge Projects under SOPD-G for the year 2019-20 in Sivasagar & Nazira Legislative Assembly Constituencies of Assam, amounting to Rs. 109.49 Crs (approx) from approved & eligible Contractors enlisted with APWD.

Details may be seen at website www.assamtenders.gov.in from 19.05.2020. Amendment/Addendum to the SBD, if any, and further notifications shall appear in this website and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The contractor/bidder must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of PWD, Assam website www.assamtenders.gov.in

The earlier press notice invited vide No. CE/DEV/TB/504/2019-20/08 Dated 23.03.2020 is hereby cancelled due to lockdown for COVID-19 Pandemic.

Note:- N.I.T. Value is inclusive of GST, Labour cess etc.
Sd/- Chief Engineer PWD (Roads),
Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3.
Janasanyog/CF/341/20

Family of four tests negative for COVID-19 in Dibrugarh

Another 7 passengers diagnosed with fever symptom

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

DIBRUGARH, May 15: The four samples collected from a family of four who arrived here yesterday via special train from Delhi have tested negative for COVID-19. The family members were diagnosed with symptoms of fever and therefore, they were rushed to the quarantine centre at Jokai Model Hospital for further examination yesterday.

Another seven passengers from among 184 passengers who alighted from the special train this morning at Dibru-

garh Railway Station, Banipur have been diagnosed with symptoms of fever. Among the seven, three are from Dibrugarh, another three from Tinsukia and one from Charaideo districts. They were taken to the quarantine centre at Jokai for COVID-19 test.

Among those who arrived here today, 24 are from Arunachal Pradesh. The district-wise number of passengers from other districts include Tinsukia (74), Dibrugarh (38), Biswanath Chariali (2), Charaideo (6), Dhemaji (24), Lakhimpur (15) and Sivasagar (1).

All the passengers underwent health

screening at their respective health camps set up on the station campus.

Thirty-three passengers of Dibrugarh have been sent for quarantine in the designated city hotels namely - Khyati, Nandini and Maurya - while two others have been home quarantined.

Further, the 14 Dibrugarh-bound passengers who arrived in Guwahati yesterday via Shramik Express train were brought to Dibrugarh by bus. They were screened at temporary health screening centre at Victoria Girls' HS School and moved to Jironi lodge here for quarantine.

2nd batch of 29 returnees reaches Mariani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

JORHAT, May 15: The second batch of 29 people coming from outside Assam alighted from the special train carrying them at Mariani Railway Junction under Titabar Civil Sub-division of the district today.

A senior Jorhat district administration official informed that among the 29 returnees 15 were of Golaghat, three of Sivasagar and 11 from Jorhat district.

All the people were asymptomatic and have been sent to home and institutional quarantine, the official stated.

It may be mentioned here that from May 6 till date 663 people who arrived by own vehicles or ambulances have been screened at the zonal screening centre for six districts of Upper Assam set up at Kakodunga (bordering Golaghat district) on the western outskirts here.

Shops start reopening in Dhubri district

CORRESPONDENT

DHUBRI, May 15: Dhubri Deputy Commissioner Anant Lal Gyani on Thursday allowed a majority of shops to start functioning on rotation basis but with restrictions in the district from Friday.

The Deputy Commissioner in his order said, "The Orange Zone tag on Dhubri district by the Ministry of Health Affairs, Government of India has been withdrawn with immediate effect and Dhubri district is now coming to normalcy. Normal life has resumed in the district. Business establishments can remain open until 4 pm every day."

The order further stated that the standalone shops, grocery shops and pharmacies including veterinary clinics will remain open every day, while shopping complexes, cinema halls, shopping malls, salons, beauty parlours, restaurants, gymnasiums, hotels and lodges, etc., will remain closed until further order.

The remaining category of shops will remain open on a rotation basis, stated the order which also said the president/secretary of the Chambers of Commerce will ensure regulating the shops.

Gyani also ordered that the owners of the shops must arrange handwashing and all the workers of their establishments must wear face masks while selling items or working in the establishments and social distancing should also be maintained by the staff and customers.

OBITUARY

Sukumar Singha

GUWAHATI, May 15: Sukumar Singha (popularly known as Abele), a social worker, passed away at his Naba Santipur residence in Doldidohor on Thursday at 8.45 pm. He was 43.

He leaves behind his parents, two brothers, two sisters and a host of relatives and admirers.

His sudden demise was deeply mourned by the locality.

2 hurt in accidental firing in Nagaon market

A CORRESPONDENT

NAGAON, May 15: In an unexpected melee with on-duty patrolling police at Nagaon Borbazaar area, a dreaded drug mafia was injured by bullet. The incident took place when the drugs mafia tried to snatch away the service pistol from the on-duty patrolling police officer and accidentally a bullet hit the leg of the drugs mafia. In the melee, Sub Inspector Pradeep Bonia was also injured.

According to police sources, the injured drug mafia has been identified as Arjul Ali, who was a police constable and was dismissed from service recently due to involvement in various anti-social activities during his short period of service with the Assam Police. He was admitted to Nagaon BP Civil Hospital and was undergoing treatment.

Speaking to this correspondent here, the newly-appointed officer-in-charge of Nagaon Sadar PS, Inspector Ashok Kumar Dutta said that like the other days during the lockdown period, a police

patrolling unit was deployed at Borbazaar Chariali to monitor the social distancing norms in the entire market area. When some of people violated the lockdown norms in the area this afternoon, the on-duty patrolling police officer along with his unit tried to make them aware of the guidelines.

It was then the drug mafia came forward and tried to snatch on-duty SI Bonia's service pistol. Amidst the melee, a bullet went out accidentally which finally hit one of Ali's legs, Dutta further said.

Meanwhile, senior police officials of the district rushed to the spot and started investigation. During the investigation, police recovered some samples of highly intoxicated drugs in Ali's small shop at Borbazaar area. Immediately, police raided his house situated near the market area from where police recovered other samples of banned drugs, the sources further claimed.

Meanwhile, the injured drug mafia Arjul Ali fled with the aid of some members of his gang from the hospital on a car late this evening.



State Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma visiting the Changsari-based potato godown, on Friday. - UB Photos

Kaziranga hotels, resorts to be used as quarantine centres

CORRESPONDENT

KAZIRANGA, May 15: In view of arrival of many people from outside the State, hotels and resorts in Kaziranga will be used as quarantine facilities to accommodate the people for a mandatory 14 days.

State Health Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sharma had already announced that hotels and resorts in Kaziranga would be used for accommodating the people coming from outside Assam as mandatory 14 days quarantine in Golaghat district.

Informing this correspondent, Shantanu Gogoi, Magistrate, Bokakhat subdivision, said that hotels and resorts in Kaziranga will be used to its capacity for accommodation of trav-

ellers arriving Golaghat district coming from outside the State.

According to information received from Kohora Model Hospital, eight persons who arrived from Chennai are currently being put up in Bonashree Tourist Guest House owned by Assam Tourism department at Kohora. Another 13 people are expected to arrive Kohora tonight by 10 pm.

A few days back, three persons were kept in a private hotel in Kohora for quarantine.

Sources said that security personnel are remaining alert to ensure that those who are quarantined follow all forms of medical rules.

Private tourist lodges are also being used for quarantine facility said the sources.

36-hour Dima Hasao bandh passes off peacefully

CORRESPONDENT

HAFLONG, May 15: The Halali Progressive Welfare Society called 36-hour Dima Hasao bandh from 5 am of May 14 to 5 pm of May 15 passed off peacefully.

The bandh was called by Halali Progressive Welfare Society, which includes ex-DHD cadres, demanding immediate arrest of the culprits involved in the Sontosh Hojai killing and proper implemen-

tation of the memorandum of settlement (MoS) signed among the Government of India, Government of Assam and both the factions of Dima Halam Daogah.

It may be mentioned here that on April 24 at around 6 pm, Santosh Hojai was kidnapped from his house at Harangajao and on April 30, his body was recovered along NH-27, around 100-km from his home at Lailing under the Langting Police Station.

Jayanta Hojai, the wife of Santosh Hojai along with some neighbours, went to the Harangajao PS to lodge a complaint against the incident soon after it happened.

Surprisingly, the officer-in-charge of the Harangajao PS refused to accept her written complaint for two times by stating that her husband would return. After she moved the high court on April 26, then only her FIR was accepted by the officer-in-charge.

NOTIFICATION

It is for general information of all Class-I (C) registered Contractors under the Additional Chief Engineer (PHE), Lower Assam Zone, Bamunimaidam, Ghy-21, that a database of all Class-I (C) registered Contractors need to be prepared for taking up various works for implementation of Jal Jeewan Mission (JJM). For preparing the database, some particular information about each registered contractors are required in prescribed format. The prescribed format can be obtained from the office of the undersigned in any working day upto 29.05.2020. The filled up format along with all necessary enclosures shall be received by the office of the undersigned upto 08.06.2020.

All the Class-I (C) registered contractors are requested to submit the information within the stipulated time frame or their name/Farm shall not be considered for empanelment of Implementation Support Agency (ISA) in JJM.

Sd/- Addl. Chief Engineer (PHE)
Lower Assam Zone, Ghy-21
Janasanyog/C/458/20

SHORT QUOTATION NOTICE

Sealed quotations affixing court fee stamps of Rs. 8.25 (Rs. eight & twenty five paise) only in plain paper are hereby invited from intending Firms/ Suppliers/ Wholesalers/ Mills for supply of the items which may be required for the distribution amongst the flood affected people and other natural calamity in the year 2020-21. The quotation will be received during office hours in the Relief Branch, O/O Sub-Divisional Officer (Civil), Gohpur Sub-Division, Gohpur up to 2.00 pm on 20.05.2020 and will be opened on the same day at 3.30 pm by the committee chaired by Sub-Divisional Officer (Civil). The intending traders or their representative should remain present at time of opening of the said quotation with their sample.

Detail of the notice including items of GR may be obtained from the office of the undersigned.

Sd/- Additional Deputy Commissioner I/C
Gohpur Sub-Division, Gohpur
Janasanyog/C/501/20

No. CE/DEV/TB/572/2019-20/5

PRESS NOTICE

The Chief Engineer P.W.D. (Roads), Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3 invites Bids on behalf of Governor of Assam for 2 (Two) nos of Packages for Roads projects under Signature Scheme of SOPD-G (State Priority Scheme) for the year 2019-20 in Abhayapuri North & Abhayapuri South LAC of Assam from approved & eligible Contractors enlisted with APWD amounting to Rs. 20.00 Crs (approx) including GST.LC etc.

Details may be seen at website www.assamtenders.gov.in from 20.05.2020. Amendment/Addendum to the SBD, if any, and further notifications shall appear in this website and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The contractor/bidder must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of PWD, Assam website www.assamtenders.gov.in

The earlier press notice invited vide No. CE/DEV/TB/572/2019-20/3 Dated 28.02.2020 is hereby cancelled due to lockdown for COVID-19 Pandemic.

Sd/- Chief Engineer PWD (Roads),
Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3.
Janasanyog/CF/337/20

No. CE/Comm/42/2019-20/Pt-III/11

PRESS NOTICE RE-INVITING TENDER

The Chief Engineer, P.W.D (Roads), Assam on behalf of the Governor of Assam re-invite bid from approved and eligible contractors registered with Assam PWD (Roads) for the work "Construction of SPT Bridge at Gagalmari Road from Sildubi Gagalmari Pt. II under SOPD-FDR for the year 2019-20 for PMGSY Package No. AS-17-149 for the year 2008-09 (Bridge length = 100.00m)" under SOPD-FDR for the year 2019-20 in Morigaon district of Assam. Details may be seen at website- assamtenders.gov.in and also at the office of the undersigned in the "Communication branch", from 18.05.2020 to 25.05.2020 during office hours. The earlier press notice published vide letter No. CE/Comm/42/2019-20/Pt-III/8, Dt. 16.03.2020 may be treated as cancelled due to nationwide lockdown in view of Corona Virus pandemic.

Sd/- Chief Engineer, PWD (Roads),
Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3
Janasanyog/CF/326/20

SHORT NOTICE TENDER NO. 01 OF 2020-21

Sealed tender affixing fee stamp (non-refundable) purchased in Assam worth Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight and paise twenty five only) are invited from the Regd. Class-I (C) category contractor having renewal under the Adl. C.E. (PHE), Lower Assam Zone and Class-II category contractors/ firms having renewal under Nalbari (PHE) Circle, for different works of PWSS under Barpeta/ Belsor (PHE) Division, under Nalbari (PHE) Circle as mentioned in the list annexed with the detailed NIT.

The tender will be received up to 2.00 PM of 22.05.2020 and will be opened on the same date in the presence of the tenderer or their authorized agents who would like to be present. For any unforeseen reason if tender could not be received and opened on the day, then the same will be received and opened in the next working day at the same time and venue for which no separate communication will be made.

No tender will be accepted unless tender papers are duly purchased from the office of the undersigned. Detailed tender paper may be obtained up to 2.00 PM of 21.05.2020 during working hours from the office of the undersigned against application and on payment of Rs. 200.00 (Rupees two hundred) only in cash.

The undersigned reserves the right to issue the tender papers to the tenderer and to accept or reject any or all tender without assigning any reason thereof and does not bind himself to accept the lowest tender.

2% Earnest Money will be deposited against each work in the form of deposit at call and to be drawn in favour of the Superintending Engineer (PHE), Nalbari Circle, Nalbari. (1% for SC/ ST/ OBC).

The Original copy of following documents shall have to be produced by the intending tenderer along with the application for issue of tender paper. Tender papers shall only be issued after satisfactory of the said original documents by the office of the undersigned.

- Original copy of PAN Card.
- Original copy of up-to-date Labour License.
- Original copy of Contractor's/ Firms registration Renewal.
- Original copy of GST registration certificate.
- Original copy of Caste Certificate.
- Original copy of GST return of last month.

Rates should be quoted on percentage basis at per/ above/ below the APWD (Building) Schedule of rates for 2013-14, Sanitary- 2013-14, (Roads & Bridge 2013-14), electrical- 2013-14, PHE-15-16 & Deptt. Estt. Rates. Tenderers should clearly mentioned the name of work, Gr. No. etc. in the body of the tender otherwise the tender will not be treated as valid tender. Tender papers without the contractor's signature and Registration No. will not be accepted.

Rates quoted exceptionally below the schedule and non-schedule items should be technically justified with supporting documents along with the tenders.

UNSEALED TENDER WILL SUMMERLY BE REJECTED.
Sd/- Superintending Engineer (PHE)
Nalbari Circle, Nalbari
Janasanyog/C/485/20

Ganguly has political skills to lead ICC: David Gower

NEW DELHI, May 15: Former England skipper David Gower feels Sourav Ganguly has the right "political skills" to lead the ICC one day and he has already displayed that as BCCI president, which is a "far tougher job".

The elegant left-hander is very impressed with Ganguly's leadership abilities and believes that he has what it takes to head the global body in the future.

"One thing I have learnt over the years is that if you are going to run BCCI, you need to be many, many things. Having a reputation like he (Ganguly) has is a very good start, but you need to be a very deft politician.

"You need to have control of a million different things,"



We all know about the immense following for cricket in India. So it is indeed a wonderful thing to behold.

Sourav has the toughest task imaginable in charge of BCCI, but so far I would say the signs are very good.

- David Gower

Gower said ahead of "Q20", a unique chat show for the fans presented by 'GloFans'.

Gower reckons being president of the BCCI is the toughest job imaginable in world cricket.

"And of course, you need to be responsible for a game that is followed by, I mean, should we say a billion people here in India," he said.

"We all know about the immense following for cricket in India. So it is indeed a wonderful thing to behold. Sourav has the toughest task imaginable in charge of BCCI, but so far I would say the signs are very good.

"He has listened, given his own opinion and has pulled strings gently," he said.

Political skills are a must in administration and that's where

Gower finds his fellow left-hander ticking all the boxes.

"He is a very, very good man and has those political skills. He has the right attitude and can keep things together and will do good job. And if you do a good job as BCCI chief in the future, who knows?"

"But I would actually say the more important job, to be honest, is running BCCI. Being head of ICC is an honour, there is a lot that can be done by ICC, but actually look at the rankings, look at where the power is heading up. BCCI is definitely the bigger job," he said.

On the cricketing front, Gower believes World Test Championship has given the format much-needed context. - PTI

Kane wants assurances before Premier League returns

LONDON, May 15: England captain Harry Kane says players are waiting for safety guidance from the Premier League after the government said it was "opening the door" for the return of football next month.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said during Thursday's meeting with the Football Association, Premier League and English Football League had "progressed plans for the resumption of the professional game in England".

The Premier League hopes for a return to action on June 12, with matches played behind closed doors.

Tottenham striker Kane is willing to take the next step, moving from individual training to small group sessions, but suggested more informa-

tion was needed.

"I don't think anyone knows the right answer at the moment," he told ITV's 'Good Morning Britain' programme.

"I think the majority of players are looking forward to playing again as soon as possible but we know we want it to be as safe as possible too.

"From what I have heard - obviously I haven't seen too much of my team-mates - at the moment everyone is OK. We want to see how the Premier League gives us a plan and what that looks like."

Kane confirmed that he, along with the rest of the Spurs squad, had taken initial tests for coronavirus, with no positive results following their return to training.

"About a week ago we start-

ed going to the training ground, we were allowed to have one-on-one training with one member of staff on one pitch, self-distancing from everyone," he said.

"We had tests on Monday, all the players and staff had tests, and everyone came back negative, which was great."

Kane said Liverpool's 25-point lead would make them worthy champions however the 2019/20 campaign ends, with the absence of their fans from the conclusion to the season a necessary evil because of the pandemic.

"Liverpool deserve to lift the title and with their fans missing it will be a strange situation. But we've not been through a time like this in our lifetimes," he said. - AFP

Messi accepts 'risk' of possible La Liga return

MADRID, May 15: Lionel Messi says he is comfortable with footballers returning to play again as La Liga prepares to restart the season in Spain next month.

La Liga president Javier Tebas has circled June 12 as the ideal date for matches to resume.

Barcelona sit top of the table, two points ahead of Real Madrid.

Players in Spain have started working individually at training grounds as part of a strict and staggered programme, with five players already put into quarantine after testing positive for coronavirus.

"The risk of contagion is everywhere," Messi said in an interview with *Mundo Deportivo*, published on Friday.

"When you leave the



house the risk is already there, so I think you can't think about it too much because otherwise you'll not want to go out anywhere.

"But we also understand it is essential to comply with protocols and take all the possible measures of preven-

tion. Going back to training is a first step but we shouldn't get complacent and we must continue taking all the necessary precautions and assume we have to start playing games but behind closed doors."

Messi also spoke about Inter Milan striker Lautaro Martinez, whom Barcelona are reportedly keen to sign this summer.

Martinez is viewed as a long-term replacement for the 33-year-old Luis Suarez. "If I'm honest I'm not sure if there were or are negotiations right now for him, I have no idea," Messi said.

"Lautaro is an impressive striker, especially because I think he is very complete - he is strong, he dribbles well, he has an eye for goal, he knows how to protect the ball." - AFP

Don't reduce women domestic games: Healy



Alyssa Healy

es worth millions of dollars.

The women matches in the domestic women competition Marsh Sheffield Shield and the Women Big Bash League (WBBL) are not lucrative compared to the men's cricket but hosting them still burns a hole in Cricket Australia's pocket.

However, Healy says cutting the games for women would not be prudent.

"(Playing less games) obviously doesn't sit great. We don't want to lose any cricket. It would be a real shame," Healy, who is a board director of the Australian Cricketers Association (ACA), told The Unplayable Podcast.

"Especially the WBBL, it's such a great tournament for us and it's the bulk of the cricket we get to play." - PTI

USTA planning for New York US Open, mull alternatives

LOS ANGELES, May 15: The United States Tennis Association is pressing ahead with preparations to stage the US Open in New York this year but is "aggressively" drafting alternative plans for the tournament, a spokesman said.

With New York the epicentre of the coronavirus pandemic in the United States, the US Open's apparently precarious place on the sporting calendar has faced increasing speculation in recent weeks.

Multiple reports have suggested that USTA officials are mulling a possible switch of the August 31-September 13 tournament to either Indian Wells or Orlando in an effort to evade the clutches of COVID-19.

However, USTA spokesman Chris Widmaier said in an email to AFP on Thursday that the organisation's sights remained firmly set on staging the Open at its regular venue and date.

"The USTA's goal is to hold the 2020 US Open in New York on its currently scheduled dates," Widmaier said, describing planning for the tournament as "ongoing."

"We understand that there is a great deal

of speculation regarding the USTA's planning for the 2020 US Open," he added.

"We would like to clarify that while we are exploring every possibility around the US Open, the potential to shift the event location or date is not at the forefront at this point in time."

Widmaier added, however, that because of the "uncertain and rapidly-changing environment" caused by COVID-19, the USTA had been "aggressively modelling many other contingencies, including scenarios with no fans."

A final decision on plans for the US Open would be taken next month, in "mid-to-late June", Widmaier said.

"Paramount with all our decisions regarding the US Open will be the health and safety of all those involved, in any capacity, with the tournament," Widmaier said.

USTA officials are in constant contact with New York State and City agencies regarding coronavirus.

COVID-19 has wreaked havoc with the international tennis calendar, which has ground to a standstill since the crisis erupted. - AFP

Liverpool boss Klopp pokes fun at Neville

I didn't learn a lot in lockdown, other than Gary Neville has an opinion about absolutely everything. It is incredible.

- Jurgen Klopp



health crisis.

The former England international has criticised Premier League chiefs for being slow to give updates on their restart plans.

He also took issue with the government's call for players to take wage cuts during the pandemic and let rip on a host of other subjects.

Klopp could not resist a

good-natured jibe at Neville when asked what his lockdown experience had been like.

"I didn't learn a lot in lockdown, other than Gary Neville has an opinion about absolutely everything. It is incredible," Klopp told the BBC's Football Focus programme.

Liverpool were two wins away from winning the English title for the first time in 30 years when the Premier League was postponed on March 13.

The league hopes to resume in mid-June and players are already returning to training while observing strict social-distancing rules.

Klopp has been in touch with Liverpool's squad, but he admitted it had been hard to go so long without seeing them in person. - AFP

Amit requests Rijju to revamp awards selection process

NEW DELHI, May 15: Repeatedly denied the Arjuna award for an "inadvertent" dope offence back in 2012, Asian Games gold-winning boxer Amit Panghal on Friday requested Sports Minister Kiren Rijju to revamp the selection criteria for the national sports awards, calling the current process "discriminatory".

In a letter to the Minister, Panghal, who became India's first male boxer to win a world championship silver last year, said that athletes should not have to plead their case for an award by nominating themselves.

"The current process is that a sportsperson has to send application and then sports committee selects on the basis of these applications.



Amit Panghal

Award selection is also based on discriminative decision of sports committee members who hold no accountability," he said in the letter.

Panghal has been nominated twice for the Arjuna award but has not been considered because of the past dope violation in 2012. - PTI

'IPL with 5-6 teams will be great for women's cricket'

NEW DELHI, May 15: Swashbuckling Indian opener Smriti Mandhana feels a full-fledged women's Indian Premier League (IPL) can make a difference in tapping the talent which would help the national team do well at the global level.

The 23-year-old opener also acknowledged the efforts the BCCI is putting in to make it a reality.

"The BCCI has put in a lot of effort, first we had an exhibition match kind of women's IPL two years ago then there was a very successful IPL with three teams. And this year it was supposed to be four teams," Mandhana said on the BBC podcast 'The Doosra'.

"I'm sure a lot of IPL style matches will take place for a year or two. A five or six-team IPL for women will be great for Indian women's



cricket specially for the World Cups," she added.

The southpaw hopes the gap between the domestic and international cricket that exists in women's cricket in the country right now will be bridged soon.

"Women's cricket in India is growing massively, specially the domestic circuit. But there's still a lot of gap be-

tween competition between international and domestic circuit which I think will be bridged in 2-3 years."

The Indian women's team has taken huge strides since entering their maiden final of a World Cup in 2017 and coach WV Raman feels the side has the potential to become the best team in three years. - PTI

ICA is there to extend a helping hand

Very often, those who have served the game are forgotten once away from centre stage. They could, sadly, struggle to make ends meet or may develop an illness which drains their bank balance.



Lokendra Pratap Sahi

Everybody, after all, does not make it big and all are not lucky enough to get security-providing employment. So, when the hard times come, they get hit the most.

When that happens, that lot needs monetary relief, a reality quickly grasped by the Indian Cricketers' Association (ICA).

Accordingly, the ICA has launched a first of its kind initiative, a Welfare Fund, purpose being to reach out to

former players who, in the midst of this never-ending pandemic, are in desperate need of resources.

"Generally, this is a tough period for all of us. But the ones most affected are either those without a job or those who have retired from service but don't receive a pension..."

"Besides, many former players either run their own academy or are employed at such facilities. The lockdown has put a stop to their income and they're looking for help..."

"Our initiative will, to an extent, provide succour to those in a crisis," ICA president Ashok Malhotra, a former India batsman, told this columnist.

Of course, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has a pension scheme, but only for those who have played a minimum of 25 First-Class matches.

As a body, the ICA represents retired cricketers, including former India internationals. It came into being less than a year ago and already has 1,750 members.

The Welfare Fund has raised around Rs 55 lakh and contributions are coming in. Soon, Malhotra and his team (secretary Hitesh Majumdar, treasurer V Krishnaswamy) will short-list the ones most in need and effect the transfer of funds.

Beneficiaries could include Tilak Raj, whose small business has folded up, and diabetic Krishna Dey, who one gathers is in urgent need of help. Raj played quite a bit of cricket with Mohinder Amarnath and Madan Lal.

Contributions permitting, the ICA will reach out to 10 former players, men and women, in each of the five zones. The beneficiaries may include widows as well.

"More funds we raise, more the

number of former players we'll be able to help. Both men and women stand to benefit. I haven't sounded out the current lot, but I intend appealing to them too. This cause, after all, is worthy," Malhotra maintained.

The ICA has two representatives in the Apex Council of every state association. Anshuman Gaekwad ('a big help') and Shanta Rangaswamy are its representatives in the Apex Council of the BCCI.

According to Malhotra, the ICA representatives in the states are the ones mostly forwarding names of the needy.

To set the ball rolling, the ICA gave Rs 10 lakh to the Welfare Fund, which has received handsome contributions from former players settled overseas. Like Rajinder Singh Ghai, who resides in the US.

"We're indebted to all, corporates

included, who are contributing. More than the amount, it's the thought that matters. To be honest, this is a time when people are looking at their own financial health, yet so many have come forward..."

"A clutch of former India captains have also pitched in, following the lead taken by Mohammad Azharuddin," Malhotra informed.

Gaekwad, who has worn many hats, was most appreciative of the initiative: "That non-cricketers too have contributed just goes to show the goodwill players enjoy. The response has clearly been overwhelming. Personally speaking, the ICA has given me a platform and I've done what I could. It is my duty to try and help."

The ICA intends to keep the Welfare Fund going even after this pandemic phase in our lives gets over. That, indeed, is more good news.

SU DO KU

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

Solution of last problem

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

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